

## INFORMATION TO USERS

The negative microfilm copy of this dissertation was prepared and inspected by the school granting the degree. We are using this film without further inspection or change. If there are any questions about the content, please write directly to the school. The quality of this reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original material.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. Manuscripts may not always be complete. When it is not possible to obtain missing pages, a note appears to indicate this.
2. When copyrighted materials are removed from the manuscript, a note appears to indicate this.
3. Oversize materials (maps, drawings, and charts) are photographed by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.
4. Most photographs reproduce acceptably on positive microfilm or microfiche but lack clarity on xerographic copies made from the microfilm. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

**U·M·I** Dissertation  
Information Service

University Microfilms International  
A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106





**Order Number 9231691**

**Poetic thought, the intelligent Universe, and the mystery of self:  
The Tantric synthesis of *rDzogs Chen* in fourteenth century Tibet**

**Germano, David Francis, Ph.D.**

**The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1992**

**Copyright ©1992 by Germano, David Francis. All rights reserved.**

**U·M·I**  
300 N. Zeeb Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106



**A dissertation entitled**

POETIC THOUGHT, THE INTELLIGENT UNIVERSE,  
AND THE MYSTERY OF SELF:  
THE TANTRIC SYNTHESIS OF RDZOGS CHEN  
IN FOURTEENTH CENTURY TIBET

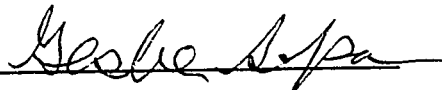
submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

DAVID FRANCIS GERMANO

Degree to be awarded: December 19\_\_ May 19\_\_ August 1992\_\_

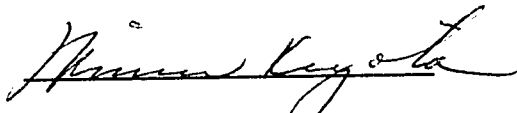
Approved by Dissertation Readers:



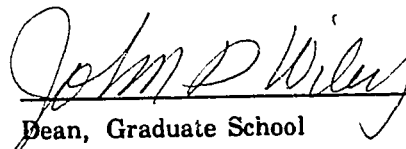
Major Professor

August 14, 1992

Date of Examination





  
Dean, Graduate School



**POETIC THOUGHT, THE INTELLIGENT UNIVERSE, AND THE MYSTERY  
OF SELF:  
THE TANTRIC SYNTHESIS OF RDZOGS CHEN IN FOURTEENTH  
CENTURY TIBET**

by

**DAVID FRANCIS GERMANO**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy  
(Buddhist Studies)**

at the  
**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON**  
1992

**© Copyright by David Francis Germano 1992**

**All Rights Reserved**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Part 1: Introduction

Acknowledgments....	iii
Foreword....	vi
Abstract....	viii
Dedication....	xi
Introduction....	1
Chapter One <i>Overview of the Great Perfection....</i>	3
Chapter Two <i>The Corpus of Longchenpa....</i>	10
Chapter Three <i>The Seventeen Tantras....</i>	39
Chapter Four <i>The Essentials of the Great Perfection in Eleven Adamantine Topics....</i>	51
Chapter Five <i>The First Adamantine Topic: the Ground and Ground-presencing....</i>	60
Chapter Six <i>The Second Adamantine Topic: the Process of Straying....</i>	68
Chapter Seven <i>The Third Adamantine Topic: the Enlightened Nucleus Pervading all Living Beings....</i>	77
Chapter Eight <i>The Fourth Adamantine Topic: the Location of Primordial Gnosis within Us....</i>	83
Chapter Nine: <i>The Fifth Adamantine Topic: the Pathways of Primordial Gnosis Within Us....</i>	90
Chapter Ten <i>The Sixth Adamantine Topic: the Gateways of Primordial Gnosis Within Us....</i>	95
Chapter Eleven <i>The Seventh Adamantine Topic: the Objective Sphere of Primordial Gnosis' Shining Forth....</i>	109
Chapter Twelve <i>The Eighth Adamantine Topic: Contemplatively Taking Primordial Gnosis into your own Experience....</i>	114
Chapter Thirteen <i>The Ninth Adamantine Topic: the Signs and Measures of Contemplative Realization....</i>	128
Chapter Fourteen <i>The Tenth Adamantine Topic: Dying and Post-death Opportunities in the Intermediate States....</i>	130

Chapter Fifteen *The Eleventh Adamantine Topic: the Fruit of Buddhahood as the Universe's Self-Exploration comes to a Climax in the Enlightenment Experience....135*

*Part II: Translation of Longchenpa's "Treasury of Words and Meanings"*

Introduction....139

Chapter One: *The Ground, Ground-presencing, and Liberation of the Totally Positive One....143*

Chapter Two: *Straying into Fictive Existence and the Structure of the Consequently Neuroticized Existence Therein....175*

Chapter Three: *How Enlightened Energy ("Buddhahood") Continues to Holistically Pervade all Living Beings....214*

Chapter Four: *This Gnostic Energy's Presence and Location in Human Existence....231*

Chapter Five: *This Gnostic Energy's Pathways in Human Existence....261*

*Part III: Annotation-Commentary to Longchenpa's "Treasury of Words and Meanings"*

Introduction....277

Chapter One....289

Chapter Two....395

Chapter Three....557

Chapter Four....604

Chapter Five....704

Mini-encyclopedia of Terminology....807

Glossary: Tibetan terms with English translations....965

Abbreviations of Titles Used in the Thesis....983

Bibliography of Secondary Literature....985

Bibliography of Reference Materials....992

Bibliography of Texts in Sanskrit and Tibetan....993



### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The present work is part of the semi-culmination of many years of study, thought, and contemplation, during which I owe a debt of gratitude to many individuals for their gifts of compassion, intelligence, integrity, and friendship. I am also indebted to the University of Wisconsin, Mellon Fellowship Program, Fulbright-Hays Program, and Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China who have so generously funded my research over the past seven years. In particular, in my initial studies at the University of Wisconsin, I would like to thank David Knipe, Minoru Kiyota, Velcheru Narayan Rao, Frances Wilson, John Newman, Leonard Zwilling, and Jose Cabezon for expertly guiding me through the intricacies of Sanskrit, Tibetan, Buddhist traditions, religious studies, hermeneutical issues in Asian thought, and other esoteric matters. In addition, I must thank Matthew Kapstein, who generously took time out of his busy schedule at the University of Chicago to read some of Longchenpa's exoteric writings with me, and oriented me in the Nyingma universe in response to my numerous tiresome questions.

During the past four years, many Tibetan lamas in India, Nepal, Tibet and China have aided me in ways small and large, and to all of them as a collective body I am immensely grateful to: Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche, Urgyan Tulku Rinpoche, Chadrak Rinpoche, Trulzhik Rinpoche, Tsetrul Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, Khanpo Rinzin, Khanpo Tsewang Gyatso, Khanpo Pema Sherab, Khanpo Namdrol, Chime Tsering, Sangye Rang-jung, Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Pekar Rinpoche, Zenkar Tulku, Phudruk, Dorji Tashi Tulku, Tsopo Dorlo Tulku Rinpoche, Tenzin Gyatso Tulku, Lobsang Tsering and Khanpo Tsenam. While I have yet to actually meet him, Namkhai Norbu's extensive writings in the forms of books and transcripts also proved quite useful to me early on in my research. For various conversations and assistance along the way, I would also like to thank Matieu Ricard, David Christianson, John Deweese, Andreas, Erik Hein Schmidt, Dalung, Ethan Golding, and particularly David Higgins. A source of

continuing inspiration for me has been the centers of Buddhist revival in Tibet, particularly Jikme Dorji Rinpoche and his nuns' efforts at Longchenpa's ancient power-place at Gangri Thokar in Central Tibet, Khanpo Chodrak and his students' mountain retreat center in Minyak Rong in Far East Tibet, and Khanpo Jikphun's huge Institute and nunnery in the nomadic highlands of Golok Serta.

It is impossible to express my gratitude to four people who truly embody the Buddhist tradition of learning, realization, and compassion, and who have influenced my own spiritual and intellectual development more than any others: Geshe Lhundub Sopa, who patiently and incisively instructed me in the perplexing intricacies of Tibetan language and Buddhist thought, and in whom I first encountered the traditional Buddhist blend of intellectual brilliance and ethical compassion so lacking in our own academic life; Dr. Herbert Guenther, whose writings have courageously challenged us to rigor, creativity and existential significance in our "thinking"/experiencing of Buddhist thought and praxis, and whom graciously shared his unparalleled brilliance in *rDzogs Chen* with me during a stay in Saskatoon in 1990, as well as in many subsequent enlightening conversations; Khanpo Chodrak, who welcomed me in his mountain retreat in Ba-Lha-sGang when I was at wits end, and kindly put his considerable learning and realization to the task of answering my daily succession of tedious questions on diverse exoteric and esoteric matters; and Khanpo Jikme Phuntshok (Khanpo Jikphun), whose visionary realization, scholastic brilliance, fearless teaching, and amazing mountain stronghold of *rDzogs Chen* scholarship and meditation at Lamarung in Golok Serta finally convinced me that the living tradition of *rDzogs Chen* is still vibrantly alive in Tibet itself, and whom opened my eyes in more ways than I could recount.

I would also like to thank my father and mother for their unflagging support throughout, and in particular for their daily teachings on the ways one must proceed through life. I am also very grateful to my wife, Sonam Dickey, who has patiently endured long years of ceaseless work and made those years both meaningful and possible, as well as my daughter, Anna Yeshe, who

brings light into a dark world. Finally, I would like to dedicate whatever slight positive energy accrues from this work to the cause of stopping the ongoing slaughter of "minority" cultures by materially and numerically dominant cultures, as well as the concomitant slaughter of nature and other living beings by our species across the world, with the ultimate hope that the experiential path outlined in this book (and others like it) may some day take hold in the world at large, and begin to accomplish what seem at present distant dreams.

## **FOREWORD**

While I had originally conceived of the present work as a translation and comprehensive commentary on the entire eleven chapters of Longchenpa's *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings (Tshig Don Rin Po Che'i mDzod)* along with a series of related essays on the Great Perfection (*rDzogs Chen*), I eventually realized that pragmatic considerations made this rather inappropriate in the context of a Ph.D. thesis. For these reasons, though I have completed my original plan in preliminary form, I have decided to only include my work concerning the first five chapters herein. I also eventually decided to structure the present text as a commentary appended to the translation in the form of "annotations", since this seemed most well suited to empowering the reader to actually participate in Longchenpa's thought itself, though a free standing study would certainly have been more easily appropriated by the typical reader. Despite this, temporal contingencies forced me to bring even this partial study to a too hasty conclusion, and thus I am well aware that much of my commentary remains marred by over simplification, lack of clarity, and the all too prevalent reductionism that tends to pervade one's thought and writing in dealing with traditions culturally and linguistically far removed from one's own origins. Certainly even these opening parts of the overall work will be substantially rewritten prior to their eventual publication. I have also left a few scattered untranslated citations from Tibetan works in my commentary when I thought they might prove of particular interest to other scholars in the field, though for varying reasons I was unable to provide a competent translation at this time.

The title of the section "mini-encyclopedia" reflects my original intention more than its present state, since I had originally conceived of it as a series of interlocking essays exhaustively analyzing the major "code words" found in these classical texts on the Great Perfection. However, this proved overly ambitious as well, and thus I chose to remove much of the material in general as well as eliminating reference to most of the terms found only in

Chapters Six to Eleven, leaving merely a glorified glossary. Some of these essays I plan to eventually publish as articles, while I may circulate future expansions of this section privately to interested people if a publishing venue for it remains elusive. A final caveat is that the current text was composed in the main while traveling, and thus I was unable to consult a wide range of secondary literature on the various pertinent issues, which inevitably left its mark on the present state of the commentary. The above comments are principally intended for those familiar with the initial and ongoing scope of my overall project, as well as others possibly interested in the future of the present text. The entire work with an exhaustive commentary amounts to some five thousand pages still in the process of being rewritten, and hence its future form largely depends on publishing opportunities that may or may not exist.

**ABSTRACT*****POETIC THOUGHT, THE INTELLIGENT UNIVERSE, AND THE MYSTERY OF  
SELF: THE TANTRIC SYNTHESIS OF RDZOGS CHEN IN FOURTEENTH  
CENTURY TIBET***

David Francis Germano

Under the supervision of Professor Geshe Sopa

The *rDzogs Chen* tradition is an extremely innovative philosophical and contemplative system originating out of Buddhist Tantric mysticism within the 8th-10th centuries, and in many ways is quite unusual in the context of normative Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. While its origins remain controversial, we currently possess only a large body of canonical and exegetical literature in what claim to be Tibetan translations, as well as an extensive secondary literature that developed in Tibet from the 10th-20th centuries. The tradition is especially striking in its implicit development of a model of rigorous philosophical thought that refuses to be reduced to syllogistic reasoning (though utilizing it as a secondary hermeneutical tool) or dismissed as mere "aesthetics" as it treats Buddhist Tantra as a serious philosophical innovation that must be utilized to reinterpret previous traditional scholasticism, in stark contrast to the trend to extend traditional scholastic methodologies into Tantra, and deny the revolution of "poetic thought" they may embody. In addition, its complex evolutionary emphasis and description of a non-reified intelligence operative at every level of the Universe is strikingly similar to recent developments in modern scientific research. Finally, it would seem that the Great Perfection represents the most sophisticated interpretation of the so-called "Buddha nature" tradition within the context of Indo-Tibetan thought, and as such, is of extreme importance for research into classical exoteric philosophic systems such as *Mādhyamaka* and *Yogācāra*, while also providing fertile grounds for future explorations of the interconnections

between Indo-Tibetan and East Asian forms of Buddhism, as well as between Indo-Tibetan Buddhism and contemporary Indian developments such as the tenth century non-dual Shaivism of Abhinavagupta.

Though this tradition is by no means homogenous, one can readily distinguish out a classical system encapsulated by "eleven adamantine topics" (*rDo rJe'i gNas bCu gCig*), which together constitute a wide ranging journey spanning the early history of the Universe to the climaxing heights of a Buddha's full enlightenment. This system is most brilliantly articulated by the fourteenth century Tibetan scholar kLong Chen Rab 'Byams Pa (1308-1363) in his *The Seven Treasuries* (*mDzod bDun*) and *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* (*sNying Thig Ya bZhi*), which contain some of the world's most profound poetic and philosophic masterpieces. This dissertation thus bases itself on Longchenpa's corpus, and his own textual sources, namely *The Seventeen Tantras*, *The Seminal Heart-Essence of the Sky Dancer* (*mKha' 'Gro sNying Thig*) by Padmasambhava, and *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Vimalamitra* (*Bi Ma sNying Thig*) by Vimalamitra and other early non-Tibetan figures in the tradition. In particular, it focuses on kLong Chen Rab 'Byams Pa's *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* (*Tshig Don mDzod*) which is directly structured on the aforementioned eleven topics, and is his most succinct yet extensive exposition of the tradition of the Great Perfection in its entirety. Part I is an overview of these eleven topics in general, as well as in the context of *The Treasury of Words and Meanings'* corresponding eleven chapters; Part II consists of a translation of the first five chapters from *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* (centering on the primordial nature of the Universe, the early history of its exteriorization into space and time, the origination of alienation, evolution, and a subtle analysis of the energetics of human existence); and Part III provides a very lengthy commentary on those five chapters in the form of running annotations (the bulk of the thesis thus occurs in Part III). In Part III, the above texts are systematically analyzed in relation to Longchenpa's discussions of a given issue, and many

lengthy passages extracted from them are translated therein, along with extensive interpretative comments.

Although some scholars have attempted to marginalize the tradition in relation to Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, in fact the Great Perfection can be understood as its culmination, since in its seamless blend of the exoteric and esoteric it overcomes many of the limitations inherent in the "normative" traditions' sterile division between "philosophy" and the esoteric practices/theory of Tantra. This dissertation clarifies the essential structure, orientation, and content of the tradition, as well as providing a very detailed explication of the first five of the eleven topics encapsulating its overall range. The larger work from which it is drawn contains a systematic treatment of all eleven topics, along with a comprehensive translation (and independent commentary on) *The Treasury of Words and Meanings*.



**DEDICATION**

*May "Vast Space" Longchenpa, the savior-master of phenomenon's primeval exhaustion  
And the great vehicle conveying the sevenfold vast treasury,  
The quintessential nucleus of the precious ultra-profound's key points,  
Be victorious with his thousands of "stainless light rays"!*

Written by Ngakwang Lodro (*Khanpo Jikphun*), the master poet of peerless wisdom, on behalf  
of the American translator *Sherab Gyurme* (David Germano).

ཡང་ཟུང་རིན་ཆེན་གནད་ཀྱི་སྣང་པོའི་བརྒྱན།

མཛོད་ཆེན་རྣམ་བཤུན་འདྲེན་པའི་ཤིང་ཉ་ཆེ།

ཆོས་ཟད་གདོད་མའི་མགོན་པོ་སྣང་ཆེན་པ།

དྲི་མེད་འོད་ཟེར་སྣང་ལྷན་སྐྱེལ་གྱུར་ཅིག།

ཅེས་ཞུ་རིའི་ལོ་ཙཱ་གེས་རབ་འགྱུར་མེད་ཀྱི་ངོ་པ། ངག་དབང་སློབ་གྲོས།

## INTRODUCTION

The current study is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the Great Perfection tradition of Tantric Buddhism in its classical form as systematized by kLong Chen 'Rab 'Byams Pa (hereafter referred to as Longchenpa) in fourteenth century Tibet, along with the beginnings of a systematic interpretation of each individual issue contained therein. Part I provides a very brief overview of the historical and philosophical significance of the Great Perfection, an analysis of Longchenpa's own corpus and related earlier texts which he draws upon, and concludes with an overview of each of the "eleven adamantine topics" which encapsulate the tradition in its entirety. Part II then contains a translation of the first five chapters of Longchenpa's *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* (*Tshig Don mDzod*; hereafter referred to as TDD), while Part II consists of a detailed commentary and analysis of that text in the form of lengthy annotations. The significance of TDD is that in conjunction with its lengthier "commentary", Longchenpa's *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* (*Theg mChog mDzod*; hereafter referred to as TCD), it forms the single most important literary exegesis of the philosophical and contemplative traditions known in Tibet as "the Great Perfection" (*rDzogs Pa Chen Po*). In the appendixes I have provided a type of expanded glossary in the section entitled "Mini-encyclopedia" which contains all the key terms used in this text along with the original Tibetan words which they translate, and for this reason I have chosen to cite Tibetan in the main body of the dissertation only sparingly so as to not interrupt the flow of the text. The title of the thesis sums up what appear to me the main innovative elements of this tradition: its assertion of a philosophical discourse that refuses to be reduced to syllogistic logic and hence has close connections to Heidegger's later self-conscious development of "poetic thought"; its complex evolutionary understanding of the Universe emphasizing its inherent intelligence right from its primordial beginnings (centered on the question of the significance of "self-awareness" (*Rang Rig*)); its reinterpretation of the so-called "Buddha nature" theory (based on the central question of "light") which constitutes

a marked theoretical and contemplative advance in the search into the "mystery of self" that began to reemerge in Buddhism only a few centuries after its founder's resolute assertion of "no self"; and finally its reinterpretation and transformation of Buddhist scholasticism on the basis of Tantra as a serious philosophical innovation or "synthesis", in strict contrast to other scholars' attempts to "rationalize" Tantra via extending traditional scholastic methodologies and logic-based philosophical models as the appropriate hermeneutical techniques for comprehending the often poetic, terse canonical texts that form the core of esoteric Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.

Due to the relative paucity of previous Western academic research into these specific traditions along with the conservative nature of the religious hierarchy with regards to esotericism, in my research I encountered substantial resistance to the very premises of this study (i.e. a systematic and publicly accessible discussion of the Great Perfection), despite the free circulation of such studies in Tibetan language texts. These problems were further aggravated by the contemporary Tibetan neglect of the Great Perfection's textual traditions, as well as the specific neglect of the crucial early writings. Because, however, the crucial texts are currently only partially available, are themselves inherently unclear on many points, and presuppose reliance on an intact oral tradition actively engaged in existential realization of extra-textual dimensions, it is essential to work closely with contemporary Tibetan representatives of these lineages, despite the many difficulties this currently entails. Because of these difficulties (compounded by the current political problems in China which render access to Tibetan areas extremely problematic) and the importance of such "field work", most of my four years of research was spent in culturally Tibetan areas of Asia working on highly specialized textual and contemplative issues in conjunction with Tibetan scholars, such that vital comparative and synthetic work had to be postponed to a later date. Only on such thorough foundations based on the textual and oral traditions can truly significant interpretative and comparative studies gradually take form.

### Chapter One Overview of the Great Perfection

In many ways the Great Perfection is philosophically unique in the entire two thousand and five hundred years of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, and as such constitutes a crucial element in our understanding of Buddhist history overall, especially with regards to the often noted split between logically oriented Indo-Tibetan Buddhists and the more aesthetically oriented developments in East Asia. While the tradition may or may not have initially taken form in Northwest India, other parts of India, Central Asia, a multi-national gathering in Central Tibet, the legendary Zhang-zhung kingdom in what is now considered Western Tibet, or simply Tibet itself following the breakup of the Tibetan kingdom (its brilliant creator(s) will almost certainly remain unknown to us), all of its canonical and exegetical literature currently available to us is exclusively in Tibetan language. Although at least five hundred years (800 AD - 1300 AD) of thought, contemplation and composition in this tradition (which may not have been a clearly self-conscious tradition in the beginning) preceded him such that all the major themes, structures, and terminology were in place prior to his birth (above all in the canonical *Seventeen Tantras of the Great Perfection* (*rGyud bCu bDun*)), it was Longchenpa (1308-1363) who systematically refined the terminology used by the tradition with a series of subtle yet clear distinctions; brilliantly revealed its relationships with mainstream exoteric Buddhist thought; clarified its internal structure; created from it masterpieces of poetic philosophy remarkable for their aesthetic beauty, philosophical rigor, and overall clarity; and overall pinpointed the inner quintessence of the tradition with writings that not only systematized every major topic, but also creatively explained each to render crystal clear the unprecedented revolution in the content, form, and structure of "philosophical" thought in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism that the Great Perfection teachings entail. In the over six hundred years that followed Longchenpa, few really fundamental innovations in the tradition ensued, and in fact many scholars simply rewrote or revised Longchenpa's own seminal writings,

with a concomitant tendency towards simplification of their original richness and diversity. For this reason, to intellectually understand the Great Perfection we must look to Longchenpa's own corpus, along with the texts which he based himself on, i.e. mainly *The Seventeen Tantras*, and the writings attributed to Vajraprahe (more commonly known by the Tibetan translation of his name (*dGa' Rab rDo rJe*), I here simply give his original name as mentioned in *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* (NGB1 34,1) - Reynolds in *Self-Liberation* reverses the two syllables to read it as Prahevajra based on a mantra in a short Guru Yoga text by Dzongsar Khyentse Chokyi Lodro (d. 1959); as far as I know the form "Vajra-prahe" that I have located in NGB is the most ancient occurrence of the Indic original of *dGa' Rab rDo rJe*), Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Śrisiṃha and other semi-legendary Indian Masters as found in *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* (*sNying Thig Ya bZhi*). While these texts are uniformly viewed by the living tradition as forming the heart of the tradition overall, it must be said that overall they are little studied (particularly since the devastating effect of the Chinese takeover of independent "Tibet" and other culturally Tibetan kingdoms this century), and few living Tibetan scholars have any real mastery of their intricate discussions of the Great Perfection in their full range of details. For these reasons, the present work is focused on what is arguably the single most central text of the tradition that comprehensively, clearly, and succinctly discusses every major philosophical and contemplative facet of the Great Perfection (i.e. Longchenpa's TDD), since once this classical text has been translated along with a systematic commentary based on the living oral tradition, the entire body of texts temporally and thematically directly related to it, and our own intellectual-spiritual traditions in the West, it will be possible to relatively easily move both "backwards" to the question of the Great Perfection's origin as well as "forwards" and "sideways" into the question of alternative systematizations and presentations of the tradition in its essentials.

Some Tibetan and Western scholars have raised questions as to whether the Great Perfection tradition can actually be considered part of the Buddhist tantric tradition, or even Buddhism as a whole, and thus it is important to briefly touch upon this issue. While I do believe that the Great Perfection marks an innovative and striking revolution in thought both within the Buddhist and tantric tradition overall (which could lead one to feel it ultimately belonged to neither due to its striking differences from the status quo in both), these "classic" texts culminating in Longchenpa's corpus are inextricably part of tantric thought, as well as Buddhism in general, and there isn't the slightest doubt that *The Seventeen Tantras* themselves originated in a Buddhist milieu. It is true, however, that the emphasis on spontaneous non-visualized vision (see my account of eighth adamantine topic below), a hierarchically organized evolutionary perspective, the primordial indwelling non-transformative nature of enlightenment, and the Universe's thorough intelligence, do distinguish these texts markedly from the normative Buddhist tantric tradition, and as such, suggest according them a different classification, just as Tantra itself evolved out of exoteric Buddhist traditions, yet can clearly not be reduced to them either intellectually or contemplatively (despite its presupposition of them for much of its symbolic resonances). Along these lines, one can profitably interpret the overall system of thought as a very innovative reinterpretation of the mainstream exoteric Indian Buddhist schools of "the Middle Way" (*Mādhyamika*) and "Mind Only" (*Cittamātra*) that not only revives the themes of the so-called "Buddha-nature" or "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" (*Tathāgagarbha*) literature in a much more sophisticated form, but also takes the tantric discourse and transforms it into a model for a new understanding of philosophical thought and literary expression totally eliminating the boundaries between exoteric philosophy (emphasizing analytical logic) and esoteric tantras (emphasizing contemplation and "aesthetic" issues). This treatment of tantra as a serious philosophical enterprise going beyond exoteric Buddhism in terms of both content and methodology entails not only that

sylogistic logic is displaced to the role of a minor "player", but also a "turning" from individual epistemological concerns to an evolutionarily directed poetic contemplation on the Universe's (or "Being's") own dynamics, which as such is closely linked to Heidegger's later work on "poetic thought" and Being, as well as to the evolving body of literature referring to itself as "transpersonal psychology" or "transpersonal theory" (which, despite an initial tendency towards simplistic overly generalized hermeneutics, is quite admirable for its overall clarity of structure and broad-based inclusivity - see Wilber's *Up from Eden* and Washburn's *Ego and the Dynamic Ground*) and recent "scientific" literature like Jantsch's *The Self-Organizing Universe* (which Guenther in particular has extensively drawn upon in his interpretations of Longchenpa - see his *Matrix of Mystery* and *From Reductionism to Creativity*). At the same time, it must be pointed out that the above mentioned texts attributed to Vajraprahe, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and so on (all non-Tibetan figures dating to the period of "royal" Tibet in the 8th-9th century and earlier) can with no certainty be assumed to actually be their compositions, and it is quite problematic as to whether the highly technical systematization of the Great Perfection tradition discussed here actually existed during 8th century Tibet (or anywhere else for that matter). Related to this is the presence of a Great Perfection tradition in so-called "indigenous" Tibetan religion of Bon (which is vital to this day both inside and outside Tibet, though as many have noted, the Bon is actually more a heterodox sect of Buddhism in its current form), which claims its own roots go back to the ancient Zhang-zhung kingdom (located in what is now Western Tibet), and beyond (see Kvaerne's "'The Great Perfection' in the Tradition of the Bonpos" for a brief discussion, as well as Karmay's *The Great Perfection* 201-205 and elsewhere). The nature of the philosophical, mythological, and contemplative sources of this "classical" Great Perfection tradition (by which I mean its systematization as found in the above mentioned texts) is currently extremely unclear, and will only be gradually illuminated by detailed, and quite difficult, historical research which, however, must also base itself on a more acute

philosophical and religious hermeneutical sensibility than has been the case up until now. In addition, a clear understanding of the overall scope and structure of these classical presentations is a necessary prerequisite to trace most probably distinct lines of development of the different topics found therein. However, it can be said with certainty that the classical texts themselves bear all the earmarks of the Buddhist tradition as assimilated to the native genius and temperament of Tibet, and in particular fully exploit the Tibetan language's own unique creative capacities, which are markedly different from those of the Indic languages of early Buddhist traditions (in striking contrast to later Tibetan texts centered around awkward translations of logical and epistemologically oriented Indian Buddhist originals).

Whatever its origins were, ultimately in Tibet itself there was not only a strong Great Perfection tradition in the purportedly non-Buddhist Bon tradition, but in general many great scholar-adepts of all Tibetan Buddhist sects also participated in the scholastic and contemplative tradition of the Great Perfection, and it was generally considered to be the inner spiritual force behind the ecumenical movement (*Ris Med*) in Tibet over the last two centuries. Despite this non-sectarian dimension, above all the Great Perfection has been historically associated with the "Nyingma" (*rNying Ma*) sect of Tibetan Buddhism, which considered it to be the ultimate teaching within their overall systematization of the Buddhist philosophical and contemplative teachings into nine spiritual paths. These nine paths consist of a triad classifying non-tantric exoteric Buddhism ("the four truths", "emptiness", "suffering", etc.) a triad classifying "external" lower order tantric systems (emphasizing the performance of externally performed rituals, etc.), and a triad classifying "internal" higher order tantric systems (emphasizing internally performed visualizations, etc.): (i) the vehicles of the Listeners (*Nyan Thos*; *Śrāvakayāna*), Self Awakened Ones (*Rang Sangs rGyas*; *Pratyekabuddha*), and Spiritual Heroes (*Byang Chub Sems dPa'*; *Bodhisattva*); (ii) the Action Tantras (*Bya Ba'i rGyud*; *Kriyā Tantra*), Conduct Tantras (*sPyod Pa'i rGyud*; *Caryā Tantra*), and Yoga Tantras (*rNal 'Byor rGyud*; *Yoga Tantra*); and the Great Yoga Tantras



(*rNal 'Byor Chen Po rGyud; Mahāyoga*), Subsequent Yoga Tantras (*rJes Su rNal 'Byor rGyud; Anuyoga Tantra*), and Transcendent Yoga Tantras (*Shin Tu rNal 'Byor rGyud; Atiyoga Tantra*). These nine paths have been discussed in detail by Tulku Thondup Rinpoche in *Buddha Mind* (pp. 3-88), Reynolds in *Self-Liberation*, Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (pp. 153-372), and Guenther's *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice*; Longchenpa also discusses this nine path structure extensively, such as in GTD 212,2ff. It is the three inner tantras in particular that are on the whole unique to the Nyingma tradition (and which at times were attacked as inauthentic (i.e. no Indian original) by more recent Tibetan sects), while the ninth classification, i.e. "Transcendent Yoga Tantras" can also be referred to as the Great Perfection (GTD 345,6; 350,6). This spiritual vehicle itself has a number of internal divisions (of which the philosophical, textual, and contemplative references are far from clear - see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* 319-345), which are based on the following triad (GTD 352ff): the Mind Series (*Sems sDe*), the Space Series (*kLong sDe*), and the Esoteric Precepts Series (*Man Ngag sDe*). Each one of these series is then further subdivided, with the Esoteric Precepts Series being characterized by the following triad: the Scattered (*Kha Thor*), the Oral Tradition (*Kha gTam*), and the Esoteric Precepts Taught in its own Tantric Scriptures (*rGyud Rang gZung Du gSungs Pa'i Man Ngag*). The third group again itself has four subdivisions (GTD 364,5), of which the fourth subdivision has three internal divisions (GTD 367,1), of which the third division is itself divided into these two: the Oral Transmission (*sNyan brGyud*), and the Exegetical Lineage (*bShad rGyud*). The Exegetical Lineage then has four divisions: the External Cycle (*Phyi sKor*), Internal Cycle (*Nang sKor*), Secret Cycle (*gSang sKor*), and Unsurpassedly Secret Cycle (*gSang Ba bLa Na Med Pa'i sKor*). It is this final classification which is the focus of Longchenpa's TDD, TCD and his Great Perfection writings in general, though he does at times refer to the "Secret Cycle" as well. While in general this bewildering mass of classifications requires a full length interpretative study to

even begin to make sense of it, for our present purposes it should simply be kept in mind that the "classical" Great Perfection tradition I am here concerned with, and which has been by far the most intellectually and contemplatively popular aspect of the "Transcendent Yoga" vehicle (despite the separate scriptures, contemplative techniques, and outlooks of the Mental and Space Series), is within the Esoteric Precepts Series. It is this portion of the ninth vehicle that is considered the inner quintessence of all the other spiritual vehicles, and all references to the "Great Perfection" within the current text should be understood as referring to it in particular, which Longchenpa sums up in "eleven adamantine topics" (see below). Despite Longchenpa's complex analysis in GTD of the Transcendent Yoga's internal divisions, in CBD (350,4ff) he gives a much more simple presentation dividing it into the Mind, Space and Esoteric Precepts Series, with the Esoteric Precepts Series then simply classified into the External, Internal, Secret, and Unsurpassedly Secret Cycles. He then says that while the tantras in this Series are numerically beyond the scope of our imagination, in essence their significance can be encapsulated into *The Seventeen Tantras*. An additional important text is the fundamental tantra of the Mind Series entitled *The All-Creating King* (*Kun Byed rGyal Po*), which Longchenpa often quotes in his Great Perfection writings, and even composed a short commentary on (see Lipman's translation in *You are the Eyes of the World*; also see Neumaier-Dargyay's recent translation of this tantra in *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind - the Motherly Buddha*).

## Chapter Two *The Corpus of Longchenpa*

Biographies of Longchenpa as well as catalogues of his writings (his own and that of his chief biographer) indicate that not only did he study the standard Buddhist tantras common to all Tibetan sects, but also wrote extensively on them, though it appears most of those texts were among the large portion of his collected works which were lost over time. Fortunately, his corpus of writings on the Great Perfection has been much more faithfully preserved, and as we now possess them are principally those texts forming the following five collections (see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* 575-596 and Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 145-188 for biographies of Longchenpa; also see Guenther's survey of Longchenpa's corpus in KBE1 xiii-xxv): (1) *The Trilogy of Dispelling Darkness* (*Mun Sel sKor gSum*), (2) *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* (*Ngal gSo sKor gSum*), (3) *The Trilogy of Natural Freedom* (*Rang Grol sKor gSum*), and (4) *The Seven Treasuries* (*mDzod bDun*), (5) *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* (*sNying Thig Ya bZhi*). The first four collections contain texts exclusively authored by Longchenpa's own hand, whereas the fourth collection contains five distinct groups of texts, three by Longchenpa, and two by earlier Great Perfection Masters. The internal dating of Longchenpa's corpus is not clear, since most of his texts fail to refer to the date of their composition within their colophons. Of special note throughout his corpus is the manner in which he fluidly moves back and forth between the "lower" Buddhist traditions, exoteric Buddhist tantra, and the Great Perfection itself in a quite seamless natural fashion, unlike many earlier figures whose traditional Buddhist scholastic learning was often quite suspect (it would be impossible to imagine Longchenpa's texts outside of a Buddhist context, which is not necessarily true for some earlier texts), and later figures in the Nyingma sect who very self-consciously and somewhat artificially attempted to explain "lower" Buddhist classics in terms of the Great Perfection. Longchenpa's corpus can thus be understood not only as the definitive classical

systematization of the Great Perfection balanced between its creative origins and its present state, but also as the most consistently brilliant, profound, and wide ranging philosophical series of texts that we now possess within this tradition.

(1) *The Trilogy of Dispelling Darkness* consists of three texts interpreting the main tantra of the "Great Yoga" vehicle, *The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra* (*gSang Ba'i sNying Po*), which is perhaps the key Tantra in the Nyingma sect outside of specifically Great Perfection Tantras. The main text in this trilogy (*Dispelling all Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions*) has been translated in its entirety by Gyurme Dorje (GDD), and along with the Tantra itself is the object of a difficult, yet at times brilliant, study by Herbert Guenther (see his *The Matrix of Mystery*). Although Longchenpa interprets this Tantra from the hermeneutical standpoint of the Great Perfection, and as such touches upon various points of the Great Perfection in this trilogy, in the main I have found it of limited usefulness for understanding the highly technical passages of his main Great Perfection works. However, these texts do deal with "the mandala of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities" in extensive detail, and since this mandala's visionary presence constitutes the third of the four Direct Transcendence visions in Great Perfection contemplation, those passages are quite helpful in understanding the cursory mentions to these mandalas within his Great Perfection writings proper. As Gyurme Dorji points out in GDD (p. 1460), the colophon to *Dispelling All Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions* dates this text to either 1340 (in his early 30s) or 1352 (in his mid 40s), of which Dorji believes the latter date to be more likely. If we were to accept this later date, it may be that Longchenpa turned his intellectual attention to *The Nucleus Of Mystery Tantra* for the sake of his disciples at that time who were interested in the existential, intellectual, and contemplative issues involved therein, as well as his desire to bring out the latent resonances connected to the Great Perfection that he perceived in this fundamental Mahāyoga Tantra (which probably had wider circulation than the Great Perfection Tantras themselves, just as in contemporary Tibetan circles), and which had been

poorly understood by earlier authors. Thus after consolidating his own understanding of the Great Perfection tradition with a series of brilliant scholastic works (KGYT, LYT, etc.), he was able to reinterpret "earlier" or "lower order" works with his new found perspective, which along with the needs of the disciples gathered around him at any given point, probably accounts for the miscellaneous works he continued to author, such as his commentary on *The All-Creating King Tantra* translated by Lipman in *You are the Eyes of the World*.

(2) *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* is an interlocking set of texts based on the following beautiful trilogy of versified root texts: *The Resting-at-Ease of Mind as Such*, *The Resting-at-Ease of Contemplation*, and *The Resting-at-Ease of Magical Illusion*. For each one of these root texts, Longchenpa also wrote an extensive prose commentary, a structural summary, and a contemplative guide to the verse's inner meditative significance (See Guenther's KBE1 xix for details). Guenther has translated all three versified root texts along with his own commentary in *Kindly Bent To Ease Us* (in three parts), while Tulku Thondup has translated selected portions of the commentaries in his *Buddha Mind*. While the trilogy's various texts all refer to the "Great Perfection" in their full titles, are written from the ultimate perspective of the Great Perfection, and in numerous passages deal with particular points of the Great Perfection tradition, overall the texts' focus remains on exoteric teachings common to other sects of Tibetan Buddhism. As such, discussions of issues unique to the Great Perfection tend to be rather general, and in fact often emphasize exoteric approaches in stark contrast to related treatments in TDD and TCD (which are exclusively concerned with the Great Perfection tradition's own viewpoint). These texts can be classified as part of the "Stages of the Path" (*Lam Rim*) genre of literature that became popular in Tibet, and include the standard range of exoteric topics common to those texts, though they also reflect the seamless synthesis of exoteric and esoteric (i.e. Tantric) discourses that is so characteristic of Longchenpa's corpus, unlike the standard primarily exoteric and "schizophrenic" Stages of the Path works such as Gampopa's *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (*Thar rGyan* - see

Guenther's translation) and Tsongkhapa's *The Great Stages of the Path (Lam Rim Chen Mo)*. While definitive dating is impossible at this point, it seems to me very probable that these texts were authored relatively earlier in his career (and as such before *The Seven Treasuries*), perhaps while in his thirties or earlier (Higgins agrees with this assessment in *The Tibetan Lam-Rim Genre* 31-33). Dr. Guenther suggested to me that these works were written while Longchenpa was still at bSam Yas monastery dealing with poetics, and felt that the colophon to Longchenpa's *The Story of Wildwood Delights* (see Guenther's *A Visionary Journey*) almost certainly refers to these texts by name as having just been completed. The colophons to these texts themselves give Longchenpa's name as "Dri Med 'Od Zer" and specify his retreat cave at Gangs Ri Thod dKar, which would place their composition at the earliest in his early 30s, since this name was given to him by Padmasambhava in a vision during his early 30s while staying at bSam Yas mChims Phu (though it must be noted that colophons are not always reliable, since they could be the product of a later final edition or compilation of a text composed (in part or whole) considerably earlier). Certainly it would be highly unlikely that he was engaged in serious writing during the three years he spent with Kumārādza in his late twenties and early thirties, since in that period he was engaged in constant travel under difficult material conditions, as well as having to cope with the considerable existential demands of intellectually, ritually, and contemplatively appropriating the new Great Perfection teachings Kumārādza was transmitting to him.

It seems to me highly unlikely that following his mature works on the Great Perfection that Longchenpa would return to an exoteric approach on these issues, particularly in texts that tend towards interpretative patterns he had already firmly rejected (especially in TDD and TCD). A particular point in regard to this is the question of the "universal ground" (*Kun gZhi*), which in TDD and TCD Longchenpa is very concerned to describe it as exclusively impure in contrast to the "Reality Body" (*Chos sKu*), while in his commentary to *The Resting-at-Ease of Mind-as-such* (as in YZD) he partly blurs the distinction between these

two terms. By positing TDD and TCD as subsequent works, we can understand this (and other related differences) as a natural evolution of his thought increasingly oriented towards the Great Perfection, which entailed drawing a precise demarcation between the primordial source of psychic activity ("primordial gnosis") and its current distorted modality (the "mind"); if TDD and TCD were previous works (which seems to me very improbable), this subsequent blurring of distinctions and fundamental shift in orientation is very difficult to understand, especially given systematic and precise nature of Longchenpa's writings, as well as the continuance of these Great Perfection-inspired viewpoints in his decidedly later works (ZMYT, CBD, NLD). Pinpointing the source of his virulent anti-idealism (i.e. to whom he was reacting) also may help us to a degree in understanding the progression of his thought. If we trust the colophonic information and date these works to his early thirties, perhaps their composition served to "clear his mind" in a type of literary/intellectual preparation prior to his whole hearted absorption into the difficult attempt of scholastically synthesizing and interpreting the profundities of the Great Perfection tradition itself, as a well as a provisional "farewell" to his earlier preoccupation with poetry, which would be largely submerged until its subsequent transformation in the poetic masterpieces of CBD and NLD (the poetry and exoteric slant of YZD clearly suggest a common period of composition with this trilogy). While *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease's* beauty and power is undeniable, and it does form a very valuable complement to Longchenpa's exclusively Great Perfection oriented texts, characterizing it as the final summation of Longchenpa's thought into a kind of comprehensive "Stages of the Path" for the Great Perfection is severely mistaken (though characterizing it as a preliminary "Stages of the Path" cycle oriented in general *towards* the Great Perfection would be a fair assessment). Finally, according to Matthew Kapstein (verbally conveyed to me), *The Resting-at-Ease of Magical Illusion* draws heavily upon Shangs Pa bKa' brGyud materials, which he speculates Longchenpa may have been familiar with through his root Master Kumārādza.

(3) *The Trilogy of Natural Freedom*: structurally, this group of texts is similar to *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease*, with three versified root texts around which a number of prose texts are then based upon (many of these commentarial texts appear to now be lost): *The Natural Freedom of Mind-as-such*, *The Natural Freedom of Reality*, and *The Natural Freedom of Sameness*. While I have studied these texts relatively slightly, it appears on the whole they are more contemplative in nature, and thus helpful in understanding TDD mainly in terms of its eighth chapter on contemplation (in particular on the lengthy section on Breakthrough meditation and the nature of freedom therein). This cycle of texts are closely linked to *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease*, suggesting that both stem from a common period (along with YZD). *The Natural Freedom of Mind-as-such* has been translated by Tulku Thondup in *Buddha Mind* (pp. 316-354), along with its auto-commentary (pp. 355-374); the former has also been translated by Guenther as *The Natural Freedom of Mind* (see bibliography). In Longchenpa's own catalogue to his corpus (see below), he classifies *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* as a text which generally teaches esoteric topics, while *The Trilogy of Natural Freedom* falls under the same overall category, but is additionally said to explain the general meaning of the "Mental Class" section of the Great Perfection teachings (Tulku Thondup this classifies this trilogy as a commentary on the "Mind Series" of Transcendent Yoga teachings in *The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa* 73).

(4) *The Seven Treasuries* are justly Longchenpa's most famous works, and are considered by many scholars (present included) to represent the culmination of the over two thousand year history of Buddhist thought. These seven texts are as follows: *The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (*Yid bZhin mDzod*), *The Treasury of Esoteric Precepts* (*Man Ngag mDzod*), *The Treasury of Spiritual Systems* (*Grub mTha' mDzod*), *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* (*Theg mChog mDzod*), *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* (*Tshig Don mDzod*), *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* (*Chos dByings mDzod*), and *The Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality* (*gNas Lugs mDzod*). It seems almost certain that the final four Treasures (if



not all seven) temporally followed Longchenpa's LYT and KGYT (see *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts*) as on the whole they represent a more sophisticated approach to the Great Perfection tradition, although the status of ZMYT is debatable. In details, they agree with VNT/LYT rather than KGYT/KGNT.

(i) *The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (hereafter cited as YZD) is a wide ranging, lengthy work that definitely shares the exoteric orientation of *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease*, and can also be classified as part of the "Stages of the Path" genre, though it begins with an extensive treatment of cosmological questions usually not found in that genre (see Higgins' *The Tibetan Lam-Rim Genre* for a discussion of this issue). It barely touches upon the main issues of Great Perfection, and where it does is markedly different than Longchenpa's principal works in that tradition. It is primarily a scholastic work dealing at length with the entire range of exoteric and esoteric Indian Buddhist thought common to all Tibetan Buddhist sects, and as such is perhaps the only work of Longchenpa's to actually enjoy sustained popularity as part of standard monastic curriculums in Tibet.

(ii) *The Treasury of Esoteric Precepts* (hereafter cited as MND) is a short, quite interesting work arranged throughout in sets of six topics, which ranges over a wide variety of areas and is cast in the form of direct advice for someone engaged in meditative contemplation. As such, this short text only deals in passing with a limited number of themes belonging to the classical systematization of the Great Perfection, mainly in relation to contemplation and the ultimate "fruit" of enlightenment (I have translated this text in its entirety, and plan to eventually publish it conjunction with Matieu Ricard, including an oral commentary by the late Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche). In his own catalogue to his corpus (see below), Longchenpa characterizes MND as a text clarifying the "stages of the path" along with the fruit of enlightenment (*Lam Rim 'Bras Bu Dang bCas Pa*) in exoteric manner, since all the different vehicles should be comprehended as a type of "preliminary" or "efficacious means" to entering the path of the Great Perfection.

(iii) *The Treasury of Spiritual Systems* (hereafter cited as GTD) is part of the "tenet system" genre of Buddhist literature which give systematic accounts of the various Buddhist philosophic-religious systems, including non-Buddhist Indian systems (see Guenther's *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice* and Geshe Sopa's *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* for English translations of two such texts). As usual, Longchenpa transcends the limitations of this genre with a powerful work that includes a detailed account of the entire nine path structure (see above), thus providing an analysis of the entire range of Tantras unique to the Nyingma tradition (culminating in the "Transcendent Yoga", i.e. the Great Perfection). While this text fails to give any comprehensive treatment of the Great Perfection in any sense, there are a number of interesting details in its final section, especially as to the supposed commentarial literature for *The Seventeen Tantras* (see below) and the notion of "luminous channels". The first half of Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume One* 43-379) is obviously based on this work, and in fact entire sections are often extracted directly from GTD with only the slightest of alterations.

(iv-v) *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* (hereafter referred to as TDD) and *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* (hereafter referred to as TCD1-2) together are Longchenpa's main scholastic work on the Great Perfection tradition, and can be understood as a "commentary" on *The Seventeen Tantras* which attempts to provide a tightly ordered comprehensive account of the entire range of philosophical and contemplative issues found in the classical Great Perfection tradition (understood in the above mentioned sense of the most profound internal division of the "Transcendent Yoga" (*Atiyoga*) teachings in the ninth spiritual vehicle). It should also be noted that both works are among Longchenpa's most difficult, especially in terms of their often lengthy citations of obscure versified texts. As such, these are prose texts that lack the intense beauty of some of Longchenpa's other poetic works (see vi-vii in particular), yet compensate for it in their structural precision, wide-ranging span, and dramatic force as they journey through the entire history of the Universe,

from the pre-origination primordial state of the Universe or Being in itself, through involution, evolution, and the spiritual path, on up to the final culmination of the Universe's self-exploration. The range of texts is nothing short of stunning, and constitute a radical revolution in the history of Buddhist thought that assumes everything that preceded it as a basis, and yet is primarily concerned to go beyond such lower order systems in its exploration of the final nature of the Universe itself, and how that nature bears upon our present state of existential despair, the possibility of spiritual liberation, and the nature of the Awakened One (i.e. a "Buddha"). One can consider these texts to represent the flowering of taking Buddhist Tantra seriously as a vehicle of rigorous philosophical thought, and in this sense can be clearly viewed as a highly sophisticated reinterpretation of mainstream exoteric schools of Buddhist thought. The relationship between these two texts is that TDD deals purely with the essentials of the Great Perfection tradition in a very tightly ordered sequence of "eleven adamantine topics" (see below) corresponding to its eleven chapters, such that its internal structure (beginning with the "Ground", i.e. the Universe before anything existed as such, and culminating in the enlightenment experience of a Buddha as the Universe comes to full self-consciousness of itself) is crystal clear without any intervening digressions on the complex series of internal divisions of the "Transcendent Yoga" vehicle, "allegories" of the Great Perfection tradition, and so on. Divested of all such "superfluous" topics, in TDD Longchenpa gives a very detailed account of every essential topic pertaining to Great Perfection theory and contemplative praxis. TCD then is a much lengthier work dealing with the same range of issues as TDD, but including some peripheral topics omitted by TDD, as well as often going into much more extensive detail than TDD on the main topics. As such, we can understand TDD either as a summary of TCD, or TCD as a loose type of expanded commentary to TDD, since in regard to the main topics their structures are generally very similar, and in fact certain passages are word for word identical. I suspect that the composition of TCD followed TDD temporally due to refinement of many positions taken in

TCD, although we have now way of knowing for sure, and in fact the two may have been composed in conjunction with each other, over a lengthy period in parts, and so on. For these reason, I have utilized TCD's corresponding passages extensively in my annotation-commentary to TDD, and have tried whenever possible to at least provide the page references to the corresponding discussion in TDD. In his own catalogue (see below), Longchenpa characterizes TCD as "a commentary on *The Seventeen Tantras* and *The One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts*", while TDD is specified as being related to "the key points of carrying this into spiritual path" (*Lam Khyer gNad*).

Furthermore, the overall structure of these works (which is most clearly represented by the "eleven adamantine topics") is also found in varying forms in a number of short and lengthy texts composed by Longchenpa in *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* (see LYT, KGYT and ZMYT below), all of which give roughly similar highly technical accounts of the entire range of intellectual and contemplative topics of the Great Perfection tradition. One text in KGYT (KGYT1 461-501) in particular appears to have clearly been a short prototype for TDD, since its title, sequential outline and contents are almost identical (albeit in much abbreviated form): *The Storehouse Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* (*Tshig Don Rin Po Che'i Bang mDzod*). Another "dry run" for TDD appears to be a text entitled *The Eleven Words and Meanings* (*Tshig Don bCu gCig*) found in VNT (VNT3-"Pa" 1-66). For this reason, these texts' importance in understanding TDD and TCD cannot be overestimated, and as such I have also attempted to discuss these texts' treatments of each issues in TDD, as well as provide page references for their various passages corresponding to TDD's internal sections. However, it seems to me clear that TDD and TCD mark the apex of Longchenpa's scholastic attempts to systematically interpret the Great Perfection tradition, with TCD in particular offering extremely subtle interpretative refinements that would appear to criticize many of his own earlier presentations as found in *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts*. These works thus mark the culmination of Longchenpa's scholastic efforts, and most clearly

reveal the nature of his philosophic contribution to the Great Perfection tradition. While the main topics he deals with in these texts were generally articulated prior to Longchenpa's time, in TDD and TCD Longchenpa standardizes the terminology with careful attention to a series of subtle and precise distinctions far from clear in previous literature, clarifies the overall structure and interrelationships of the various areas of Great Perfection thought, reveals connections to mainstream exoteric and esoteric Buddhism, and explains many obscure points with brilliant philosophic acumen with an underlying theme of what we might term "the intelligent Universe". In *Buddha Mind* (156), Tulku Thondup notes that TCD was said to have been written at the time of Kumārādza's death, which would mean that Longchenpa composed it during his mid to late thirties, and thus relatively early in his life. However this conflicts with the story that Longchenpa composed *The Seven Treasuries* in Bhutan, and subsequently rewrote them in Central Tibet after losing them on the road.

Finally, it should be noted that both texts quote from a wide variety of texts, but in the main from *The Seventeen Tantras*, which Longchenpa repeatedly cites in lengthy passages. However, unlike many other dull Tibetan Buddhist texts that simply cite scriptures one after another in deadly tedium, and in marked contrast to many subsequent Nyingma writers whose texts reveal little new about the passages they cite, Longchenpa's citations are seamlessly interwoven with his own text structurally and interpretatively, such that not only are these often quite obscure passages illuminated through examining Longchenpa's prefatory and follow-up comments, but in fact Longchenpa's own text is illuminated by the citations, such that the two exist in perfect symbiosis. Thus in order to understand these two texts, it is necessary to read slowly, and observe the intricate interplay between Longchenpa's own text and the citations, as well as how together they slowly articulate an impressive and essentially dramatic structure (each text has a detailed internal outline that becomes quite complex, and thus this too requires careful attention to be sensitive to the architectonic quality of Longchenpa's discourse). It thus becomes clear that TDD and TCD form an impressive

synthetic commentary on *The Seventeen Tantras* that provides detailed interpretations of obscure lines and passages, and overall penetrates to the very quintessence of this integrated body of texts to reveal their inner structure, motivation, and significance. Given that we no longer (?) possess the commentarial literature that may have once accompanied these terse texts, the only hope for accurate translation of these "transcripts" of celestial dialogues ("Tantras") lies in the tedious, but vital, task of examining Longchenpa and related author's citations one after another with an eye towards prefatory and follow-up comments, as well as the overall context in which each passage is cited. For this reason, I have attempted to begin such a project by noting elsewhere in Longchenpa's corpus that he cites the same passage as TDD cites, and trying in part to provide summaries or translations of the interpretative comments Longchenpa makes therein.

(vi-vii) *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* (hereafter cited as CBD) and *The Treasury of Abiding Reality* (hereafter cited as NLD) both consist of root poem-texts in verse, and a single detailed auto-commentary which unpacks the root verses in a mixture of prose and scriptural citation. The root verse of CBD in particular enjoys a certain amount of popularity as a contemplative text in the sense of being memorized and recited to enhance one's Breakthrough contemplation (not as a manual of techniques or visualizations). Apparently these two works were temporally the final of *The Seven Treasures* (see directly below), and are poetic masterpieces of immense beauty which range freely over the Great Perfection tradition, though making no pretense to a comprehensive treatment in the style of TDD, TCD and the assorted texts in *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* (above all else, these two texts and are more concerned with contemplatively exploring the nature of pure awareness itself as the inherent intelligence of the Universe within and as us, and hence is relatively little concerned with the various technical details of subtle body theory, the minutiae of the Direct Transcendence visions, and so on which preoccupy Longchenpa in his scholastic works). In many ways, these two texts mark the culmination of Longchenpa's creativity and

poetic skills, and may have been a resurgence of his inner "muse" made possible by the completion of his vast, scholastic treatises on the Great Perfection (TDD, TCD, etc.) which despite their brilliance and structural power, are aesthetically speaking somewhat flat on the whole. Thus, following this period of scholastically mastering the bewildering intricacies of this tradition, Longchenpa's poetic inclinations (which evident from an early age) gave birth to these two texts with a perfect blend of poetic intensity and a profound understanding of the Great Perfection such that they have a penetrating clarity. CBD in particular can be understood in a sense as a hymn to the mind of enlightenment (which is synonymous with the Great Perfection), and NLD is in particular structured around unpacking the significance of the "four great commitments of the Great Perfection" (*Dam Tshig Chen Po bZhi*). While it is often said that CBD in particular emphasizes the "Space Series" teaching of the Great Perfection (Longchenpa's own catalogue classifies as "explaining the general meaning of the Space Series"), in fact both texts quote extensively from *The Seventeen Tantras*, and a variety of other scriptural and exegetical writings of the Great Perfection tradition (both texts' overall mixture of citations are very similar, and in particular emphasizes *The All-Creating King of the Mind Series* - see above). As such these are very important resources in understanding Longchenpa's scholastic works on the Great Perfection, particularly in interpreting some of the more obscure quotations from *The Seventeen Tantras*. Given that CBD and NLD are stylistically, structurally, thematically, and in terms of citations very similar, it would seem probable that Longchenpa composed them during the same period. In addition, it would appear that we can be confident as to these two texts being subsequent to the other texts of *The Seven Treasuries* for a number of reasons. First, CBD 234,4 refers to TDD by its alternative name of *The Treasury of Precious Radiant Light* ('*Od gSal Rin Po Che'i mDzod*), while CBD 235,7 refers to TCD by name. In addition, CBD refers to *The Treasury of Spiritual Systems* (GTD; page reference temporarily misplaced). GTD 405,5 in turn mentions LYT by name, suggesting that the collections LYT and KGYT of *The Seminal*

*Heart-Essence in Four Parts* were composed by Longchenpa while in his 30s previous to the composition of *The Seven Treasuries*. Finally, Longchenpa produced a partial catalogue of his own works (the *bsTan bCos Kyi dKar Chag Rin Po Che'i mDzod Khang* included in some editions of his *Miscellaneous Works* (I obtained mine from modern day Derge)) while residing in Bhutan at *Bum Thang Thar Pa gLing*, in which he mentions all of the *Seven Treasuries* by name with the exception of NLD (unless he later changed the title and here refers to it by some unknown name), along with specifying *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease*, *The Trilogy of Natural Freedom*, and the three portions of *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* belonging to him (LYT, ZMYT and KGYT). Apparently this catalogue was composed during Longchenpa's forced exile in Bhutan lasting to the late 1350s, and as Dr. Guenther pointed out to me in conversation, this accounts nicely for what appears to be the "legal" imagery pervading NLD ("chaining", "binding", "indicting") which may very well stem from the traumatic effect this incident had on Longchenpa (who was unjustly accused and banished from Central Tibet by the powerful Tibetan leader Tā'i Byang-Chub rGyal-mTshan). Related to this, there is an oral tradition that all *Seven Treasuries* were written by Longchenpa in Bhutan (related to me by Urgyen Tulku), but then were subsequently lost in a river while loaded on a yak on the way back to Tibet, such that he had to rewrite them all at his famous retreat Gangs Ri Thod dKar in Central Tibet (there is also evidently an account that the so-called "Protector" spirits retrieved these teachings for him, which is related to the oft-told tale of how these spirits actually made the paper and ink at Longchenpa's bidding while he wrote down *The Seven Treasuries* at Gangs Ri Thod dKar). This story casts doubt on any colophonic information as well as internal references in the texts themselves, since these could have been easily inserted during their supposed rewriting. It appears he spent a large part of his forties in Southern Tibet/Bhutan (we can be sure that he was in Bhutan in 1355 - Guenther's KBE1 xv), and evidently died only a few years after his eventual return to



Central Tibet following reconciliation with Tā'i Situ Byang Chub rGyal mTshan, the ruler of Tibet at that time (see Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 161 and Karmay *The Great Perfection* 213).

According to Khanpo Jikphun (the only living Tibetan Master I know of who openly and frequently teaches Longchenpa's entire range of Great Perfection writings to a monastic congregation in general), the natural teaching order of *The Seven Treasuries* is to begin with YZD, which extensively teaches the lower Buddhist and non-Buddhist tenet systems in classical India as well as the exoteric cosmological background; second is GTD, which deals with a similar range of teachings, as well as including a brief treatment of the higher ends of the spiritual path (i.e. the Great Perfection); third is MND, which teaches the exoteric mental training (*bLo sByong*) along with some aspects of the Great Perfection; fourth and fifth are CBD and NLD, whose teachings focus on Breakthrough contemplation, the former on its view, and the latter on its commitments; sixth is TDD which teaches the Great Perfection's own spiritual tent system including the practice of Direct Transcendence, and limits itself to the essentials of this most profound of teachings; and seventh is TCD, which rounds out TDD's treatment to provide a more exhaustive analysis including related peripheral topics.

Finally, it must be noted that despite our inability to clearly date Longchenpa's various texts, it is clear his own understanding of the Great Perfection system was in continual flux as he underwent a process of change, and one finds a constant criticism and reformulation of his own earlier positions throughout the corpus (which may not always be so clear when talking with Tibetan scholars, who often have a predetermined ideological predisposition towards enforced unity and homogeneity). A minor example can be found in TDD's Chapter One, where Longchenpa identifies the "originally pure Ground" as the single valid position from among the "seven views of the Ground", whereas in TCD he treats all seven views as fallacious, and instead identifies "the Ground of indivisible original purity and spontaneous presence" as the valid position. While this is a relatively minor difference, there are many other points where TCD and TDD make extremely subtle distinctions which criticize overly

vague styles of presentation that, nevertheless, can be found in abundance within Longchenpa's own writings in LYT and KGYT (TCD in particular consistently provides extremely refined interpretations not found anywhere else in his corpus). At the same time, such indications of a natural evolution in his thought should not be confused with the inherent multi-valent hermeneutic operative in these texts, which enables Longchenpa to interpret topics, or even the same lines, in a variety of ways without contradiction. This multi-dimensional interpretative strategy includes the creative etymologizing that is so pervasive in Longchenpa's corpus (which takes full advantage of the syllable-based meaning units characteristic of Tibetan language), and which can result in a single term being etymologized in ten or more ways in different contexts; the standard hierarchically arranged levels of interpretation that are successively more refined or profound as they move "inwards" towards the most difficult to understand and increasingly profound dimensions of a given issue ("external", "internal", "esoteric", "quintessential" and so on levels of interpretation); and simply in general a tendency towards proliferation of various interpretative perspectives designed to illuminate different facets of the issue. At any rate, rather than describe TDD and TCD as earlier scholastic works written by Longchenpa when he was still struggling to come to terms with these materials and had yet to find himself, it may be more accurate to suggest that it is within these two texts that Longchenpa's "scholastic/contemplative" struggle with the Great Perfection tradition may have come to its climax (and thereby surpassing in precision his earlier accounts in LYT and KGYT), thus freeing him to create the poetic masterpieces of CBD and NLD. It is here that uncontroversial dating of these principal texts could help us tremendously in understanding the evolution of Longchenpa's thought, and thereby gain a better understanding of Longchenpa the visionary, charismatic teacher, scholar, poet, and contemplative adept. If Tulku Thondup's dating of TCD's composition is correct (during his mid to late 30s), it would

be extremely interesting to determine what type of texts he composed during the last twenty years of his life following this scholastic masterpiece.

(5) *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* (*sNying Thig Ya bZhi*) consists of five collections of texts ("four parts" refers to the first four, while the fifth is Longchenpa's concluding summary of them): *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Vimalamitra* (*Bi Ma sNying Thig*) by Vimalamitra and other early Great Perfection Masters (hereafter referred to as VNT); *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Spiritual Master* (*bLa Ma Yang Tig*) by Longchenpa (hereafter referred to as LYT); *The Seminal Heart-Essence of the Sky Dancer* (*mKha' 'Gro sNying Thig*) attributed to Padmasambhava in conjunction with Ye Shes mTsho rGyal (hereafter referred to as KGNT); *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Sky Dancer* (*mKha' 'Gro Yang Tig*) by Longchenpa (hereafter referred to as KGYT); and *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Profound* (*Zab Mo Yang Tig*) by Longchenpa (hereafter referred to as ZMYT). Overall, these collections of texts are quite unlike the works discussed above since they represent comprehensive Great Perfection systems containing initiation rituals, liturgy, detailed meditations, historical accounts of their transmission with biographies of principal figures, and so on (unlike TDD and TCD which as scholastic treatises lack any associated initiatory rituals and so on). In general, the term "Seminal Heart-Quintessence" (*sNying Thig*) is understood as a synonym for the "Great Perfection" (*rDzogs Chen*), and generally refers to a closely interrelated cycle of texts that present a comprehensive system of meditation and theory in the "Esoteric Precepts Series" of the "Transcendent Yoga" (*Atiyoga*) vehicle, including detailed initiation rites, associated visualization practices, rituals, histories of transmission and so on. Although Longchenpa himself focused on two "Seminal Heart-Essence" systems above all (i.e. those stemming from Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava respectively), other such systems were evidently already in place at that time, and in fact have continued to be created anew right up to the twentieth century. Usually these "Seminal Heart-Essence" systems are rooted in visionary experiences closely bound up with these key

figures involved in the transmission of Buddhism to Tibet in the 8th century (Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and so on), and while a number of these systems have emerged in the six centuries following Longchenpa's death, it is rare that they even begin to approach the philosophic depth, complexity, and brilliance of Longchenpa's own writings. For further details on the notion of "treasure texts" which are revealed in visionary transmissions (both psychically and materially), and then disseminated in a contemporary setting (with the understanding that these texts stem from dynastic Tibet or earlier, but were "concealed" in the external environment or internal psychic depths such that they were unknown in the human realm up till the moment of their revelation by their appointed "treasure finder"), see Tulku Thondup's *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*. Longchenpa's apparent disinterest in some other well-known "treasure finders" in the Nyingma school who preceded him forms an interesting area for further research, and may be due to geographical and institutional reasons, though I have as yet done little research into doctrinal relationships between those figures and the traditions which Longchenpa brought to a culmination.

Each of the five collections forming *The Seminal Heart-Essence* contains lengthy systematic accounts of Great Perfection philosophy and contemplative praxis that are structurally very similar to that of TDD and TCD, and as such constitute the main source (apart from TDD and TCD) for our understanding of the classical presentation of Great Perfection in Longchenpa's corpus (I have used these texts extensively in my commentary on TDD). These texts all base themselves in general on *The Seventeen Tantras*, though a number of other Great Perfection Tantras as well are cited. These five can be grouped into two "Seminal Heart-Essence" (*sNying Thig*) collections attributed to legendary non-Tibetan authors, and three "Seminal Heart-Quintessence" (*Yang Tig*) collections authored by Longchenpa himself (*Yang* literally means "further" or "ultra", and thus indicates these are the "ultra Seminal Heart-Essence" teachings where Longchenpa provides a "further" commentary on these basic textual collections that extracts their "quintessence"). The two

Seminal Heart-Essence collections (VNT and KGNT) are thus generally described as the two distinct Great Perfection traditions which Longchenpa inherited (stemming from the great "Indian" (in the very broad sense of the word) Masters Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra respectively), and which he ultimately unified in his own corpus and teaching. Longchenpa wrote a set of commentaries on each of these two systems which he applied the name "Seminal Heart Quintessence" to (LYT is based on VNT, and KGYT on KGNT), and in addition to which he composed a third "Seminal Heart Quintessence" system (ZMYT) commonly understood as Longchenpa's own subsequent integration of these two distinct traditions (KGNT/KGYT and VNT/LYT). One should also note the presently quite popular *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Longchenpa (kLong Chen sNying Thig)*, which was revealed to 'Jigs Med kLing Pa (1730-1798) during a series of visions of Longchenpa. Since this was understood as a visionary transmission from Longchenpa, he is the "author" in that sense, and in fact this system quickly became much more popular than any of the three Great Perfection cycles authored by the historical Longchenpa (LYT, KGYT, and ZMYT). See Goodman's *The kLong Chen sNying Thig* and Tulku Thondup's *The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa* for discussions of the historical background of the transmissions in *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Longchenpa's* teachings.

(i-ii) *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Spiritual Master* (LYT) by Longchenpa is his interpretation of *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Vimalamitra* (VNT) by Vimalamitra and other early Great Perfection Masters, which he evidently first studied in detail with his root Master Kumārādza (1266-1343) during his late 20s. VNT is a very difficult series of texts, while Longchenpa's LYT is a far clearer distillation and organization of its sprawling three volumes. Longchenpa's own catalogue specifies LYT as having fifty four sections, while GTD 405,5 refers to only fifty one sections. The name of VNT derives from the fact that a substantial number of these texts were authored by Vimalamitra, and the remaining are said to have been transmitted by Vimalamitra under conditions of secrecy to a limited number of

Tibetan disciples towards the end of the 8th century. On LYT1 26,4, Longchenpa says that Vimalamitra transmitted these Great Perfection teachings to five Tibetans during the great heyday of the Tibetan Kingdom when Buddhism first flourished in Tibet: the King Khri Song lDe bTsan, the Prince Mu Ne bTsad/bTsan Po, Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po, sKa Ba dPal brTsegs, and lCog Ro kLu'i rGyal mTshan, and criticizes others' statements that only the King and Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po received these transmissions (he repeats these statements on GTD 403 - surprisingly, Dudjom Rinpoche (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume One* 555 apparently agrees with the notion that only the King and Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po received these transmissions from Vimalamitra). GTD 403,4 apparently indicates that Vimalamitra compiled the "four volumes" (*Po Ti bZhi* - see below) which forms a major part of VNT into a single collection, and then concealed them as "treasure" at Brag dMar dGe Gong in bSam Yas mChims Phu in Central Tibet, without transmitting them at all even to his select Tibetan disciples. Longchenpa goes on to specify that Vimalamitra transmitted the "other" Tantras and esoteric precepts to the five Tibetan disciples mentioned above, who then translated them, and were later concealed as treasure by Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po in the Zhwa temple in Central Tibet (LYT1 27,1 terms these "the oral transmission" (*sNyan brGyud*)). It should be noted that Dudjom Rinpoche in his *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume One* 555-556 fails to make this distinction despite mentioning that both Vimalamitra and Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po individually conceal texts; Tulku Thondup in *The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa* 32 says that Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po concealed the texts of VNT, though on 58-59 he mentions that Vimalamitra as well concealed Great Perfection texts (without specifying any particulars). There was evidently also a partial oral tradition said to continue uninterrupted through Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po and onwards (see Tulku Thondup's *The Tantric Tradition* 59), while the actual texts of VNT were gradually "rediscovered" from their places of concealment a hundred years or so subsequent to their initial translation into Tibetan.

LYT1 27,3 specifies "one hundred years" passed after Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po "went into the sky in a mass of light" (i.e. departed from our human realms), whereupon the "elder" lDang Ma Lhun Gyi rGyal mTshan took out the texts concealed at Zhwa temple, who subsequently transmitted them in particular to lCe bTsun Seng Ge dBang Phyug. lCe bTsun later reconcealed these texts, then had visions of Vimalamitra which directed him to the Great Perfection texts concealed at bSam Yas mChims Phu, where he then proceeded to extract from their place of concealment. He in turn eventually transmitted these teachings to Zhang sTon bKra Shis rDo rJe (1097-1167), who had also withdrawn texts concealed by Vimalamitra at bSam Yas mChims Phu (Tulku Thondup's *The Tantric Tradition* 62; Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume One* 561). There is certainly a question as to whether lCe bTsun and Zhang sTon's lifetimes actually even coincided (see Prats' "Tse dBang Nor Bu's Chronological Notes..." 206), and although it is certain that lDang Ma and lCe bTsun were historical figures, it is only with later figure Zhang sTon that we can be fairly sure of the dates involved. These texts were thus sequentially transmitted through a series of Tibetan masters until finally Longchenpa himself received them, along with the appropriate empowerments, oral commentaries, and contemplation instructions, from his own root master Kumārādza (see Tulku Thondup's *The Tantric Tradition* 59-67 and Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume One* 555-574 for brief accounts of these early Masters of the Great Perfection tradition. The important thing to keep in mind from my brief summary is that the texts of VNT are considered to be a compilation by Vimalamitra of the principal writings on the Great Perfection by himself and his own Masters in India (where they were restricted to a very select esoteric circle), were only partially disseminated in Tibet to his five principle disciples, were quickly concealed in two locations by both Vimalamitra himself and his chief disciple Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po after being translated into Tibetan during the 8th-9th centuries (such that only a very tenuous "oral transmission" continued at all), and then were gradually "rediscovered" from

the 10th century onwards in Central Tibet by a succession of Tibetan Masters. While the "true" story here is far from clear, it seems quite likely that the texts of VNT represent perhaps the oldest strata of the "classical" Great Perfection tradition (i.e. containing all the major themes of Longchenpa's own corpus), and certainly were removed by at least several generations from Longchenpa in terms of their genesis.

In terms of the actual contents of VNT, these are often referred to as "*The Four Volumes*" (*Po Ti bZhi*) and "*The One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts*" (*Man Ngag brGya Dang bCu dGu*), which Longchenpa mentions at the beginning of TDD along with *The Seventeen Tantras* as the ultimate source of his explanation of the Great Perfection system in practical format within TDD (160,1). In fact, in GTD 387,6 Longchenpa divides the supreme Great Perfection teachings (which he labels as "the unsurpassed vehicle of the adamantine nucleus of radiant light" on 372,5) into the "vast Tantras" and the "profound esoteric precepts": "vast Tantras" primarily refers to *The Seventeen Tantras*, while "profound esoteric precepts" primarily refers to *The Four Volumes* and *The One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts*, i.e. the collection of texts known as *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Vimalamitra* (VNT). The distinction between these two classifications is basically as follows: (i) "Tantras" are revealed canonical texts that are generally extremely terse, and which are dramatically structured as if "transcripts" of a transcendental Buddha giving teachings in response to an audience of Sky Dancers and Spiritual Heroes (and as such are not considered the product of human literary composition); and (ii) "esoteric precepts" are then understood as compositions of the great Indian human masters of the tradition prior to its transmission to Tibet (Vajraprahe Mañjuśrīmītra, Śrisiṃha, Jñānasūtra, Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra in particular), which tend to be more detailed and clear than the former texts. Longchenpa discusses this latter classification on GTD 402,7-405,6, which thus is an analysis of VNT's internal structure. He divides the esoteric precepts into two sections: the "profound" *Four Volumes*, and the "extensive" *One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts*.



As for the *Four Volumes*, basing himself on VNT's own catalogue by Vimalamitra (VNT1 1-37), Longchenpa gives them as the following "five precious lettered (texts)" (*Rin Po Che'i Yi Ge*): *The Golden Lettered* (gSer Yig Can), *The Copper Lettered* (Zangs Yig Can), *The Conch Shell Lettered* (Dung Yig Can), *The Jewel Lettered* ('Phra Yig Can), and *The Turquoise Lettered* (gYu Yig Can). "Four" volumes are arrived at by counting *The Jewel Lettered* and *The Copper Lettered* as a single volume, and the other three separately as constituting three volumes. He also divides each one of these five into a "mother" and "son" series of texts, which generally indicates a root text ("the mother") and a series of commentarial texts "born" from it ("the sons"), and thus it will be necessary to read Vimalamitra's own catalogue closely in conjunction with the titles of these "sons" specified by Longchenpa here to correlate these with the actual texts found in VNT. For the time being, I will simply give rough correlations of these five cycles with the principal author and location in VNT (it should also be noted that there are numerous references to lCe bTsun as the discoverer of these texts in their colophons): according to Longchenpa, *The Golden Lettered* consists of nine mother and sons, the most prominent of which is the important Tantra entitled *The Single Son of All the Buddhas* (Sangs rGyas Thams Cad Kyi Sras gCig Po) or *The Single Son of the Teaching* (bsTan Pa Bu gCig) along with an extensive commentary on it by Vajraprahe, and the well-known "Last Testaments" ('Das rJes) of Vajraprahe, Mañjuśrīmitra, Śrīsiṃha, Jñānasūtra (VNT1 37-344 - see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume I* 490-501 for the biographical details surrounding these "Last Testaments"); *The Copper Lettered* (VNT1 345-438); *The Conch Shell Lettered* is authored by Vimalamitra, and in the main is a systematic survey of each of *The Seventeen Tantras* (VNT2 1-159); *The Jewel Lettered* appears to principally be authored by Vimalamitra, though interspersed with texts by the other masters such as Śrīsiṃha and Vajraprahe (VNT1 439-699); and *The Turquoise Lettered* by Vimalamitra, Vajraprahe, Mañjuśrīmitra, Śrīsiṃha and Jñānasūtra (VNT2 161-323). Tulku Thondup (*The Tantric Tradition* 68) notes an

alternate definition of these four in the historical survey falsely attributed to Longchenpa, which gives *The Four Volumes* as *The Conch Shell Lettered*, *The Copper Lettered*, *The Single Son of the Teaching*, and *The Three Last Testaments* (*Das rJes gSum*). However, the current edition of VNT clearly labels *The Single Son of the Teaching* and *The Three Last Testaments* as belonging to *The Golden Lettered*.

The second part of VNT (VNT2 325- 749 and VNT3-"Da" 1-315) then deals with *The One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts*, which Longchenpa provides a list of on GTD 403,7-405,4. Vimalamitra's own catalogue to these gives a similar listing of one hundred and nineteen titles (VNT2 325-333). These texts are attributed to the same non-Tibetan authors of *The Four Volumes* (see above), but unfortunately the actual texts' ordering doesn't correspond to their enumeration in Vimalamitra and Longchenpa's catalogue: the sequence of texts begins with #1, but then skips to #44, #49, and so on. It would seem that VNT in fact doesn't contain the full 119 texts referred to by these titles, though certain titles refer to sections of *The Four Volumes* as well, and thus a careful analysis of the VNT in its entirety in conjunction with these 119 titles would be helpful (this incompleteness of the 119 Esoteric Precepts was commented on even in the 19th century - see 'Jam mGon Kong sPrul folio 45a in the first volume of the 1976 reprint of *Rin Chen gTer mDzod Chen Po*). At least one title of this collection (*rTsa gNas 'Khor Lo*) is quoted extensively by Longchenpa (see TCD1 373,2ff), which would apparently indicate that some portion of the VNT may have been lost following his death. The final part of VNT in its present redaction (VNT3 "Na" to "Zha") mainly consists of biographies of principal Tibetan Masters in the tradition, including a lengthy one on Longchenpa himself.

(iii-iv). *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Sky Dancer* (KGYT) by Longchenpa (Longchenpa's own catalogue specifies 55 internal sections) is his interpretation of *The Seminal Heart-Essence of the Sky Dancer* (KGNT) attributed to Padmasambhava (the great "Indian" Master said to have first brought the Great Perfection teachings to Tibet in the 8th

century), and differs in many details from VNT and LYT (especially in its presentation of the subtle body). Longchenpa first obtained a copy of KGNT at the age of thirty one (see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume I* 580), following which he experienced a series of visionary experiences relating to Padmasambhava and the latter's Tibetan consort Ye Shes mTsho rGyal in a remarkable series of events at bSam Yas mChims Phu involving a select circle of disciples to which he transmitted these empowerments (see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume I* 580-588 and Longchenpa's own autobiographical account in KGYT3 203-266). The transmission of KGNT is quite unlike that of VNT, since its "rediscovery" was said to have taken place immediately preceding Longchenpa's own birth. The basic story is that during the "royal" period of Tibet during the latter part of the 8th century while Padmasambhava resided in Tibet, he first transmitted these teachings to his Tibetan consort Ye Shes mTsho rGyal, and then subsequently when a Tibetan princess (the daughter of King Khri Song lDe bTsan) named Lha lCam Padma gSal passed away at the age of eight (Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume I* 554; *The Tantric Tradition* 164-165), Padmasambhava brought her back to life, and transmitted the esoteric teachings of KGNT to her. Padmasambhava then had Ye Shes mTsho rGyal conceal these texts as a "treasure" without disseminating them in general (the prominent role of the princess and his consort in transmitting these teachings accounts for the title "Sky Dancers"). This system was then unknown in Tibet until that Princess' reincarnation some five centuries later as Padma Las 'Brel rTsal (1291?-1315?) in Central Tibet, who first revealed these teachings from their place of concealment while in his early 20s. Longchenpa then is considered the reincarnation of Padma Las 'Brel rTsal and thus of the Princess Lha lCam Padma gSal (despite the apparent discrepancy between Padma Las 'Brel rTsal's death date and Longchenpa's birth date), though he only obtained a copy of KGNT in his early thirties through the efforts of one of his chief

disciples. In fact, in KGYT, Longchenpa uses the name "Padma Las 'Brel rTsal" to sign his commentaries on KGNT.

At any rate, these two main Great Perfection transmissions to Tibet (through Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra respectively) thus merged in Longchenpa. In general, it must be kept in mind that both VNT and KGNT rely heavily on *The Seventeen Tantras*, and in the main are structurally quite similar in their respective systematizations of Great Perfection thought. At the same time, they diverge on many details, and are quite different in terms of their overall focuses and styles in a way that would seem in keeping with the traditional accounts of Padmasambhava as a charismatic visionary and Vimalamitra as an extremely learned scholar in the traditional sense. While KGNT is a very homogenous series of texts that tend towards the evocative and visionary while particularly concentrating on ritual and contemplation (the language of these texts is extremely fluent, and on the whole make for pleasant reading), VNT is very heterogeneous collection of texts that tend to be much more scholastic, "philosophically" oriented, and at times extremely difficult to interpret. VNT (especially those texts authored by Vimalamitra) not only appears to be solidly linked to the traditional complex scholastic treatises favored by Indian Buddhists, it also at times has rather odd syntax and difficult expressions that seem to clearly indicate translations from non-Tibetan originals (quite unlike KGNT). In addition, Longchenpa's corpus in general (especially *The Seven Treasuries*) emphasizes VNT over KGNT, and tends to frequently cite texts in the former while rarely citing the latter, though despite this obvious influence of VNT's scholastic presentations, it seems that KGNT and the visionary experiences Longchenpa had in relation to it left more intangible effects on his corpus in terms of its visionary dimension.

(v) While it is generally said that *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Profound* (ZMYT) is a commentary on both VNT and LYT which integrates these two separate traditions, in his own catalogue Longchenpa characterizes the "thirty five sections" of ZMYT

as "summarizing the key points of the exceedingly profound (topics) as found in LYT", and appears to emphasize its relationship to LYT (ZMYT2 559,4 in its own internal catalogue identifies forty eight sections, possibly indicating that at the time of the Bhutanese catalogue's composition ZMYT1's "*bShad rGyud*" in 35 sections had been completed, while ZMYT2's "*sNyan brGyud*" in 10 sections was yet to be written). As mentioned above, in general Longchenpa's TDD and TCD appear to agree more with VNT than KGNT, and his other texts frequently quote from VNT despite rarely citing KGNT. However, the catalogue to ZMYT (ZMYT2 553,3-562,4) along with its publishing colophon (ZMYT2 562,5-563,4), clearly indicate that ZMYT "encapsulates the key points of the esoteric precepts" found in the two "mothers" (i.e. VNT and KGNT) and the two "sons" (i.e. Longchenpa's own LYT and KGYT) which together constitute *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* proper (ZMYT2 563,1-2). Longchenpa himself says that ZMYT summarizes into one the quintessence of *The Seventeen Tantras*, *The Three Tantras of bTags Grol*, VNT, and KGNT (ZMYT2 557,3-5). It should also be noted that ZMYT2 cites *The Great Universally Radiant Seminal Nucleus Tantra* (*Thig Le Kun gSal Chen Po'i rGyud*) extensively, which in its colophon says it was translated into Tibetan by the Indian master Śrisiṃha and the Tibetan translator Vaitsa (Vairocana). In fact it would seem fair to characterize ZMYT1 as in part a systematic synthesis of the other four systems, while ZMYT2 is a more wide ranging theoretically oriented series of quite interesting discussions of Great Perfection topics not clearly found elsewhere in Longchenpa's corpus, which in particular draws heavily on *The Great Universally Radiant Seminal Nuclei Tantra*. It would also seem quite likely that the texts of ZMYT were written over the course of a number of years, and in part were prompted by the particular occasions and the needs of disciples, unlike the tightly organized LYT and KGYT which were focused on particular hermeneutical tasks (i.e. the interpretation of Vimalamitra's VNT and Padmasambhava's KGNT respectively). It doesn't seem to me accurate to describe ZMYT as the "summation" or "masterpiece" of his Great Perfection writings since it has this

heterogeneous texture indicating a number of writings somewhat adventitiously combined into a single collection at a later date, and despite probably containing his final "scholastic" writings on the Great Perfection (which is which is why a number of interesting passages, definitions, and topics can be found here though absent elsewhere in his corpus), it lacks the powerful intensity of structure and uniformity of purpose informing his earlier scholastic works. I would also suggest this reflects Longchenpa partially losing interest in the systematizing scholasticism that absorbed his energies during his 30s and early 40s (whereas in TDD, TCD, KGYT, LYT and so on he is very much caught up in the project of "mastering" and "systematizing" the tradition), and instead in his later years turning back to his initial and primary love, that of poetry, which bears its final fruit in the stunning beauty of CBD and NLD (such that he ends his brilliant literary life not with a scholastic survey or summation, but with poetic images). Along with most aspects of Longchenpa's life and teachings, this issue of ZMYT's relationship to Longchenpa's overall corpus provides fertile grounds for further scholarship, and a preliminary study focusing on the structure of all five collections in a type of detailed analytical catalogue would be quite helpful for future research.

It should also be noted that my own research was devoted to the contents of Longchenpa's corpus in terms of the philosophical and contemplative eleven adamant topics of the Great Perfection, and that I certainly made no headway in untangling the extremely confused historical issues of the origins of the Great Perfection from the 8th-14th century that resulted in the systems which he inherited (my above remarks are merely a simplified presentation to enable the reader to understand the basic significance and structure of Longchenpa's own corpus). Samten Karmay (in his *The Great Perfection* and assorted articles) almost alone has begun to seriously research the materials existing on this dark period, and has made an admirable beginning in this admittedly difficult task. At the same time, it would seem to me that such historical research into the "classical" Great Perfection doctrines that I am at present

concerned with must be based on a thorough (and philosophically sensitive) understanding of the presentation of this system as found in Longchenpa's own corpus and the earlier texts found in *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts*. With such an understanding, and beginning with a comprehensive study of the historical accounts found in the latter collection, it will then be possible to move backwards in time in conjunction with others sources to trace the formation of these doctrines and their relation to other trends (to the extent such is still possible). Without such a sensitive and comprehensive understanding of the philosophical and religious issues involved, it would seem that such historical research is severely handicapped (though for the time being such a handicap may be inevitable). While an articulation of the current non-critical standardized history/mythology of the Great Perfection traditions' origins as understood by the Tibetans themselves is certainly important (such as provided by Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume I*), and in particular explorations of the underlying symbolic (conscious and unconscious) force of these accounts are desirable, it seems futile to dogmatically defend such accounts as historical "fact" based on an overly simplified and literalist-oriented understanding of the issues involved, a tendency which is actually quite attuned with the reductionist scholastic accounts of Nyingma history that it superficially seeks to oppose, since both seek to perpetuate a heavily biased "no questions asked" story for our passive acceptance (which thus constitutes yet another potential pitfall for anyone involved with these traditions).

### Chapter Three *The Seventeen Tantras*

Aside from these human-authored texts in VNT and KGYT, the main sources Longchenpa draws on his Great Perfection writings are the transcendently-authored *The Seventeen Tantras*, which can generally be found within the standard collections of Nyingma Tantras, i.e. *The One Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Old School* (*rNying Ma'i rGyud 'Bum*). They are often spoken of as eighteen in number as well, which includes the short *bKa' Srung Nag Mo'i rGyud* (Ati 559-573; in GTD 390,6, Longchenpa refers to it in his presentation of *The Seventeen Tantras* as *Nag Mo Khros Ma*. According to Tulku Thondup (*The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingma* 190) some systems such as KGNT classify these principal Tantras of Great Perfection teachings as nineteen, including the *kLong gSal 'Bar Ma* with the above eighteen. The root tantras themselves are extremely terse (often in extremely packed, aphoristic verses), and as is traditional in South Asia were originally intended to be studied along with their explicitly human-authored commentaries, which generally are much more detailed and readily understandable. In VNT, *The Conch Shell Lettered* by Vimalamitra (VNT2 1-159) provides a very interesting and heavily annotated analysis of each Tantra, including etymologies of their titles, discussions of their internal divisions and so forth. GTD 390,1-403,2 and TCD1 128,4-136,6 also discuss these seventeen Tantras' individual overall significance and interrelationships, and in particular GTD 400,3-403,2 indicates the commentarial literature was evidently quite extensive at one point by providing the names of a number of commentaries. Each root Tantric cycle is classified into a "mother" text which is the actual Tantra itself, and a series of "son" texts which are exegetical texts composed by the famous Great Perfection mystics of India (Vimalamitra, Śrīsimha, and so forth - Longchenpa explicitly defines them as such on GTD 402,6). In the Ati edition of *The Seventeen Tantras*, each Tantra's colophon refers to the similar numbers of "mother and son texts" for that Tantra, though they generally only specify one commentarial title at the most, presumably



that of the chief commentary on that Tantra (Ati's numbers and commentarial titles in general correspond to those given by Longchenpa in GTD, though there are some discrepancies). I have heard rumors of some type of small collection of "son" texts to these Tantras that may have existed in Tibet prior to 1950, though I have been unable to locate a currently existent copy of such a text. A systematic search of the various collections of Nyingma Tantras for these titles may be fruitful. Today I only know of one commentary still existent, that of Vimalamitra's on *The Six Spaces Tantra*. Its full title (*Rin Po Che gSal Ba'i Phreng Ba*) is mentioned in Longchenpa's enumeration of these commentaries (GTD 402,3), as well as in Ati's colophon to that Tantra. The text itself is a lengthy, very detailed, word by word commentary on the Tantra in the full blown scholastic style characteristic of late Indian Buddhism, and in many parts is quite difficult. While the text itself in many ways superficially supports its purportedly being a translation of a classic Sanskrit treatise, a detailed comparative analysis of its language (especially its intricate etymologizing of terms in the root Tantra) with an eye towards it being a Tibetan translation from a Sanskrit original, or a work originally composed in Tibetan, will be the only way to begin to say anything useful on this subject. It can be said, however, that if this text were actually the work of the Indian Vimalamitra who was in Tibet at the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th centuries, there could be no question that the Great Perfection in its mature form was present at that time. As the situation currently stands, there is roughly a two hundred and fifty year gap (800 AD to 1050 AD) between the time when Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava were evidently active in Tibet, and the period when we can with some certainty say that the classical Great Perfection system was being transmitted in Tibet with lCe bTsun Seng Ge dBang Phyug (10th?-11th century) and Zhang sTon bKra Shis rDo rJe (1097-1167). While the latter's dates appear fairly reliable (and it is with Zhang sTon that we have first reliably dated thorough history of the Indian origins of the Great Perfection tradition with Vajraprahe and so on - see Karmay's *The Great Perfection* 211), there is considerable question as to lCe

bTsun's dates (see Prats' "Tse dBang Nor Bu's Chronological Notes on the Early Transmission of the Bi Ma sNying Thig"). At any rate, Matieu Ricard verbally related to me that other commentaries to *The Seventeen Tantras* were said to have circulated in Tibet up until quite recently, including the "complete set" of Vimalamitra's commentaries (Longchenpa's analysis in GTD provides only titles, not authors). Given the secretive nature of some contemporary Nyingma Masters, as well as the uncatalogued collections still existing in Tibet and China, there is still some hope that further commentarial literature on these crucial texts may eventually show up. However, it is uncertain whether Longchenpa himself had access to the full range of commentarial texts whose titles he enumerates in GTD, and indeed the only mention I have so far located in his corpus (aside from the mere enumeration of their titles) is on YZD 146,2, where he refers to a commentary on *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* by Vimalamitra (presumably the *Mu Tig gSal Byed* mentioned on GTD 402,1). At the same time, he may have considered it superfluous to cite commentarial literature on *The Seventeen Tantras*, and instead chose to rely directly on the root Tantras themselves in terms of citations, while partly drawing his own commentary from this secondary literature.

It should also be noted that most current editions of *The Seventeen Tantras* do have sparse (and occasionally heavy) annotations written by unknown hands. These annotations are generally similar from one edition to another, but also have marked differences, indicating that they were probably penned by two or more people at different times, but drawing from a common source. Dan Martin verbally informed me that in one edition he had seen an attribution to Me Long rDo rJe (the teacher of Kumārādza, Longchenpa's own root teacher), though I was subsequently unable to independently confirm this. In particular, the edition of *The Six Spaces Tantra* in Ati has extensive glosses that are obviously drawn from Vimalamitra's own commentary on that Tantra. Since *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* is the only other Tantra of have detailed annotations (in both NGB and Ati edition), it

would seem reasonable to assume that these as well are drawn from Vimalamitra's commentary to that Tantra that Longchenpa mentions in YZD (see above). Since the other Tantras are on the whole not annotated at all or only very sparsely, this could suggest a late date for these annotations when only these two commentaries were still available. The possibility that some of the glosses may actually have been subsequently extracted from Longchenpa's own corpus cannot be excluded. In that the annotations apparently derive from authentic and now lost commentaries, I have in general given them very serious consideration (while I cite them rarely in the annotations, they are often incorporated into the translation or my own interpretation), though it must also be admitted that there is considerable textual corruption in the annotations (misspelling, etc.), some annotations are obscure to the point of being useless, Longchenpa's own commentary at times clearly contradicts the annotations, and certain annotations appear to be clearly mistaken. As mentioned above, the main source for interpreting these difficult texts must be considered to be Longchenpa's own corpus (as well as the texts in VNT and KGNT) in his prefatory and follow-up remarks to his frequent quotations of them (often providing alternative interpretations as he returns over and over to the same passages), as well as the current oral tradition which unfortunately appears to currently be in extreme danger. In fact, one of the foremost living Longchenpa scholars, Khanpo Jikme Phuntshok (*'Jigs Med Phun Tshogs*), told me that many years ago in his youth he had thought to write an extensive commentary on *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* (traditionally viewed as the root of the other sixteen Tantras), but ultimately had to abandon the idea because the commentarial and oral tradition simply wasn't sufficient to fully resolve the many problematic passages in that text. In fact, *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* is arguably the key text of the entire collection, and as such is extensively cited by Longchenpa throughout his corpus. However, the entire medium length text is in verses, and at times is obscure in the extreme. For this reason, it is hard to believe that there was not originally an extensive accompanying commentary (GTD 401,4 gives five titles), and yet,

given this Tantra's crucial importance and obscurity, it is also difficult to understand how those commentaries came to be completely lost despite the survival of so much other related literature.

These seventeen texts are not an arbitrary collection of unrelated texts, and many things point to their being a coherent, inextricably linked series of texts that may have stemmed from a single source (or perhaps several groups of texts that developed in dependence on one another): the similarity of ideas and thematic structures across the entire collection, the repetition of common passages and identical phrases, stylistic similarities, and a number of passages within the collection which explicitly refer to other Tantras by name. For example, *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* refers to all seventeen titles in sequence in the passage cited on GTD 398,1 and in an additional passage found on NGB 166,2-5); *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* (Ati 723,3-728,1) refers by name to all eighteen Tantras, along with brief indication of their overall significance and content. The traditional account evidently is that these seventeen Tantras were all revealed to Vajraprahe, and transmitted from him through the short list of Indian Masters of the Great Perfection on up to Vimalamitra, who then brought these texts to Tibet. Evidently he was then said to translate them into the Tibetan language in conjunction with the Tibetan sKa Ba dPal brTsegs, after which they were subsequently concealed and remained hidden until being revealed a century or two later by lDang Ma Lhun rGyal at Zhwa Temple in Central Tibet, at which point they were then again transmitted continuously in Tibet (in translation) up until the present. While in the Ati edition many of these Tantras don't specify the circumstances of their supposed translation into Tibetan, the colophons of *The Blazing Lamp Tantra*, *The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction*, *The Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness* and *The Blazing Relics Tantra* specify they were translated by the Indian Master Vimalamitra and the Tibetan translator sKa Ba dPal brTsegs; *The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror's* colophon mentions Vimalamitra alone; and the colophon to *The Tantra of Self-Arisen*

*Awareness* specifically mentions the protector of Zhwa temple, and says it was translated by Vimalamitra along with sKa Ba dPal brTsegs and Cog Ro kLu'i rGyal mTshan at bSam Yas, while an additional colophon there attributed to lCe bTsun Seng Ge himself says that Vimalamitra translated it from "three different languages" (?), and that eventually Nyang Ting Nge 'Dzin bZang Po concealed it within Zhwa temple, where subsequently it was unearthed by the elder lDang Ma, who transmitted it to Seng Ge dBang Phyug. This extremely interesting reference to "three different languages" is further explained in NGB's version of this colophon, where (NGB 698,6-699,1) it says these three languages are that of Sanskrit, Oḍḍiyāna and "rGya Nag". While the term "rGya Nag" now ordinarily refers to "China", in an earlier context it can also refer to Central Asia. In fact, Turkestan has many place names related to black, some of which evidently derive from places where the water blackens the teeth (Dr. Guenther conveyed this interesting fact to me in conversation). Related to this, the important early master Śrisiṃha is generally said to originally be from "rGya Nag", and the syntactical oddities of parts of his corpus make it very unlikely that they weren't Tibetan translations from another language. *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* itself mentions a "rGya Nag (?) King Likarta" (*rGya Nag Gi rGyal Po Li Kar Ta*) on Ati 585,4-5 (TCD1 332,7's citation gives the spelling as *Li Gar Ta*), though I have been unable to determine the specific reference here. Also possibly related is Newman's identification of the "Shambhala" of Kālacakra legend with "the Uighur kingdom centered at Khocho that flourished circa 850-1250" (see Newman's *The Wheel of Time* 84). The Great Perfection's doctrinal similarities to the tantric traditions of Kashmiri Shaivism as culminating in Abhinavagupta are quite striking, though my own knowledge of these traditions is quite superficial (see Mueller-Ortega's *The Triadic Heart of Śiva*). Finally, it should also be noted that *The Seventeen Tantras* (NGB1 34,1ff) also explicitly refer by name to the early Indian Great Perfection Masters: Vajraprahe at Dhankośa lake in the western country of Oḍḍiyāna,

Mañjuśrīmītra, Śrīsimha in the Sho Sha district (*Sho Sha'i gLing*), Jñānasūtra, and some other names which are not immediately recognizable.

At any rate, despite the closely linked nature of these texts, many sections are extremely difficult to interpret, a difficulty which is compounded by the wide variance in readings between NGB and Ati, and often even as cited in various place in Longchenpa's own corpus. In general, I have attempted to carefully compare the readings of NGB, Ati, and all other citations of a given passage in Longchenpa's writings along with the glosses in NGB and Ati, but have only cited such textual differences when it appeared necessary to correct TDD's reading, or when they offered an interesting variant reading. While it is difficult to generalize, and in fact Longchenpa's citations at times agree with the NGB edition and at other times with the Ati edition, overall I had the feeling that Ati had been heavily "corrected" by a much later editorial hand aiming at clarifying ambiguous passages (unfortunately, at times he appears to "correct" the proper reading due to his failure to understand it), while the admittedly ambiguous "original" found in NGB actually often was supported by Longchenpa's own citation of the passage in question. Frequently Longchenpa's own reading of a given passage differs from both NGB and Ati where the latter's readings are quite obviously the correct ones, and in these cases I have attempted to consider whether TDD's reading is the result of Longchenpa's conscious misquotation to make a particular point in that context, his unconscious adjustment of the text to bring out a subtle nuance, a simple error in recalling the lines due to his lack of a printed copy at that time, or a scribal error. In deciding whether to correct the text in TDD as well as what to make of the variant readings, I have relied heavily on the overall context in the Tantra, Longchenpa's own use of the cited passage, and the readings of that same passage found elsewhere in Longchenpa's corpus.

In general, I have based my translation of these numerous citations on their context within the respective Tantras themselves, though giving precedence to Longchenpa's own

interpretation whenever it is clear. Many of these passages embody very complex lines of thinking that are only tersely expressed, and in my own opinion, some recent attempts in the West to translate these passages in simplistic "paint by dots" translations devoid of interpretation is not only very unhelpful in penetrating the true significance of these Tantras, but in the worst cases actually distorts the line of thought that eventually emerges after sustained contemplation of the original text in Tibetan. Aside from the numerous obscure passages in *The Seventeen Tantras*, even deceptively simple passages are easy to misinterpret without a comprehensive knowledge of the entire underlying system and terminology, while the one commentary to these tantras we do still possess (Vimalamitra's VLDC) shows how impoverished our understanding of the other sixteen Tantras clearly must be in the absence of their associated commentarial literature. As with many of the early Great Perfection writings we still possess both the root verse text and its associated prose commentary (such as Garab Dorji's brilliant work in VNT1 73-271), Vimalamitra's commentary not only clarifies the overall structure and progression of the Tantra (which would often be very difficult, if not impossible, to discern otherwise), but also provides a word by word interpretation of each line based on a very creative etymologizing technique characteristic of these texts (some etymologies being quite straight forward, while others are manifestly "false"). This creative etymologizing (which reveals the true genius of the Tibetan language) often reveals detailed meanings of the original root verses which would have been impossible to otherwise discern, even if one had been able to properly interpret the "general" line of thought. Given our current lack of understanding of these texts' genesis, it is impossible to say to what degree Vimalamitra's commentary is a creative unpacking of the original or to what degree such meanings were already implicit in the original, though on the whole the two (root verses and prose commentary) strike me as being quite closely connected without the manifest artificial nature some other commentaries appear to have in relation to the root texts they purport to be showing the "true" significance of. It must be admitted that such a commentarial tour de

force (i.e. the missing commentaries) are impossible to reduplicate even generally in the current state of affairs, since their intricate word by word exegesis (and often seemingly quite idiosyncratic) can in no way be anticipated on the basis of the root text's actual words (certainly the discovery of a commentary for any of the major Tantras cited here would require a thorough revision of my work). Many of these passages as cited in TDD are impossible to definitively interpret, including the problematic nature of many demonstrative pronouns' references, which thus problematize the entire line (since the reference of "this" or "that" indicates how to interpret all that follows). Given these factors, to apodictically insist on a single interpretation would be hermeneutically naive and/or egotistical, and I think the best solution in ambiguous passages is to suggest a range of interpretative possibilities consistent with the overall text and tradition, as well as making a point of declining to engage in the pretense of closure where there is none. My own methodology has been to attempt to locate other citations of a given passage in Longchenpa's corpus (as well as in the texts by Padmasambhava and others in KGNT and VNT), and then systematically analyze the overall context of the citation, prefatory and follow-up remarks in each occurrence for both specific and general interpretative clues, in addition to gradually building up an overall familiarity with the reoccurring themes and structures of this closely linked body of literature. While it is impossible to avoid mistakes completely, such a methodology at least ensures that any mistakes are at least harmonious with the overall classical system of Great Perfection philosophy and contemplation, as well as the general orientation of that particular passage. While the living oral tradition is still of vital importance in interpreting these texts (aside from contemplatively engaging the system of praxis that is their inner quintessence), it must be said that the current lineage of oral explication doesn't seem capable of in any way substituting for the missing commentarial texts, and thus we must simply face the hermeneutical dilemma of a fragmented body of texts that is currently available to us only in this inevitably obscure form. In addition, I have attempted to not succumb to these many



difficulties by "shutting down" the rich ambiguity present within these texts (a positive ambiguity flowing into multi-valent resonances as opposed to the negative obscurity that results in our being unable to say anything at all), nor engage in the all too prevalent tendency to shirk interpretative responsibility to the "Lama". Along these lines, Dr. Guenther and Khanpo Jikme Phuntsok in particular have been an inspiration to me in my ongoing struggle to reveal the inner kernels of light concealed within these at times inscrutable texts. Related to this, of course, must be how Longchenpa himself created his masterful commentaries on *The Seventeen Tantras*: did he rely primarily on the oral teachings of Kumārādza and/or an extensive body of textual commentaries, or instead did he himself create many of these interpretations from within his own inner realization? In this way, it is difficult to know exactly how accessible, or inaccessible, these texts were in fourteenth century Tibet. The unfortunately prevalent habit of offering half-translations that neither "dare" nor "deign" to actually fully interpret the meaning by simply offering word equivalents strung together in a type of Tibetanized grammar avoids specific "mistakes" by not actually even committing itself to any interpretation at all, which seems to me as erroneous as the complementary tendency to offer interpretations that self-evidently fly in the face of the entire tradition due to the scholar's inadequate grounding in the textual and oral tradition, as well as perhaps a poor understanding of the sophisticated issues involved in hermeneutics per se. In contrast to this, it is essential that we remain extremely flexible hermeneutically and restrain our inherent tendency towards dogmatism, which includes not only extensive reliance upon the oral "texts" of the living tradition, but also the retention of a healthy skepticism towards them: there is no substitute for one's own painstaking appropriation of these materials through study, critical reflection, and contemplation, while at this still preliminary phase in our appropriation it would seem that extremely localized research is still preferable, since the only authentic way to interpret these numerous ambiguities is a comprehensive grounding in that particular tradition as a whole, and the

author's particular corpus. The rich play of meanings advocated by Derrida and others in the expansion of the hermeneutical circle may produce fascinating results whether based on a careful grounding in the original sources or not, but surely we must maintain a distinction here, especially in light of the significant differences in textuality and experience between these traditions and that of the West. The ambiguity I have attempted to bring out in my commentary to TDD is thus hermeneutically justified as present in the original, and/or as help in dealing with the interpretative problematics of dealing with a fissured text, a fissuring which began with the text itself and has undeniably continued up to the present without interruption (in conventional terms, we cannot even judge the precise relationship of the original root texts to their associated commentarial literature).

In summation, the reader should keep in mind that TDD is a commentary to *The Seventeen Tantras* in a very precise sense including both line by line and synoptic elements: Longchenpa interweaves cited passages from the latter with prefatory and follow-up remarks that elucidate their overall context as well as obscure lines, in addition to creating a tight overall structure that reveals their essential and contextual meaning as a whole. Rather than being mere dry enumerations of authorities to legitimate his own discourse, or a blow by blow explication of a single text, TDD's citations and its own prose is a seamless blend that perfectly complement each other. Thus the reader must contemplate the text slowly, with a constant awareness of the play between these two, and the ongoing structuration of the text. Longchenpa has taken an entire body of texts (*The Seventeen Tantras*), distilled their essential topics out, and then created a medley of their passages within that eleven part structure, and with interstitial commentary which offers a detailed (often line by line) explication of each passage. While the Tantras themselves are often terse to the point of obscurity, and Longchenpa's text is without striking beauty (unlike other poetic masterpieces of his), the combination of the two creates a powerful blend of prose and verse that maintains the imagistic power of aphoristic verse, while providing the explanatory dimension of prose

commentary. As much as I have attempted to repeatedly revise my translation towards a greater clarity, the result is in no sense "easy reading", just as the Tibetan original is a difficult text. While I have attempted as much as possible to empower the reader through extensive annotation and commentary that explain both particular points and overall structure, the text itself calls for a deliberate, meditative reading of exploration rather than rapid consumption for some ulterior motive of acquisition, questions posed and answers found in ever widening circles of significance.

#### **Chapter Four The Essentials of the Great Perfection in Eleven Adamantine Topics**

Longchenpa's technical writings on the Great Perfection tradition are generally based on *The Seventeen Tantras* and *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Vimalamitra*, while internally they are either strictly or loosely structured in relation to the eleven adamantine topics (*rDo rJe gNas*) which encapsulate those texts' entire range of philosophical thought and contemplative praxis. As mentioned above, these eleven topics are clearly discernible within *The Seventeen Tantras* rather than being Longchenpa's own innovative creation, yet it is Longchenpa above all who finally brought them to their philosophical and poetic climax in a series of tightly structured works. These topics are the "support" or "infrastructure" of the text's various discussions and "point to" the spiritual path leading to realization of the adamantine reality of the Universe (i.e. enlightenment); they are "adamantine" (*rDo rJe; Vajra*) since that which they point to is like a diamond, "hard" to penetrate via intellectual understanding without experiential realization due to their profundity, as well as being enduring "indestructible" truths applicable to the universe's abiding reality rather than culturally and linguistically dependent fabricated networks of conventional "truths". Thus right from the beginning this term points both to the quite different concept of a "text" here (which are phenomenological "reports" of lived experience meant to be re-lived via extra-textual contemplative means, as well as poetic philosophy) and to the Great Perfection's own orientation towards explaining everything from the viewpoint of the ultimate (the "adamantine"), as opposed to other traditions' tendency to explain from the perspective of the lower order (and whom thus have such problems in understanding the presence of an Awakened One's primordial gnosis within ordinary sentient beings). This notion of "adamantine topics" can be found in standard Indian Buddhist texts, such as *The Unsurpassed Continuity (Uttaratantra)* similar structuring around seven "adamantine topics", which in fact philosophically shares much with TDD, and additionally connotes that the teachings contained within here are like a "thunderbolt" which

can devastate all illusion ("topic" (*gNas*) can also be literally interpreted as "base" or "residence", since within these topics' explanation the adamantine reality dwells, and thus can dawn within our realization if we base our contemplation on them). In our present context, the term "adamantine" in particular indicates these topics are all born, and centered within, the "adamantine nucleus of radiant light" (*'Od gSal rDo rJe sNying Po*) lying at the heart of all living beings, the "enlightened nucleus" or "Buddha-nature" which can be identified with the primordial Ground of all that is. This Ground of pure possibilizing potential is "adamantine" both in the sense of being utterly devoid of the differentiation of actualized concrete forms (the mystery of "self" lies in how to bypass all the potential pitfalls of egotism and narcissism so that you locate this interior dimension where the "other" truly fades away), and in the sense of its primordially being "indestructible" as it continues without change throughout all living beings and the Universe itself. With these eleven adamantine topics, Longchenpa is thus concerned to imaginatively journey back to this "adamantine nucleus" or "Ground" of the Universe in its original primordially, retrace the "early history" of the Universe whereby the wild variety of delusory worlds spun into existence from within the Ground's formless pure potential, explore the continuing presence of the Ground's pure gnostic energy within the resulting living beings, detail the contemplative path through which we may recontact this primordial dimension so that we may re-experience the Universe's initial formation with the advantage of "hindsight", and finally come to understand the nature of the culminating event in the Universe's self-exploration and evolution (i.e. the "enlightenment" of a "Buddha"), and what issues out of this critical event. As such, the recurrent overall themes are that of the thorough self-organizing intelligence of the Universe at every level, a resolute involutory and evolutionary emphasis, and hierarchical models of all material and psychic existence pointing to the Universe's own pure gnostic energy as the ultimate cosmic and personal source of the distorted phenomena deriving from it that retroactively obscure its own luminosity (such that "intelligence" is primary to "matter", and

an Awakened One's enlightened gnosis is primordial to our ordinary distorted psyches). This leads us directly to the mystery of "self" that has bedeviled Buddhism from its very origins (which began in a doctrine of "no self" denying any permanent identities to phenomena or beings), and thus an inherent feature of Longchenpa's thought is that it revolves around the question of what is "self" (*Rang*) and what is "natural" (*Rang bZhin*), which in the Tibetan language are etymologically inextricably related to each other ("natural" literally being "self-according to", "self-face", or "self-as". In alternatively widening and narrowing circles, the text spirals around this central question of "self" and "other" in a complex pattern that avoids the traditional pitfalls of ordinary egotism, philosophical idealism and analytic sterility while using traditional Indo-Tibetan Buddhist terminology and concepts to explore untraditional (for Indo-Tibetan philosophical thought) themes as it turns the tradition back onto itself in its philosophically rigorous "thinking" of the liminal dimension between Being and beings, the Universe and the individual, purity and despair. In accordance with this turning, the entire concept of "philosophy" is itself implicitly transformed as formal and informal models of syllogistic logic (so essential in later Indian Buddhist thought) are devalued to the status of an important but non-central hermeneutical tool, and a type of "poetic thought" assumes the vacated throne (without admitting the sterile split into "logical" philosophy and "Tantra", or the equally sterile extension of the latter into the former), though these methodological issues aren't as self-consciously articulated as one is accustomed to in twentieth century Western literature. Certainly the split between the Gelukpa and Nyingma sects in Tibet along these lines is very reminiscent of the current split between "analytical" and "Continental" philosophers in the West, though important lines of continuity exist as well. This unique example of traditional Buddhist thought transcending many of the stagnant limitations of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism results in a very powerful tradition that will be extremely interesting to view in relation to the mature tantric traditions of late Indian Buddhism (especially the Kālacakra system), once scholars begin to seriously deal with these traditions as

philosophically rigorous systems of contemplative thought and praxis rather than merely enumerate "facts" one after another.

While all of Longchenpa's Great Perfection writings (i.e. those texts which interpret the entirety of Buddhist thought explicitly or implicitly from the special standpoint of the Great Perfection's classical systematization) in general are loosely based on these eleven adamantine topics in terms of structure and sequencing of their discussions, *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* (TDD) takes these eleven topics as the direct basis for its eleven chapters in a one to one correspondence, such that in this medium length text Longchenpa provides a comprehensive discussion of these eleven without any extraneous digressions into such interesting, but non-vital, issues as literary divisions, symbolic allegories, historical transmission, and so on. Instead, in TDD he precisely encapsulates the essentials of the Great Perfection into a "dramatic" tightly structured sequence of eleven headings (i) beginning with the Universe's formless primordiality, (ii-x) continuing with a detailed account of evolution, and (xi) culminating with an analysis of the Universe's self-culmination as it comes to full self-consciousness in the enlightenment experience of an Awakened One, i.e. a Buddha: TDD embraces Longchenpa's entire vision of the man and cosmos as he (i) details the dynamics inherent in the Universe, or Being, prior to any type of disruption or evolution; (ii) the means by which evolution takes place post-disruption, including a detailed account of the inner meaning of embryogeny and the development of human neurosis; (iii-v) the way in which our contact with that deeper spiritual dimension is unbroken throughout; the presence of this inner luminosity within our selves, including a detailed presentation of the subtle dimensions of energy flow within our body; (vi-viii) the means by which we can recontact that dimension, returning to the ever present source of our being, involving a bewildering variety of yogic techniques that date back to pre-Buddhist Tibet as well as first-seventh century India, Central Asia and China; (ix) the physical, mental, and verbal phenomenological indicators marking the reintegration of one's fragmented

psyche; (x) the nature of liminal life-phase transitions, including a detailed account of the process of physical death and an inner phenomenological description of pre- and post-death experience; and (xi) finally the nature and dynamics of the individual psyche that has realized this return, and reemerges in life and society. The exact significance of each of the eleven points (with their condensed titles indicated parenthetically) is as follows: (i) the primordially pure-potentiality of the Universe or Ground, along with its primeval transition from interior self-contained potentiality to exteriorized actuality in the Ground-presencing ("the abiding reality of the Ground"); (ii) the process of straying as the distorted worlds of suffering and alienation take form out of that formless primordially ("the process of straying into cyclic existence"); (iii) how the Ground's primordial purity and virtual potentiality continues to pervade all living beings with its fivefold dynamics as an "enlightened nucleus" or "Buddha-nature" ("how the nucleus of Buddhahood's expansive awakening pervades all living beings"); (iv) the location of primordial gnosis within our body/mind and its relationships to our ordinary distorted psychic activity ("the location of primordial gnosis within us"); (v) subtle body theory, i.e. tantric physiology which analyzes the pathways via which this gnostic energy operates within us ("the pathways of primordial gnosis within us"); (vi) the four gnostic lamps as the operators enabling this inner gnostic energy to manifest through the "gateways" of our eyes into the external space surrounding us, where we can contemplatively tune into its inner significance ("the gateways of primordial gnosis within us"); (vii) the objective sphere or "expanse" in which this gnostic energy exteriorizes itself, and the key points of contemplation with regard to this expanse as well as the awareness or "intelligence" which is an inherent quality of the expanse ("the objective sphere within which primordial gnosis shines forth"); (viii) the specific contemplative techniques and systems which will ultimately enable you to re-experience the Universe's initial beginnings and thus shake free of corporeality and neurosis ("contemplatively taking primordial gnosis into your own experience"; (ix) the various external and internal psycho-physical and visionary signs



that should be used as indicators informing you of your ongoing progress in ever deepening contemplative realization that stays on track towards the ultimate goal of definitive enlightenment ("the signs and measures of contemplative realization"); (x) a detailed analysis of the phases in dying and post-death existence with an eye towards the special opportunities they afford for spiritual enlightenment ("the intermediate states"); and (xi) the nature of the activities and gnosis issuing directly from the heart of enlightenment (i.e. a "Buddha") as the ultimate climax of the Universe's journey of self-exploration ("the ultimate fruit or climax of enlightenment").

A few general points should be kept in mind in understanding these eleven adamantine topics. In terms of the first two chapters in particular, Longchenpa's presentation may strike us as a type of cosmology far removed from our own lives, but in fact this is far from the truth of it. This imaginative account of the Universe's origins and early history must also be understood as occurring in its entirety within each life and death we pass through ourselves, as well as applying to each and every moment of our current existence as the pure primordial Ground resides within our hearts with its presencing pervading the body in the network of luminous channels and mandalas of interiorized deities, such that every instant we re-enact the cosmic drama of straying as our ongoing lack of self-recognition impels our psychic energy into the distorted realms of cyclic existence both within the internal geography of our subtle body, and within the outer geography of our intersubjectively experienced world. Thus the reader should note how Longchenpa proceeds from the initial abstract, cosmogonic discourse of the opening chapters to inexorably interiorize every single point of that discourse within the context of our own life and death in the current moment. A second, and related, point is the vital importance of symbolic correspondences in interweaving these distinct topics, as energy is seen to consistently self-organize itself at all levels of its complex hierarchy (whether as pure potential or in distorted actualization) in terms of triads and quintets, which then are all intimately interlinked with each other. A third point is

Longchenpa's resolute emphasis on "enlightenment" being always already indwelling within all living beings, such that he consistently uses the special terminology usually reserved for the description of the enlightened state and being ("gnosis", "Spiritual Body", "wisdom-energy", etc.) to describe the inner dynamics of every living being's psycho-physical sustenance and self-organization. It must be understood that this usage of what we might refer to as "Buddha-terminology" is quite controversial, and many other Buddhist scholars within and without Tibet have found it difficult to understand how, aside from merely indicating that living beings have the *potential* to become enlightened, these factors can be said to be already present within ordinary life. Since I return to this issue throughout my commentary to Longchenpa's text, I will at present merely say that the key elements to understanding this issue lay in the gnostic self-organizing intelligence of the Universe; the central mystery of recognizing "self" in understanding the relationship between beings and Being, or individuals and the Universe as such; and the liminal zone between poetry and philosophy where "poetic thought" dwells.

It should be noted that subsequent to Longchenpa other authors also composed works on this basic structure of the eleven adamantine topics, such that it came to represent a type of mini-genre of literature within the tradition. Two well known examples are 'Jigs Med kLing Pa's *The Gnostic Master (Ye Shes bLa Ma)* and rTse Le sNa Tshogs Rang Grol's *The Nucleus of the Sun (Nyi Ma'i sNying Po)*, the latter which has been rendered into English in a restricted circulation-text *The Circle of the Sun* by Erik Hein Schmidt as well as in *Meditation Differently* by Herbert Guenther. While I have yet to make a systematic survey of these later works as a whole, these two texts in particular are quite derivative of Longchenpa's own TDD and TCD, and seem to me to offer little in the way of additional profundity aside from some helpful clarification. Finally, while twentieth century developments in French and German philosophy are quite helpful in understanding the Great Perfection tradition, the persistent split between theory and praxis (best seen in the

sophisticated textual hermeneutics of Derrida and others in contrast to the simplistic mentality which continues to dominate psychology in North America) compounded by their pervasive exclusion-oriented ethnocentricity hampers efforts to creatively explore the interconnections between these two traditions, along with the equally pervasive reductionism that dominates Western research into Indo-Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Guenther's recent work (*Matrix of Mystery, The Creative Vision, From Reductionism to Creativity*) has clearly shown the clear similarities between the Great Perfection and recent scientific and "pseudo" scientific thought, though his work has remained inaccessible to some due to its hermeneutic demands on the reader. As I mentioned above, "transpersonal theory" in the West seems to me a promising (though currently quite limited) effort to transcend the sterile ethnocentricity and text-bound intellectualism of much current Continental philosophy (its present tendency towards simplification I all too readily understand, as I have found my own thought inevitably tends towards reductionism in confronting the all too numerous interpretative blocks and dead-ends that constantly crop up in working with these traditions as a cultural "outsider"), and it would seem accurate to characterize the Great Perfection tradition as perhaps the most fertile grounds for these theorists from among various systems that developed in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. While in the current context I have only touched upon such Western sources in passing, certainly the only future this tradition has in the West will stem from a multi-dimensional appropriation that includes (without being limited to) its integration into our culture as a serious vehicle for ongoing thought not only in philosophical topics such as hermeneutics, semiotics and phenomenology, but also in such diverse areas as social criticism and psychological therapy. In this integration, it is important that we don't reduce the Other to "precursors" or mere analogues of our own thought, but rather confront them as coherent, powerful systems of thought and praxis in their own right which in many ways challenge the basic underpinnings of our own concept of "thought", "religion", "subjectivity" and the "text". Since to do so it is essential that those lacking the necessary

linguistic background are em-powered to fully appropriate these texts, I have attempted to explicate the enclosed recreation of Longchenpa's text in great detail, with the ultimate hope that the serious reader can begin to participate in the movements of contemplative thought this text embodies through the medium of my own recreated text, and thus become free to move forward rather than simply passively ingest a prepackaged limiting interpretation that ultimately de-vitalizes the reader, and inhibits further participatory creativity (the flip side to the equally devitalizing practice of literalist half-translations that are generally also half-thought out). Without doubt, however, my present work partially participates in both devitalizing tendencies, and thus certainly requires further refinement in conjunction with the reactions of its readers. The following eleven sections provide brief summaries of each of these eleven adamantine topics by way of providing overviews of the corresponding eleven chapters in Longchenpa's *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings*.

### **Chapter Five *The First Adamantine Topic: the Ground and Ground-presencing***

The first topic begins with the beginning, i.e. the primordial "Ground" of all existence from which the manifest Universe flows, which in its initial emergence is termed the "Ground-presencing", literally "the lighting-up of the Ground" from within its dark formless depths of pure potential. This topic thus deals with the character and dynamics of that Ground itself in its self-contained interiority, as well as the nature of its initial spontaneously present transition from this pure self-contained interiority into actualization or "presencing", as it breaks out of its seamless enclosure to evolve into a complex hierarchically organized integrated cosmos resonating with luminosity and intelligence (the movement from potential to actuality is something like a "big bang", where in one instant from "nothing", "everything" comes into being). It is thus nothing less than an "early history" of the Universe, a journey to the edge of that which can be known, and beyond into that which is no-thing, and as such, cannot be known as a thing. While I have chosen to render the term etymologically as "Ground" (*gZhi* is a quite common term in the sense of "base" or "foundation"), it could also be translated as the "Universe" (the unity (*uni*) in all the apparent multiplicity (*verse*)) in the sense of the whole rather than the totality (such that is neither a collection of things, nor any thing at all in itself), while philosophically related to Heidegger's notion of "Being", and his later notion of "appropriation" (*Ereignis*; the relation of these two terms to Longchenpa's use of the "Ground" is not some type of sterile "identity", and certainly their interrelation requires future thought explicitly concerned with this issue). The term "Ground" is consistently evoked as the pure seamless energy potential present as the dynamic openness whereby anything and everything may come-to-presence, itself no-thing yet preceding every-thing as their source and ongoing reality; it is the One and Only which plays for reasons hard to express. Similarly, the term "Ground-presencing" (*gZhi sNang*; literally the "appearance within the Ground" or "the lighting-up of the Ground", i.e. it simultaneously denotes the

presencing of, from, and within the Ground, as well as the Ground-in-its-lighting-up) has an ambiguous relationship to the Western concept of "evolution", especially in the much more sophisticated theories of evolution that have emerged recently (see Jantsch's *The Self-Organizing Universe*). It must be kept in mind that the "Ground-presencing" initially is mandalically integrated configurations of unimpeded rainbow-hued pure light energy flowing forth from within the Ground (which as such also characterizes our post-death experience and the vibrant visions of authentic contemplation), which only subsequently devolves "down" into dualistically experienced congealed matter and distorted psychic activity via the shock of its own lack of self-recognition, from which point it then "evolves" or self-organizes back towards its source (i.e. towards enlightenment). For this reason, these distorted experiences (*Khrul sNang*) encapsulated in the term "cyclic existence" can both be understood as the systematically misinterpreted Ground-presencing, as well as distinct from the Ground-presencing's pure light energy, which thus remains as the latent vibrant energy which is the ongoing (though unrecognized source) of these psycho-physical distortions which dominate our current experience. Additionally, rather than involving a vast panorama of inert matter with the occasional accidental emergence of sentient life, in Longchenpa's story awareness is present right at the beginning of the Universe, with its recognition or non-recognition being the crucial determinant in the path the universe's evolution takes: all "material" elements are none other than awareness' playful resonances in five-hued light, which under the conditions of non-recognition seemingly congeal and solidify into dualistically experienced "matter" encapsulated by the classical analysis into the quintet of earth, water, fire, wind and space (names which act as images for these five basic types of energy due to their rich network of associations). Thus we come to the key notion of "self-presencing", which transcends traditional solipsistic and dualistic ego-logical theories since rather than a fragmented world split between the mind and body, consciousness and matter, the self and other, it asserts that the core dynamism of the Universe is awareness itself, a gnostic intelligence of radiant light

from which the entire spectrum of psychic activity and material dynamics derives (the apparent differences being the degree to which this luminous resonance's high energy vibrations have congealed, slowed down, and dimmed), such the macrocosm is revealed as an extended family from which no one is excluded. The most striking facet of this first topic in the context of Buddhism as a whole is thus its imaginative search back to the beginning of the Universe, and its emphasis on the notion of a thoroughly intelligent Universe. Despite the characteristically Buddhism presentation of a neutral impersonal "Ground" and its "creative dynamism" (*rTsal*) rather than the personalized "God" and its "power of imagination", there are obvious connections with Corbin's characterization of Sufi thought on the Godhead and creation in his *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī* 182: "the Godhead possesses the power of Imagination, and that by imagining the universe God created it..." Finally, with all eleven topics we must keep firmly in mind the intensely symbolic nature of Longchenpa's description of the Universe's origination, post-death experience, our subtle body, and so on.

Longchenpa's discussion of the first topic in Chapter One has three basic sections sequentially arranged in correspondence to the Universe's own history as such: (i) the Ground, (ii) the Ground-presencing, and (ii) the way in which the Totally Positive One becomes free within the Ground-presencing's initial emergence.

(i) *The Primordial Ground* (161,4-178,6): Longchenpa begins the text with a discussion of the identity of the primordial Ground in its pure self-contained potential ontologically prior to all differentiation, and in particular devoid of the fissure into the deluded ("sentient beings") and the awakened ("Buddhas"). He does so by analyzing a classic Great Perfection classification of all types of views concerning this primordial Ground's identity into seven stereotypical positions which, though all containing an element of truth in their characterizations of the Ground, are ultimately reductionist stances that override Heidegger's "ontological difference": Being cannot be reduced to a being nor to our typical categories of

thought based on beings' experience, and likewise the Ground's pure potential cannot be reduced to, or accurately described in terms of, things and their discrete characteristics (it is precisely that which is no thing at all). In TDD, Longchenpa gives the seventh view (that of the Ground's original purity) as authentic, while in TCD he rejects the seventh view as equally distorted, and characterizes the authentic position as being the Ground of "indivisible original purity and spontaneous presence" (which strikes me as a more refined interpretation than TDD). Longchenpa then turns his attention to the authentic identity of this "Ground" (which is closely related to Heidegger's conception of "Being" and Jantsch's notion of the "Universe") with an emphasis on showing how its pure vibrant nothingness can give rise to the wild variety of worlds we currently experience, which he presents in terms of the key dyad of its "original purity and spontaneous presence", and its expanded (and equally important) triune identity as "its essence, nature, and compassionate resonance". "Original purity" signifies the Ground's utter emptiness wherein no-thing at all can be said to exist ("totally purified of any materialization from the very beginning"), while "spontaneous presence" signifies the Ground's inherent dynamism which serves as the pure source-potential of everything that comes to exist. The Ground's utter emptiness and openness is in perfect union with its spontaneously dynamic light energy, such that its emptiness is inherently dynamic and luminous, and its luminosity is thoroughly empty and unmaterialized - the two aspects are merely conceptual isolates abstracted from a unitary seamless reality. The Ground's triune identity then involves a more detailed analysis into its empty essence (corresponding to "original purity"), its luminous nature (corresponding to "spontaneous presence"), and its all-pervading compassionate resonance (the nucleus of awareness present within the previous two). This third element goes beyond the mere union of emptiness and appearance to indicate the Ground's inherent intelligence, and its concomitant ceaseless self-organizing into complex evolving hierarchies: not only is the Ground an empty expanse which is simultaneously vibrant five-hued light energy (corresponding to the five colors of a



rainbow), that empty luminosity is also permeated with intelligence, and as such, constantly self-organizing at the vast cosmic level of the star systems to the microcosmic level of atomic structures, to the peculiarly personal world of the self-conscious animal that is ourselves (see the mini-encyclopedia for a discussion of the etymological significance of the term "compassionate resonance", a term ordinarily simply meaning "compassion"). However, at the dimension of the primordial Ground, this triune identity remains as a virtual reality that is self-contained potential devoid of any actualization or exteriorization, as such characterized as "the Spiritual Body within a Vase", i.e. the entire cosmos is enfolded within its pure potential, yet it remains latent formlessness hidden from exterior view. Finally, I must point out that Karmay's comments that "very rarely are the theories of emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) and the non-self-existence (*Niḥsvabhāvatā*) evoked in rDzogs Chen tantras, if at all" (*The Great Perfection* 215) are extremely misleading, because the concept of "original purity" in this context is very clearly used in the sense of "emptiness" within *The Seventeen Tantras*, and Longchenpa himself often points to certain controversial lines in Candrakīrti's writings and *The Transcendental Consummation of Insight* literature that suggest such a positive interpretation of emptiness. While it is true these texts are not littered with references to the actual term "emptiness" (*sTong Pa Nyid*; i.e. "emptiness" as a nominative as opposed to the adjectival form "empty" (*sTong Pa*) or the verbal form *sTongs*)), see TDD 168,3, 175,6, 237,1, 251,4, 262,5, 266,6, 267,2, 288,1 and so on for citations of passages using the term "empty" (including the important terms "the empty seminal nuclei lamp" and the "naturally free empty channel"); see KGYT2 222,3 for an explicit reference in the *kLong gSal* to the essence being "empty", the nature being "radiant", and compassionate resonance being "all-pervading". In addition, in these Tantras explication of "original purity" the analogous term "absent" or "absence" (*Med Pa*) is used in a very uncompromising presentation of the thorough emptiness this term denotes, wherein not even "transcendent reality", "awareness", or "primordial gnosis" can be said to exist (TDD 171,1). At the same time, original purity is

simultaneous with spontaneous presence, which accounts for describing the Ground as "beyond the limitations of being empty or non-empty" (TDD 287,3), and in understanding the role of emptiness in the Great Perfection it is important to keep in mind the critical terms "internal radiance" (i.e. pure potential or virtual reality) and "external radiance" (that pure possibilizing potential as it gives rise to actualization). While a detailed analysis of the relationship of these classical Great Perfection texts to the Mādhyamika Prāsaṅgika tradition is quite beyond the scope of my present discussion, at this point I would merely like to indicate that even in *The Seventeen Tantras* (i.e. without considering Longchenpa's corpus) it is very clear that the tradition embodies an innovative dialectical reinterpretation of Prāsaṅgika notions of "emptiness" rather than a mere sterile "diametric opposition" to them that Karmay suggests (Longchenpa's anti-idealism has very clear roots in *The Seventeen Tantras* themselves), and in fact many Western and Tibetan scholars familiar with Longchenpa's Great Perfection writings view them as considerably more sophisticated than the classic texts of Mādhyamika Prāsaṅgika that we now have available to us. While emptiness is itself empty as such (*Rang sTong*), it is not the case that it is empty of its inherent dynamic spontaneous light energy (*gZhan sTong*), even though that vibrancy is itself devoid of being any-thing at all within its essential absence of all materialization or dualistic fixed frozen forms.

(ii) *The Ground-Presencing* (178,6-183,3): it is thus to the Ground-presencing that Longchenpa next turns, which signifies the primeval moment when a gnostic wind stirs from within the Ground's primordially, and for obscure reasons rents open the sealing enclosure of the "vase" such that in an instant from nothing comes everything, as luminous spiraling galaxies suddenly expand outwards from the infinite singular darkness of the Ground's pure potentiality. The dynamics of this exteriorization of the Ground-presencing from within the Ground as the rupture from potential to actuality takes place (in technical terms this is termed the transition from "internal radiance" to "external radiance") is summed up in terms of "eight

gateways of spontaneous presence", the eight "doors" through which the Ground's dynamic spontaneous presence passes through its infinite interiority into actualized forms. These can be further analyzed into six modes of spontaneous presence's shining forth (in the manner of compassion, five lights, primordial gnosis, Spiritual Bodies, non-duality, and freedom from limitations) and the two gateways through which it is self-interpreted: the pure gateway of primordial gnosis leading up the pathway of transcendence (*Nirvana*) and the impure gateway of cyclic existence leading down into alienation (*Samsara*). While spontaneous presence itself forms a shimmering mandalic panorama utterly devoid of materialization, duality, or ignorance, the key lies in the emergent capacity for self-reflection and awareness deriving from the Ground's compassionate resonance, which in that instant of the Ground-presencing's manifestation is suddenly confronted by this swirling play of rainbow colored lights. In this single instant, this capacity for awareness can either self-recognize the lights as its own self-presencing and hence in the second instant become liberated as a Buddha, or fail to self-recognize the lights and hence inexorably move towards the dualistic creation of the Other as it strays into dualistic existence as a "sentient being". This split at the Universe's first instant is expressed as the "freedom" of transcendence in contrast to the "straying" of cyclic existence, and hence it is said that the indeterminate, neutral Ground-presencing can either serve as the "foundation of freedom" (in the case of recognition) or the "foundation of straying" (in the case of non-recognition).

(iii) *The Freedom of the Totally Positive One* (183,3-187,2): Longchenpa concludes the chapter with an analysis of the former eventuality, i.e. what happens when in the first moment of the Ground-presencing self-recognition takes place, and this capacity for awareness becomes liberated into enlightenment. Since this enlightenment takes place directly at this crucial juncture of the Universe's primeval origination without passing through long centuries of darkness and alienation, this Awakened One is referred to as the primeval Buddha and is given the name the "Totally Positive One". Through the Totally

Positive One's instantaneous insight into the mystery of self, this recognition ripens the Ground into the "fruit" of enlightenment as its initial probing self-exploration in the form of the Ground-presencing instantaneously climaxes into a full self-consciousness of itself, with the result that its spiraling expansion outwards towards actuality ("external radiance") is reversed in its track, and the Ground-presencing in its entirety just as suddenly spirals back into its singular source of pure potential ("internal radiance"). Thus Longchenpa closes the chapter with a lengthy citation outlining the dissolution process of spontaneous presence sparked by the Totally Positive One's self-recognition, which takes place in eight phases corresponding directly to the eight modes in which spontaneous presence initially manifested. All eight modes spiral back into themselves just as the nighttime worlds of the solitary dreamer suddenly spiral back into the unitary awareness of the dreamer as s/he awakes, or the spinning rainbow colored light of a crystal flashing through the surrounding space suddenly dissolves back into clouds abruptly obscure the sun. Yet this return to the spiral's source of pure possibilizing potential is not a mere return or dissipation into the previous formless unaware depths of the self-contained Ground, but rather retains a perfect self-consciousness that entails the dawning of a new evolutionary epoch in the history of the Universe. This unprecedented epoch involving a complex new relationship between its pure potential and exteriorized actualization is termed a Buddha (literally "expansively awakened", or all stains "dissipating" and all potential "unfolding"), the actual state of which forms the subject of the eleventh adamantine topic.

**Chapter Six *The Second Adamantine Topic: the Process of Straying***

The second topic concerns the process ensuing should recognition not take place at the Ground-presencing's inception, causing its spontaneous presencing to pass through the impure gateway of cyclic existence as its psychic capacity self-interprets the lights confronting it as "other" with the consequentially inexorable manifestation of the emotional distortions of desire, hatred, and ignorance dragging it down into pervasive materialized corporeality and distorted universal neurosis (summed up in the three realms of cyclic existence). This distorting involution of the Ground-presencing is in contrast to its enlightening dissolution within the Totally Positive One's liberation as described at Chapter One's end, as we now turn the consequences of the Ground's self-exteriorization and self-exploration gone astray to explain the origination of alienation and the Other. While the dynamism of the Ground's presencing is itself indeterminate as to the subsequent evolution of its initial sixfold manifestation (encapsulated by the dyad of cyclic existence and transcendence), two "gateways" open up therein in the very instant of its exteriorization, which in essence are the two main possibilities for the Ground's self-interpretation of its own unfolding as it impels itself from pure potential to an expanding network of actualized forms: it can either recognize its own unity (and thus become the Awakened One named "the Totally Positive One"), or fail to recognize it (thereby entering into a type of cosmic neurosis, which eventually takes shape as "sentient beings", i.e. the various life forms which inhabit our worlds). In this crucial moment of non-recognition, the Ground in its exteriorization forgets its own enduring reality, and its capacity for self-reflection (internal light) begins to fragment off from its capacity for luminous presencing (external light), resulting in individual sentient beings and material entities originating as its initially radiant light dims into distorted subjective psyches and congeals into solidified objective matter. Yet even in the eventuality of non-recognition and consequent "straying" (*Khrul Pa*) into a fragmented and lonely

experience of the world, there remains the ever present possibility of reversing that straying via recognition: the entire cosmic drama of the Ground, its evolution and the critical moment of recognition and non-recognition is repeated in miniature for each living being at the crucial transition known as death as our sedimented materialization dissolves into an experience of the Ground's originally pure radiant light, which then in post-death experience re-expands into the radiant panorama of the Ground-presencing, and then in the absence of recognition descends into the impure experiences of our neurotic world as we move into rebirth, both a re-materialization and a re-neuroticization of our physical and mental energies by virtue of the karmic imprints and forces accumulated over endless lifetimes of fragmented and fragmenting experience (see the tenth topic). In this way, cyclic existence is seen to have a very definite beginning (corresponding to this moment of non-recognition), a beginning which is renewed over and over in the ongoing cycle of this primordial drama. Longchenpa's account of this process of straying in Chapter Two can be analyzed into four distinct sections: (i) an account of the triune dimmed awareness (or "ignorance") as the mechanism via which we first descend into cyclic existence, and the twelvefold cycle of interdependent origination which sustains its vicious cycle; (ii) the way in which our entire range of distorted experience remains essentially thoroughly pure as a perfect mandala of enlightened energy; (iii) a description of how embryogeny (from conception to birth) takes place within this context; and (iv) an analysis of the nature of our psycho-physical energy in its subtle dimensions (summed up in the tantric physiology of "channels, energy winds, and seminal nuclei") with an emphasis on the continuing presence of pure gnostic energy as its ongoing source.

(i) *The Mechanism of Straying* (187,2-195,2): Longchenpa begins the chapter with a subtle analysis of the nature of this non-recognition which marks the beginning of cyclic existence as we stray into alienation and dualistic materialization. This process from the first moment of non-recognition up until its reversal in enlightenment is termed "straying", a term literally meaning "error" with a particular connotation of perceptual errancy (such as

hallucination, illusion or simple perceptual errors such as mistaking a coiled up rope for a snake, or seeing a white conch shell as yellow due to an eye disease). Thus the term "straying" clearly indicates that the underpinnings of cyclic existence's alienation is a question of perception, or more accurately of the interpretation of perceptual experience, which thus has a very precise beginning: at the initial emergence of the Ground-presencing (i.e. the manifest cosmos), the "perceiver" (i.e. the emergent cognitive capacity for self-reflection and self-awareness) confronts an objective sphere of rainbow colored light, which it must interpret. Should it properly interpret the lights with penetrating insight as its own self-presencing, it is liberated; yet should it err in interpreting the lights as some unknown, vaguely threatening Other divorced from its own intelligence as a proto-subjectivity, it "strays" into the harrowing world of a lonely alienated "subject" surrounded by discrete "objects" and other subjects that create a basis tension that the "subject" seeks to resolve by alternately "possessing" and "destroying" the others through actual and imaginative attempts at union and negation (i.e. love and war). As with any perceptual situation, the first moment of this straying can thus be analyzed into the "subject" or "perceiver" (understood as a dynamic derivative of the Universe's own gnostic intelligence) which is the main "causal impetus" of the perceptual interpretation, and the fourfold conditions which constitute the entire perceptual event. The perceiver's non-recognition itself is identified as "dimmed awareness" (which literally means "unaware", i.e. ignorance), i.e. in our failure to be aware of the display of lights as our own self-presencing ("self-aware"), our inner light of awareness becomes obscured such that not only do we ourselves become "dimmed", but also a corresponding noematic transformation ensues such that the radiant five-hued light energy congeals and materializes into the five dimmed material elements (earth energy, water energy, fire energy, wind energy, and space energy) which constitute our external environment and physical bodies. This dimmed awareness is analyzed into three phases of increasing coarseness and distortion that are considered as the primary "cause" of straying

(i.e. the misinterpretation of the experienced world as being made up of discrete entities fissured into "self" and "other": "the catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity" (the initial mere lack of recognition), "the coemergent dimmed awareness" (the unfolding dualism that now becomes an innate feature of this proto-psyche), and "the dimmed awareness of rampant reification" (the full blow dualistic conceptual distortions which result). The supporting conditions for this erroneous perception are analyzed into the standard four-part classification of perceptions' conditional determinants normally found in Indian Buddhist epistemological texts, though each term is defined in a special manner to explain the inner mechanism of straying: "the causal condition" (the proto-psyche's non-recognition or dimmed awareness), "the referential condition (the objective presence of external luminous display), the controlling condition (the active assertion of "self" and "mine"), and the immediately antecedent condition (the temporal conjunction of the preceding three). Longchenpa then proceeds to discuss in general the nature of the distorted psychic activity which ensues (the six aspects of the psyche, the five aspects of reifying conceptuality, etc.), and winds up with a treatment of the classic Buddhist analysis of "twelvefold interdependent origination" explained in the special context of his preceding analysis of the Ground, Ground-presencing, and straying into cyclic existence. In general "interdependent origination" indicates the functional interdependence of all phenomena, which instead of being discrete entities adventitiously related to each other (i.e. subject and object, self and other), are inextricably interlinked as they emerge and function in conjunction with each other at all points. In our current context, Longchenpa emphasizes the involutory and evolutionary aspects of this vicious cycle, which accounts not only for the early formation of the Universe, but also repeats itself infinitely over the course of every birth, life and death: this notion of "interdependent origination" indicates clearly the basic presence and primacy of self-organizing intelligence throughout the Universe in all dimensions, as well as the indivisible co-involution and co-evolution of what we tend to fissure into the material



"objective" and psychic "subjective", which explains why the Ground-presencing's pure luminosity is materialized into solid "matter" and "corporeality" in direct relation to the unfolding psychic distortions of dimmed awareness.

(ii) *The Continuing Purity of Cyclic Existence* (195,2-199,3): since the preceding detailed account of how straying systematically contaminates and distorts the entire system in the vicious cycle of cyclic existence may lead one to believe the Ground and its presencing themselves thus become tainted with the delusions of dimmed awareness, Longchenpa at this point cites a number of evocative passages (from exoteric and esoteric sources) emphasizing the ongoing purity of all that is, as well as the indwelling presence of the primordially unstained spiritual reality within us, by delineating the boundaries between "conventional" and "ultimate" truth. He thus characterizes the experience of dualism and alienated materialization as having the status of a dream, reflection or illusion, which to the experiencer seems all too real (and thus has a certain conventional "thoroughly obscured" truth to it in terms of its phenomenological hermetic coherence, as well as a certain intersubjective coherence as in mass hallucination), yet in fact has no ontological status or "ultimate" truth to it. In this way, the Ground and Ground-presencing remain latently present within the depth-heart of our existence undistorted by the pervasive illusions we give ourselves over to, and in that their pure gnostic energy is actually functional as the ultimate source of our entire psycho-physical being, the entire range of our impure alienated experience can be imaginatively traced back to its corresponding pure source-intensity within our hearts. This is not logically established via syllogisms or analysis, but rather is evoked in us through a series of symbolic correspondences: our ordinary body is the Spiritual Body of the Buddha, our ordinary speech are divine mantras, our ordinary mental activity are holistic meditative states, and the entire complex ritual and paraphernalia of Tantric Buddhism (the mandalas, initiations, visualizations, and so on) are located within our own ordinary body, mind and experience as we pass through birth, life, and death. It is thus in this section that

Longchenpa first turns towards one of his major themes, that enlightenment is accomplished via recognition, and as such, involves the unfolding of what is already contained latently within, rather than an unprecedented creation or accessing of some spiritual realm or altered state of consciousness transcendent of our ordinary existence and energy. As a concomitant to this, Longchenpa understands this enlightened nucleus of energy within our gnostic interiority as constantly operative in our current embodiment as the ongoing source of the entire range of our psycho-physical energy, such that the wisdom-energy of the Buddhas is always already dynamically present within us, though its efflorescent dynamics become distorted by force of our persistent refusal to "see the truth", and instead obsessively engage in false ego-logical projects of "self". To provoke the reader to turn with him in understanding the gnostic intelligence which ensures the thorough purity of cyclic existence even in its darkest reaches, Longchenpa relies on poetry and its evocative symbolism (in contrast to the dry prose of the subsequent section on embryogeny). Padmasambhava's KGNT in particular gives a particularly clear account

(iii) *Human Embryogeny* (199,3-208,2): having described the general mechanisms of straying operative in the origination of cyclic existence, Longchenpa now gives a detailed discussion of embryogeny, i.e. how the human embryo takes form from conception to birth. One of the key elements of this interesting account of embryogeny is the presence of "consciousness" at the beginning as an additional component (forming the embryo's "ultimate" energies) to the material elements of the male's semen and the female's ovum (the latter two forming the embryo's "conventional" energies), which derives from the reincarnating being's psychic essence as a subtle complex of "winds" and "mind". This psychic essence brings with it an unconscious karmic complex of life memories in the form of karmic traces or inveterate propensities as seed-potencies within its depth-structure referred to as the "universal ground" of the psyche, which immediately begins to influence the embryo as it directs the embryo's organization and gives rise to proto-emotions. In the

tenth chapter on dying and post-death experiences, Longchenpa describes in more detail the nature of these post-death experiences as the lead into the deceased person's consciousness being led to re-incarnation within its future mother's womb. In the current section, a day by day analysis of the first fifty six days of the embryo's development is provided (presented in the seven day phases), which focuses on the operations of the five elemental energies (earth, water, fire, wind, and space energies) as they develop the embryo's physical structures, as well as subtle energetics (i.e. the channels, energy winds, and seminal nuclei). This account also points out the more subtle "ultimate" elemental energies at work here, which eventually will act as support for the gnostic visions and revelation of Buddhahood in enlightenment. Of particular note here is the intimate linkage of these physical elements and emotional distortions even in the embryo, with the emotional distortions of the proto-psyche determining the relative preponderance of physical elements and the material energies' operations, and those material elements of the body in turn affecting the expression, and further patterns of emotional distortion - the body and psyche co-evolve in interdependent origination right from the moment of conception. In this way, not even the oceanic experiences of the womb, terror-filled shock of birth and pseudo-union of nursing are primordial to the child's psyche (though they evoke primordial archetypal memories), and whatever ideas of the "innocence" of childhood remained after Freud are thoroughly destroyed, as even in the minute embryo of a few cells emotional distortions and reactions are already at work in the basic patterns of desire, hatred, and ignorance.

(iv) *The Subtle Energetics of Human Existence* (208,2-216,2): Longchenpa concludes this second chapter with a discussion of the subtle energetics of the human body/mind, which involves two sections. The first section deals with the classic triune elements of tantric or "mystic" physiology (see Chapter Four and Five's annotations for my thoughts on such "subtle body" theory as a whole) that play such a vital role in contemplative techniques: the inner channels, energy winds, and seminal nuclei that permeate the structure of our existence.

In brief, the channels are conduits or passageways, the seminal nuclei are the "genetic" material of intelligent light energy that flow through those conduits, and the winds are the vital energy that provides the movement or impulse impelling the nuclei through these channels. While these subtle body theories are intended to embrace the coarser physical aspects of our body as well (i.e. "channels" embraces veins, arteries, nerves, ducts, etc., "nuclei" includes sperm, hormones, etc., and "winds" embraces metabolism, digestion, breath, etc.), they cannot be reduced to the material level, but rather have a hermetic quality that is extremely important in our imaginative re-experiencing of the world's creation in contemplation. It is thus important to note the symbolic correspondences and fields of meanings set up in these accounts of the triune subtle body, as well as its close linkage to our ordinary psycho-physical processes. In his description, Longchenpa is careful to account for how these subtle energetics have both an impure distorted aspect and a pure optimal intensity aspect, which in ordinary beings are characterized as the former obscuring the latter, though in fact also stemming from it: there are the ordinary three channels and the transcendent network of "luminous channels", the distorted karmic winds and pure gnostic winds, and the conventional semi-material seminal nuclei and the ultimate gnostic nuclei of light.

The second section then deals with the presence of the five elements (earth, water, fire, wind and space energies) within our body with an emphasis on their pure dimensions as dynamic facets of our heart's gnostic energy (whereas the earlier account of embryogeny tended to focus on the conventional material and semi-material energies that constitute our current impure corporeality). Each element is classified into five internal aspects (i.e. the fivefold earth energy, etc.), with the five aspects of wind-energy further individually divided into five subdivisions each due to the key importance of that element. This discussion would seem to be an outgrowth of the standard fivefold analysis of the "energy winds" that is a common feature of both Hindu and Buddhist tantric thought, which is here applied to each of the other four elements as well. Longchenpa's interpretative comments are rather terse, and

the symbolic underpinnings as well as precise references underlying these various internal divisions of the elements (like a gnostic "periodic table") are often not clear at all, though they appear to be a mix of tantric thought, medical theory, common sense, and certain key doctrines of Great Perfection thought and contemplative praxis. I have done my best to interpret the underlying basis of these classifications in terms of their bodily locations and functions, though it was impossible to be entirely satisfied with the results.

**Chapter Seven *The Third Adamantine Topic: the Enlightened Nucleus Pervading all***

***Living Beings***

This third topic concerns the manner in which the indestructible nucleus of radiant light (the so-called "Buddha nature", a latent core of spiritual awakening within all living beings) continues to pervade sentient beings' psycho-physical fabric even as they stray further and further from a conscious awareness of it into the depths of attachment and coarse materiality. Again, this relates to the ancient heresy that "God" remains indwelling at all times despite our fallen-ness, as well as Heidegger's contention that beings remain inextricably within the embrace and destiny of Being itself, and the notion that a gnostic intelligence or "wisdom" is inherent to the Universe as operative both within matter itself and in/as living beings. TDD's third chapter is thus an elaboration and extension of the brief section in Chapter Two on cyclic existence's thorough purity: while the second chapter detailed how distortion, suffering and fragmentation arises despite the innate purity of the Ground, the third chapter describes how this innate purity nevertheless remains unstained at the core of all life, thereby pointing to the possibility of return. The chapter can be analyzed into three sections: (i) an exoterically oriented discussion of the enlightened nucleus of realized energy (*Tathāgata-garbha*) or "Buddha-nature" present within all living beings; (ii) a detailed tantric analysis of that enlightened nucleus of pristine awareness in terms of its fivefold dynamics; and (iii) a poetic account of how the cosmos is located within our own ordinary and mind, with a particular emphasis on its sacral nature (i.e. the body as a temple, and the Buddha within).

(i) *The Enlightened Nucleus Pervading all Living Beings* (216,2-223,2): following his detailed presentation of the formation of cyclic existence and neurotic living beings, Longchenpa now turns his attention to the manner in which the pure Ground and its holistic presencing continues to be latently present within those living beings as an "enlightened nucleus of realized energy", or an "enlightened nucleus of bliss energy", i.e. the quintessence

of Buddhahood within us. This question of a "Buddha-nature" within all living beings was of course extensively discussed in India, as well as forming an important element of the transmutation of Buddhism in East Asia as a whole, and in fact Longchenpa's presentation here is primarily based on a standard exoteric text: *The Discourse on the Great and Exalted Total Passage Beyond Misery (Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra)*. Longchenpa emphasizes the importance of a positive understanding of emptiness, and characterizes teachings of pure exclusive emptiness (*sTong Nyid rKyang Pa*) as mere "scare tactics" designed to shake the beginner out of his/her ingrained egotism and obsessive fixation on the solidity of discrete "things" and "selves", which must be then superseded by the positive teaching on the vibrant gnostic energy that is simultaneous with emptiness (the Ground's simultaneous original purity and spontaneous presence), yet constitutes an "authentic self" that goes beyond the sterile "no self" teaching of the lower vehicles. As such, he views the third "cycle" or "wheel" (*Khor Lo gSum Pa*) of the Buddha's proclamations as being of ultimate significance, and not the second cycle's teachings of utter emptiness as found in *The Transcendental Consummation of Insight (Prajñā-pāramitā)* literature (see my annotations to Chapter Three for further details). Longchenpa's comments here are fairly typical of the so-called "emptiness of other" or "extrinsic emptiness" (*gZhan sTong*) schools of thought in Tibet (see Hookham's *The Buddha Within* for a detailed discussion), and in fact in this first section he refrains from making any uniquely Great Perfection-oriented interpretations; indeed the entire third chapter is remarkable for its general lack of technical terms and notions belonging to the Great Perfection tradition. However, Longchenpa clearly intends his presentation to be understood structurally in terms of the entire text, and it is within this overall context of the eleven adamant topics that we can see the current chapter as embodying a very sophisticated reinterpretation of the "enlightened nucleus" or "Buddha-nature" theory that goes quite beyond its formulation in India, as well as the general exoterically philosophical-oriented presentations outlined by Hookham (she touches only briefly on related notions in 159-161),

despite his generally conventional remarks on the subject (which are usually quite dependent upon *The Unsurpassed Continuity (Uttara-tantra)* - see STCP1 99b 3ff and ZMYT2 316ff for more extensive comments by Longchenpa). Thus we must understand the enlightened nucleus as the interiorized dimension of the Ground and Ground-presencing discussed in Chapter One, as well as understand Longchenpa's discussions of primordial gnosis' location, pathways and gateways within human existence (see Chapter Four-Six) as applying to the dynamic presence of this enlightened nucleus of pristine gnosis within our bodies. In lines with my previous comments on the subject, this "enlightened nucleus" is not a mere passive latency buried away within our depths, but actually is ceaselessly dynamic as its vibrant luminosity continues to radiate outwards as the source of our psycho-physical being. Of particular importance is the luminous visions of rainbow colored spheres and images in Direct Transcendence contemplation, which are understood as the exteriorized radiation of the heart's enlightened nucleus shining outwards via our heart, and then retroactively perceived with our senses, such that this enlightened nucleus becomes perceivable to us intensely symbolic images. In this way, the entirety of TDD can be understood as an innovative commentary on the significance of the "enlightened nucleus" (*sNying Po*) or "Buddha nature", which the beginning of TDD refers to as "the adamantine nucleus of radiant light". As is typical of Longchenpa, he thus seamlessly interweaves the esoteric and exoteric traditions of Buddhism into a single discourse, and again we come to the vital importance of his writings' internal architectonic structuring, since otherwise we might be tempted to dismiss this short section on exoteric views of the indwelling "Buddha nature", and wrongly conclude TDD has little to offer on this subject. Elsewhere in his corpus Longchenpa frequently cites exoteric passages concerning the "enlightened nucleus of realized energy" or "Buddha-nature" where his framing comments explicitly interpret it in terms of the unique features of the Great Perfection, such as the network of luminous channels and Direct Transcendence contemplation (for example, see LYT2 244,6). LYT2 252,2 has this



particularly clear account in the context discussing the Direct Transcendence visions: "...these visionary presences are the external presencing of the radiation of the radiant light from within your heart; since whoever sees them perceives the presence of the enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy, it is said that they" contact primordial gnosis in its radiant light" ..."

It should also be noted that while Tibetan Buddhism in general views this "Buddha nature" as present within the minutest of insects (accounting for the extreme care a devout Tibetan Buddhist will take in avoiding harm to insects), there is generally a strict line drawn between "living beings" and vegetative life, despite the emphasis on harmony with nature such as clearly discernible within Longchenpa's poetry (see Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 166-172 for a summary of such passages). This question as to the distinction between "living beings" and "plants" (which bears on the central position of the continuity of consciousness or psychic force beyond death in Buddhism as a whole), as well as the related issues of the status of microorganisms where the line between "insect" and "plant" would seem quite blurred and relationship of the "enlightened nucleus" to inanimate material things, is rather interesting, and requires further thought. The Great Perfection tradition in particular emphasizes that the entire material and animate Universe is the dynamism of this enlightened nucleus' self-organizing gnostic intelligence (i.e. the "play of the singular enlightened mind"), though it appears to makes a subtle distinction between this gnostic intelligence as present within living beings, and as reflected within the inanimate light energy (and its congealed presence as matter) that is in co-evolution within them, a distinction present at the beginnings of the Universe: the Ground's nature gives rise to rainbow hued light displays, while its compassionate resonance manifests as the capacity for self-reflection and consciousness. It may be that Longchenpa thus tends to restrict the term "enlightened nucleus" or "Buddha-nature" to living beings to emphasize this distinction (in lines with his overall tendency to understand things in terms of complex interlocking hierarchies, and disinclination to vague generalized claims such as that the "enlightened nucleus" is present within everything down

to each individual atom), while his overall discourse clearly indicates that even material things are derivative of the resonating gnostic intelligence at the Universe's heart, which in CBD in particular is referred to as the "enlightened mind" (since I only recently focused on this question of explicitly attributing the term "enlightened nucleus" to inanimate matter, I need to reexamine Longchenpa's discussions, though certainly in general he consistently associates the "enlightened nucleus" with "all living beings" rather than broader statements as to its pervasive presence within all material things as well). Hookham's comments in *The Buddha Within* 291-293 make a pertinent point with respect to important aesthetic differences between Tibetan traditions and East Asian Buddhism in relation to this issue, yet she fails to clearly state the above distinction; at the same time, further research is necessary to clarify the relationship of Hua-Yen views on the subject to Longchenpa's Great Perfection writings.

(ii) *The Fivefold Dynamics of the Enlightened Nucleus* (223,3-227,1): following his mainly allegorical presentation indicating the general presence of this enlightened nucleus within living beings despite their ignorance of it, Longchenpa now turns to an analysis of the dynamic identity of this enlightened nucleus of pristine awareness. Its dynamics are given as a series of fivefold classifications derived from Buddhist tantra (the five primordial gnoses, the five Spiritual Bodies, and so on), which are also reflected on the impure lower order in similar fivefold classifications (the five emotional distortions, the five psycho-physical aggregates, and so on). All these terms are understood as symbolic evocations of awareness' own dynamics, the gnostic intelligence of the Universe which is the root of our capacity for consciousness, and thus Longchenpa one by one explains the particular dimension of awareness that underlies each term. This section concludes by tying the discussion back into Chapter One's analysis of the Ground in terms of the triune identity of empty essence, radiant nature, and all-encompassing compassionate resonance, each of which is defined as expressing itself in terms of the previously discussed quintets.

(iii) *The Cosmic Mandala within Us* (227,1-229,5): to conclude the chapter, Longchenpa extends the symbolic correspondences of pure and impure in an evocative section locating the entire "pure" religious structure (its canons, Masters, temples, and realizations) within our ordinary "impure" body, speech and mind as the seemingly exterior macrocosm is found within the microcosmic human body, mind, and gnostic awareness. With these detailed correspondences describing the interior body in terms of a tree, typical Tibetan landscape, the firmament, and the religious trappings of a temple in a series of often striking images, Longchenpa intends not only to evoke the spiritual presence of the enlightened nucleus within us (and thus an initial understanding that we are, and always have been, luminous beings who are the residence of the divine), but also a sense of the intimate co-evolution of the exterior and interior expressed in the mystery that true self-awareness reveals the entire cosmos to be self-presencing.

**Chapter Eight *The Fourth Adamantine Topic: the Location of Primordial Gnosis within Us***

The fourth topic deals with the location and presence of pure primordial gnosis within the human body and mind, the nature of its dynamism as distorted in our ordinary neurotic unconscious and psyche, and the interrelations of pure gnosis with our present impure corporeality and distorted psychic activity. As such, it can be understood as an extension of the third chapter's discussion of the indwelling enlightened nucleus or "Buddha nature", and as such deals with the issue in terms of the unique doctrines of the Great Perfection. The chapter has three main sections: (i) an opening section on the primary locations and forms gnostic energy takes within our body; (ii) a detailed delineation and differentiation between the impure "universal ground" of our neurotic psyche and the pure Reality Body that is the quintessence of the Awakened Ones; and (iii) a similarly detailed delineation and differentiation between the impure dualistically and emotionally distorted ordinary "mind" of sentient beings and the pure non-dual optimal primordial gnosis characterizing the psychic activity of the Awakened Ones.

(i) *The locations and forms of primordial gnosis within the human body* (229,5-232,6): Longchenpa opens the chapter with a general discussion of the particular regions in the human body where primordial gnosis and its radiation tend to concentrate, which he sums up into four "divine palaces": the heart (referred to by its Sanskrit term *Tsitta*), the skull (referred to as the "white conch shell house"), the eyes (at times referred to by their Sanskrit term *Tsakshu*, and at other times by the evidently Indic term *Briguta*), and the inner channels (it is important to keep in mind that the gnostic essence or enlightened nucleus is resident within the heart, while the other centers are important areas where its radiation tends to take significant forms). This is related directly to enlightened nucleus being described symbolically in terms of the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities (which

appear to all living beings in post death visions (described in the so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead*), as well as to a select few visionaries in this very life time within the context of Direct Transcendence visions), with the 42 peaceful deities being present within the still center of the heart, and the 58 wrathful deities (as their radiation) located within the furious dynamic center of the brain. Their luminous radiation in terms of seminal nuclei and linked chains of light pervades throughout the body's channels, while the "eyes" are especially important as a pair of channels of pure light energy run directly from the heart's enlightened nucleus to the centers of the two eyes, and act as the conduit whereby the radiant images of this internal luminosity become exteriorized and directly visible within the Direct Transcendence visions. Longchenpa thus sums up the forms in which primordial gnosis is present within our body as its essence being present in terms of Spiritual Bodies, its nature in terms of seminal nuclei of light, and its compassionate resonance as the gnostic lamps. The Spiritual Bodies indicate its mandalic gestalts or principal energy, the seminal nuclei signify its dynamic radiation as radiating throughout the body as the source of our psycho-physical vibrancy, and the gnostic lamps indicate this radiation's optimal activation via contemplation such that it becomes manifestly present to us in a series of intensifying visions that ultimately lead us back into our own heart, and the attainment of fully unfolded enlightenment.

(ii) *The differentiation between the universal ground and the Reality Body* (232,6-237,7):  
 Longchenpa next discusses a classic topic of Great Perfection literature clearly discussed already within *The Seventeen Tantras*, that of the need to strictly differentiate between the "universal ground" of our psyche operative as the fundamental basis of cyclic existence (*Samsara*), and the Reality Body which is the basis of transcendental reality (*Nirvana*). This notion of the "universal ground" is certainly based on the previous articulation of an "universal ground consciousness" (*Ālaya-vijñāna*) in the "Yogic" or "Mind Only" tradition in Indian Buddhism (*Yogācāra; Cittamātra*), but that concept is quite transformed as it is woven into the overall structure of Great Perfection thought. In brief, it refers to the subtle

substratum of our psyche which first develops in those initial instants of the Ground-presencing where the Universe's capacity for self-reflection fails to recognize itself, and thus becomes pervaded by dimmed awareness as it strays into cyclic existence. This basic substratum of dimmed awareness or non-recognition acts as a type of karmic repository ensuring a personal continuity or unconscious "memory" throughout the endless cycles of birth and death, with all our physical, verbal, and mental actions leaving subtle karmic traces or imprints that then influence our future acts as inveterate propensities in a constantly changing mutually sustaining feedback loop. The "universal ground" thus obviously is closely connected with twentieth century theories of the "unconscious", though it is important to be sensitive to the quite different terms in which each is understood (see Waldron's *The Ālayavijñāna in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought* for a discussion of the Indian concept's relations to modern psychoanalytic theories of the unconscious). This unconscious substratum thus acts as the basis for the standard eightfold analysis of our modes of consciousness or cognition: (i-v) the five sensory modes of consciousness (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile), (vi) the psychic or intellectual mode of consciousness that conceptually processes the former's sensory data, (vii) the emotionally distorted psyche as ego-logical trends assert themselves, and (viii) the "universal ground consciousness", an amorphous mode of consciousness closely linked to the universal ground itself. At any rate, in the present context it must be understood that this universal ground's essence is dimmed awareness, and as such, it is an intrinsically distorted dimension whose beginning and end perfectly coincides with the limits of cyclic existence. Though it operates as the most basic conventional substratum of our psyche with its karmic repository-source, it is itself actually derivative of the pristine gnostic awareness present within our heart, and is described as the dimming radiation of the heart's luminous channels under the conditions of non-recognition, i.e. dimmed awareness. This pristine awareness is precisely what the "Reality Body" refers to, which, rather than being some far distant potential to develop into a Buddha is the vibrant

empty intelligence that is dynamically operative within our own existence right here and now. Because the relationship between this Reality Body and universal ground is thus more like the radiant life-giving sun and the clouds which adventitiously obscure it than gold and the stone from which it was alchemically transformed, Longchenpa totally rejects any confusion or identification between these two terms, and is particularly adamant about rejecting the notion that the universal ground is transformed or purified into the Reality Body. Purity is primordial, and the Universe's gnostic intelligence is always already present, such that enlightenment involves the *dissipation* of the universal ground and the neurotic distorting psychic activities based upon it, such that the indwelling Reality Body can radiantly shine forth free of the obscuring clouds of dimmed awareness. In this way, while the "universal ground" in Great Perfection thought is clearly based on earlier Indo-Buddhist literature referring to the "universal ground consciousness", the concept of the "Ground" itself is quite distinct.

An important aspect of Longchenpa's discussion is his obvious sensitivity to the numerous other sources which tend to blur this line between the Reality Body and the Universal Ground, which he explains in part due to a widespread confusion as to two distinct uses of the term "universal ground" (see Karmay's *The Great Perfection* 178-184 for a brief overview of this problematic surrounding the term "universal ground" and some interesting sources on the issue, though it seems to me he has failed to understand the overall contextualization of the term "universal ground" in Longchenpa's thought, and in particular in terms of its relation to the first two adamantine topics). While in general Longchenpa uses the term in the above sense, some Tantras apply the term "universal Ground" to the primordial Ground itself in the sense that the entire panorama of cyclic existence and transcendence ultimately derives from the Ground as their pure source-potential, with the result that many scholars then mistakenly conflated the two distinct references, and thus deduced that the Reality Body (i.e. the primordial Ground) could be identified with the

purified "universal ground" of our present psyches. Longchenpa's entire discussion then is oriented towards pointing out the many fallacies inherent in such an identification, and indeed the strict demarcation of these two terms is already clearly present in *The Seventeen Tantras*. Interestingly, despite Longchenpa's strident rejection of any identification of these two terms in TDD, TCD and his other Great Perfection writings, his own exoterically oriented writings as found in *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* and *The Wish-fulfilling Treasury* are quite ambiguous on this question, and actually tend to blur the distinction between the Reality Body and the universal ground, with some aspects of the latter clearly referring to the primordial Ground. As for possible implications of this in terms of our dating of Longchenpa's corpus, see my discussion above (Tulku Thondup in *Buddha Mind* 214 notes the different presentations of "universal ground" in these texts, but fails to provide any suggestions as to understanding the significance of this striking difference in terms of the possible evolution of Longchenpa's thought).

(iii) *The differentiation between our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis* (237,7-249,4): the referent of the term "mind" is by definition neurotic and dualistic in structure, while the term "primordial gnosis" is often understood as the transformation of the mind into the enlightened non-dual and undistorted cognitive processes of an Awakened One, or Buddha. The latter definition is precisely the type of interpretation that Longchenpa is concerned to totally reject, since in his view it precisely reverses the relationship that pertains between the two: primordial gnosis is the primary reality of vibrant luminosity ever-present within our heart, while the "mind" is merely the distorted derivative of its dynamism that begins and ends with cyclic existence. This opposition is closely connected to the previous section's contrast between the universal ground and the Reality Body, since in brief the universal ground is the basis or substratum of the ordinary mind which is its dynamic operations, just as the Reality Body is the "substratum" of primordial gnosis, which then signifies its dynamism. Longchenpa thus totally rejects notions that enlightenment stems from the



purification or transformation of the mind, since instead it is the positive presence of primordial gnosis enfolded within our interiority that unfolds into the manifest awakening of a Buddha when the obscuring clouds of the ordinary "mind" have been cleared away. This was also a controversial issue in Tibetan Buddhism, and it is important to keep in mind that in the Great Perfection "primordial gnosis" indicates the inherent self-organizing intelligence of the Universe itself, the wisdom of Being in which all beings remain in the embrace of. This intelligence remains operative within us at unconscious levels along with its objective correlate of pure light intensity, and remains in sharp contrast to the dualistic emotionally distorted mind fixated on its illusion of a personal ego threatened and desirous of the other, along with its objective correlate of solidified material appearances, and distorted, reified entitativized appearances in general (the "co-evolution" of the subject and object, the interior and exterior). In contemplation, the key then is to directly penetrate to this normally unconscious gnostic intelligence and its pure luminosity via bypassing the normally obsessive mind with its distorted appearances, and thus gradually en-lighten our being as the background goes into the ascendancy, and our mind and its seemingly solid "realities" gradually fade away within the expanding vibrancy of our inner core of self-organizing light energy. A particularly interesting facet of Longchenpa's discussion here is his discussion of the "location" and "pathway" of the mind and primordial gnosis in our body, which foreshadows the discussion of "luminous channels" in Chapter Five. Finally, it should be noted that it is in this section that Longchenpa's virulent anti-idealism first surfaces in TDD, as he totally rejects the obviously prevalent notion of his contemporaries that somehow "appearances" can be reduced to the individual ego and its ordinary psychic activity, i.e. the "mind". This is a very consistent theme that constantly reoccurs in his corpus, and is an important factor in understanding the nature of "self-recognition" of the external presencings as "self-presencing" that constitutes enlightenment, as well as his frequent descriptions of the entire cosmos as the "play" or "creative dynamism" of the one and only gnostic awareness,

which must be identified as the self-organizing intelligence at work throughout every dimension of the Universe, and in particular within our psycho-physical being, though unrecognized as such. The key to this issue lies in the abyss between the alienated ego and authentic gnostic subjectivity, between congealed matter and pure intensities of light, between the self and the Other: this abyss may only be bridged by a leap of recognition that is without ground, and yet paradoxically reveals the abyssal Ground that fills the void without becoming any-thing at all in doing so, such that we soar with the wings of enlightenment through the expanse which is our only true home.

**Chapter Nine *The Fifth Adamantine Topic: the Pathways of Primordial Gnosis***

***Within Us***

The fifth topic concerns the pathways via which the enlightened nucleus' gnostic energy circulates in our body from the heart's interiority, and in particular the pure pathways ("luminous channels") via which (in Direct Transcendence contemplation) that gnostic luminosity shines forth from the depths of our heart out into the external expanse of space, where it is directly visible to us (such that re-experience the initial emergence of the Ground-presencing from within the self-contained depths of the Ground). Thus this is the key chapter in TDD concerning what is often referred to as "subtle body" theory or "mystic" physiology, though the term "mystic" is quite misleading since these intensely symbolic analyses of the flows of energy in human existence embrace bioenergetic processes as well as contemplative imaginal realities, and hence are complex interpretative frameworks not reducible to either physiological realities or "mystic" imagination. Longchenpa's discussion not only accounts for the nature of our identity as luminous beings in showing how the heart's inner luminosity branches outwards throughout our body, he also presents a comprehensive theory of our coarse and subtle psycho-spiritual structures or "energetics", along with indications of the contemplative means through which we can imaginatively manipulate and/or activate these energetics to help us in our quest to overcome neurosis and alienation as we progress down the spiritual path towards the citadel of enlightenment. These subtle energetics, as mentioned above, can be encapsulated into the following indivisibly interrelated triad of elements: the channels, energy winds, and seminal nuclei, of which the first and third are focused on here as the "winds" were dealt within in detail in Chapters One and Two. We can rearrange Longchenpa's account into three main sections: (i) the luminous channels of pure gnostic flows of energy; (ii) the three principal exoteric channels of the human body; and (iii) the seminal nuclei that constitute the dynamic energy flowing through those channels.

(i) *The luminous channels* (249,7-251,6; 255,5-256,2): while the three principal channels subsequently dealt with are a standard feature of Hindu and Buddhist tantric physiologies, the so-called "luminous channels" are a unique feature of the Great Perfection tradition. These "luminous channels" are imagined as slender lines of light running throughout our body, and as such are given various imagistic names such as "crystal tube" and "white silk thread" channels. They should be understood as the network of luminous radiation extending outwards from the heart's enlightened nucleus to pervade our body, and as such are conduits of exclusively pure undistorted energy in contrast to the exoteric triad of channels which are said to have both pure optimal modes and impure distorted modes of operation. As such, there are two distinct functions to this network of luminous channels: in general, they act as the ongoing ultimate source of our psycho-physical vitality such as in their "radiation" forming the "universal ground" of our psyche, while in particular, within the context of the Direct Transcendence visions, a luminous channel running from the heart up to the center of the two eyes (also called "the far ranging water lamp") acts as the conduit for the overflowing of the stimulated enlightened nucleus' luminosity such that via the eyes' gateways it becomes exteriorized into the external space surrounding us, where we directly perceive the enlightened nucleus in luminous images of rainbow colored mandalas of light. Longchenpa's account of this latter function also clearly indicates that the luminous nuclei within these channels continue to fuel the ongoing transformations of these visions as they intensify, rather than merely acting as a conduit for their initial manifestation. Finally, within these visions, the luminous channels' slender lines of light gradually expand outwards while maintaining their pure intensity, such that our corporeality dematerializes and we are liberated within a body of pure light (or a "rainbow body").

(ii) *The three principal channels* (249,5-7; 251,6-255,5): Longchenpa next turns his attention to the standard presentation of three principal channels running up the center of our body, which are discussed in both Hindu and Buddhist tantric literature in India. While some

traditions simply refer to these primarily as the "right", "left" and "central" channels. Longchenpa's analysis is very rooted in the etymological meaning of each channel's proper name: "the flavor channel", "the solitary channel", and "the all-encompassing channel". Unlike the luminous channels, the energy-flows within these three channels have both distorted and non-distorted modes, such that they act both as the support for cyclic existence's continuing illusion within the conditions of non-recognition, and as the basis for transcendent reality's liberating enlightenment in the eventuality of self-recognition. Longchenpa's own discussion is centered on the contemplative means enabling you to tune into these channels' respective energy flows, and thereby begin the transition from distortion to liberation by freeing-up and/or activating these channels' pure energy. This section thus focuses on lower order contemplative techniques such as "sex yoga" or "food yoga", though it also remarks upon the gnostic lamps which play the vital role in Direct Transcendence contemplation. As such, the luminous channels and three principal channels are closely linked with each other (both playing roles in Great Perfection contemplation proper), and it would appear that in part this can be understood as the luminous channels being the inner esoteric reality of the three principal channels, which as the outer external sheath embrace a wider variety of bioenergetic psycho-physical functions deriving from that inner slender line of pure light radiation. The basic interconnections between these three channels are symbolically very important: the flavor channel on the right hand side of the body tends to be associated with "conventional" physiological processes; the solitary channel on the left hand side of the body is primarily associated with "ultimate" gnostic radiation and our innate intelligence; and the all-encompassing channel at their center then represents the non-dual integration and transcendence of this opposition into the unitary energy of our own being. At times the "all-encompassing channel" thus seems to be identified with the luminous channel, while at times it is strictly differentiated as the latter's external sheath, such that the latter represents the primordial "super unity" which continues uninterruptedly throughout all evolution as the utter

unforced natural unity of all life. It is important to keep in mind that these characterizations of the channels refer to the nature of energy flowing with them, i.e. the seminal nuclei (see next section), and in line with the tantric identification of these nuclei as the "enlightened minds" (in Buddhist Tantras' interiorization of the spiritual quest in terms of our own psycho-physical processes), these nuclei (along with the channels that function as their primary conduit) are characterized in terms of the three main facets of the "enlightened mind" which a practitioner aspires to, and an Awakened One fully incarnates: its "efficacious means", its "insight", and their non-dual integration. Thus the flavor channel is the primary location for the conventional nuclei and their "efficacious means" (i.e. physiological processes), the solitary channel is the primary location for the ultimate nuclei and their "insight" (i.e. the higher order intelligence in-forming these processes), and the all-encompassing channels represents their transcendent integration into a unitary flow (see my annotations to Chapter Five for further thoughts on this symbolic structure). Finally, Longchenpa gives an account of the four main energy "wheels" within our body (which signify the vital intersection points of channels within our body), and details the significance of these four wheels in relation to the three channels.

(iii) *The seminal nuclei* (256,2-259,4): as mentioned above, the critical importance of these channels lies in the energy flowing within them, which primarily takes the form of "seminal nuclei", a term denoting a wide range of inner processes including physiological hormones, sexual fluids, and so on, as well as subtle pure light intensities emanating outwards from the heart. The main classifications of these nuclei are fourfold: the "conventional nuclei" predominant within the flavor channel, the "ultimate nuclei" predominant within the solitary channel, the "natural nuclei" predominant within the all-encompassing channel, and the "nuclei of light" found within the luminous channels. Longchenpa's analysis again focuses on the significance of these nuclei in terms of contemplation and the spiritual path, with "conventional nuclei" being the key dynamic in the

lower order practices of sex yoga, and the "nuclei of light" being the key to the higher order practices of Direct Transcendence meditation. Longchenpa thus begins by giving an overview of these varying types of seminal nuclei, their corresponding contemplative techniques, and various locations within the human body, followed by an account of the "nuclei of light" as the dynamic supports of the Direct Transcendence visions (this description is fairly general, while technical detailed accounts of these nuclei within that context can be found in Chapters Six and Seven), and the manipulation of the seminal nuclei as the key aspect of sexual yoga. It is of course the former that is the heart of the Great Perfection tradition and thus the central topic of TDD, and Longchenpa is careful to strictly differentiate between the two, emphasizing that sexual yoga has no place within the Great Perfection other than as an auxiliary expedient means to engage those whose sensual obsessions block them from otherwise turning to spiritual pursuits (and who must then subsequently be led to true Great Perfection contemplation once their sexual yogic practices begin to wean them away from fixation on corporeal desire).

**Chapter Ten *The Sixth Adamantine Topic: the Gateways of Primordial Gnosis Within***

**Us**

The sixth topic focuses on two essential interrelated aspects of Great Perfection thought, which have their roots in exoteric Indian Buddhism yet in fully developed form are unique to the Great Perfection: the "gateways" in the human body as the site for the movement of primordial gnosis from interiority to exteriority, and then retroactively from exteriority to interiority; and the "gnostic lamps" as the dynamic forms primordial gnosis' luminous radiation takes as it passes through these gateways into the external expanse of the sky. These "gateways" and "gnostic lamps" are a key innovation in Great Perfection subtle body theory as well as the understanding of the heart's "enlightened nucleus", and are critical elements in understanding the "theoretical" background of Direct Transcendence contemplation (one of two main aspects of Great Perfection meditation), as well as providing a classificatory scheme for understanding the contents and dynamics of those visions. In simplified terms, "gateway" refers to our eyes, and in particular to the two slender luminous channels running upwards from heart (the location of the enlightened nucleus' pristine luminosity) to the center of the two eyes. In Direct Transcendence meditation, the heart's luminosity is stimulated or activated through focusing on an external light source (such as the sun, moon, or a lamp) while remaining in a state of focused calm, with the body in one of a standardized set of three "watching postures", and the eyes in one of a similar triune set of "gazes". By these simple means applied in reliance upon your Spiritual Master's detailed oral instructions, the enlightened nucleus' luminous radiation becomes stimulated such that it overflows through these luminous channels into the eyes ("the gateways"), and thereby flows outwards into the space surrounding you, where it becomes directly visible to your eyesight in a series of luminous images. This luminosity is encapsulated into four "gnostic lamps", along with the related critical concept of awareness' radiation being visible as minute linked



chains of light: the far ranging noose water lamp, the empty seminal nuclei lamp, the thoroughly pure expanse lamp, and the self-emergent insight lamp. In overly simplified terms, the far ranging noose water lamp refers to the luminous channels running in slender lines to our two eyes, the empty seminal nuclei and pure expanse lamps signify the primary forms that the radiation of our internal awareness and expanse respectively take within these visionary presences, and the self-emergent insight lamp indicates our nucleus of pristine awareness along with its dynamic capacities to perceive these visions with penetrating insight. In this way, the luminosity of the indwelling Buddha-nature becomes exteriorized in rainbow colored visions that are directly present to our eyes, and which gradually unfold in complexity and extent in a series of four visions (see Chapter Eight) culminating in the vivid presence of the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities stretching across the sky, and its subsequent dissolution within the expanse of reality. The nature of these visions is essentially identical to the Ground-presencing which manifests from within the Ground's formless self-contained depths at the beginning of the Universe, as well as to the post-death visions of the reality intermediate state (see Chapter Ten), and these lamps should be understood as illuminating the pure Ground-presencing usually obscured within us by the clouds of our ordinary neurosis and corporeality, revealing the inner divinity that makes us essentially luminous being as we re-experience the primordial beginnings of the Universe via this exteriorization of our inner grounding essence's radiation. These four lamps are characterized by an inner unity as well, since ultimately these are mere analytic divisions of the unitary nucleus of triune gnostic energy (the Ground) and its luminous self-presencing in terms of mandalically structured quintets (the Ground-presencing). Longchenpa's discussion of this sixth topic can be analyzed into six sections: (i) a brief section on the concept of "gateway" in relation to the heart-to-eyes luminous channels; (ii) a general overview of the four lamps; (iii) a thorough discussion of the far ranging water lamp; (iv) the empty seminal nuclei lamp; (v) the pure expanse lamp; and (vi) the far-ranging water lamp.

(i) *The gateway of primordial gnosis* (259,4-261,4): this short section describes the luminous channel running from the heart to the two eyes within the outer sheath of the ordinary visual channel (evidently the optic nerve), which in general is referred to as the "far ranging noose water lamp", and is visually described as resembling the horns of a *Ba Men* since from a narrow base at the top of the skull these two branches expand in diameter as they run down to the eyes (*Ba Men* is often understood as a type of deer or buffalo, evidently with the emphasis on the tapered nature of the horns rather than the unusual feature of the "base" being narrow and the "tip" being wide, but this common identification of *Ba Men* in this context is controversial). As usual, Longchenpa is careful to differentiate between the luminous channel which enables the vision of the gnosis' luminous presences (*'Od sNang*) in Direct Transcendence contemplation, and the coarse eye with its semi-material visual faculty which enables the vision of ordinary distorted appearances (*'Khrul sNang*): the former is labeled "the pure far ranging noose water lamp", and the latter is labeled "the impure far ranging noose water lamp". He thus criticizes those who identify this lamp as merely the eye itself, and in other texts identifies only the tips of those two luminous channels as the "real" water lamp. The discussion of this far ranging water lamp at the beginning of the chapter in addition to its subsequent separate section along with the other three gnostic lamps indicates its central importance, and indicates that this "water lamp" not only denotes the passageway of the visions, but also in part connotes the entire network of luminous channels, which is simply a name applied to our inner luminosity as it radiates outwards from the heart. In this sense all the lamps depend on the "far ranging water lamp" not only in that it provides the conduit for their exteriorization (TCD2 1,3-4), but also in that on the whole they are all ultimately mere facets of the radiation of the luminous channels (for example see *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* (Ati 527,1), where the four lamps are described as being the "light emanated out from the luminous channel"; however, see my discussion below as to how the

insight lamp's also denotes the heart's inner awareness, in which sense the other three lamps are its radiation).

The notion of "gateways" is a very ancient one in Buddhism, and plays a particularly important role in the Great Perfection. For example, human existence is generally summed up in terms of the "three gateways" of our body, speech, and mind", which are the gateways or modes through which we encounter the external world; the five senses are termed the "five gateways" since they are doors opening both outwards and inwards as we go outwards towards the world, and the external world enters into the otherwise self-contained interiority of our consciousness. In the current context, after discussing the internal "pathways" of primordial gnosis within the human body, Longchenpa turns towards the "gateways" which these pathways lead to, i.e. the portals through which this gnostic energy may pass outwards into the external sphere. This obviously involves a radically active mode of perception, as instead of the mere passive registering of incoming sensory data or even the semi-active filtering and manipulation of that data, the "sensory data" (i.e. the lights) itself first issues outwards from our own interiority via the eyes, and then as exteriorized images of light are perceived by our eyes in direct sensory experience. While "gateways" in this context is thus generally understood as "eyes", in fact these classical texts of the Great Perfection often speak of "five gateways" classified into three groups, which are correlated to the radiation of Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind: the five gateways are our two "eyes", our two ears, and our Brahma's aperture, i.e. the top of our crown where hair swirls outwards (see VNT2 86,6). Following ZMYT2 283,1's comments, we can understand our two eyes as serving as the gateway for the "inner Buddha's" luminous radiation as Enlightened Bodies, since the luminosity shining outwards through them is ultimately perceived as the intensely colored images of the Buddhas' physical forms in mandalic arrangements; our two ears serve as the gateway for that "enlightened nucleus" or "Buddha's nature's" Enlightened Speech emanate outwards in the form of mantric rhythms; and the Brahma's aperture then is the chief gateway

for the "linked chains" of awareness' radiation, which are thus here correlated to the enlightened nucleus' Enlightened Mind (these linked chains are the ultimate seeds giving rise to the mandalas of Buddhas in the third vision of Direct Transcendence, just as the Enlightened Mind is the quintessence of the Buddhas - see TDD 383,2-3 for a quote from *The Seventeen Tantras* instructing us to look to the linked chains' Spiritual Bodies if "you desire to see the Enlightened Mind of all the Buddhas"). Additionally, the significance of isolating out the eyes and ears in particular from our five senses relates to the obvious primacy of vision and hearing within the human species, which together not only account for most cultural art forms, but also the critical facility of language in both its graphic and aural dimensions. For this reason, KGYT2 218,1ff explains the gateway of primordial gnosis as fourfold: the gateways for its "direct manifestation", i.e. the two eyes, and the gateways for its "hidden presence", i.e. the two ears. "Directly manifest" (*mNgon Du Gyur Pa*) and "hidden" (*IKog Tu Gyur*) are epistemological terms that generally refer respectively to objects immediately evident to our sensory perception, and to objects that are not immediately perceivable via our direct sensory perception, but rather than can only be understood through reasoning and inference. In the present context, "directly manifest" evidently refers to the luminous visions of Direct Transcendence where we directly perceive the gnostic radiation that passes through the eyes, while "hidden" indicates that the gnostic energy passing through the ears is not immediately evident in this manner. ZMYT2 294,4ff says that the ears are "hidden" gateways since gnosis "pervades them without lighting-up or appearing (directly)", while the eyes are the "directly manifest" gateways since the gnostic radiation via them is "radiant and unimpeded". In the same context, on ZMYT1 455,6-456,2 Longchenpa provides a further explanation, which he explicitly says "is a vital point that I realized for myself, and which others don't understand". In this passage, he says the reason that only the eyes and ears are classified as the gateways of primordial gnosis from among the five sensory gateways is as follows: though all five are similar in terms of being

gateways for the flow of ordinary perceptual consciousness which is primordial gnosis' dynamism after all, the key feature distinguishing the eyes and ears from the other senses is that through them in particular, right in the current moment we can directly see and hear primordial gnosis' own natural radiation (in its pure intensity) in terms of the triad of "sounds, lights, and rays" (*sGra 'Od Zer*). Longchenpa is of course referring to their function in the Direct Transcendence visions, which consist of the mantric sounds, luminous images, and radiating rays of light of the mandalic presence of the enlightened nucleus' exteriorized radiation. The term "sounds, lights, and rays" is a common expression in detailing these visions are part of post-death experience in the intermediate state of reality (see Fremantle's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* 40-41 for a simple description in that context), while Namkhai Norbu provides a more pertinent explanation in his *Dzogchen* (20): the manifestation of the Enjoyment Body (which forms the essence of the Direct Transcendence visions) takes place via three factors - mantric sound is the first stage of energy's manifestation; light is the second stage as the energy becomes visible without any specific form; and "rays" indicates the third phase as the infinite forms and colors of the divine mandalas take shape. In ZMYT2, Longchenpa gives a somewhat different presentation where he combines the "gateways of primordial gnosis" with the "gateways of the ordinary mind". For example, ZMYT2 294,4-6 defines the gateways of primordial gnosis as the two eyes and two ears (thus totaling four), while it says the gateways of the mind are the "three gateways of desire", i.e. the mouth and two nostrils (made explicit on KGYT2 225,2). On ZMYT2 282,6-283,2, Longchenpa correlates the two eyes with the presence of the Spiritual Bodies luminous radiation; the two eyes with the presence of the sounds of Enlightened Speech; and says the "radiation of the Enlightened Mind shines the ordinary mind in its linkage with the lungs." Thus again he defines the "fifth" gateway corresponding to the Enlightened Mind in terms of the formation of ordinary distorted psychic activity via the heart's radiation mixing with the lungs' breath (and thus "the gateway of the mind"), while the accounts above identify the fifth

gateway as an additional gateway of primordial gnosis located at the Brahma's aperture (LYT1 465-466 has a related anomalous presentation of the "four gateways" of awareness' radiation as including the heart-lung channel where the mind forms, whereas other accounts define all four as referring to the exclusively pure luminous channels - see my annotations to Chapter Five for a translation of the full passage). Finally, the use of "gateways" in Chapter One should be noted, where the Ground-presencing's manifestation is summed up in terms of "eight gateways of spontaneous presence's shining forth", and in particular speaks of the "two gateways" of pure and impure self-interpretation via which the Ground-presencing either enters the epoch of transcendence (*Nirvana*) or of cyclic existence (*Samsara*).

(ii) *The four lamps of primordial gnosis* (261,4-262,6): I have outlined the significance of these four lamps above as the four dynamic operators pertaining to our internal nucleus of luminosity, the inner light of pristine awareness. The actual term "lamp of primordial gnosis" (*sGron Ma; Mar Me*) can be found in previous exoteric Buddhist texts, where the Awakened One's primordial gnosis is seen as a "lamp" which illuminates the world not only for the Awakened One's own penetrating insight, but also sheds light on the spiritual path for all living beings, clearing away the dark gloom of ignorance. The Buddhas themselves are termed "lamps", since they are the "lights of the world" whose teachings and charismatic actions constitute brilliant points of light throughout the "nighttime" of cyclic existence. For example, see the citation from *The Litany of the Eloquent One's Names* on LYT2 252,4, which Davidson (verse 62) renders thus ("the torch of gnosis" renders the term I here translate as "the lamp of gnosis"; also see the quote on ZMYT2 140,2):

*Vairocana, the great lumen, the light of gnosis, he is the illuminator, the lamp of the world, the torch of gnosis, with great splendor he is radiant light...*

Thus it is natural that in the Great Perfection the radiation of the enlightened nucleus as exteriorized in the Direct Transcendence visions would be imaged as gnostic "lamps" lighting-up across the sky's expanse like the dawn of the sun marking the new day's onset (it must also be kept in mind that these "lamps" are the key dynamic of the post-death visions in

the intermediate state of reality as well, since the transcendent visions of the Ground-presencing, post-death intermediate state, and Direct Transcendence contemplation are all ultimately identical). As a side note, Longchenpa at times quotes some quite provocatively lines from exoteric Indian Buddhist texts that are startling similar to certain descriptions of the Direct Transcendence visions, such as this passage from *The Flower Ear Adornment of the Buddhas Discourse* (ZMYT2 140,3):

*Luminously radiant from the ground to the ocean,  
For some it shines in the sky's expanse,  
And the mandalas of light are radiant.*

Longchenpa obviously intends us to read "ground" as the enlightened nucleus within the heart and "ocean" as the two eyes (both standard terms in Great Perfection literature), while indicating the latter two lines describe the manifestation of the heart's radiant light via the eyes in the sky during the Direct Transcendence visions, which semi-culminate in the vision of luminous mandalas of Buddhas stretching across the sky's expanse.

While TDD and TCD are both structured around the present classification of four lamps, there are alternative classifications of "five lamps" and "six lamps". For example, LYT2 246,6ff details the following five lamps, which Longchenpa says (as opposed to the standard four lamp classification) "is in accordance with the unsurpassed way of contemplatively taking them into your own accordance": (i) the flesh lamp of the Tsitta, i.e. the heart; (ii) the lamp of the Ground in its abiding reality, i.e. the awareness which resides within there (the heart); (iii) the lamp of the smooth white channel connecting the heart to the eyes; (iv) the far ranging noose water lamp, since the eyes' pupils (i.e. the tip of those luminous channels located there) apprehend the reflections of (the heart's) radiant light; and (v) the lamp of luminously radiant gnosis, which is the depth-contemplations developing via the unwavering presence of this radiant light. Thus (v) appears to be analogous to TDD's "self-emergent insight lamp"; (iv) is identical to the TDD's "far ranging noose water lamp" while (iii) merely signifies the luminous channels whose tips constitute the "true" far ranging water lamp; (ii)

signifies the enlightened nucleus of pristine awareness itself, which can thus also be considered under the umbrella of the "insight lamp", and (i) refers to the residence of the enlightened nucleus at the heart, which Longchenpa discussed in Chapter Four as the "divine palace of the Tsitta" where the mandala of peaceful Buddhas is located. ZMYT2 138,5-142,7 discusses a sixfold classification in some detail (this passage is particularly notable for the number of interesting citations from non-Great Perfection literature in relation to these lamps): (i) the abiding Ground lamp (the enlightened nucleus or spontaneously present expansive awakening which pervades all living beings like butter pervades milk); (ii) the flesh lamp of the Tsitta (the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses are within the heart with their natural luminosity, like a butter lamp within a vase); (iii) the lamp of the smooth white channel (see above); (iv) the far ranging noose water lamp (see above); (v) the lamp of the (post-death) intermediate state period (the lighting-up of the Ground-presencing in terms of Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses within the post-death visions, which if self-recognized will liberate you; as such, this lamp subsumes the Direct Transcendent visions which in TDD are divided up into the empty seminal nuclei lamp, expanse lamp, and self-emergent insight lamp); and (vi) the lamp of the ultimate fruit (i.e. enlightenment itself as the "fruit" of Buddhahood, where the Ground-presencing (the luminous visions) dissolve into the expanse, and awareness takes hold of its own-site; it is "ultimate" since there is no further progression or enhancement necessary, like the perfectly ripened autumn crops). Obviously the first four correspond directly to the similarly named lamps in the fivefold classification, the fifth lamp accounts for the special context of the post-death visions, and the sixth lamp refers to definitive enlightenment itself. Dorje and Kapstein's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume II* 151 details an alternate sixfold classification of the lamps, which is merely a combination of the four lamps dealt with in TDD along with the "flesh lamp of the Tsitta" and the "lamp of the smooth white channel" (I have yet to locate this classification in Longchenpa's corpus). Finally, rTse Le sNa Tshogs Rang Grol (b. 1608)



provides a neat classification of "nine lamps" merging TDD's account of four lamps and ZMYT's account of six lamps (with "nine" resulting since the "far ranging lamp" is a common element of both lists): the three internal lamps (i.e. operative within our body) are the Tsitta flesh lamp, the smooth white channel lamp, and the far ranging noose water lamp; the three external lamps (i.e. operative within the exterior space in the visions), and the three outer lamps are the empty seminal nuclei, pure expanse, and self-emergent insight lamps. By engaging in Direct Transcendence contemplation via applying the key points explained by your Spiritual Master in reliance upon these three internal lamps, the three external lamps then light-up externally as visionary presences, and as your contemplation progresses the intermediate state and ultimate fruit lamps manifest as well (the former in the third vision with the mandalas of peaceful and wrathful deities, and the latter in the fourth visions with the dissolution of those visions in the expanse of reality as you attain enlightenment). The ninth lamp, that of the abiding Ground, pervades the entirety of cyclic existence and transcendent reality throughout (see his *Nucleus of the Sun (Nyi Ma'i sNying Po)* translated in Schmidt's *Circle of the Sun* (46) and Guenther's *Meditation Differently*).

(iii) *The far ranging noose water lamp* (262,7-266,2): as discussed above, this lamp refers to the eyes, and in particular to the tips of the luminous channels located there which act to "apprehend" the luminous visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation (just as in an normal context the eyes "apprehend" distorted appearances, and function as our primary sense). While the etymology of this lamp's name is explained in a variety of ways, in brief "far ranging" relates to these visual forms being apprehended with the eyes' "noose" from their distant presence in the space surrounding us (keeping in mind that our eyes can "range" over the horizon to perceive far distant things, unlike the other senses which are quite limited in their range and often require direct physical contact), while "water" connects to the "watery" nature of the eyes both in the physical sense (tears, etc.) as well as the metaphorical sense of differentiating between turbidity and lucency in a free flow of light energy. See

Levin's *The Opening of Vision* 167ff for some perceptive comments on the relation of "water" and the "eyes" in his discussion of the relation between crying and vision, of which the following quote from Arnold Mindell's *Dreambody* is particularly appropriate:

"...In healing ceremonies, light, water, love, release of emotions, energy flow, circulation, harmony and crystal clear water are all descriptions of curative experiences. The water is a description of free flowing energy which cleans the body by unlocking egotism and its resulting cramps...Since the water is a healing agent, the diseases it cures must be characterized by rigidity. But rigidity has many aspects...A water experience is holistic and unifies the entire personality so that ego, Self, dreams, body, inner and outer come together in one human being. The more rigid the ego..., the more threatening the flow of the body or the psyche appears. A rigid and frightened personality becomes terrified, split off from nature, and cannot believe that a Self or a body consciousness exists that can organize behavior once ego rulership is given up..."

(iv) *The empty seminal nuclei lamp* (266,2-271,2) and (v) *The pure expanse lamp* (271,2-276,2): the next two lamps (the seminal nuclei and expanse) then account for the actual content of the visionary presences perceived in Direct Transcendence contemplation, along with the "linked chains" which are generally classified together with the empty seminal nuclei lamp as "awareness' radiation" (*Rig Pa'i gDangs*) or "awareness' lighting-up" (*Rig Pa'i sNang Ba*) in contrast to the expanse lamp as "the expanse's lighting-up" (*dByings sNang*). However, TCD1 329,1 describes both lamps as being the "natural radiation of awareness" in a beautiful allegory describing them as the "brother and sister" sent out by their parents (i.e. self-awareness), with the expanse lamp incarnating that radiation's "manifest" (*sNang*) aspect and the nuclei lamp incarnating that radiation's "empty" (*sTong*) aspect. In terms of their presence in the Direct Transcendence visions, "the seminal nuclei lamp" initially appears as pea sized spheres of light which in the early stages have concentric circles of rainbow colored light encircling them ("encircling rims"), which gradually with ever-deepening contemplative

experience become spontaneously present and increasingly large, until in the third vision they are revealed as the "divine palaces" inhabited by the Buddhas whose mandalas light up in the sky at that point. "The pure expanse lamp" initially appears as a dark blue in the spherical form or resembling the Tibetan vowel sign "Naro" (like the outline of a bird in flight with two wings stretching out), and with experience gradually expands outwards in patterns of rainbow colored light, which culminates in the third vision to stretch across the sky to form the "pure land" itself within which these mandalas appear. Even in the initial phases of vision the expanse's lighting-up forms the "background" within which the seminal nuclei manifest as the "foreground", and while the rainbow colored visions dominate our sense through the first three visions, ultimately they will all dissolve within the infinite blue of space within the fourth vision, as all phenomenal appearances return to their source in the expanse of reality. In addition to these two lamps, the linked chains of light transform into the actual Spiritual Bodies (i.e. the images of Buddhas) which appear within these divine palaces during the third vision. It should be noted that while the linked chains themselves (which are understood as the ceaseless radiation of our inner awareness) have a visual correlate discernible by ordinary individuals at any given point, the appearances of these two lamps usually only takes place during our waking hours as stimulated by at least a few days of contemplation relying on the key points of Direct Transcendence as explained by a competent Master in the tradition. Although it is the linked chains of light which form the true focus of contemplation, their initial wildly oscillating presence makes it impossible to concentrate upon them for beginners, and thus initially the practitioner must focus on the seminal nuclei, until gradually the movements of these linked chains calm down, which is expressed as "fixing them within the fence of the expanse". These transforming light visions are analyzed into four distinct phases in accordance with their gradual intensification in terms of extent, complexity, vividness, and spontaneity, which are referred to as the "four visions" of Direct Transcendence (see my brief explanation in the context of the eighth adamantine

topic). For extensive details on the philosophical import of these lamps, as well as their visionary transformations in conjunction with the linked chains, the reader is referred to my upcoming work providing a complete translation and thorough commentary on Longchenpa's *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* (see Chapters Six through Eight in particular).

(vi) *The self-emergent insight lamp* (276,2-281,3): this lamp refers to our inner awareness itself (referred to in the sixfold classification as our "abiding Ground lamp", i.e. the enlightened nucleus of pristine awareness within the heart), as well as its various facets within our psyche (such as LYT's "lamp of luminously radiant gnosis"). In this way, the insight lamp can be understood as embracing the other lamps as both their ultimate source (in that they are the radiation of awareness), and as that which cognizes their exteriorized presences with penetrating insight within Direct Transcendence contemplation. In the latter sense, it can be identified as the stable self-awareness developed in Breakthrough practice, which is in most Great Perfection systems is said to be a necessary precursor to Direct Transcendence contemplation since Breakthrough contemplation must be applied within it as the key point of the mind (see rTse Le sNa Tshogs Rang Grol's *The Circle of the Sun*, 34a 6ffz): without having first differentiated between the ordinary mind and primordial gnosis via Breakthrough meditation (see Chapter Four and Eight), there is no way that you can competently base your visionary contemplation on a stable sense of self-awareness, and instead emotional distortions will quickly result in the ordinary obscurations of pervasive cathexis to the visionary presences (pride, lust, etc.). In addition, as mentioned above, the linked chains of light that ripen into the bodily images of Buddhas (and which are considered the ultimate focus of Direct Transcendence meditation) are described as the "radiation" of this insight lamp. Thus TCD2 2,3-5 identifies the insight lamp's "essence" as our experience of the naturally radiant lucent internal awareness as we focus on the visions within Direct Transcendence contemplation; its "dynamism" is the penetrating insight which cognizes the

presences as exteriorized objects; and its radiation is the linked chains of light. In this way ultimately the other lamps are only expedient means for us to tune into this pristine awareness within our heart (which is otherwise inaccessible due to our lifetimes of obscuration), both in the sense of its exteriorized image as linked chains which transform into shimmering mandalas, and its internal naturally radiant presence which blossoms as the lotus of our heart (TCD2 26,7):

"...That which cognizes all the other lamps is this indwelling wisdom-energy of empty radiant reality, along with its dynamic efflorescences in terms of psychic activity. By focusing unwaveringly on the triad of the far ranging, seminal nuclei, and expanse (lamps) as a (provisional) means, internally you differentiate out this lucent immaculate self-awareness, along with the insights which burst out from the depths of this indwelling wisdom..."

**Chapter Eleven The Seventh Adamantine Topic: the Objective Sphere of Primordial  
Gnosis' Shining Forth**

After describing the internal locations of primordial gnosis within our body (Chapter Four), the internal passageways through which it circulates therein (Chapter Five), and the gateways via which it passes outwards into the exteriority of space (Chapter Six), the seventh topic thus deals with the objective sphere within which this gnostic luminosity shines after passing through the gateways of our eyes. The term "objective sphere" (*Yul*) is also the standard term for "object", and thus the term's inherent ambiguity enables it to signify the sky itself as well as the "objective dimension" of this luminosity, i.e. its exteriorization so that it becomes a visual "object" for us. The expanse lamp in particular forms the "background" or objective sphere of the other visionary presences within Direct Transcendence contemplation, and thus it, along with awareness which it is in seamless union with, is the focus of Longchenpa in the seventh chapter, as he begins to explore the nature of this internal gnostic radiation as objectively exteriorized in these visions. His treatment can be divided into three sections: (i) the objective sphere of gnosis' shining forth; (ii) the key points of contemplatively stimulating the gnostic lamp; and (iii) the seamless union of the expanse and awareness.

(i) *The objective sphere of gnosis' shining forth* (281,4-282,5): it is usually said that the "objective sphere" of this gnostic energy shining forth within these visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation is the "empty lucent sky devoid of clouds", since usually you begin these practices outdoors using sunlight as a basis. However, in fact the issue is more complex than that, and thus Longchenpa begins by making a distinction between the "external objective sphere" and the "internal objective sphere": the former is identified as the empty sky, and the latter as the pure expanse lamp, both of which form the objective sphere for the shining forth of awareness' linked chains (i.e. the expanse lamp lights up against the

background of the open sky, while the linked chains then are "imprisoned" within that lamp's luminous rainbow colored manifestation in the sky). He also indicates that contemplation of the empty sky induces a sensation of empty radiance, a practice which relates to Breakthrough meditation. While some sources then identify the sky as the "external expanse" and the expanse lamp's luminous manifestation as the "internal expanse", in TCD2 2,5ff Longchenpa criticizes such an explanation as quite inappropriate (which again provides an example of the extremely refined interpretations of TCD seemingly criticizing his own previous interpretative stances, since on KGYT1 476,3 and elsewhere he clearly appears to identify the external expanse as the "empty sky"). Instead he identifies the "external expanse lamp" as the initial vision of blue luminous radiation within the center of the sky (which is "external" in the sense that is our inner space energy "exteriorized" into the sky), while the "internal expanse lamp" is the five-colored shining of the five lights' glow which diffuses outwards from that deep blue with sustained practice (which is "internal" in the sense of being "within" that external expanse, i.e. its enfolded potential). The reason Longchenpa gives is that the sky has no intrinsic relationship with the individual perceiving these visions, while the lamp's presence or absence is directly tied to the individual's presence and absence, and thus even its external aspect must be understood as the "external" manifestation of the radiation of the individual's internal space energy (keeping in mind that "space energy" and "sky" are the same word in Tibetan (*Nam mKha'*). Thus the sky or space itself merely provides the location or opening for this lamp to shine forth, and apart from that is not to be understood as the actual expanse lamp. Obviously the "deep blue" of this internal space energy is analogous to the deep blue of the open sky's infinite depths, while the rainbow colored lights unfolding from within it correspond to how the shimmering colors of a rainbow will suddenly arc out across the sky, though generally invisible as they remain curled up within the sky's normal deep blue. For this reason, Longchenpa also emphasizes that the "external" and "internal" aspects of the lamp in essence refer to a unitary expanse,

with the distinction basically relating to whether its "tent-home of rainbow light" is clearly present or not (i.e. whether the rainbow colored lights remain enfolded within the expanse's dark blue, or are unfolded and expanding outwards from it). Finally, he makes quite clear that in this case "internal" and "external" do not refer to "hither" vs. "thither", but rather indicate that the former emerges from the latter.

To understand the overall significance of this expanse lamp, it is important to keep in mind that in other Buddhist texts the term "expanse" or "expanse of reality" is usually considered as synonymous with "emptiness", i.e. the empty nature of all phenomena, and Longchenpa clearly has this sense in mind in these opening pages in Chapter Seven as he talks about the "empty" sky with citations from two *Transcendental Consummation of Insight* texts; TLKS 310 defines "expanse" as "devoid of elaboration" (*sPros Pa*), i.e. no dispersion, or conceptual diffusion. Yet in contemplating that empty sky in Great Perfection meditation, the "expanse" itself lights-up in luminous vivid patterns of light unfolding from its deep blue essence (TDD 274,4), which indicates in a very direct way that "emptiness" is not a sterile nothingness, but rather is itself inherently overflowing with luminous light energy (such that "expanse" is more in the sense of a "dynamic field" or "source-potential" of light). After this gnostic luminosity intensifies and expands outwards to culminate in the vast mandalas (the "full moon" following its waxing phase), in the fourth vision it then dissolves back into the empty sky from which it derives (the waning of the moon back into the empty sky of the thirtieth of the lunar month), as all the visionary presences of Buddhas, divine palaces and pure lands dissolve back into the deep blue expanse of reality (see KGYT2 117,5ff). In KGYT2 77,4-6 Longchenpa makes this particularly clear: appearance and emptiness are non-dual, with appearance being empty, and emptiness lighting-up (i.e. appearing), which he images as the colors of a rainbow in the sky. In this way, the term "expanse" signifies this "inner space energy" within us that expands outwards in visions as rainbow colored light within which we must take hold of the linked chains of awareness' radiation, and yet also signifies the infinite



expanse of reality within which all these phenomenal appearances ultimately dissolve in the fourth and final vision: in both cases it forms the pervasive "background" within which everything else takes place and thus within which everything returns. It is the former aspect of its forming the site of our inner gnostic energy's radiation shining forth within the sky that we are at present concerned with. In his *The Crystal and the Way of Light* (p. 124), Namkhai Norbu gives an alternative explanation of the internal and external expanse outside the specific context of Direct Transcendence contemplation: the nature of our own mind referred to as "mind-as-such" is the internal expanse, while the nature of all phenomena referred to as "reality" is the external expanse". In Great Perfection contemplation, we must thus realize the inner unity of these two expanses, and thus penetrate to the mystery of the non-duality of the microcosmic interiority and the macrocosmic exteriority, whereby we attain a body of rainbow light (i.e. vivid presence united with thorough emptiness).

(ii) *The key points of contemplatively stimulating the gnostic lamp* (282,5-286,4): while the main account of Direct Transcendence contemplation is within Chapter Eight, Longchenpa here provides a short summary of techniques for initially igniting these lamps' visionary manifestation within the sky's objective sphere, as well as some preliminary indications of the sequences in which these visions unfold. This account includes the so-called "dark retreat" practices performed in isolation within a specially prepared hut or cabin that allows no light to penetrate within from outside, which utilize special techniques to ignite the luminous visions' manifestation (in the absence of an exterior light source to concentrate on). These practices are done in conjunction with the initial meditations performed outside utilizing sun light as a support, and involve a roughly similar sequence of luminous visions (there are some differences in the early stages), with the ultimate goal being that these luminous self-presencing visions become spontaneously and vividly clear without any distinction between nighttime and daytime. The main point to observe here is that these practices involve no forced contrived visualizations (usually considered the heart of tantric

practices), but rather involve applying a series of very simple postures and other key points such that a series of light visions spontaneously unfold of their own accord.

(iii) *The seamless union of the expanse and awareness* (286,4-294,7): not only is the expanse (as background and objective sphere of the visions) a perfect simultaneity of emptiness and radiance, it also is inherently characterized by intelligence, i.e. awareness, which it is in seamless union with: the Ground is empty in essence, radiant in nature, and all-pervading in its compassionate resonance (see Chapter One). In terms of the initial phases of Direct Transcendence contemplation, the "expanse" is identified as the "dark blue" and its luminous radiation diffusing outwards in rainbow colored light; "awareness" refers to awareness' radiation in linked chains of light: the latter forms the objective sphere within which the former is stabilized and "confined". This union of the expanse's lighting-up and the linked chains is thus the contemplative indication that you are tuning into the primordial union of the expanse and awareness. By further classifying the empty seminal nuclei together with these linked chains as the "lighting-up of awareness" (*Rig Pa'i sNang*), while the rainbow colored light's transformations is termed "the lighting-up of the expanse" (*dByings Kyi sNang Ba*) during the early phases of the visions, the entire visionary array can be understood as the product of the seamless interrelationships between "awareness" and the "expanse", which within the third vision culminate by the expanse's lighting-up as the pure land filling the sky and awareness lights-up as the Spiritual Bodies who are the quintessences of those pure lands (see ZMYT1 219,1-220,2 where Longchenpa makes this explicit). In the fourth vision, then, enlightenment is attained by awareness taking hold of its own-site within the originally pure expanse as everything spirals back into the pure potential of the center (TDD 291,4). Longchenpa thus concludes the chapter by emphasizing the importance of actual contemplation to allow this primordial unity to come to the fore via clearing away adventitious stains, and providing a brief survey of various key points pertaining to both the expanse and to awareness with regards to visionary contemplation.

**Chapter Twelve *The Eighth Adamantine Topic: Contemplatively Taking Primordial***

***Gnosis into your own Experience***

The eighth topic is the heart of the Great Perfection as it concerns "meditation" or "contemplation", i.e. the psycho-physical therapeutic techniques whereby you are able to transcend text-bound pure intellectualism to experientially play out the cosmic psycho-drama Longchenpa outlines in TDD. The term "contemplatively take into your own experience" (*Nyams Su Len Pa*) indicates that ultimately the focus must not be on the mere "techniques" (though it is vital that you properly apply the various key points in accordance with contextualized guidance from someone who "has been there before"), but rather on the nature of the journey these techniques enable as you return back to the origins of the Universe itself. These systems of contemplation are precisely what make these texts so hermeneutically problematic in the West, since ultimately the text assumes an extra-textual dimension to the reader's interaction with it, i.e. that s/he is actively engaged in its accompanying psycho-spiritual (and extremely specific) contemplative systems so as to fundamentally transform his/her physical and psychic energies. People often fail to understand this symbiotic relation between the text and these contemplative systems, and thus either engage in the latter devoid of the powerful multi-valent dimensions added to contemplation by these poetic-philosophical masterpieces (which can be oral as well as written, though the former is becoming increasingly problematic), or plunge into the texts with sophisticated hermeneutical strategies and frameworks, yet never experientially engage these highly specific extra-textual (or intertextual?) contemplative systems with a variety of excuses (like the music critic who never plays a note, or the psychologist who refuses to engage in self-analysis). An additional often misunderstood point is that though these contemplative systems and accompanying experiential realization are the heart of the tradition, and ideally would be seamlessly unified with intellectual and aesthetic scholarship, it is possible to

imaginatively penetrate to the former in accomplishing the latter and thus perform an important service in the cultural appropriation of the tradition as a whole, though perhaps ultimately leaving one's own basic neurotic structures firmly in place. At any rate, this therapeutic extra-textual dimension is certainly not all together absent within the West (Husserl's epoché and other phenomenological techniques, Assagioli's psychosynthesis, Jung's dreamwork and active imagination, recent work in "altered states" research in humanistic and transpersonal psychology, more philosophical-influenced developments in European psychiatry, and so on all come immediately to mind), yet at the present these developments would seem to on the whole to be quite different in structure, as well as generally bearing a quite different relation to associated "texts". An example would be the corpus of Martin Heidegger, which in many ways is strikingly similar to Longchenpa's own thought, yet is devoid of any specifically formulated series of contemplative systems (Breakthrough, Direct Transcendence, dream yoga, etc.) interwoven within the texts themselves, and which the reader could implement as s/he journeys through the text-embodied thought (which is not to deny the fertility of Husserl's original call to the "things themselves" (and various phenomenological techniques) for understanding this general issue of "contemplation" within the Buddhist tradition, nor to gloss over the manner in which Heidegger himself radicalized these phenomenological models of experience and description - see Ihde's "Phenomenology and the Later Heidegger" for a very pertinent discussion of Heidegger's later writings viewed as a radicalization of the experiential, descriptive methods initially articulated by Husserl). This problematic also ties into the schizophrenic split between "philosophy" on the one hand, and psychology and religion on the other, such that the former has been characterized by extremely sophisticated and complex intellectual developments in the present century yet has accomplished very little in the way of actually confronting our own neurotic structures of being in the world, while the latter (i.e. psychology) has begun to make progress in actually working directly with our physical,

verbal and mental energies and structures, yet on the whole (especially in North America) has remained extremely simplistic, reductionist, and intellectually naive. Thus in understanding this chapter and its wide variety of contemplative techniques, it is essential to tie each detail into the structure of TDD as a whole, and note how these contemplations are designed to experientially en-liven the story of the Universe and of the individual which Longchenpa is concerned to tell, such that not only does the text itself enhance the contemplations by providing their intensely symbolic context and interconnections, but also the contemplations enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the resonances of the text, which are in part imaginative journey, and in part phenomenological "reports" of lived experiences (such that, for example, our understanding of the term "self-presencing" is increasingly deepened and expanded via our ongoing contemplative experience - see Levin's "phenomenological diary" of a Great Perfection retreat in *The Opening of Vision* (473-484) for a good account of the transformative extra-textual effects of contemplation). It is only in union with each other that the text (which can be an oral text as well) and contemplation can perform their ultimate goal of healing us from our present state of suffering, reintegrating our fissured psycho-physical being and releasing us into the unimaginable freedom of our own natural state.

Longchenpa's treatment of "taking primordial gnosis into your own experience" is by far the longest chapter of TDD, and in fact almost equals in length all of the preceding seven chapters combined. While in general the essentials of Great Perfection contemplation can be encapsulated within the two complementary meditative systems of "Breakthrough" and "Direct Transcendence", there are also a wide variety of other meditative systems that function as auxiliary, preliminary, and enhancing practices, and are utilized in accordance with an individual's particular psycho-physical capacities and overall situation. In addition to discussing the "liberating instructions" or "precepts" on these contemplations, Longchenpa begins the chapter by discussing all the various considerations that are involved in spiritual meditative "practice", i.e. in experientially bypassing our pervasive neurosis and corporeality

to contact the inherent truth that we are luminous beings of primordial purity: the proper conduct of disciples, the appropriate personality and behavior of a prospective Teacher, the initiations, and the "commitments" or "vows" by which you must abide in the framework of those initiations, and vis-a-vis other living beings. Thus this eighth chapter can be divided for our present purposes into five broad sections: (i) general considerations applying to spiritual contemplation; (ii) lower order auxiliary yogic techniques designed to lead us into Great Perfection contemplation proper, yet themselves still oriented towards fabricated conceptuality; (iii) Breakthrough contemplation; (iv) the preliminary practices to Direct Transcendence contemplation; and (v) Direct Transcendence contemplation.

(i) General considerations applying to spiritual contemplation (295,2-311,5): this section is a fairly standard (i.e. for Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Tantra) discussion dealing with the appropriate and inappropriate characteristics of both the Spiritual Teacher and the disciple, as well as the initiatory empowerments which establish a living bond between the two, and the commitments pertaining between the two, which if maintained properly, function to maintain that bond as a positive living force enabling us move along the spiritual path. The Spiritual Master is a crucial element to contemplation because s/he has traveled the path we must embark upon (just as we naturally seek a teacher to learn a trade, or verbal information to supplement schematic maps in our journeys across a country), and thus is able to transmit to us the spiritual "spark" or energy that helps us to begin to break down ingrained patterns of desire, hatred and ignorance, as well as guide us effectively past the many pitfalls and dead-ends that litter the spiritual path. Since these teachings are the only means to alleviate the true cause of all our suffering, this relationship is uniquely important from within the web of relationships that bind us to others, and thus maintaining its integrity must be prioritized. For this reason, the tradition especially stresses the relation to your Spiritual Master, who is ultimately a mere indicator or image for your own internal wisdom that you must "trust" in, and thereby enable the Universe's innate gnostic intelligence to flow forth from within. As

such, there are many contemplative practices utilizing visualization and ritual to "tune into the Spiritual Master" (*Guru Yoga*), a few instances of which can be found in LYT, KGYT, and ZMYT, though none are elaborated in the context of TDD (see Dilgo Khyentse's *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* for a detailed account for one very popular system of such practices in the Seminal Heart-Essence tradition). While certain aspects of the empowerment rituals differ from the main initiatory systems of other Buddhist Tantras, the most interesting feature of this section that is unique to the Great Perfection tradition is the discussion of "four great commitments", which Longchenpa explains at great length in his NLD (see the mini-encyclopedia for a brief overview of these).

(ii) Lower order auxiliary yogic techniques and other considerations (313,3-337,7):

Longchenpa now turns to the actual contemplations themselves, which he divides into two sections: contemplation for those with intellects wrapped up in objective reference points (*dMigs Pa Yul Gyi bLo Can*), and for those to whose intellects awareness is self-presencing (*Rig Pa Rang sNang Ba'i bLo Can*), i.e. Great Perfection meditation proper. It is the former which the present section concerns, and mainly entails more standard types of meditation involving focusing on artificial "reference points" (*dMigs Pa*), whether visualized external forms of light, internal subtle body meditation, substances used alchemically, or special considerations/viewpoints. Longchenpa structures his discussion of these around a standard classification into four yogas: the yogas of continuous conduct, continuous meditation, continuous view, and continuous fruit. As one would expect, specific meditative techniques are largely discussed in the lengthy section on "the yoga of continuous meditation", while the other three sections involve more general abstract guidelines on the nature of your conduct, view, and "fruit" (i.e. the overall telos of the spiritual path you are oriented towards) as you embark on the contemplative path of the Great Perfection. For example, the section on the yoga of conduct details twenty one styles of conduct with evocative names such as "like a small child", "like a madman", "like a mountain", and "like a thunderbolt", which can be

understood as entailing specific behaviors that one should temporarily implement to help loosen up the solidity of our distorted perceptions and behavioral patterns as reinforced by societal ideologies (i.e. cease all verbal activity "like a deaf mute", or roving around from place to place talking utter nonsense "like a madman"), they can also be understood as general instructions on the type of lifestyle which will help foster a spiritual way of being in the world (i.e. you fit into the social world around you without making waves "like a camel", you fearlessly venture in the solitary path of contemplation "like a lion", and you separate the troops of neurosis and enlightenment "like a hero").

While the section on the yoga of continuous meditation also includes some general considerations, on the whole it is a detailed description of a variety of purificatory and preparatory meditative techniques designed to enable one to be able to successfully engage in Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence contemplation, with a particular emphasis on the former (as is quite clear in the concluding remarks - the specific preliminary practices for Direct Transcendence are subsequently explained in (iv), though the practices detailed in our present section also function as auxiliaries for it). Of particular interest here is the explanation of the four contemplative systems (*bSam gTan*) revolving around "food", "clothes", "dreams", and "karmic propensities", and the so-called "twenty one means of concentration of gods and humans" (*Lha Dang Mi'i Sems 'Dzin Pa*). The former set of contemplations focus on where our energy is fixated in our ordinary existence in order to undo the resulting blockages in energy flow, and thus utilize the liberated energy for spiritual concerns: sex (sex yoga), food (involving alchemical practices utilizing herbs, and so on, as well as visualization-energized breathing), clothes (meditations centered around the well known technique of "mystic fire", whereby internally generated warmth alleviates the need for clothes - see Geshe Gyatso's *Clear Light of Bliss* and Guenther's *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*), dreams (a simple series of instructions enabling us to bring our sleep into the contemplative path), and the network of karmic propensities permeating our unconscious (a



more general series of exhortations to enter into a state of naked awareness undercutting these propensities self-sustaining vicious cycle of neurotic conditioning). The "twenty one means of concentrations" all involve focusing your mind on a given reference object (such as visualized syllables, special meditative songs, recitations of mantric syllables, emptiness, and so on) as a method for beginners to gradually gain the ability to concentrate their psyches, and find a calm state or still point wherein the normal hyper-active neurotic conceptuality and emotional reactions subsides to an extent by virtue of the force of your concentration. Such a capacity is a basic prerequisite to successfully engaging in any of the other contemplations, and in particular leads you to develop the practice of "inner calm" (*Zhi gNas; Śamatha*), which itself leads into Breakthrough contemplation as that state of inner calm is liberated, and we tune into the state of pristine awareness normally obscured by our mind's incessant movements in reactive patterns of desire and hatred. Thus these techniques are the contemplative equivalent to Chapter Four's lengthy discussion of the differentiation of the ordinary mind and primordial gnosis, i.e. the ordinary neurotic mind from its pristine source, mind-as-such. Namkhai Norbu in particular has clearly explained the processes involved here in the various transcripts of his teachings that circulate around (and which accord quite well with Longchenpa's own writings on the subject): "calm" (*gNas Pa*) signifies the relaxed non-conceptual state where the agitated waves of thought subside into a placid ocean of psychic energy (a lower order state accomplished by practices of "inner calm"), "movement" (*Gyu Ba*) signifies the dynamic movement of thought (which relate to the practice of "incisive vision" (*Lhag mThong; Vipāśyanā*), while "awareness" (*Rig Pa*) is the pristine state of presence within which these two are integrated (the gnostic intelligence of the Universe as present within us), and as such forms the quintessence of Breakthrough contemplation. Thus "incisive vision" dissolves the state of "inner calm" to avoid the dead-end of a static state of self-absorption, and open the way to re-integrate thought and appearances into our state of

being, as we experience the entire Universe as the dynamic play of the gnostic intelligence indwelling within us.

(iii) Breakthrough contemplation (339,2-365,3): while the preceding lower order practices involve various artificial considerations and forced visualizations, Great Perfection contemplation proper merely relies on "the self-presencing of awareness" (*Rig Pa'i sNang Ba*) without any artificial external props or internally fabricated visualizations (which are so characteristic of Buddhist Tantra in general), and can be encapsulated within the dyad of Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence meditation. In striking contrast to the previous section with its detailed instructions on visualizations, postures, and so on, Longchenpa's lengthy discussion of Breakthrough contemplation is utterly devoid of any such instructions, but rather revolves around the manner in which we may tune into the state of pristine awareness beyond the obscuring neurosis of our ordinary mind, and continue in that state's radiant openness (see above). Implicitly, beginners must rely on artificially set off short contemplative sessions sitting in a lotus posture or other comfortable position, but ultimately the Breakthrough is something to be practiced throughout the night and day at all points in our life, and not merely short phases of "concentration" or "absorption" confined to a meditative hall or retreat center. Since few have the capacity to immediately contact this state of pure awareness following a Master's symbolic "introduction", the preceding variety of techniques are generally relied on in various combinations to assist the disciple to gradually develop the capacity to find this state (differentiating between "primordial gnosis" and the "ordinary mind"), and be able to consistently remain within it. However Breakthrough meditation itself is beyond such techniques, and merely involves remaining within this state of pure self-awareness tuned into the Universe's inherent gnostic intelligence, such that all external phenomena are recognized as "self-presencing", i.e. the co-evolving dynamism of this gnostic intelligence as-and-within-you. The only specific instruction beyond this is to "keep your eyes open", which emphasizes this contemplation is

not a self-contained quietistic absorption removed from the world, but rather actively integrates with all that presences around us, as well as our own inherent dynamism manifest in psycho-physical activity. Obviously such contemplation is closely connected with certain Zen practices and other contemplative techniques found throughout the world (indeed it would seem that any question of Chinese influence on the Great Perfection would have to be centered on these doctrines, and the central role of Śrisiṃha in relation to them may be significant given the descriptions of him as being from *rGya Nūg* - see above), though it is important to understand the Breakthrough in the context of the overall structure of the Great Perfection teachings lest one engage in hasty comparisons. For this reason, Longchenpa provides a lengthy philosophical and poetic evocation of Breakthrough contemplation centered on the identification of "awareness", which is inextricably interwoven with the main teachings of the Great Perfection and divided into these three sections (following Śrisiṃha's *The Great Khyung Bird Soaring Through the Sky* found in VNT2 376-387): indicting everything within its great original purity wherein phenomena are exhausted; confining them within its naked unimpededness beyond action; and chaining them within its great sameness of total freedom. His discussion includes the important classifications of the twelve adamantine laughs (*rDo rJe Gad Mo bCu gNyi*s) and seven marvelous esoteric words (*Ngo mTshar Gyi gSang Tshig rNam Pa bDun*), while concluding with a lengthy analysis of the meaning of "freedom" (*Grol Ba*) in this contemplation by means of the following fivefold classification: primordial freedom (*Ye Grol*), natural freedom (*Rang Grol*), the freedom of naked vision (*Cer Grol*), freedom from extremes (*mTha' Grol*), and the freedom of the one (*gCig Grol*).

The "Breakthrough" contemplation is closely linked with the practice of "Direct Transcendence", and in fact is usually considered the necessary prerequisite for successful meditation in it. While currently most teachers advocate a thorough grounding in Breakthrough contemplation prior to engaging in Direct Transcendence since stable self-

awareness and insight are crucial in avoiding the pitfalls of attachment to the latter's luminous visions, there is evidently a more ancient tradition which reversed this sequence, at least in the initial stages of practice. At any rate, though Longchenpa details a standard list of seven ways in which Direct Transcendence is superior to Breakthrough contemplation, in fact this must be understood as the latter by itself in opposition to being practiced in conjunction with the former. Both involve very direct, unmediated ways of tuning into our inner naked awareness devoid of any artificial techniques such as visualization (there are only a very simple set of "guidelines" or "key points" to be applied in both cases), yet different in the dimension of that naked awareness which they zero in on: Breakthrough meditation involves the original purity of awareness in its abiding empty reality, while Direct Transcendence enables us to contact the luminous spontaneous presence of awareness in its inherent dynamism (LYT2 18,2), which ZMYT1 208,2 describes by characterizing Breakthrough as the "Ground" (where original purity is in the ascendancy) and Direct Transcendence as the "Path" (i.e. the evolutionary path where spontaneous presence is in the ascendancy; also it connotes that Breakthrough constitutes the "foundation" of Great Perfection meditation, while Direct Transcendence is the actual "path" leading you to enlightenment). Thus these two practices enable us to re-experience the Ground with direct immediacy in its original purity and spontaneous presence (see Chapter One), and partially correlate to a very ancient dyad going back to the beginnings of Buddhist meditation: techniques for calming or stilling the mind (*Zhi gNas; Śamatha*) and techniques for the enhancement of mental clarity and vision (*Lhag mThong; Vipāśyanā*); this also correlates to the disyllabic nature of the terms for "enlightenment" (*Byang Chub*) and "Buddha" (*Sangs rGyas*) in Tibetan, which involve the simultaneity of "purification" (*Byang*) and "dissipation" (*Sangs*) of stains within original purity, and the "perfection" (*Chub*) and "expansion" (*rGyas*) of enlightened qualities within spontaneous presence. In this way, these two complementary styles of contemplation at the heart of the Great Perfection again evoke the recurrent theme of the seamless union of

emptiness and dynamism, that the vacuum is itself overflowing with light. Finally, since Breakthrough contemplation involves tuning directly into this naked awareness without any intervening steps or unfolding phases, while Direct Transcendence contemplation involves applying a variety of simple key points (postures, gazes, etc.) and the unfolding of a series of visions deriving from awareness' radiation, TCD1 122,7-122,1 characterizes the latter as "effortless" and "instantaneous" (*Cig Car*), and the latter as "involving effort" and "sequential".

(iv) *The preliminary practices to Direct Transcendence contemplation* (368,7-375,1): there are three main sets of meditative techniques used to prepare yourself for the practice of Direct Transcendence, all of which ultimately revolve around enabling you to differentiate between the ordinary neurotic mind and primordial gnosis, such that you can directly tune into the pristine awareness vibrating within your heart: training on the four elements' sounds, the conduct of differentiating between cyclic existence and transcendence's respective domains (*Khor 'Das Ru Shan 'Byed Pa'i sPyod Pa*), and the preliminaries of body, speech and mind. The yoga of the four elements' sounds refers to a series of meditations performed by concentrating on the "sounds" of these elements, such as focusing intently on the sound of turbulent water in a rushing creek, or the roar of wind on a mountain peak. The practice of "differentiation" basically involves acting out wildly in terms of your body, speech and mind by doing whatever pops into your head (imitating animals, etc.), until finally you reach a state of exhaustion where all your attachments and usually rigid sense of self temporarily fade away, and you are able to settle into a deeply relaxed natural state referred to as "settling into a state of naturalness" (*rNal Du dBab*). In this way we differentiate between "cyclic existence" and "transcendence", i.e. between our ordinary conditioned mind and the pristine stillness of mind-as-such that is its ultimate source. Finally, "the preliminaries of body, speech, and mind" principally involve some simple visualization exercises, as well as a standard analytical meditation on the nature of the mind

(examining its point of origination, endurance and cessation to experientially realize its ultimate emptiness), which all lead one to "settling into a state of naturalness".

(v) Direct Transcendence contemplation (365,3-368,7; 375,1-411,4): the remainder of the chapter is an exhaustive discussion of the key points of Direct Transcendence meditation (i.e. its postures, breathing, etc.), and the way in which its visionary presences gradually unfold, which is encapsulated into a sequential series of "four visions" (*sNang Ba bZhi*; also the ordinary term for "presences" or "appearances"). While Breakthrough contemplation has many evident analogues to other Buddhist (and non-Buddhist) styles of meditation (whether in East Asian "Zen" systems, or Indo-Tibetan contemplation of emptiness), the practice of Direct Transcendence is quite unique, and strikingly different from the ordinary visionary practices involved in Buddhist Tantra. What is so unusual about these contemplations is that the visionary presences that unfold in these four visions are totally spontaneous, and aren't the product of the typical painstaking creation of prescribed forms in visualization practices. Instead, a series of very simple key points (postures, directions of gaze, and so on) which are applied in conjunction with focusing on a light source (often summarized into the triad of the sun, moon, and lamp), with the result that luminous images are perceived in the external space, which gradually increase in size and complexity until vast mandalas of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities fill the sky around you, despite there never being any conscious intention to produce such visions. Theoretically, this luminosity is understood as being the exteriorized radiation of our own heart's enlightened nucleus of pristine awareness, and thus is identical to the pure Ground-presencing that evidenced in the first moments of the Universe's primeval emergence from its state of self-contained interiority, i.e. the pure possibilizing potential referred to as the "Ground". Since we have grounded ourselves in stable self-recognition of self-awareness with prior practice in Breakthrough contemplation (after cutting through obscurations via the other meditative techniques), "this time" we are able to encounter the unfolding cosmic evolution of the Universe from its singular genesis

with penetrating insight, such that instead of returning through the interpretative gateway of cyclic existence and ignorance, we pass through the gateway of recognition, and re-enact the primordial liberation of the Totally Positive One, such that in the fourth and culminating vision the entire luminous display of the Ground-presencing dissolves back into the internal expanse of the Ground as we are expansively awakened into the full enlightenment of Buddhahood. Thus Direct Transcendence is a contemplative re-experience of the cosmic drama outline in Chapter One, with the "Ground" as our own heart's originally pure awareness, the Ground-presencing as its radiation flowing outwards into the sky via our eyes (see LYT2 18), and the meaning of "self-presencing" finally revealed fully in an utterly unforgettable and unmistakable manner with an experiential character that transcends mere textual-bound intellectuality.

The four sequential visions in which these unfold are as follows (there is also the possibility of these visions taking place instantaneous, though for the vast majority of people they are experienced in gradual phases over a lengthy period of time): the vision of reality's immediacy, the vision of contemplative experience's intensification, the vision of awareness' optimization (literally "awareness arrives at its (full) measure"), and the vision of exhaustion within reality. "Immediacy" (*mNgon Sum*) also means "direct perception" in Buddhist epistemological texts, and thus indicates the direct presence or "immediacy" of sensory objects to us (in contrast to other more obscure objects that we can only know through inference, and so on). "Reality" of course signifies the empty radiance of our enlightened nucleus, and thus this first vision indicates that in the initial emergence of this inner luminosity we are able to have direct sensory perception of reality itself in its vibrant light (KGNT1 66,6), unlike our usual perception of phenomenal forms constitute of congealed matter. This first phase basically involves the initial localized luminous presences of the expanse and seminal nuclei, and is said to last up until three nuclei appear in conjunction with each other. The second vision then is marked by these initial rainbow colored presences

increasing in size and number, as well as undergoing various transformations marked by the "intensification" of internal experiences of bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality, as well as of the external visionary presences. In addition, these presences gradually become spontaneously present such that concentration on light sources is no longer required for their ignition, while the previously rapidly moving linked chains of light now become still within the "prison" of the expanse's luminosity, such that we can now turn our attention towards them. The third vision is then usually said to commence with the first appearance of a Buddha's bodily image, and culminate with the visionary appearance of vast mandalas of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities stretching across the sky. Since these deity-images are the "ripening" of awareness' radiation in the form of these linked chains of light, this vision is said to be the "optimization of awareness", just as the moon waxes to its full luminous presence in the middle of the lunar month. The fourth vision then involves the dissolution of these luminous visions as primordial gnosis itself spirals up within the expanse (see the end of Chapter One for an account of this dissolution process in the context of the Totally Positive One's freedom), and in this return to the source we are expansively awakened into enlightenment. See the annotations to Chapter One for my extensive comments on the crucial differences between this return to the Ground of pure potential in dynamic enlightenment (the Universe in a state of full self-consciousness), and the self-contained formless primordial Ground prior to the Ground-presencing (literally, the unknown Universe).



**Chapter Thirteen *The Ninth Adamantine Topic: the Signs and Measures of  
Contemplative Realization***

The ninth topic concerns the psycho-physical and visionary signs manifesting in the practitioner's own body, speech, mind and external environment as realization deepens in the progression along the meditative path. Such analyses enable the individual practitioner to empirically observe his/her own success in spiritual refinement, and keep watch out for stagnation, deviation, and other pitfalls in attempting to bring the relevant practice to its optimization, as well as aiding Teachers in their evaluation and sequential instruction of disciples. The variety and remarkable nature of many of the signs also serves as a curb against intellectual hubris for those who may mistake intellectual comprehension with experiential realization, as the former will not issue forth in the astonishing psychic powers and other measures which mark the latter. In Longchenpa's discussion of this topic in the ninth chapter, there are basically three distinct sections which Longchenpa correlates to the past, present and future in the subsequent half of the chapter: (i) the present: a detailed analysis of the various signs marking proper progress in the contemplations presented in the eighth chapter (ranging from the feeling you can fly to an astonishingly youthful complexion, as well as internal sensations and psychic capacities), with a particular focus on the specific transformations occurring in the different elements of the visions in Direct Transcendence contemplation (411,4-424,3; 427,6-433,6); (ii) the past: a description of the various signs naturally occurring in your current body, speech and mind that indicate your having successfully engaged in these spiritual practices during previous lifetimes, ranging from a natural capacity for concentration to "birthmarks" and so on which are remarkable similar in shape to classical auspicious symbols (424,3-427,6); and (iii) the future: an analysis of the various external environmental signs (weather, earthquakes, strange appearances of light, etc.) and internal signs (relics, marks on bones, etc.) evident in a given person's death and

cremation, which indicate both an advanced visionary's spiritual realization and attainments (including his/her possible enlightenment within death or in one of the phases of post-death visions), as well as which of the six types of life forms an ordinary man or woman's subsequent rebirth will take place in (433,6-437,4)

**Chapter Fourteen *The Tenth Adamantine Topic: Dying and Post-death Opportunities***  
**in the Intermediate States**

The main focus of the tenth topic is not to merely describe the nature of dying and post-death experience, but rather to explore these processes in relation to the spiritual opportunities they afford us. Thus the tenth chapter is understood as being elaborated for the sake of those people who are unable to attain freedom within this life in reliance upon the contemplative processes detailed in Chapter Eight, but who may yet skillfully utilize the experiences of dying and post-death to become spiritually awake. Longchenpa's discussion is structured around the four "intermediate states" (*Bar Do*), which are the principal transitional periods or "gaps" characterizing our reoccurring cycles of life and death: this life (the period "between" birth and death), dying (between life and post-death existence), post-death (between dying and rebirth, and the period of post-death experience leading into the next rebirth (between the post-death visions and actual rebirth in a new incarnation). These intermediate states' technical names are the ordinary or "natural" intermediate state (since this phase of incarnated life is the most stable, and typical state we find ourselves in), the intermediate state of dying, the intermediate state of reality ("reality" refers to the luminous visions which manifest to us in post-death vision by power of our temporarily being liberated from coarse corporeality), and the intermediate of rebirth or fictive existence. Elsewhere, Longchenpa speaks of "six intermediate states" by adding an "intermediate state of dreams" and an "intermediate state of contemplation" to this basic list of four (see ZMYT2 78,3ff); LYT2 218,1 gives a similar list of six, with the exception it substitutes "the intermediate state of the abiding Ground" for the "ordinary intermediate state". Obviously the most startling parts of these descriptions is those sections which purport to be detailed phenomenological accounts of the internal experiences, sensations, and visions that generally ensue not only in the process of dying, but in the period of post-death existence between death and rebirth in a

new physical existence (usually said to be no more than forty nine days in ordinary circumstances). Just as with the subtle body theories previously discussed, we again find ourselves on treacherous grounds hermeneutically, and for the time being I will limit myself to noting that the highly integrated symbolic force of the visions described herein must be the core of any interpretative accounting of these descriptions, as well as that these visions are said to be a confused blur for most ordinary living beings (like a nightmare) and only appear in vivid stable visionary to an accomplished visionary (just as the subtle body is only present in indistinct form within most beings, and becomes vividly present in the mandalic form described in these texts only by the force of contemplative realization). The actual specific forms of the mandalas of deities said to appear in post-death vision are often described as cross-cultural by modern Tibetan teachers, though it has often been noted that their particular appearance is quite obviously based on ancient standardized Indian depictions of royalty. This also relates to the identical mandalas' appearance in the Direct Transcendence visions, which some teachers have informed me will spontaneously appear in precisely that manner whether or not the individual has had prior visual experience or conceptual knowledge of these deities' appearances. While certainly the other aspects of the Direct Transcendence visions (the spheres, rainbow light, linked chains, and so on) could readily be understood as relating to intrinsic features of our visual apparatus and the nature of light itself, while other particular forms which manifest in this context are specifically said to be indeterminate (i.e. depend on the individual in question), the claims for the cross-cultural experience-independent spontaneous universality of the visions of these mandalas of deities are intriguing. While certain structural features of these deities' intensely symbolic mandalic arrangement could be understood in terms of Jungian archetype theory as relating to the depth-unconsciousness' predispositions, the specificity of their actual visual appearance of course must be a localized phenomenon (despite Tibetan scholars' inevitable protests), as one would expect given that these visions are said to be the "self-projections" (*Rang sNang*) of

your own awareness against the backdrop of cosmic emptiness. If credence is given to these claims of spontaneous specificity of the images appearing in these mandalic visions, it could only seem that some type of localized archetypal field of images is created by force of previous visionaries' psychic concentration, which in the tradition is expressed as "the inspiration of the lineage" (*brGyud Pa'i Byin rLabs*). Certainly this issue requires further thought, and given the spontaneous nature of vision here as opposed to contrived "mapped out" visualizations characteristic of other tantric systems, this may be an especially fertile topic for Jungian research. See Fremantle's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and Lauf's *Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Books of the Dead* for an analysis of the basic elements in this mini-genre of Tibetan literature, as well as partial explication of the rich psychological insights contained in these descriptions.

While all Tibetan sects study this "death" literature to some extent (the intermediate state of this life is dealt with only in passing here, and the main focus without question is on the dying and post-death experience), it is in the Great Perfection tradition that these accounts of dying and post-death are most perfectly interwoven into the theoretical and contemplative system as a whole. In the process of dying, all our psycho-physical energies temporarily dissolve back into the Ground such that we are led back to the still point at the center from which everything flows ("the pure radiant light" whose white intensity contains the rainbow light of the Ground-presencing in potentia), while the subsequent emergence of the luminous post-death visions is the Ground-presencing itself (as due to our non-recognition of the radiant light, it radiates out into these rainbow colored displays), identical in substance and appearance to that described in Chapter One within the context of the early history of the Universe, and in Chapter Eight as the context of the unfolding visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation. Thus again we are faced with the alternative possibilities of self-recognition and non-recognition when confronted with these self-presencing displays of light, and in the latter eventuality, we then inexorably proceed into the intermediate state of

rebirth, just as in the early history of the Universe we pass through the interpretative gateway of cyclic existence, and thus go astray (see Chapter Two). Thus the entire cosmic cycle outlined in Chapter One and Two is repeated in our own microcosmic experience in death, post-death, and rebirth, with the entire drama unfolding in rainbow colored hues against the backdrop of the "sky", with a renewed opportunity for both enlightenment and for alienation, such that should we yet again fail to transcend our limitations, again we pass from the Ground to the Ground-presencing, and from the Ground-presencing to the distorted experiences of cyclic existence as we are helplessly reborn. At every step of the way there remains the possibility of liberation, and thus Longchenpa carefully details each intermediate state's critical phases and unfolding experiences with an eye towards the possibilities of liberation that they offer to the spiritually acute individual, with the end result of a type of spiritual "map" of dying. The chapter thus is structured on the basis of the following five sections: (i) a brief overview of the four intermediate states (437,5-440,4); (ii) a short description of the ordinary intermediate state of this life exhorting us to prepare a firm foundation of study and critical reflection upon which to base our meditation (440,6-443,1); (iii) an analysis of the intermediate state of dying, including very interesting descriptions of techniques to ascertain the signs of impending death, rituals to reverse an impending death if indicated, a detailed phenomenology of the dying experience, techniques to transfer your consciousness at death to a "pure land" where spiritual conditions are optimal, and other fascinating topics (443,1-458,1); (iv) an analysis of the post-death intermediate state of reality with a detailed phenomenology of the major phases that unfold in the typical sequence of luminous visions, as well as an account of the various psychic powers occurring in the intermediate state, and the processes of liberation corresponding to the twenty one different types of individuals with the spiritual capacity to attain enlightenment herein (458,1-485,2); and (v) an analysis of the intermediate state of rebirth, the subsequent phase of post-death experiences where the visions are increasingly oriented towards your impending rebirth back

in cyclic existence, which includes an account of the "pure lands", since rebirth within them is the best opportunity for those who have been unable to achieve enlightenment up until this point (485,2-497,4).

**Chapter Fifteen *The Eleventh Adamantine Topic: the Fruit of Buddhahood as the Universe's Self-Exploration comes to a Climax in the Enlightenment Experience***

The eleventh topic concerns the nature of enlightenment itself not only as the "fruit" or "climax" of the spiritual path, but also as the "fruit" of the Universe's own self-journey initiated by the obscure stirring of a gnostic wind that rent open the Ground's self-contained interiority, following which its non-recognition of its own luminosity impelled a long journey through alienation and despair until finally, it recovers its senses and spirals back into its own center in the self-recognition of Buddhahood's expanse awakening (the term "fruit" (*Bras Bu*) thus ties into the imagery of the "Ground" and "path", as we travel out from our home to a destination via an intermediary winding path). This evolutionary return to the mother-ground is not a mere dissolution or dissipation, but rather entails a new epoch of dynamic activity perfectly balanced between the Ground's pure potential and the vibrant Ground-presencing's luminous dynamics, which as such is capable of compassionately and precisely leading other living beings to spiritual freedom out of the bondage of cyclic existence. Enlightenment is thus marked by a new higher order interrelation between "internal radiance" (i.e. pure potential) and "external radiance" (i.e. actualization), as the latter spontaneously emerges from the former divested of the intermediary of conceptualizing neurosis, while the Enlightened One's awakened self-consciousness ensures that amidst all this dynamism there is not the slightest risk of self-forgetting, and thus of the alienation of straying. In this way, the dynamism of enlightenment is entirely different than the indeterminate emergence of the Ground-presencing from within the primordial nameless interiority of the Ground discussed in Chapter One, which was liable to two modes of self-interpretation symbolized by the impure gateway to cyclic existence, and the pure gateway to primordial gnosis. This distinction between the individual and the Universe, between being and Being, is not obliterated, yet the nature of that relationship is definitively altered: "enlightenment" is



defined as "taking hold of the secure place" (*bTsan Sa Zin Pa*), and is understood as being totally beyond possibility of relapse, or return to the helpless self-delusion of cyclic existence. At the same time, we may ask the hypothetical question as to what would happen should cyclic existence be "finally" emptied out, and there remained only the awakened epoch of enlightenment: would forgetting again ensue? Without admitting that such an utter absence of illusion may ever take place, this final illumination of all darkness throughout the Universe's infinite reaches, it may be said that the answer to such a question is every bit as obscure as the reasons behind the initial rupture of the Ground's self-contained seal which first leads to the Ground-presencing. What can be said when there is nothing to say? Finally, it should be noted that the enlightened qualities which manifest in the Awakened One are not the result of an unprecedented creation or transformation of our energies in the alchemy of yoga, but rather involve the unfolding of our own nucleus of pristine awareness, the gnostic intelligence which all along has in-formed our existence. Longchenpa's analysis of enlightenment does not concern the actual moment of enlightenment itself (which he has dealt with in Chapters One, Eight, Nine, and Ten), but rather is concerned with the "enlightened qualities" that naturally flow from this moment upon which everything hinges, and thus the eleventh chapter can be readily analyzed into two main sections: (i) the Spiritual Bodies and (ii) the primordial gnosis that pass into ascendancy within the enlightenment experience.

(i) *The Spiritual Bodies* (498,1-505,2): conventionally, the "Spiritual Bodies" refer to the Awakened One's capacity for presence or display to living beings, while "primordial gnoses" signify his/her holistic ways of knowing, and in general the latter is understood as the dynamism or resonance permeating the gestalt set up by the former's way of being: they form a complementary mandala (*dKyil 'Khor*), with the Reality Body at the center (*dKyil*) and its dynamic energy radiating out to the periphery (*'Khor*). However, in fact, the two terms are closely interrelated and defined in terms of each other: the Spiritual Bodies are

defined as the "body" or "support" for the enlightened qualities, while primordial gnosis itself is defined as the stainless wisdom-energy present as those Spiritual Bodies inner quintessence or nucleus. Longchenpa's account of the Spiritual Bodies is structured around the standard triad of Spiritual Bodies: the Reality Body, Enjoyment Body and Emanational Body (see mini-encyclopedia for details), which he further subdivides into a ninefold classification by combining the three terms with each other (the Reality Body of the Reality Body, the Enjoyment Body of the Reality Body, etc.), and discusses in terms of the classic quintet of their corresponding pure land, location, contemplation, retinue, teaching, and time.

(ii) Primordial gnosis (505,2-516,2): Longchenpa's discussion of primordial gnosis is based on the following triune classification: the grounding primordial gnosis of the Reality Body, the characteristics-endowed primordial gnosis of the Enjoyment Body, and the all-pervasive primordial gnosis of the Emanational Body. See the mini-encyclopedia for a discussion of these three classifications.

**Part II**

**Translation of Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings***

## The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings

*Illuminating the Three Sites of the Unsurpassed Secret, the Adamantine Nucleus of  
Radiant Light<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction [158]<sup>2</sup>

*The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings is Padārtha Ratnasya Kosha Nāma in  
Sanskrit, and Tshig Don Rin-po-che mDzod Ces Bya Ba in Tibetan.<sup>3</sup>*

*I prostrate to the glorious Totally Positive One!<sup>4</sup>*

*He is the primeval Savior, who is endowed with the five supreme perfections in his direct  
enlightenment prior to everything within the sky of reality's expanse,  
Whose mandala of radiant light, wherein the spontaneously present Spiritual Bodies,  
primordial gnoses and enlightened qualities are totally complete, emanates thousands of  
light rays of enlightened activity,  
And thus illuminates the isle of liberation from fictive existence and peaceful calm, arising  
from time without beginning as the unprecedented Teacher of the path, the glory of all of  
cyclic existence and transcendent reality -  
This solar force of auspiciousness and prosperity shakes open the thousand petals of my  
pistil-like mind and I worship him in all my being with a crown of joy!*

*Through possessing immense clouds of immeasurable compassion he brings down a shower  
of benefit and bliss upon sentient beings,  
While the dragon-roar thunder of his wisdom and love pervades to the ends of the cosmos  
and the lightening streaks of his primordial gnosis radiantly pervade throughout -  
May this Glorious Savior who encapsulates into one the varied transformations of the  
Victorious Ones in the three times, along with the assembly of Spiritual Masters,  
And the ocean-like assembly of Sky Dancers and Oath Bound Ones today look after the lotus-  
lake of my mind! [159]*

*Though spontaneously present in his thorough primeval purity, he is not within the scope of  
the short-sighted;  
Though involved with all sentient beings without exception, he is undefiled by the stains of  
fictive existence and calm;  
Though he has obtained the calm of direct enlightenment, he has not changed into anything  
other than the supreme of events (that he always already is);  
Though there is no duality of purity and impurity, he is manifest purity - to him I pay  
homage!*

*From the innumerable planets and stars of the Victorious Ones' Sacred Doctrine  
In the firmament of the extremely vast celestial expanse of what can be known,  
I will explain the topic of the unsurpassed secret mantra's adamantine nucleus  
In a treasury of precious words and meanings.*

The glorious Victoriously Transcendent Totally Positive One first became directly enlightened into unsurpassed enlightenment within the spontaneously present palace of the primeval expanse, whereupon he "turned the wheel" of the Spiritual Doctrines. Those teachings' ultimately supreme fruit is the unsurpassed vehicle centered on the adamantine nucleus of radiant light, as found within the natural Great Perfection's doctrinal categories. I will analyze its main topics [160] from *The Seventeen Tantras of the Supremely Unchanging Radiant Light* together with *The Collection of One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts*,<sup>5</sup> while in particular discussing how you meditatively take the direct realization of these tantras and esoteric precepts' inner meaning into your own hands so as to enable you who are karmically fortunate to actualize liberation in a single lifetime. In this way, there are eleven crucial subjects with which I will discuss this adamantine topic in brief:<sup>6</sup> (i) the Ground, (ii) the process of straying, (iii) the way in which the nucleus of enlightened energy continues to pervade, (iv) the location or abode of this gnostic energy, (v) its path, (vi) its gateway, (vii) its objective sphere, (viii) how you meditatively take it into your own experience, (ix) its optimal measures, (x) the intermediate state, and (xi) the site of freedom. To expand a bit on these eleven topics which form the body of the my present treatise (corresponding directly to its eleven chapters), I will discuss (i) the Ground, the abiding reality of that which is real in its fundamental character prior to the emergence of Awakened Ones in consequence of their realization of it and the emergence of sentient beings in consequence of their non-realization of it; (ii) the process of sentient beings' straying from within that Ground; (iii) the way in which the Ground continues to pervade all living beings even as they stray; (iv) the location/abode (in human existence) within which its gnostic energy is supported; (v) the pathway (in human existence) from which its great presencing takes place; (vi) the gateway (in human existence) through which its gnostic energy shines forth; (vii) the objective dimension within which it comes into presence; (viii) the manner in which it should be meditatively taken into your own experience; (ix) the delineation of such

meditation via ascertaining its optimal realization's signs and measures; (x) these gnostic-energy lamps' display in the post-death intermediate state should experiential realization not be perfected during this lifetime; and (xi) that which is the ultimate limit of all of them, the great site of freedom.

These eleven topics are just as spoken of in *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra*:<sup>7</sup>

*What or whom is the beginning of sentient beings in cyclic existence?  
 Who takes hold of the first occurrence of transcendence?  
 What is the key point of the Awakened Ones' not straying?  
 From what does the straying of sentient beings emerge?  
 Where is the dwelling site of self-awareness' primordial gnosis?  
 From what pathway does it emerge?  
 What are the gateways for this gnostic energy to shine forth?  
 What are the key points of its lamps like?  
 How do its characteristics appear?  
 As for the key points of its objective sphere, where does it shine forth?  
 By what special supports is it actualized?  
 What are the key points of gradations in intellect like for its realization?  
 How is it taken into your own experience meditatively?  
 What are the key points to the signs and measures of these meditative practices' optimization?  
 What are the appearances involved in the intermediate states?  
 Where is the freedom your own mind is freed within?  
 Having been freed, how does compassionate display emerge?*

*The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* also describes these eleven topics:<sup>8</sup> [161]

*Though with mere pointless intellectual enumeration you can exhaust in their full diversity  
 Every subject or meaning that can be an object of verbal signification,  
 Their crux is encapsulated within the profound inner meaning of these eleven topics:*

- (i) Though the Ground's abiding reality is inconceivable,  
 It is explained as the three types of primordial gnosis;*
- (ii) Though the foundation of straying is explained in many ways,  
 It can be summed up as spontaneous presence and compassionate resonance;*
- (iii) Indwelling within us is awareness' gnostic energy in the Spiritual Bodies;*
- (iv) Its abode is the Enlightened Heart-Mind, the mandalic center of the Tsitta;*
- (v) Its pathway is your four main channels, and that which propels it is your inner winds;*
- (vi) The gateway of its shining forth is your eyes and so forth;*
- (vii) It gathers within the sky, the objective sphere free of conditioning;*

- (viii) If you wonder how to take it into experience meditatively,  
There are the Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence practices;*
- (ix) Their optimal measure is the yogic tuning into the four assurances;*
- (x) The intermediate states are where the mother and son are joined;*
- (xi) And the site of freedom is the original beginning.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### *The First Adamantine Topic: the Stage of Systematically Presenting the Ground*<sup>9</sup>

At this point I will extensively explain these eleven topics individually. The first adamantine topic involves the systematic presentation of the Ground, the abiding reality of that which is real in its fundamental character prior to the emergence of Awakened Ones ("Buddhas") in consequence of their realization of it and the emergence of sentient beings in consequence of their non-realization of it, along with the manner in which the Ground-presencing manifests from the Ground.<sup>10</sup> *The Six Spaces Tantra* puts the question thus:<sup>11</sup>

*Hey Teacher, the Totally Positive One!  
In the beginning prior to the Teacher himself, and thus prior to sentient beings existing  
as "sentient beings"  
Or Awakened Ones existing as "Awakened Ones", how does the Ground exist?*

There are three topics within this discussion: the abiding reality of the primordial original Ground; the manner in which the Ground-presencing shines forth from it; and the manner in which the Totally Positive One is free.<sup>12</sup>

### I. The abiding reality of the primordial original Ground<sup>13</sup>

This involves two sections: a general discussion of the categories of the "seven Grounds", and a detailed explanation of the originally pure primordial Ground.

#### I.1. A general discussion of the categories of the seven Grounds<sup>14</sup>

In general, there are no more than seven ways of describing the Ground in the Great Perfection tradition: the traditions of asserting the Ground as spontaneously present, as indeterminate, as the definitive and determinate foundation, as capable of transforming into anything whatsoever, [162] as describable in terms of anything whatsoever, as varied, and as originally pure. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes them thus:<sup>15</sup>

*This abiding reality in its natural flow  
Exists in seven ways:  
It is held to be spontaneously present in view of its being varied;  
Indeterminate in its being alive with movement (including that of the mind);  
Determinate via its unchanging nature;*



*Transformable into anything with the dynamism of its presencing;  
 "Describable" as anything since it gives rise to everything;  
 Originally pure since it is free of straying and distortion;  
 And variegated with its diverse modes of manifestation.*

*Since the Great Perfection can appear in any way,  
 There are a great number of diverse assertions about it  
 Drawn from the specific particulars of such descriptions;  
 Yet within the view turned towards its abiding natural flow  
 It is revealed as neither this one nor two, and in fact is utterly free of any such  
 characterizations at all.*

*The Six Spaces Tantra says:<sup>16</sup>*

*The Ground which exists in a primeval, natural flow  
 Has no existence outside of its own oneness,  
 Yet it appears in seven distinct ways  
 When conceptually delineated  
 Under the bias of our distorted perception.*

*Though it appears in these seven ways,  
 Such appearance is only due to our non-recognition of its oneness  
 Under the influence of the presencing process of its single essence.*

*Even so, let us examine their individual significance:*

*(i) In the Ground's being spontaneously present,  
 It appears as the nucleus comprising all variety.*

*(ii). In its being indeterminate,  
 It appears with observable features involving the psyche's flickering movements.*

*(iii) In its being determinate within its own condition,  
 It appears devoid of transmutation caused by mental activity.*

*(iv) In its being capable of transformation,  
 It appears to a mind's perception in accordance with the perceiver's actions.*

*(v) In its being the essence of all that is possible,  
 It manifests as the intrinsic essence of whatever appears.*

*(vi) In its being variegated,  
 It appears in the mode of individualized variety.*

*(vii) In its being originally pure,  
 It appears as primordially stainless.*

*All of these appear in accordance with the perceivers' varying intellectual gradations  
 and perspectives,  
 While its own condition remains originally pure throughout.*

Although the Ground is thus taught as seven-fold due to this individuating analysis based on interpreting singular awareness' reality, [163] these words, letters and styles of assertion are totally unestablished within awareness' essence.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, I do not here maintain any theoretical position fixated<sup>18</sup> exclusively on one extreme, claiming "It is this only". However, since others won't understand this if I don't discuss it in accordance with these factors, I will provisionally deal with them.

This can be profitably examined in reference to two types of individuals: those who adhere to the tenet systems and those who adhere to the spiritual path.<sup>19</sup> The adherents to the tenets teach those six faulty views concerning the Ground, and thus lapse into extremist views via fixation on their respective biases. This is similar to six blind men groping about a divine elephant with their hands, and then attempting to appraise its shape and color. The adherents to the path, on the other hand, in our own canons faultlessly assert the Ground to be originally pure, and thus are similar to the sighted who appraise the elephant's nature:<sup>20</sup>

*All of these appear in accordance with the perceivers' varying intellectual gradations and perspectives,  
While its own condition remains originally pure throughout.*

First I will explain in six corresponding sections a little of the pertinent characteristics of the six faulty views of the Ground. Each of the six will be discussed in terms of a triad of subsections: an articulation of the assertions involved in such a view, my refutation of those assertions, and a summary of the refutations' significance.<sup>21</sup>

#### **I.1.i. The assertion that the Ground is spontaneously present**<sup>22</sup>

Proponents of this position claim the following: the spontaneously present abiding reality is without fragmentation nor does it lapse into partiality, as it is characterized by all the dynamic qualities being primordially spontaneously present.<sup>23</sup>

My refutation of such assertions: if all the dynamic qualities were spontaneously present, then it follows that the fruit of separation from adventitious stains (i.e. manifest enlightenment) would also be spontaneously present, since all the dynamic qualities would

always already be primordially spontaneously established.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, such a position would entail the impossibility of anyone at all straying from the Ground, and the incoherence of any notion that these errant strayings can be cleared away, since it would logically follow that the fruit is always already present within the causal impetus.<sup>25</sup> If everything was spontaneously present, then by virtue of even cyclic existence being spontaneously present, freedom itself would become impossible, since by force of a causal impetus (cyclic existence) and its fruit (freedom) being necessarily temporally distinct from each other, it would follow that the latter couldn't be spontaneously present when the former was. *The Six Spaces Tantra* says:<sup>26</sup> [164]

*That very Ground of spontaneously present variety  
Is not the genuine Ground itself.*

*If it were, it would entail the following:  
By sentient beings properly exerting themselves in meditation  
The freedom of Buddhahood wouldn't ensue,  
Since spontaneously present dimmed awareness would continue to pollute them.*

*If you respond by saying they become free via the presence of awareness,  
Won't even the fruit (of enlightenment) still not involve freedom?  
Analogically it resembles how black charcoal  
Cannot be changed into a white colored substance,  
No matter what you try to clean it with.*

*Since a causal impetus and its fruit must be (temporally) distinct from each other,  
Again, the former cannot be spontaneously present when the latter is.*

My summary of these refutations' overall significance: we don't maintain the Ground is spontaneously present in such a fashion - cyclic existence is not established by force of the Ground's essence being originally pure; transcendence is not established by force of the Ground's nature being thoroughly pure; and the Ground thus remains within an identity primordially beyond all defects, since it involves neither (cyclic existence nor transcendence) and is beyond intellection or verbalization.<sup>27</sup> In this way, in its own terms the Ground isn't spontaneously present as such, and thus this quality shouldn't be attributed to it other than to indicate that the Ground is the pure source-potential of spontaneous presence.<sup>28</sup> Again from *The Six Spaces Tantra*:<sup>29</sup>

*The Ground abiding in such a manner  
Has an identity indicated by spontaneous presence.*

**I.1.ii. The assertion that the Ground is indeterminate**<sup>30</sup>

Proponents of this position claim the following: because the Ground's essence isn't anything at all, it is indeterminate in terms of having a single nature, and thus appears in a given way merely in accordance with whatever a perceiving intellect imputes it to be.

My refutation of such assertions:<sup>31</sup> if the Ground is simply whatever an intellect imputes it to be, then transcendence of misery would be untenable when that Ground is imputed to be cyclic existence (and vice a versa); when imputed as singular, plurality would not be feasible (and vice a versa). Because the determination of one would be confused with the other, it would necessarily follow that straying and freedom would interchange positions. If this utter indeterminacy pertained, it would follow that upon becoming free you could then become reversed into errant straying; it would also follow that you would always already be freed at the very time when you are manifestly not freed. Utter confusion would result since that which is determinate and that which is indeterminate would mutually interchange positions. Finally, if the Ground were indeterminate, it would not be tenable as the Ground itself, as the defect of its "not taking hold of the site" would be entailed.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, *The Six Spaces Tantra* says:<sup>33</sup>

*Though the indeterminate Ground is taught,  
Such a description is not tenable for the real Ground -  
I understand it as being a provisional description  
Geared towards those with a particular intellectual cast and capacity. [165]*

*If the real Ground were like this, the fruit (enlightenment) would vacillate,  
Or, in other words, would come to include its own reversal;  
The indeterminate would become determinate,  
And the determinate as well would become indeterminate.*

*Since there would in fact be determinacy by virtue of indeterminacy as such existing in  
itself,  
This view of the Ground is just like the extremes of karmic actions (and their results).*

My summary of these refutations' overall significance: we don't maintain the Ground is indeterminate in such a fashion - by force of words and their referents (objects) being utterly undifferentiated within the Ground, the absence of origination, cessation and endurance within its primordially unborn reality can be definitively established, and thus we say that within its sky-like reality there is utterly no determinacy in terms of the partial fixations (of our linguistic and conceptual frames).<sup>34</sup>

**I.1.iii. The assertion that the Ground is the definitive and determinate foundation**<sup>35</sup>

Proponents of this position claim the following: the Ground's essence is unchanging like the sky, while its modes of appearance are not liable to transformation, like fire and water.<sup>36</sup>

My refutation of such assertions: if the Ground were exclusively unchanging, then it would necessarily be the same as asserting a permanent self.<sup>37</sup> Also it would follow that freedom via spiritual exertion would be impossible, since impure awareness could not be transformed into its pure form. As a direct consequence of these assertions being valid, meditative realization of the Ground and cultivation of the spiritual path would be pointless, since one of this position's defective consequences is that it would be impossible for anyone to reverse errant straying by contemplatively realizing the Ground.<sup>38</sup> *The Six Spaces Tantra* says:<sup>39</sup>

*The teaching of the "determinate Ground"  
Is also not the authentic nucleus.*

*Since its own true condition is inverted (by the perceiver who determines it),  
Analogically just as a white conch shell  
Will itself appear yellow to the jaundiced eye,  
Determinacy of both self and other fails to pertain to the Ground,  
Which is thus beyond the confines of such determinacy.*

*Therefore, this as well is not authentic.*

*For another reason, since this would entail determinate causes and determinate effects,  
There would be no difference between that and a permanent self.*

My summary of these refutations' overall significance: we don't maintain the Ground is determinate in such a fashion - it is true that we say "transmutation and change are absent"

within its originally pure reality (since it is inherently pure in the context of realization without any duality evolving in its nature even in the absence of meditative realization), but we don't accept such statements as "No purification ensues with meditative exertion".<sup>40</sup> [166]

**I.1.iv. The assertion that the Ground is capable of transforming into anything whatsoever**<sup>41</sup>

Proponents of this position claim the following: since the Ground's essence is not regionalized or segmented, it has the capacity to transform into any state of affairs or condition.<sup>42</sup>

My refutation of such assertions: if its abiding reality were liable to such transformation, then it would follow that it is not an abiding reality.<sup>43</sup> Since there would be this capability of transformation in any direction whatsoever, despite attaining the fruit of freedom, it would be reversible back into its causal impetus (i.e. distorted experience); or this causal impetus itself (i.e. distorted experience) would, right during its own agitated state without even undergoing substantial change, interchange positions with the state of an Awakened One who is already liberated via his/her previously having transcended misery (i.e. the fruit of enlightenment).<sup>44</sup> If this is asserted, then it would necessarily follow that there would be no soteriological necessity at all, and freedom would lack any veracity due to its reversibility. Furthermore, it would entail that matter and awareness are capable of transformation into each other. *The Six Spaces Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>45</sup>

*Previously "the capacity for transformation" was taught,  
Yet if the Ground's own abiding reality were liable to transformation  
It would entail problems similar to its former description as indeterminate.*

*Since the fruit itself (liberation) would be reversible into its causal impetus (distorted appearances),  
All meditative exertion would become pointless;  
Because it would entail such repeated reversals and inversions,  
Inanimate matter as well could possess awareness,  
Yet since such isn't the case, this capacity for transformation must be rejected.*

My summary of these refutations' overall significance: since the Ground itself is devoid of transmutation or change, it never becomes other, and thus when all distortions have been

purified into their own intrinsic reality, we refer to it as "seizing hold of your own-place within the Ground's essence".<sup>46</sup>

**I.i.iv. The assertion that the Ground may be described in terms of anything whatsoever**<sup>47</sup>

Proponents of this position claim the following: since as the essence of all things it manifests in a groundless free flow without restrictions, the Ground may be described in terms of anything whatsoever.<sup>48</sup>

My refutation of such assertions: if the Ground can appropriately be described in terms of anything whatsoever, then just as concrete things are endless the Ground itself would be endless. Such an assertion, however, would logically entail the defect that the ultimate limit of this endlessness couldn't be established.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, by force of such a position entailing that the Ground could be described as existent or non-existent, as well as permanent or annihilated, it follows that the Ground characterized in this way isn't tenable as the Ground of abiding reality. *The Six Spaces Tantra* says:<sup>50</sup>

*The Teacher himself formerly taught  
That the Ground is open to descriptions,  
Yet all of that seems to be a partial presentation: [167]  
Since it involves establishing the Ground on the face of everything's superficial being,  
Such a position entails the Ground being endless.*

My summary of these refutations' overall significance: since the Ground transcends existence and non-existence as well as permanence and annihilation, it defies all descriptions, yet whichever (descriptions possess soteriological effect) are still utilized in "symbolic, analogical teaching" drawing upon (a given image's) partial symbolic (concordance partial for poetic evocation).<sup>51</sup>

**I.i.vi. The assertion that the Ground is varied**<sup>52</sup>

Proponents of this position claim the following: because the Ground's essence naturally arises everywhere as everything, it manifests in terms of varied modes of appearance.<sup>53</sup>

My refutation of such assertions: the Ground's being varied would entail it being plural, and since such a Ground would be untenable as the foundation for purity and freedom, despite your meditative exertions all such hardships would be meaningless.<sup>54</sup> Since this plurality of the Ground would be limitless without end, it logically follows that there could be no time at which an individual could gain ascertainment of the Ground (in its definitive singular reality), or meditatively realize it.<sup>55</sup> It also follows that just as its modes of appearance undergo transmutation and change, the Ground as well will undergo transmutation and change. Yet if the Ground underwent transmutation and change as a matter of course, it would not be feasible as the Ground, since this would entail its being suffused and astir with unstable emotional distortions, just as a multitude of thought-constellations flicker forth in a single instant.<sup>56</sup> *The Six Spaces Tantra* says:<sup>57</sup>

*The Teacher earlier taught that the Ground is variegated,  
Yet this also isn't feasible in terms of my own position:*

*This assertion's faulty consequences are like this:  
By force of its essence manifesting in accordance with various descriptions,  
Its effects or "fruits" would be differentiated  
And there would be internal contradiction with the resultant multitude of claims about  
it.*

My summary of these refutations' overall significance: we don't maintain the Ground is varied in such a fashion - because its essence can't be established as anything at all, it is devoid of any particular basis for the attribution of characterizations; because its nature is free directly from within its appearance, it is devoid of anything that must be characterized or defined; and because its abiding reality is free from discursive elaboration, it is simply devoid of characteristics or definitions themselves. Since the designations stemming from this triad (the particular basis for characterizations ("illustration"), something that is characterized ("definiendum"), and the characteristics themselves ("definition")) don't thus apply to the Ground, it transcends the defect of particular modes of entitative existence despite acting as the unceasing pure source-potential of all variety.<sup>58</sup>



**I.1.vii. The faultless teaching in our own canons by those whom adhere to the spiritual path: seeing the Ground as originally pure** <sup>59</sup>

This will be explicated in three subsections: the identification of its originally pure essence, the rebuttal of objections raised with respect to that identification, and a general discussion of the natural flow-process of the Ground's pure source potential ("the Ground-in-its-shining-forth").

**I.1.vii.a. The identification of the Ground's originally pure essence**

The primordial Ground's original purity transcends the extremes of being existent or non-existent in its utter transcendence of verbal and mental expression. [168] Devoid of the existence-extreme (permanence/eternalism) by force of its essence's original purity, it doesn't exist in terms of entitative phenomena and their characteristic qualities; transcending the non-existence-extreme (annihilation/nihilism) by force of its nature's spontaneous presence, it is the thoroughly pure reality of empty radiant light, the natural and primeval expansive awakening ("the primeval Buddha-nature"), the unchanging Reality Body's wisdom-energy, the great primordially empty self-emergent gnostic energy present like the sky from the primordial beginnings, with cyclic existence and transcendent reality not to be found anywhere at all.<sup>60</sup> *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* says:<sup>61</sup>

*By force of its essence's original purity,  
Its nature is spontaneously present.*

*Beyond levels, partializing restrictions, and segmentation,  
It is devoid of existence, non-existence or something that can be seen;  
It isn't within the scope of linguistic or logical analyses,  
Nor is it something single, dual, or even an itemizable object at all.*

*It is present in a natural flow within the great emptiness.*

*The Six Spaces Tantra* says:<sup>62</sup>

*Originally pure reality devoid of discursive elaboration,  
Is the Ground-nucleus, thoroughly pure in its own essence.*

*Being devoid of words and letters,  
It can't be delineated with verbal expression;  
Being devoid of all conventional reifications and terminology,*

*Conceptuality with its subject-object dualism doesn't apply;  
There are no Awakened Ones, and no sentient beings;  
No phenomena, and no conceptions of phenomena;  
There is nothing, nothing whatsoever, nothing at all!*

*When this nucleus of such absence  
Is verbally delineated in a provisional way,  
Its essence is original purity  
And its nature is spontaneous presence.*

**I.I.vii.b. The rebuttal of objections raised with respect to this identification of the Ground's originally pure essence**

**Objection:** since all stains would be primordially already exhausted if the Ground's essence were originally pure, the errant straying of sentient beings into cyclic existence would make no sense! If its nature were spontaneously present, then it would make sense that sentient beings would be primordially free without any effort on their part, since the fruit (i.e. enlightenment) would be always already spontaneously present!

**Response:** because of primordially always already being free, it is true that in reality stains need not be further refined away, and in fact neither errant straying nor freedom exists on its own terms as such anyway. [169] Yet, like freedom and straying found in a dream,<sup>63</sup> they both appear simply as awareness' play, despite not being experienced as established in any concrete way from the first instant of their appearance. Thus describing the Ground as originally pure doesn't entail any defects.

Though it's true that via the Ground's spontaneous presence the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses of the expanse are primordially perfectly complete within its thoroughly pure nature, this doesn't entail any problems since a Buddha's manifest enlightenment involves this primordially coming to the fore by force of his/her divesting him/herself of adventitious stains, just as a dreamer awakens from sleep and his/her dreams consequently cease.<sup>64</sup>

*The Six Spaces Tantra says:*<sup>65</sup>

*The Spiritual Hero said: "Because its essence is originally pure,  
This cyclic existence of sentient beings makes no sense*

*By virtue of the stains of dimmed awareness being primordially exhausted".*

*The Teacher replied: "Oh Great Hero,  
Because the Ground's nature is spontaneously present  
It too manifests in unceasing play."*

*The Spiritual Hero inquired further:  
"Yet since the Ground's nature is itself spontaneously present,  
It follows that sentient beings should be naturally free  
Since that enlightenment should be primordially spontaneously present."*

*The Teacher replied: "As for these sentient beings,  
Since the essence is originally pure,  
Their freedoms also manifest playfully".*

*The Spiritual Hero questioned him yet again:  
"Yet with its essence being originally pure,  
There's no need or rationale for its being spontaneously present as well;  
Alternatively, by virtue of being spontaneously present,  
Its original purity comes to naught".*

*The Teacher replied: "The Ground's mode of abiding  
Can't be expressed in words by anyone,  
And thus is beyond verbal and written expression;  
Since it can't be established as having an essence of any type,  
Saying "it's originally pure and spontaneously present"  
Is impervious to such verbal attacks.*

**I.1.vii.c. A general discussion of the natural flow-process of the Ground's pure source potential ("the Ground-in-its-shining-forth")<sup>66</sup>**

Within the primordial Ground of the original expanse, there is the triad of its essence, nature and compassionate resonance; the triad of its range, actuality and identity; and its original purity and spontaneous presence. Thus when the Ground's single essence is divided up by conceptual isolates, it exists in terms of these eight qualities.<sup>67</sup> When the Ground-presencing dawns from within the Ground's range, it in turn is termed "the common Ground" in light of its serving as the ground or foundation for both freedom and straying: it is referred to as "the foundation of freedom" by force of its acting as the ground for freedom; and it is referred to as "the foundation of straying" by force of its acting as the ground of sentient beings' errant straying. [170] Thus when the factors of freedom and straying are

distinguished within the Ground-presencing's single essence, it can be understood in terms of this triad.<sup>68</sup> *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* gives it in brief:<sup>69</sup>

*Essence, nature, and compassionate resonance;  
Range, actuality, and the great identity;  
Original purity and spontaneous presence;  
The common Ground, and the ground of straying.*

It then extensively explains this in the following:<sup>70</sup>

*Its essence is original purity, devoid of any basis for expression;  
Its nature is spontaneous presence, the perfect completeness of whatever appears;  
And its compassionate resonance is all-pervasive, the naturally self-arisen.*

*Its range is automatic, spontaneous emergence;  
Its actuality is universal, uncontrived presencing;  
And thus its identity is encompassing and comprehensive gathering-in.*

*Its original purity is the natural purity from stains;  
Its spontaneous presence is the emergence of variety, and thereby  
The common Ground seems to be existent.*

Since these are intrinsic key points of the utmost importance in comprehending the Ground, they should be understood with the eye of insight.

## **I.2. A detailed explanation of the originally pure primordial ground**

This involves three subsections: the identification of the Ground's essence's mode of being, an extensive explanation of the Ground's nature, and a negation of erroneous tendencies in understanding the Ground's "features".

### **I.2.i. The identification of the Ground's essence's mode of being**

It is the self-emergent primordial gnosis of awareness,<sup>71</sup> the original primordially empty Body of Reality, the ultimate truth of the expanse, and the abiding condition of luminously radiant reality, within which such oppositions as cyclic existence and transcendent reality, pleasure and suffering, existence and non-existence, being and non-being, freedom and straying, awareness and dimmed awareness, are not found anywhere at all. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* says:<sup>72</sup>

*Within this pristine original purity  
There is nothing that can be articulated as mere "straying",  
And similarly what point could there be in talking of "non-straying"!*

*Therefore straying is primevally absent.*

*The Tantra of the Wordless Secret says:*<sup>73</sup>

*Within self-emergent primordial gnosis, there are no objects to be experienced,  
There is nothing which has previously passed away,  
Nor anything which will subsequently emerge,  
Nor anything at all which currently appears.*

*There is no karma,  
There are no latent karmic propensities,  
There is no dimmed awareness, [171]  
There is no mind,  
There is no psyche,  
There is no insight,  
There is no cyclic existence,  
And there is no transcendence of misery -  
It is not the case that even awareness itself exists.*

*There is nothing whatsoever which manifests within primordial gnosis.*

Furthermore, it can be termed "originally pure", "pure from the very first", "pure from the beginning", "primordially pure" and "primevally pure". *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra says:*<sup>74</sup>

*"Original" is its occurrence in the primeval beginnings;  
"Purity" is the utter exhaustion of stains.*

### **I.2.ii. An extensive explanation of the Ground's nature**

There are two topics here: explaining the Ground as endowed with a dyadic primordial gnosis, and as endowed with a triadic primordial gnosis.<sup>75</sup> As for the former: in consequence of the indivisibility of awareness and emptiness via the absence of concrete things within awareness, the primordial gnosis of originally pure essence is beyond mental perspectives, while the primordial gnosis of spontaneously present nature abides as depth-radiance's primordial radiation.<sup>76</sup> *The Six Spaces Tantra says:*<sup>77</sup>

*The essence itself is originally pure,  
While in nature it is spontaneously present*

If you isolate on the Ground's essence, it transcends the limitations of being existent or non-existent; if you isolate on its nature, it abides simply as the pure source potential ("the ground of shining forth").<sup>78</sup> Thus these two are indivisible within the Ground's own

condition, and are present as the Great Perfection free of all limitations. *The Tantra of Awareness' Natural Freedom* says:<sup>79</sup>

*It's naturally cleansed of the four extremes' stains.*

The explanation of the Ground as endowed with a triadic primordial gnosis involves two sections: a brief discussion of its essence, and an extensive explanation of its nature. As for the former, *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* says:<sup>80</sup>

*The Ground of great original purity is endowed with essence, nature, and compassionate resonance.*

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>81</sup>

*The emptiness of reality is all-pervasive  
As it abides in neither cyclic existence nor transcendent reality,  
And thus primordial gnosis remaining within reality's own essence  
Is indivisibly present in the manner of this triad.*

*The Six Spaces Tantra* says:<sup>82</sup>

*By means of primordial gnosis' three aspects  
The Ground's distinctiveness is put into words. [172]*

*The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* says:<sup>83</sup>

*You should understand that all the Ground's qualities and phenomena are present in this triad of its essence, nature, and compassionate resonance!*

In the Unsurpassed Secret exegetical tradition,<sup>84</sup> the extensive explanation of this triune primordial gnosis' nature describes its triune abiding reality as the essence, nature, and compassionate resonance: (i) the Reality Body's primevally pure essence resides as the Spiritual Bodies, and thus abides as the pure source-potential of the three Spiritual Bodies' seamless identity, yet is not in itself the slightest bit established in terms of segmented qualities such as faces and hands; (ii) its nature's radiance dwells as the five lights, whereby its threefold radiation<sup>85</sup> primordially naturally shines, yet without segmented colors being individually existent as such; and (iii) its compassionate resonance dwells as awareness' gnostic energy, such that the processes of enlightened knowing are distinct in their unceasing radiant clarity,<sup>86</sup> yet utterly devoid of any experience in terms of subjects and objects

discernible as actors and the acted-upon. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes this triad thus:<sup>87</sup>

*The Ground abides as the triad  
Of its original essence, nature, and compassionate resonance.*

*(i) To expand on that, via this essence abiding in terms of the Spiritual Bodies,  
It is itself present in its natural flow  
As the dimensions of Reality, Enjoyment, and Emanation  
In an indivisible and undifferentiated manner,  
Yet devoid of mental objects such as bodily color.*

*(ii) Its nature's shining forth in the manner of lights  
Is present in the natural flow of the unsegmented knowable,  
White, red, yellow, green, and blue  
Without being segmented into concretized qualities.*

*(iii) Since within its compassionate resonance's diversified pure source-potential  
There is no determinacy of it as being one thing "like this",  
Variety presences-forth, and thus it is termed "the Ground".*

According to *The Six Spaces Tantra*:<sup>88</sup>

*I. Its essence: within its originally pure reality  
There is neither primordial gnosis nor Spiritual Bodies,  
There are no lights, and it involves no colors;  
Because it isn't established as the essence of anything,  
As for dimmed awareness and emotional distortions,  
What need is there to say they aren't existent either?*

*II. Its nature: within its nature's lighting-up  
There is primordially no apprehension of distinct qualities;  
And with its natural shining devoid of coloration  
There is merely the factors of cognitive energy and awareness: [173]  
Since apprehendable objects that could be grasped are utterly absent,  
Conceptualizing apprehension doesn't take place.<sup>89</sup>*

*In its light-transcendent primordial radiation  
It is primordially pervasively present,  
And in its Spiritual Bodies-transcendent natural radiation  
It is present as the great seal of thorough purity.<sup>90</sup>*

*Nonetheless, within the lighting-up of its nature  
There is primordially no objectifications of discrete qualities,  
And it abides in the following (fivefold) manner within its fundamental dimension.<sup>91</sup>*

*(i) Engendering reality's natural radiation is its white dimension,  
Which yet remains within the great depth-radiance itself.<sup>92</sup>*

*(ii) Engendering the depth-radiant essence's dazzling luster  
With appearances self-extinguished, its yellow dimension*

*Shines in its own essence from the unmanifest depths.*<sup>93</sup>

*(iii) Engendering radiation devoid of clinging within reality's own essence,  
Divested of being fettered by anything at all  
And with clinging self-extinguished, its red dimension  
Abides as the great unadulterated depth-radiation.*<sup>94</sup>

*(iv) In maintaining (the five lights') respective dimensions without adulteration,  
Green is free of goal-oriented exertion's agitation  
And thus devoid of even optimal activity,  
Such that as the rays of (the Ground's primeval) beginnings  
It forms the relationships pervading (gnosis') depth-radiance  
In these unmanifest depth-radiant dimensions.*<sup>95</sup>

*(v) As unchanging and perfectly complete blue,  
It abides as primordially perfect without having been made so.*<sup>96</sup>

*In its thus described nature  
The Spiritual Body is without manifest characteristics,  
And abides as the peak of perfections  
Within its great primordial intrinsic purity;*<sup>97</sup>

*It doesn't manifest to sensory perception,  
And since it is naturally cleansed of corporeality and concrete qualities  
It abides as the foundation of the great depth-radiance.*<sup>98</sup>

*That which is pervaded (awareness) is empty via the pervader itself (expanse),  
Yet it lights-up without being a sterile nothingness,  
And the factor of its radiant presencing is unceasing;  
Because its nucleus includes the quintessence of everything  
Stains are absent and purified in their own-place.*<sup>99</sup>

*Thus within this great secret of the Buddha's expansive awakening,  
The dimension of its nature is present.*<sup>100</sup>

*III. Compassionate resonance: via its compassionate resonance's varied presencing  
Emptiness itself is unceasingly dynamic;  
And with the manifestations from this presencing dimension  
In terms of the twofold primordial gnosis of that which can be known,  
This presencing of absence is naturally cleansed of reified appearances.*<sup>101</sup> [174]

*Thus compassionate resonance as the Ground-nature's automatic force  
Is primordially devoid of any striving-involved activity,  
And thus presences forth primordially without any differentiation  
In the manner of uncreate manifestation:  
Just as light from the sun,  
It is not the case that it is created by itself  
But rather its own nature lights up as such (without any fabrication or artificiality).*<sup>102</sup>

*The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness:*<sup>103</sup>



*That which is termed "the great originally pure Ground" abides in terms of the triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance. That essence is unceasingly radiant as unchanging primordial gnosis, and as such is termed "the abiding condition of the Youthful Body in a Vase". Its nature is the unobstructed and unceasing presencing of the five lights, while the presencing of its compassionate resonance is like a cloudless sky. That triune Ground is termed "the abiding reality of original purity", and is utterly devoid of any fragmentation or lapsing into partiality.*

*The Exquisite Auspiciousness Tantra:*<sup>104</sup>

*Prior to the emergence of Awakened Ones in consequence of their realization, and the emergence of sentient beings in consequence of their non-realization, awareness' self emergent primordial gnosis doesn't waver from the Ground, and dwells together with its triune lighting-up.*

*The Self-Aware Primordial Gnosis itself taught this abiding reality of its own manner of being: "Hey! This vast space of its great presencing abides as the super expansive awakening which never strays from the great unwavering Body of Reality. The Essence's Spiritual Body is unceasingly present: its essence is unchanging and its means secret; it has never wavered, it is unwavering, and it is without agitation; therein all presences are simultaneously perfectly complete; all primordial gnosises are instantaneously perfectly complete; all Spiritual Bodies are present in ripened form; and all luminous appearances and visions are radiantly clear without obscuration. This abiding reality's lighting-up is unobscured by its manifestation-modes, and is a total Great Perfection with its essence, nature, and compassionate resonance devoid of fragmentation.*

*I. The essence's lighting-up: the essence's great abiding reality manifests in the manner of Spiritual Bodies, yet isn't at all present with a manifest mouth, eyes, or ears; [175] it manifests in the manner of emptiness, yet isn't at all present as an inert emptiness; it manifests superbly in the manner of five lights, yet isn't present at all with differentiated colors; it manifests devoid of fragmentation, yet isn't present at all in the manner of relatedness or integration; it manifests in the manner of being devoid of center or periphery, yet isn't present at all in terms of partializing or restricting objectifications; it manifests in the manner of being uninfected by any "parts", yet isn't present at all in terms of differentiated segmentation; it manifests in the manner of unceasing ornamentation, yet in its loftiness is utterly devoid of any manifestation in terms of upper and lower.*

*II. The nature's lighting-up: in its manifesting in the manner of vastness, it is devoid of lapsing into partiality and restrictions; in its manifesting in the manner of radiant clarity, it is devoid of concrete things; in its manifesting in the manner of blue, it is devoid of differentiated "parts"; in its manifesting in the manner of white, there is no apprehension of "family types"; in its manifesting in the manner of yellow, the dynamic qualities are perfectly complete; in its manifesting in the manner of red, clearing space is unobstructed; in its manifesting in the manner of green, the dynamic qualities are perfectly complete.*

*Thus it does abide as these five types of light, yet there is the great non-apprehension of colors; circular, yet without shape; unceasing, yet unconditioned; nonpervading, yet a great natural radiation; self-radiant, yet including the internal and external; devoid of striving and accomplishment, yet present in a natural flow.*

*III. Compassionate resonance's lighting-up: it manifests in the manner of emptiness, yet its radiance is unceasing; non-elaborated, yet the great elaboration; its nature unobstructed and unceasing, yet a great diversified indeterminacy; devoid of darkness by force of its radiance; a great absence by force of its being unobstructed and unceasing; empty in a natural flow, yet a great shining-forth everywhere; devoid of confusion, yet a great holistic total presencing-forth; all-pervasive, yet a great unifying force; pure, yet a great unceasing straying; and perfectly complete, yet a great lighting-up as a singularity - all this is present within the non-obstructed clearing space of compassionate resonance".*

### I.2.iii. A negation of erroneous tendencies in understanding the Ground's "features"

In interpreting the teaching on the originally pure Ground being endowed with a triune primordial gnosis, (i) some people go astray with respect to the assertion that its essence abides as the Spiritual Bodies, and consequently [176] assert that it is endowed with a mouth, eyes, and ears of insight and self-luminosity. Such interpretations confuse this teaching with those of the Secret Cycle, and fail to overcome the pitfalls of the Mahayoga teachings.<sup>105</sup> If it in fact had a mouth and eyes, they would have to be either coarsely existent material sensory organs, or merely an immaterial psychic dimension. If they were the former, there would be no difference between it and the coarse "desire" and "form" states of existence; if they were the latter, there would be no difference between it and the four "sensory field possibilities" (i.e. the four subtle states of consciousness in the formless realm).<sup>106</sup> *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* sums it up:<sup>107</sup>

*Because no concrete things can be apprehended  
Within the Reality Body's thorough super-purity,  
It can't be imputed as having distinct qualities.*

*If it did have distinct qualities,  
Then the Reality Body would be an apprehensible thing.*

(ii) Having gone astray in interpreting the explanation of the Ground's nature as five lights, some people assert that these five lights concretely exist on their own terms as such. However, this assertion would mean there was no difference between the Reality Body and the Spiritual Bodies involving form, as well as entailing that the expanse would not be empty reality. *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* says:<sup>108</sup>

*If you invert it as being endowed with distinct qualities,*

*The Reality Body would come to involve form.*

(iii) Having gone astray in interpreting the explanation of the Ground's compassionate resonance as unobstructed, all-pervasive, and free of elaboration, some people assert that primordial gnosis is discontinuous. However, if the Ground lacked the pure source-potential of primordial gnosis, the Awakened Ones' wisdom energy would be absent, and thus the Ground itself would become like the sky in its sterile nothingness, or else like inanimate matter. *The Six Spaces Tantra* speaks on this at length:<sup>109</sup>

*If the twofold primordial gnosis of the knowable were absent,  
What difference would pertain between this abiding reality and inanimate matter?  
Or, from another perspective, it would simply become  
A totally sterile emptiness.*

*Compassionate resonance's primordial gnosis  
Which is sensitive to the knowable just as they are ultimately,  
Knows the abiding condition of its own intrinsic reality -  
If this factor of primordial gnosis were absent,  
What would be the difference between the Ground and the four elements' material  
forms?*

*The primordial gnosis of compassionate resonance  
Which is sensitive to the knowable in all their plurality,  
Knows the states of mind of those to be trained -  
If this were absent, the Ground would be like the sky.*

*Thus the primordial gnosis sensitive to everything [177]  
Manifests within the Ground's compassionate resonance.*

*All of this is not something apprehended via referential thought -  
Aside from remaining within its own-being itself,  
It is not present in terms of coarse subjectivity and objectivity;  
Lighting-up as and within the subtle dimension of depth-radiance,  
It is the pathway of sentient beings,  
As, like a seed, it intensifies upwards.*

This twofold primordial gnosis exists within the originally pure Ground as a mere pure source-potential dimension, though absent in any coarse form, and thus the two primordial gnoses' emergence during a Buddha's enlightenment experience is feasible.<sup>110</sup> *The Verse Summation of the Transcendental Consummation of Insight Discourses* also refers to this:<sup>111</sup>

*If primordial gnosis were absent, there could be no flourishing of the enlightened  
qualities,  
No enlightenment itself, nor the oceanic attributes of the Awakened Ones.*

The following question or doubt may come to mind at this point:<sup>112</sup> "In that case, why is awareness described as being endowed with a luminous house, and as a subject of limitless luminosity?" At the respective times intrinsic to the original purity of the primordial Ground's expanse, and the original purity of the ultimate freedom-site, the dimensions of the Spiritual Bodies, lights, and lucid awareness engaging objects are not directly or substantially present, aside from the mere dimension of their depth-radiant pure source-potential. This is due to the intensely unwavering Reality Body's state being utterly devoid of objectifications or distinct qualities. This can be illustrated by an analogy with a crystal globe: when the transparent crystal isn't in the sun, or when it is in the shadows separate from the sun's conditioning, in both periods rainbow colored light doesn't manifest externally other than a mere depth radiance or glow. However, having raised-up from within the Ground, awareness abides within a luminous house during the periods of its manifestation in the Ground-presencing, its current abiding within the physical body, and the post-death reality intermediate state. Self-awareness raises-up from the Ground, and then remains within the Ground-presencing up until it/you take hold of the ultimate site (within the enlightenment experience) - thus it resembles a butter lamp sitting in the middle of its own light, or the rainbow colored manifestations ensuing when a crystal comes into contact with the sun's rays. In brief, when awareness exists within the Ground-abiding internal expanse (as opposed to the Ground-presencing's exteriorization), the Spiritual Bodies and lights are not directly or concretely existent (aside from their depth-radiance) in either the beginning or the end. Then when awareness raises-up, it involves its own luminosity's radiation.

Though awareness is said to remain within the Ground-as-contextualized when it abides in our individual hearts, [178] during this period cyclic existence is raised-up from the expanse and awareness hasn't arrived at the freedom-site - thus it is still classified as within the Ground-presencing. With a view towards this, awareness is in an unripened state within the space of natural radiation's five lights (resembling a peacock's embryonic offspring and

corresponding egg respectively).<sup>113</sup> Then awareness shines like a rainbow's colors in space during the four visions' manifestation on the spiritual path, while when it ripens into the Spiritual Bodies via arriving at its limiting state as all corporeality is purified away, it resembles the peacock's offspring emerging from their egg, and their subsequent presence.

*The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* describes it thus:<sup>114</sup>

*Awareness abiding within the Ground  
Is the perfectly complete triad of Spiritual Bodies within primordial gnosis' expanse -  
Analogically is just like a peacock's egg,  
Endowed with the inner light of primordial gnosis' radiant clarity.*

*Awareness shining forth on the spiritual path  
Is analogically indicated as resembling a rainbow's colors.*

*Awareness taken to its limiting state  
Resembles the peacock's offspring bursting open  
The eggs, and emerging.*

In this way, it is very important to distinguish between the Ground-in-its-expanse and the Ground-as-contextualized - the key points relating to these two times during which awareness respectively is and isn't within an actual luminous house are extremely crucial.<sup>115</sup>

Thus the Ground abides with its essence as indivisible emptiness and radiance, its nature as indivisible radiance and emptiness, and its compassionate resonance as indivisible awareness and emptiness. This triad is present in the following analogical manners: the primordial gnosis of its originally pure essence is present like the thoroughly pure sky; the primordial gnosis of its spontaneously present nature is present like the bright translucent ocean; and the primordial gnosis of its all-pervasive compassionate resonance is present like a stainless jewel.

## **II. The manner in which the Ground-presencing shines forth from the primordial Ground**<sup>116</sup>

This discussion involves three sections: a brief discussion of its essence, an expansive explanation of its nature, and a synopsis via its various aspects.

### **II.i. A brief discussion of the Ground-presencing's essence**

The encasing seal of the Youthful Body in a Vase (the primordial Ground of the originally pure internal expanse) is rent open, and the gnostic winds' impulsion raises awareness up from the Ground. As its self-presencing thus dawns in the eight gateways of spontaneous presence, the originally pure Reality Body's manifestation like a cloudless sky becomes present above, while directly in front the Enjoyment Body's luminously radiant pure land-manifestations pervade the sky's expanse. [179] Through its dynamism the great Ground-presencing is present below, while through its dynamism in turn the Enjoyment Body's manifestations are present below, the natural Emanational Bodies' pure land manifestations are present in their interstices, and down further below are the measureless world systems of the sixfold living beings' self-manifestations through the gate of cyclic existence. Because all of this naturally arises from the manifestation of spontaneous presence's eight gateways, it is termed "the simultaneous dawning of cyclic existence and transcendent reality's great lighting-up". As these appearances arise in external radiance from within internal radiance, essence's lighting-up is an inherently radiant unobstructed clearing-space; nature's lighting-up is primordial radiation in five-hued light; and compassionate resonance's lighting-up is an opening-up resembling a cloudless sky.<sup>117</sup> *The Explanatory Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* describes the self-presencing from within these dimensions thus:<sup>118</sup>

*The essence is unchanging primordial gnosis' unceasing radiance, which is termed "the abiding reality of the Youthful Body within a Vase". Nature is the unceasing lighting-up of the five lights. Compassionate resonance's lighting-up is, analogically, like a cloudless sky. That is termed "the abiding reality of original purity", unfragmented and devoid of any lapsing into partiality or restrictions. Below that is "the sheath of precious spontaneous presence", where the sixfold shining-forth process and two types of gateways exist. This is termed "the spontaneous presence of the Ground", "the indeterminacy of the Ground", and "the variegated shining-forth of the Ground.*

*From there on down are the sites of return and reversal. Below that is "the great Ground-presencing", and below that in turn is the Enjoyment Body's manifestations.*

## **II.2. An expansive discussion of the Ground-presencing's nature**

This discussion has two subsections: a general discussion of the spontaneously present Ground-presencing's shining-forth process, and a detailed explanation of its great manifestation.

### II.2.i. A general discussion of the Ground-presencing's shining-forth process

The encasing seal of the inner Youthful Body within a Vase is rent open, whereby the precious amulet's abiding reality naturally arises as the presencing of the eight gateways for spontaneous presence.<sup>119</sup> *The Exquisite Auspiciousness Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>120</sup>

*Alas! Though I myself am devoid of straying, from my dynamism straying emerges. Nature having arisen unobstructedly and unceasingly from the unchanging Ground, [180] dimmed awareness is naturally emergent from within compassionate resonance's indeterminacy. As an analogy, although clouds form in the sky, it isn't the case that the clouds genuinely exist there but rather they emerge adventitiously. Just so, dimmed awareness is not present at all within the Ground - dimmed awareness emerges from spontaneous presence arising in the manner of compassionate resonance, which comes to be termed "the abiding reality of the Ground's spontaneous presence". Furthermore, this is present as a great indeterminate manifestation.*

*To expand on this, its endowment with an eightfold shining-forth process is termed "the abiding reality of the precious amulet", which unceasingly opens-up a clearing space for sensual reality; it is present as the great establishment which is no establishment at all.*

*(i) The clearing-space of its shining forth in the manner of compassionate resonance is unobstructed; (ii) the lighting-up of its shining forth in the manner of the five lights is unobstructed; (iii) the enjoyment of its shining forth in the manner of primordial gnosis is unobstructed; (iv) the essence of its shining forth in the manner of the Spiritual Bodies is unobstructed; (v) the view of its shining forth in the manner of non-duality is unobstructed; and (vi) the efficacious means of its shining forth in the manner of freedom from limitations is unobstructed. In their pure dimensions they are ultimized through the gateway of pure primordial gnosis, while in their impure dimensions impure compassionate resonance is unobstructed, like a precious jewel of sensual qualities.*

*The Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness:*<sup>121</sup>

*Spontaneous presence emerges in an eightfold shining-forth process  
From within the great undifferentiated compassionate resonance,  
And without involving any determinacy in terms of designations.*

*(i) Its process of lighting-up being unobstructed,  
The locus of refuge for all sentient beings is present  
Via its shining-forth process as what seems to be compassion.*

*(ii) Via its unceasingly inherently radiant presencing,  
It manifests in the mode of the five lights' shining.*

(iii) *By force of its unceasing presencing of intelligence ("the knowing dimension"),  
Appearances unceasingly arise in the manner of the spiritual path  
Within the very gateway of pure, primordial gnosis.*

(iv) *Since in its self-presencing the limitations of all physical bodies are completely  
exhausted,  
All phenomena appear in the manner of Spiritual Bodies.*

(v) *Because the essence of cognitive activity is singular,  
It arises in the manner of non-duality.*

(vi) *Because it is itself non-abiding in its own place,  
It comes into presence within the indeterminate spontaneously present Ground  
As manifestations of a great freedom from limitations.*

(vii) *Because unimpeded awareness is perfectly complete in its singularity,  
It is linked with the essence itself  
Through primordial gnosis' gateway to purity. [181]*

(viii) *Because its process of emergence is unceasing,  
Its manifestation in the manner of cyclic existence's gateway to impurity  
Arises as the original source of sentient beings  
Out of this dimension of its pervading manifestation.*

*All of these light-up in this eightfold shining forth,  
And by virtue of naturally arising as these processes of manifestation,  
It is termed "the spontaneously present manifestation",  
Which appears in the manner of preciousness.*

## **II.2.ii. A detailed explanation of the Ground-presencing's great manifestation**

Because all appearances and life-worlds manifest as lights and Spiritual Bodies during the above described manifestation, it is termed "everything appears as a spontaneously present pure land". The Enjoyment Body's presencing arises out of its essence's dynamism; the natural Emanational Bodies' pure lands presence out of its dynamic qualities' dynamism; and the gateway of cyclic existence manifests as a dream-like self-presencing out of its compassionate resonance's dynamism.<sup>122</sup> *The Exquisite Auspiciousness Tantra* says:<sup>123</sup>

*The encasing seal of the "inner Youthful Body of the Vase" being rent open, it is present as the outer abiding reality of spontaneous presence. At precisely that point, my manifestations are rent open into exteriority, and flow forth in transparency, shimmering, intangible, undulating, quivering, throbbing, and variegated.*

*Then there comes to be the great abiding reality of spontaneous presence. From within the unobstructed clearing-space of its primordial gnosis, the presencing process of the Enjoyment Body's pure lands comes to be. From within the unobstructed*



*clearing-space of its dynamic qualities, the presencing process of the natural Emanational Bodies comes into being. From within the unobstructed clearing-space of its compassionate resonance, the presencing process of the impure emerges.*

Because the gateways of spontaneous presence thus exist within the Ground-presencing, the key points pertaining to our seeing pure lands as well as impure distorted appearances can be found here as well.

### **II.2.iii. A synopsis of the Ground-presencing via its various aspects**

Although this presencing process manifests thus within it, the Ground-presencing's own condition remains utterly devoid of straying and non-straying being established as such.<sup>124</sup>

From *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra*:<sup>125</sup>

*Since nothing can be imputed as "dimmed awareness"  
Within the great Ground-presencing,  
It isn't the case that straying is established therein.*

*Because there is no rampant imputation of the so-called "intellect",  
It is devoid of even the name "stained straying". [182]*

*Because the host of letters and names has no foothold,  
It isn't the case that even imputed straying is present.*

*Because there is nothing renowned in terms of the name "doctrine",  
It is devoid of even the intellectually imputed name of straying.*

*Because it can't be established in terms of the ordinary mind and psyche,  
It is naturally devoid of the straying involved in the winds' flickering movements.*

*Because both subtle and coarse stains are absent,  
It is naturally devoid of any straying intolvia the material elements' conditioning.*

*Because both acted upon and agent are absent,  
Where could there be the straying involved in subjective apprehension of objects?*

Even so, in that it acts as the condition of the freedom of recognizing your own essence, it is labeled "the foundation of freedom"; in that it acts as the condition of straying when there is non-recognition, it is labeled "the foundation of straying". Moreover, since this Ground-presencing is the "foundation of freedom" while original purity is the "site of freedom", the differentiation of each one's particulars is extremely important - the proper differentiation between them is quite rare (in other texts).<sup>126</sup> The Ground-presencing is imputed as

"straying" by force of straying's conditional basis taking form in dependence upon it, just as a white conch acts as the conditional basis for the misperception of it as yellow (by someone with diseased eyes) - although it is not in fact straying or distorted (just as the white conch shell isn't really yellow), it is imputed as such when it acts as the conditional basis of straying. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>127</sup>

*From within the lighting-up of the great differentiation,  
Both existence and non-existence emerge;  
The common site is termed the foundation of straying,  
And since it becomes polluted with dimmed awareness  
That which is known itself appears to be stained.*

From *The Conch Shell Lettered*:<sup>128</sup>

*Therein, the Ground of indeterminate spontaneous presence  
"Strays" through the pollution  
Of this triune dimmed awareness, quartet of conditions, and cognitive energy.*

Within the Ground-presencing as thus described, its own essence's spontaneously present lighting-up is a vast presencing as cyclic existence and transcendent reality extending to the ends of space. Because the expanse is greater by virtue of the emergence of cyclic existence and transcendence via dimmed awareness and awareness respectively, it is termed "the great marvel of the unprecedented self-presencing process' great inclusivity".<sup>129</sup> *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>130</sup>

*The lighting-up of radiance manifestly, how great in its splendor!  
The presencing itself, how intense in its incandescence!  
The Body of Reality, how it flows forth in its self-introduction!*

*The unimpeded essence, how vast in its sheath!  
The all pervasive nature, how great in its encompassing! [183]  
The universal matrix of compassionate resonance, how great in its generativity!*

*The primordial pervading radiation, how radiant in its luster!  
That which abides without impediment, how swift in pace!  
The natural radiation of awareness, how radiant in its luminosity!*

*The universal matrix of emptiness, how marvelous in its essence!  
By leaving it be without searching, how long in its continuity!  
Unimpeded and self-emergent, how encompassing in its origination!*

*The erection of appearances and fictive-life worlds within the Ground, how lofty in height!*

*Naturally free without effort, how great in its extent!  
The great primordial beginning, how wise in its revolving!*

*Endowed with the five colors, how exquisite in their drawings!  
The thorough purity of appearances and life-worlds therein, how uniform in  
appearance!  
The self-emergent radiant light, how exquisite in its array!*

*The great Ground-presencing, how great in its inclusivity!  
The dyad of cyclic existence and transcendence, how wise in linking them!  
The primordial gnoses of the five Spiritual Bodies, how exquisitely they're stacked!*

### **II.3. The manner in which the Totally Positive One becomes free**

In the very moment this raising-up from the Ground takes place, the Ground-presencing manifests as the self-presencing eight gateways of spontaneous presence. Not grasping at it as being "other", with an impartial mind you will recognize it as the natural self-radiation it is, and thus this flickering movement will immediately cut out in and of itself: in the first instant, by recognizing this self-presencing manifestation as your own nature, realization is engendered and the differentiation takes place; in the second instant, straying "dissipates" (*Sangs*) and primordial gnosis expands (*rGyas*), thereby ripening the Ground into its "fruit" or climax. This is what is meant when it is said that essence's primordial expansive awakening is re-awakened (*Sangs*) and re-expanded (*rGyas*) via realization (i.e. "the Universe's primordial Buddha-nature is "further" Buddha-fied" into a Buddha's (*Sangs* *rGyas*) manifest enlightenment). The Teacher who is thus expansively awakened directly within the Ground prior to everything following this self-presencing's dissolution within original purity, is called "the Totally Positive One".<sup>131</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>132</sup>

*Thus from the beginning and end of cyclic existence and transcendent reality,  
The Expansively Awakened One has not strayed -  
This insight faculty raised-up from the Ground  
Recognizes the self-presencing process as lacking any independent existence of its own,  
And without its slipping outwards into the multi-dimensional psyche with its reifying  
discursive thought processes,  
The flickering movement immediately cuts out in and of itself.*

*Moreover, from within this great abiding reality  
"Straying" is originally pure,*

*And there is no fabrication in terms of "non-straying".*

*Seeing the appearance of what is non-existent is what is meant by non-existence, or absence,  
And the conceptions which come as something constructed cease in and of themselves.  
[184]*

*While objectifications appear to us consequent to our straying,  
By virtue of the nature's primordial radiation being non-objectified  
All phenomena have a single flavor in Sameness.*

*Without activity and devoid of conceptuality, they are primordially expansively awakened.*

From *The Wheel of Self-Emergent Bliss Tantra*:<sup>133</sup>

*Awareness having emerged via its mere slight projection (into exteriority),  
It is radiant in a brilliant flash, and thus is divested of both reification and nihilistic negation.*

From *The Litany of the Eloquent One's Names*:<sup>134</sup>

*In one instant the differentiation takes place;  
In one instant the perfect expansive awakening of Buddhahood.*

Furthermore, because the awareness that raises-up from the Ground is seed-like in its indeterminacy as to whether freedom or straying will be brought about, it is termed "unripened awareness". Its ripening into the expansive awakening of Buddhahood is brought about by realizing-insight, as detailed in *The Blazing Lamp Tantra*:<sup>135</sup>

*That which ripens the Ground itself into the fruit is insight;  
By virtue of insight bringing the Spiritual Body to maturity,  
The Reality Body of the Essence itself  
Ripens into the Reality Body of Primordial Gnosis.*

*Its primordial gnosis is uninterrupted,  
And the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosés shine in spontaneous presence.*

When you have such self-realization by not slipping outwards into discursiveness, with this impartial outlook you link up to spontaneous presence's dissolution process, and thus abide within internal radiance. *The Illuminating Lamp* says:<sup>136</sup>

*From within this indeterminate spontaneous presence  
There is a manifestation-process of varied plurality,  
And its unceasing play accomplishes everything and anything,  
As it shines forth everywhere in any way;  
In its indeterminacy, there is a plurality of appearances.*

*One with an impartial outlook will see precisely that  
Without any impediment or blockage,  
And take hold of internal radiance as the ultimate certainty.*

*The Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness explains how spontaneous presence dissolves at  
that point:<sup>137</sup>*

*There are eight dissolution processes from within play's dynamism,  
And the Ground of indeterminate spontaneous presence is like the following  
In terms of its dynamic qualities' dissolution.*

*(i) Since compassion itself self-dissolves  
Into its own essence within compassion,  
By means of this obtaining without being established as such  
It passes on within the space of optimal activity's absence.*

*Since there isn't any non-activity either [185]  
All actions and practices pass beyond sorrow,  
While by this non-action manifesting as action  
Conditioned events are a pure space.*

*By virtue of this compassionate resonance itself self-dissolving within itself  
It isn't the case that it has gone elsewhere,  
Just as the sun's own rays  
Self-dissolve within the sun's nucleus -  
As that which involves its own natural radiation  
All Visual Experiences transcend misery.*

*All of this is a precious dynamic quality,  
Not abiding within conditionality, but rather within its own site.*

*(ii) The dissolution of its own light within itself  
Also manifests as a great dynamic quality:  
By virtue of its own essence being thoroughly pure<sup>138</sup>  
The conceptual objects resulting from grasping after characteristics cease;  
Even the coarseness of the external four elements  
Doesn't appear here, and attachment is reversed,  
While from within this intrinsically pure great emptiness  
The apprehension of colors as having real identities passes beyond sorrow.*

*Moreover, they do not pass on to another place:  
By self-dissolving within their own essence,  
All appearances pass beyond suffering.*

*By virtue of the mandalas of light naturally self-dissolving,  
Analogically like the colors of a rainbow in the sky  
Vanishing in and of themselves within that very sky,  
All manners of grasping and attachment pass beyond misery.  
In the space of this great non-differentiation,*

*This also is a precious dynamic quality.*

*(iii) The further shining-forth process of dynamic qualities is like this:  
Since primordial gnosis itself self-dissolves  
Into its own essence within primordial gnosis,  
Your psychic energy's apprehension, conception, memory and thought  
Abide within themselves - within the space of Sameness  
They are all non-dual, and beyond misery.*

*The presencing dimensions of the individual primordial gnoses also  
Are beyond misery without vanishing  
Within the uncreate space of activity's absence.*

*By virtue of that self-dissolving within itself,  
All the varied play of primordial gnosis  
Dissolves within its own mother-essence,  
And in analogical terms, is just like a boy climbing into his mother's lap:  
Inherently believing for yourself in your own primordial gnosis,  
Your own inner nature is beyond misery.*

*This also is a dynamic quality. [186]*

*(iv) Further on the dissolution process of dynamic qualities:  
By virtue of the Spiritual Bodies themselves self-dissolving within the Spiritual Bodies,  
All concrete forms pass beyond sorrow  
Without presencing within this great non-conceptuality.*

*The material elements which are summed up by coarseness,  
Dimmed awareness which is taken up with the subtle, and so forth  
Are undifferentiated, and pass beyond sorrow.*

*By force of the Spiritual Bodies dissolving within their own essence  
Cognitive energy doesn't slip outwards into emergent dimensions,  
Analogically resembling the form of a Body within a vase -  
The outer flickerings of its internal radiance  
Are purified away into their source without any independent existence of their own.*

*This also is a precious dynamic quality.*

*(v) Additionally, its dynamic qualities are like this:  
By virtue of non-duality self-dissolving within non-duality,  
Obsessions with grasping after granular enumeration  
Pass beyond sorrow in its self-dissolution  
In the manner of a non-dual oneness  
Within this singularity divested of all discursive elaboration.*

*By virtue of dualistic appearances dissolving in and of themselves,  
Analogically it resembles water dissolving  
Into water, such that there is no longer any differentiation -  
It is beyond sorrow within this great indivisibility.*

*This also is a precious dynamic quality.*

*(vi) Its ceaseless dynamic qualities are like this:  
 Since freedom from limitations self-dissolves  
 Into its own essence within freedom from limitations,  
 The whole of our individuality which fixates on the triad of Spiritual Bodies  
 Passes beyond sorrow in this exhaustion of objects.*

*Limitation itself self-dissolves within its inherent purity,  
 And can't be identified any further, analogically  
 Just like space dissolves within space.*

*Via the natural cessation of compulsive conceptuality fixated on the four limiting  
 alternatives,  
 They pass beyond sorrow within this great non-abiding.*

*This also is a precious dynamic quality.*

*(vii) The dynamic qualities of presencing are like this:  
 Impure cyclic existence's own entry gate  
 Dissolves within the gateway of the essence's purity  
 Without proceeding any where other than itself -  
 Analogically it resembles how a yak-hair tent naturally draws into its center  
 When its stake-ropes are gathered together,  
 As the sensory faculties' experienced objects pass beyond sorrow.*

*This also is a precious dynamic quality.*

*(viii) Thus, by virtue of the dynamic qualities being perfectly exhausted and complete,  
 The gateway of pure primordial gnosis itself  
 Self-dissolves within the essence,  
 And thus the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses pass beyond sorrow - [187]  
 Analogically it resembles a snow lion taking command of a glacier,  
 As you attain irreversible, fearless assurance.*

*This also is a precious dynamic quality.*

*By this overall process of the dynamic qualities' emergence,  
 The primordial gnosis which abides in solitariness  
 Finds itself in and of itself without searching,  
 Its own actuality from the very beginning.*

This concludes my extensive explanation of the first adamantine topic within *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* - the stage of systematically presenting the Ground.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *The Second Adamantine Topic: the Stage of Straying into Fictive Existence*

The second general rubric is the manner in which straying into alienation emerges from within the Ground's range, which involves two sections: a general discussion of the manner in which this straying takes place, and an extensive explanation of the details involved in how our body initially takes form within the context of straying (i.e. human embryogeny).

#### **I. A general discussion of the manner in which straying takes place**<sup>139</sup>

Within this, there are two subsections: a brief discussion of this process' essence and an extensive explanation of its nature.

##### **I.1. A brief discussion of straying's essence**

Straying and distortion emerges by virtue of the Ground-presencing not being self-recognized as its own nature, as *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>140</sup>

*Due to a lack of cognizance of the One, original purity  
Isn't self-recognized as its own intrinsic reality,  
And thus appropriation takes place in the manner of a catalyst.*

*The objective support is the colored lights (of the Ground's lighting-up),  
And thus by virtue of the causes and conditions of this subtle factor of duality  
There comes to be the objectifications involved in the karmic processes of cyclic  
existence.*

As for how this process takes place, when it surges (into actuality) within the Ground-presencing, the dynamism of the Ground's compassionate resonance naturally manifests as psychic energy characterized by clarity, awareness, and the capacity to reflect upon the objective sphere.<sup>141</sup> Should it fail to self-recognize its own nature at that point, (this psychic energy) will consequently become associated with the following triune dimmed awareness:<sup>142</sup> (i) "catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity" is this emergence in terms of psychic energy (within the Ground-presencing's inception) that fails to recognize itself; (ii) "coemergent dimmed awareness" is this psychic energy becoming coemergent with this non-recognition of its own condition; and finally (iii) "rampantly reifying dimmed



awareness" is (that psychic energy) discursively processing the self-presencing visions as something other than itself. These three aspects of dimmed awareness exist within this single psychic energy merely as different conceptual isolates abstracted out from its single essence. As this psychic energy thus reflects upon and discursively processes these self-presencing visions, it fails to understand the (true) nature of the Ground and Ground-presencing amidst this lighting-up of the triune Ground (its essence, nature, and compassionate resonance) and the eightfold Ground-presencing (its spontaneous presence's shining-forth modes), and thus grasps at them as being other than itself - in this critical distinction (between truth and appearance), it strays.<sup>143</sup> [188]

Furthermore, by virtue of this causal impetus (the triune dimmed awareness) and accompanying four conditions (the impure objectifications), the initial cognitive awareness of the presences (in the Ground's lighting-up or self-evolution) strays into dualistic experience in terms of apprehending subjects and apprehended objects. At that time the six aspects of the egoic psyche begin to unceasingly apprehend and fixate, and thus the six emotional distortions rise in latent form, whereby awareness is fettered, and strays into the appearances of the sixfold objects.<sup>144</sup> *The Illuminating Lamp* describes the process thus:<sup>145</sup>

*From within the Ground which abides in that manner,  
The causal impetus, the seed of straying,  
Is an intensely radiant and aware cognitive capacity emerging  
Via the clarity-factor slipping outwards.*

*Due to a triune dimmed awareness, there is a slight flickering outwards,  
Such that in the presencing-dimension (i.e. the rainbow colored lights)  
The intellect apprehends this objective sphere in terms of concrete identities (other than  
itself),  
And thus strays within the dimension of the Ground and the Ground-presencing  
Due to the crucial difference between the Ground and cognition of the Ground.*

*Due to this causal impetus of straying you come into contact with conditioning objects,  
And by virtue of the four conditions' impure objectifications,  
The radiant clarity-factor involved in this varied presencing is blocked.*

*The six aspects of the psyche are unceasing in their apprehension and fixation,  
And thus the six emotional distortions fether you into a self and other imagined concrete  
identities -  
As the six types of objects presence forth individually,*

*The objective sphere is apprehended and clung to in terms of concrete and separate identities.*

The six types of objects are visible forms, sounds, scents, tastes, tangible forms, and mental phenomena, while the six emotional distortions are dimmed awareness, desire, hatred, ignorance, pride and jealousy.<sup>146</sup> Moreover, since dimmed awareness pervades all of these five poisons while ignorance is merely one of the five poisons, the two are referred to separately. If dimmed awareness is classified into types, there is the catalytic triad explained above, while in addition it has the six essential dimensions explained in *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness*:<sup>147</sup>

*Dimmed awareness is like this:  
Its root is the ordinary mind's dimmed awareness;  
Its straying/distortion is the dimmed awareness of objects;  
Its straying-foundation is the dimmed awareness of the Ground;  
Its grasping and fixation is conceptualizing dimmed awareness;  
Its fabrication is the dimmed awareness of the path;  
And its non-recognition is the dimmed awareness of delusion.*

*Thus a sixfold dimmed awareness emerges,  
And presences are not seen as your own self-presencing.*

To expand on that, these six aspects of dimmed awareness are explained separately in that their respective dimensions emerge in terms of these six distinct patterns of delusion. [189] As for the six facets of the psyche, *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* describes them as well:<sup>148</sup>

*Six facets of the grasping egoic psyche emerge: (i) the psyche in conjunction with dimmed awareness; (ii) the psyche as psychic consciousness; (iii) the constantly searching psyche; (iv) the systematizing psyche; (v) the psyche in its coarse dimensions; and (vi) the classifying psyche.*

These refer respectively to (i) that which involves the psyche's flickering movements; (ii) cognitive self-awareness; (iii) the apprehension of objects; (iv) the apprehension of objects in determinate fashion and distracted involvement with objects; (v) the coarseness of emotional distortions; and (vi) subjectively and obsessively holding (to your judgments) are the delusory dimensions of the six facets.

## **I.2. An extensive explanation of straying's nature**

There are two subsections: an extensive explanation of the essential factors involved in the process of straying, and the basic features and conditions operative therein.

**I.2.i. An extensive explanation of the essential factors involved in the process of straying**

When the common (i.e. as yet undetermined and uninterpreted as either cyclic existence or transcendence) foundation of straying presences forth,<sup>149</sup> awareness itself is polluted into straying through the stains of its failure to recognize its own nature. Thus, even though awareness and the knowable are stainless, they come to involve stains. Having become enveloped within the mind's encasing,<sup>150</sup> this originally pure in essence awareness becomes polluted with the conceptual flow; by virtue of being fettered by the egoic psyche's six facets, our body enters the web of partless atomic particles, and its radiant light is paralyzed into dormancy. To expand on this, (i) through not recognizing the Ground-presencing as emergent from yourself, straying's causal condition emerges; (ii) through the Ground-presencing objectively manifesting, straying's objective condition is present; (iii) through our clinging and fixating on a sense of "I" and "mine", its controlling condition becomes present; and (iv) through the temporal conjunction of these three, its immediately antecedent condition is present. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* describes straying under these four conditions thus:<sup>151</sup>

*The common site is termed the foundation of straying,  
And since it becomes polluted with dimmed awareness  
The knowable itself appears to be stained.*

*Since memory-based thought activity manifests within the ordinary mind,  
The "essence" is polluted by the conceptual flow.*

*Since the six facets of the psyche unceasingly grasp and fixate,  
The Reality Body itself is fettered as well by its dualistic grasping at objects.*

*Since it becomes involved with partless atomic particles,  
Radiant light itself comes to be dormant. [190]*

*Since the objectifications deriving from the four conditions are impure,  
Presences themselves manifest in pluralized (and fragmentized) fashion.*

Furthermore, under the casual impetus of straying (dimmed awareness) and its conditions (the lighting-up of the objective realm to this cognitive capacity), a cognition or consciousness of the Ground manifests *from within* the Ground, and thus awareness (in the flickering and spreading outwards of this agent of straying) is fettered within the duality of subjectivity and objectivity.<sup>152</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes this process in the following:<sup>153</sup>

*The causal impetus of straying is dimmed awareness,  
As the Ground becomes polluted with cognitive activity  
And the revolving process of apprehended objects and sensory faculties sets in.*

*Straying's conditional basis is the objective sphere, and with the apprehension factor  
There is an individualizing differentiation of their respective boundaries,  
And thus there is the referential basis for the non-recognition of the One.*

*The Ground cannot be differentiated anywhere at all,  
And involves no determinability, yet this straying emerges through its suppression.*

*The psychic energy in question is the subjective apprehensions  
In their flickering, subsiding, and spreading outwards.*

*The pollution lies in its apprehension in a stained fashion,  
Such that your own inner being is fettered by the knowable.*

*Though in fact it is not that which can be apprehended,  
You become tightly bound to cyclic existence by clinging to the veracity of it all.*

**I.2.ii. An extensive explanation of the basic features and conditions operative in straying**<sup>154</sup>

Seeing the non-existent<sup>155</sup> as existent, the causal impetus of straying is the following tripartite dimmed awareness, which takes concrete form at this point. By force of being unaware of that which is fundamentally non-distorted as, and within, its self, (this cognitive energy) reifies, and thus goes astray into distortion - this is termed "the catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity".<sup>156</sup> In this non-recognition "the co-emergent dimmed awareness" signifies its spawning the dualistically experienced life-worlds of cyclic existence and transcendent reality,<sup>157</sup> while "the dimmed awareness of rampant reification" refers to its rapidly proliferating into discursive thought, as it selectively reifies and discursively

processes these appearances of discrete objects. This triune causal impetus operates in conjunction with four conditions enabling straying's occurrence:<sup>158</sup> (i) its "causal condition" is the emergence of straying via the conjunction of all three aspects of dimmed awareness, which is analogous to an individual possessed of physical form and bodily limbs such that his/her own visible appearance consequently naturally manifests; (ii) its "referential condition" then is (awareness') manifestation in an external objective sphere in what resembles a mirroring process - by virtue of a face being present in front of a mirror, its corresponding conditioning (reflection) manifests within that mirror; (iii) via (awareness') natural luminosity thus manifesting externally as a perceived objective sphere, straying's "controlling condition" is analogous to how someone might falsely reify their face's reflection in that mirror through clinging to the mirror and face as real identities - by force of the lights, awareness, and reality [191] becoming thus stained with reifying conceptuality (that obsessively abstracts-out independent selves and identities therein), the "controlling condition" of straying is operative; and (iv) by this triune dimmed awareness (the "causal impetus") and tripartite conditional basis coming into temporal conjunction with each other, the "condition of the immediately antecedent conjunction (of events)" is activated, whereby actual straying emerges.

*The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* describes these as well:<sup>159</sup>

*All these sentient beings within the three realms go astray into all sorts of distorted experiences from within the totally undistorted initial Ground which is no thing at all. The Ground's essence is emptiness, its nature is radiant clarity, and its compassionate resonance is the capacity for manifestation to, and as, sentient beings (i.e. their experienced life-worlds). Grasping cognitive activity emerges there via dimmed awareness, and by its flickering for a mere instant, this darkened cognition reflects "Have I emerged from that over there, or has that over there emerged from me?" In this way, the proto-consciousness goes astray merely by force of such thought, such that though its dimmed awareness is absent within the Ground itself, it becomes present within its subjective experience or the observable aspects.*

*Via these "observable aspects", the following four types of conditions apply. (i) To expand on this, the "causal condition" for straying derives from the Ground's being present in the manner of a luminous home, and is no other than dimmed awareness itself. (ii) The "controlling condition" then emerges by force of its turning into discursive ideation, (iii) while the "referential condition" stems from its fixation on*

itself as a subject experiencing and possessing objects, which analogically resembles a person's countenance reflecting in a mirror. (iv) Finally, the "immediately antecedent condition" derives from all three of these being in temporal conjunction with each other.

*Not recognizing for itself that the Ground is its own (origin and abiding reality), this darkened cognition strays, whereby cyclic existence's three realms come into existence. Having proceeded inexorably from there into coarse emotional distortions, the diverse physical forms of sentient beings emerge. Thus there is straying from within the Ground due to this above described impurity.*

From *The Exquisite Auspiciousness Tantra*:<sup>160</sup>

*Presencing is unceasing from within the abiding reality of the amulet of precious spontaneous presence, such that changing presences come to be without the Ground itself undergoing any change at all. As the proto-consciousness follows after the ensuing plurality of objects, it conceptually reifies and distorts everything. Though the lighting-up of the Reality Body involves no change, there thus appears to be change within the distorted appearances involved in straying; though the Adamantine Hero is not under the sway of straying, he adopts its facade in sentient beings - ultimately, [192] in the end awareness' own self-manifestations are returned to the Ground which remain their own natural condition.*

*(i) Not recognizing the non-dual presencing as being naturally self-arisen, in error you cling to the notion of an "owner" or "controller" (of these appearances), and thus the controlling condition takes form. (ii) Not recognizing that the fruit of self-awareness is self-arisen, you dualistically cling in dependence upon that causal impetus, and thus the causal condition takes form. (iii) Not recognizing sensory objects and your own cognitive activity as empty, you cling to reified objects within your referential perceptions, and thus "the condition of referentiality's own state" is present. (iv) In dependence upon temporality, awareness' light is not recognized as naturally self-emergent, and this cognitive energy begins to fixate on the light as that which it is not, whereby "the condition of the immediately antecedent conjunction of events" takes form.*

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>161</sup>

*Here I will discuss (i) the causes and conditions of straying,  
(ii) Its factors and (iii) branches,  
(iv) The unripened state of awareness, dualistic conceptual flow, and (vi) cyclic existence.*

*(i) Dimmed awareness has three forms (i.e. the causes of straying):  
"The single identity" forms the root of straying;  
"Coemergence" brings about the two reifications;  
And "rampant reification" results in dualistically enframed objects.*

*The conditions enabling straying are of four types,  
And by their assembling and taking hold, there is what is termed "straying" or  
"distortion".*

*(ii) As for the factors involved in straying, with "karmic conditioning" and so forth*

*Twelve factors can be differentiated out from within straying's dimension,  
And by these factors ripening, calendrical time and karmic actions manifest  
accordingly.*

*(iii) The branches of the straying process: via the different discursive elaborations,  
There are the specifications involved in the naming of everything,  
And the objects thus distorted come to have two aspects.*

*The mechanism of karmic actions creates the three types of realms in cyclic existence:  
The sensual, form, and formless.*

*(iv) By virtue of awareness being unripened (into expansive awakening), the different  
physical forms,  
Names and activities of the six types of living beings come into existence,  
As the process of dualistic conceptuality lying in latency,  
Activating, and then pervading comes to the fore.*

*(v) In conjunction with the discrimination of "cyclic existence",  
The accumulated karma comes together, spreads out,  
And climaxes (into effects), with the ensuing variety of specifics.*

When awareness raises up from the Ground, by virtue of its being unripened it revolves within cyclic existence's three realms and six types of life-forms in accordance with individual beings' particular karmic actions.<sup>162</sup> Those beings initially go astray through the twelve links of interdependent origination, and thus experience a corresponding accumulation internally of the twelve emotional distortions within the external twelve month and twelve year cycles,<sup>163</sup> whereby fictive existence is formed in their twelvefold sensory field. This process derives from the impurity of the following twelve sequential and mutually sustaining progressions in the complex of our ongoing interdependent origination:<sup>164</sup> [193]

(i) When the Ground-presencing manifests from within the Ground, the psyche's cognitive energy emerges via awareness' dynamism, and since it becomes co-emergent with a non-recognition of its own true nature, dimmed awareness kicks into effect.

(ii) Thus straying ensues, and the processes of karmic conditioning go into motion.

(iii) Deriving directly from that, objects' observable aspects or features are analytically processed, and thus our perceptual consciousness begins to operate.

(iv) Then linguistic differentiation such as "This is an object" and "This is an appearance" ensues, and by virtue of our apprehending and fixating on the nature of those named

presences as being concrete visible forms, our initial straying into fictive existence takes place with this dualism of "names" and "forms".

(v) From that, the six internal aspects of our sensory field emerge (the five sensory faculties along with the mental faculty), which enable our cognitive perception of objects' corresponding sixfold observable aspects to "come into being" and "spread forth".

(vi) Sensory contact in turn derives from this, as these objects are then apprehended.

(vii) Sensations then inexorably ensue out of that sensory experience in the form of attachment, aversion, and neutrality.

(viii) From that, the craving of obsessive attachment to objects emerges.

(ix) This craving leads into the subsequent appropriating individual eagerly appropriating or taking up such objects.

(x) Deriving from this appropriation, "becoming" or "rebirth" takes form by force of the consequent dimensions of multi-distorted perceptions and the experiencing of our actions (karmic influences) developing in an unpredictable fashion.

(xi) Thus birth ensues out of this birth, as sentient beings are born in the formless, form, and sensual realms.

(xii) This leads inexorably into aging and illness on up until our death, at which point the cycle continues in a fresh loop.

This twelvefold forward progression through the ordered complex of interdependent origination (the causal impetus of cyclic existence by force of our repeatedly revolving in this manner through its cycle) thus initially spreads forth from within the Ground-presencing. The subsequent cycles of this twelvefold interdependent origination operative as you stray into particular states of distorted existence (in an endless series of death and rebirth) should be understood as ancillary to that initial cycle.<sup>165</sup> In terms of a single life, death and rebirth, the twelve links take place in the following manner - the sun of reality having subsided (in the post-death visions),<sup>166</sup> via a lack of awareness of your own self-nature the impulse



towards your next life is formed (i.e. karmic conditioning), and physical existence is sought out by your consciousness-factor. Having entered your future mother's womb and proceeded through the succeeding embryonic stages of "quivering" and so forth, your "names and concrete forms" come into being.<sup>167</sup> The six inner aspects of your sensory field develop, and by the conjunction of necessary conditions you experience sensory contact.<sup>168</sup> Then sensations of pleasure and pain ensue, there is craving after experiences of those sensations, and you "appropriate" or "take up" sensory objects and karmic activities. Thus there is the impelling force towards further "existence" or rebirth, and you are born from the womb. Then in the succession of life phases as the mental and physical constellation at the prime of your life inexorably becomes otherwise (i.e. deteriorates), there is old age and finally death. *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* explains this sequentially linked origination of twelve links in the following abbreviated fashion:<sup>169</sup>

*That also emerges from dimmed awareness,  
 And from dimmed awareness, karmic conditioning goes into motion; [194]  
 From this conditioning, perceptual consciousness begins to operate;  
 From perceptual consciousness, "naming" emerges;  
 From "naming", the dimension of concrete forms emerges;  
 From concrete form, the six internal aspects of your sensory field emerge;  
 From that sixfold sensory field, sensory contact manifests;  
 From sensory contact, sensations come into being;  
 From sensations, craving comes into being;  
 From craving, appropriation emerges;  
 From appropriation, becoming or rebirth develops;  
 From this becoming or "fictive existence", birth emerges;  
 From birth, old age inexorably develops;  
 From old age, sickness manifests;  
 And from sickness, death eventually ensues.*

Thus distorted appearances manifesting as cyclic existence derive from our karmic imprints' potencies ripening and expanding outwards, imprints which are the psychic traces deposited by our lack of self-awareness and consequent apprehension of "selves" in that which is devoid (of any such concrete self-identity).<sup>170</sup> In this manner, our five psycho-physical components, eighteen sensory elements, twelve sensory fields, and so forth relating to the particular body we appropriate in a given life become established, and as we thus

revolve successively from one life to another, we remain in fictive existence forever. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* explicates it thus:<sup>171</sup>

*The three transitory worlds thus described  
Are created in the subject-object dichotomy of cyclic existence,  
Involving our five psycho-physical components and five sensory faculties,  
Our five limbs and five essential organs,  
Our five sensory objects and five emotional distortions,  
Our fivefold mind, fivefold egoic psyche, and fivefold tendency towards reification.*

*This distorted dualistic experience  
Resembles a rapidly spinning wheel -  
Continuously revolving, we remain in cyclic existence for a long time to come.*

To expand on this, the five sensory objects (visible form and so forth) emerge via our apprehending and clinging to the five lights without recognizing them as self-presencing.<sup>172</sup> Our five emotional distortions emerge via our non-recognition of the five primordial gnoses as our own self-nature. Our fivefold body-mind complex ("that which retains and gives coherence to varied (karmic propensities))"<sup>173</sup> and so forth) emerges via reality's natural radiation becoming adulterated with impurity, while our fivefold egoic psyche ("the constantly searching psyche" and so forth) emerges via our inner energy winds becoming impure. Our fivefold tendency towards reification<sup>174</sup> refers to (i) our reification of discrete self-identities in how we cling and fixate with our own thoughts and memories; (ii) our reification of self-identities within the plurality of sensory objects; (iii) our reification of self-identities within the different flickering movements of our mind; (iv) our reification of self-identities within the simple, basic aspects of our cognitive activity; (v) and our reification of self-identities within the selectively formed and analyzed mental images of phenomena. [195] This latter quintet emerges due to our not cutting off this stirring right in its tracks.

### **The thorough purity of cyclic existence**

These impure phenomena of cyclic existence don't waver even the slightest bit towards something other than being emergent from within awareness' range, enduring within its range, and remaining as mere playfulness within its range, just as dreams don't waver from sleep's range. Showing them to be empty forms in actuality, mere miraculous displays which

clearly manifest while non-existent,<sup>175</sup> reveals the thorough purity of cyclic existence. In my discussion of this, there are two sections: a clear explanation of its thorough purity in general, and of its thorough purity as revealed by a series of detailed correspondences.

### I) A general discussion of cyclic existence's thorough purity

The self-presencing of primordial emptiness<sup>176</sup> lights-up in simple playfulness - for example, although a coarse rope may appear deceptively (as a snake), in its own reality it is merely its individual strands, which are in fact even themselves empty of the partless atomic particles that they seem to be upon further analysis. Likewise, though coarse distorted appearances manifest deceptively, in reality they are an empty self-presencing devoid of any origination, endurance, or cessation. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* describes it in this way:<sup>177</sup>

*Like mistakenly seeing a rope as a snake,  
With these varied appearances  
We perceive them as what they are not,  
Giving rise to the duality of externality and internality, i.e. the material environments  
and life forms therein.*

*However, upon scrutiny only the rope itself is found -  
These environments and life forms are primordially empty,  
As the ultimate only seems to have such concrete form within the dissimulating process  
of the conventional.*

*The perception of a snake is phenomenologically true in terms of our seeing it as so,  
But seeing the rope instead is authentically true;  
Analogically, it is like the appearance of a bird on a promontory:  
The nature of these two truths is that  
This transitory world is merely conventional dissimulation,  
Which the authentic reality has no relationship to -  
In the expanse of emptiness  
Everything is free within its essence.*

Phenomena (the psycho-physical components and so forth) within awareness' range resemble clouds in the sky: though they presence within awareness, they are merely empty forms wafting in the wind without sullyng awareness itself, and thus are described as magical illusions and phantoms in *The Unsurpassed Continuity*:<sup>178</sup>

*The psycho-physical components are like magical illusions and phantoms.*

As for where those components of human existence and so forth abide, just as the world's physical environment and life forms therein abide within space, our "components", sensory elements and fields rest on karma and emotional distortions, which in turn are merely the personal projections of our conceptual flow, which itself remains within the range of mind-as-such's emptiness.<sup>179</sup> Thus empty in the beginning, empty in the present, and empty in the end, their presence is devoid of origination, cessation or endurance. [196] *The Unsurpassed Continuity* describes it thus:<sup>180</sup>

*Earth rests on water, water rests on wind (or "air"),  
And wind rests on space;  
But space itself does not rest on  
These elements of air, water, and earth.*

*Just so, our psycho-physical components, sensory elements, and sensory faculties  
Rest on our karmic actions and emotional distortions,  
While our karmic actions and emotional distortions themselves always rest  
On our distorted psychic activity,*

*This distorted psychic activity  
Rests on the purity of our mind,  
Yet the nature of the mind itself  
Does not rest on any of these phenomena.*

Though they appear to originate, cease and endue, in the very moment they are present as such nothing can be found or established. *The Magical Transformations' Nucleus of Mystery Tantra* says:<sup>181</sup>

*The wonder of it! This marvelous, astounding event/reality (Dharma):  
From that which involves no origination, everything originates;  
And in that very origination, there is no origination!*

*The wonder of it!  
In its very enduring, there is no enduring!*

*The wonder of it!  
In its very cessation, there is no cessation!*

*The Root Text on Insight* says:<sup>182</sup>

*Origination, endurance, and destruction as well  
Are said to be just like  
A dream, a magical illusion,  
And a city of ethereal spirits.*

All and every phenomena involved in appearances and the fictive worlds therein are from the very moment of their presencing forth beyond the extremes of discursive elaboration in terms of origination and cessation. *The Root Text on Insight* says:<sup>183</sup>

*The Buddha teaches that anything originating interdependently  
Is without cessation and without origination,  
Without annihilation and without permanence,  
Without coming and without going,  
Without differentiation and without singularity,  
And is based on the calm (of the mind's ultimate nature) with all discursive  
elaborations quieted.*

## **II) The detailed correspondences revealing cyclic existence's thorough purity**

As for its purity in detail, since all the appearances of cyclic existence's three realms are initially apprehended and abstracted out from the dimension of the expanse, each exists in intimate correlation with that dimension.<sup>184</sup> Thus in actuality they remain within reality's emptiness like reflections (devoid of any substantial entity beyond their appearance), and as they manifest in the present moment, our psycho-physical components, elemental energies and so forth remain in intimate correlation with the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses.<sup>185</sup> The three gateways of our human existence are in their own being free as Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind, such that the experiences involved in our birth, aging, sickness and death manifest as the playfulness of primordial gnosis within reality's expanse, and all our activities and perceived appearances presence as the view and meditation of reality in a great natural manifestation. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* thus explains them as thoroughly pure:<sup>186</sup> [197]

*Furthermore, I will clearly explain this:*

*(i) The nature of their straying into distorted appearances  
Is primordial gnosis, yet they haven't seen it as such previously!*

*Because there is thus no foundation to this straying process and its reifying  
conceptuality,  
Their universal psychic ground is realized as the great Body of Reality,  
And the flow of its conceptual reifications intrinsic to straying is cut off;  
Thus undistorted appearances devoid of such straying  
Emerge from the key point of their primordial freedom.*

(ii) *The psycho-physical components of living beings are Spiritual Bodies of the Awakened Ones -*

*Primordially so, yet no one is aware of it!*

*These psycho-physical components with the identity of Buddhahood*

*Emerge through the development of the letters present within their energy channels.*

(iii) *Primordial gnosis is self-manifest*

*From their water-bubble eyes, yet no one sees it!*

*The distorted appearances consequent upon their straying from it*

*Emerge from the key dynamics of the lamps.*

(iv) *Furthermore, their physical actions*

*Are free as the three Spiritual Bodies,*

*And thus all their activity is reality itself.*

(v) *All their speech however it may be expressed,*

*Is the recitation of the esoteric secret mantras,*

*Emerges from the key dynamics of seed syllables' varied transformations.*

(vi) *All the constellations of thoughts in living beings' minds*

*Are meditative states, yet aren't recognized as such at all!*

*Because you are free through the realization of your own mind,*

*That (non-recognition) emerges from the key dynamics of the elemental energies.*

*Since everything is thus revealed to be reality itself,*

*There is nothing to be adopted*

*Nor is there even the slightest thing to be left behind -*

*Reality is where all of this is absent.*

*Via ordinary physical activity, verbal expression and mental thought*

*The key point of freedom from cyclic existence and transcendent reality is realized,*

*And thus there is not even one of you who is not expansively awakened,*

*While cyclic existence with its three realms is exhausted to its very depths.*

*Furthermore, since they never pass beyond the ordinary body, speech and psyche*

*Of all the sentient beings within the three realms,*

*The three Spiritual Bodies need not be sought for elsewhere,*

*And even should you seek them, there is no place they will be found!*

*Not emergent in the past, nor emerging in the present,*

*They are seen by looking - what a marvel!*

*The play of this great marvel*

*Involves no differentiation into Buddhas and sentient beings,*

*Just as there are clouds in the sky*

*(And yet the sky remains stainless and unfragmented in itself) -*

*By virtue of this play being self-emergent and perfectly completed in and of itself, it is serenely calm.*

*By reason of the immediacy of reality, [198]*

*The relative sharpness or dullness of your spiritual capacities is irrelevant,*

*And hence it is not the case that any sentient being*

*Abides in any state other than this expansive awakening of a Buddha.*

*Because corporeal beings are pervaded by mind,  
There are no sentient beings who are not expansively awakened -  
Like a fruit developing from its seed,  
Your own nature is the key point of reality's character:  
Since it clearly manifests in the scope of your own sensory faculties  
Without existing in terms of verbal expressions,  
Its identity is such that when looked at nakedly it is free.*

*Furthermore, there is not even one sentient being  
Who by force of conditioning is unawakened into Buddhahood -  
Since it is self-presencing in complete harmony with primordial gnosis  
Cyclic existence is primordially non-existent,  
And therefore each (of its beings and phenomena) is naturally and innately expansively  
awakened.*

*When you realize the true significance of birth itself,  
Your abiding within the womb is seen to be the expanse of reality;  
Your body and mind coming together is the relationship of the expanse and awareness;  
By your abiding within a physical body, the Spiritual Bodies are present;  
With your aging, phenomena are exhausted and distorted appearances cease;  
Through your illness, reality is experientially savored;  
And through your death, there is the emptiness beyond concrete identification.*

*Therefore, sentient beings are expansively awakened into Buddhahood.*

*The Garland of Precious Pearl Tantra says:<sup>187</sup>*

*Your speech and actions in their own nature  
Are the conduct of radiant and empty awareness;  
The flow of your conceptual reifications, whether positive or negative,  
Are the vast space of contemplation's stream.*

*Your aberrant views and/or valid claims  
Are the impartial view of natural attunement ("yoga").*

*All your clinging to hopes and fears  
Is the fruit of being completely unimpeded.*

*Those of you who earnestly desire the Great Seal  
Make "the ritual approach" in your eating and drinking,  
And "actualize" the evocation in your sleeping and sitting.*

*Your habitual tendencies are the preparatory consecration,  
And your yawning and phlegm are the actualization of the mandala,  
While rain and vapor are sprinkled  
On the mandala of the billionfold galaxy.*

*The paths marking your passage are the great lines of the mandala;  
The imprints of your feet are designs of colored powders,  
Your desire to go is itself the deities' ritual stances,*

*While your bodily limbs' movements therein are their symbolic seals.*

*However you speak, they are mantric words;  
Your thoughts are the generation phase of tantric meditation;  
The flickering movements within your psyche are the offerings themselves; [199]  
Appearances in terms of visible forms are the deity's body;  
Loud sounds uttered (by yourself or others) are themselves music;  
Your own body is the initiatory vase;  
Its hair is the petals adorning and enriching its mouth;  
Its blood and lymph are themselves its water,  
And it is filled up with the ritual substances of your essential organs and so forth;  
Thus the giving of empowerments manifest within yourself  
Is complete even without being conferred.*

*Those desiring to transcend the commitments,  
And those desiring to rigidly preserve them, are fettered;  
The desire for freedom yields only degeneration,  
While those desiring nothing are the supreme of Sages.*

*Your visual impressions are the symbolic seals,  
And your attachment to them is felt experience of the symbols.*

*The radiantly clear awareness of your consciousness is the oral instructions,  
And the coming together of objects and your mind is the object of the instructions'  
delivery;  
Your birth, old age, sickness and death are the key points of meditative familiarization,  
And your unobstructed sixfold consciousness is realization.*

## **II. An extensive explanation of the details involved in how our body initially takes form within the context of straying (i.e. human embryogeny)<sup>188</sup>**

There are three sections here: the actual process of our physical basis taking form (i.e. the embryo); the nature of the three factors based upon it - the energy channels, energy winds and seminal nuclei; and the manner in which the pervading elemental energies are completely present within our own body.

### **II. The actual process of our physical basis taking form (i.e. the embryo)**

*The Illuminating Lamp says:<sup>189</sup>*

*Physical form is comprised of multi-dimensional and sequential manifestations  
Of the material environments and life forms therein.*

*Not understanding this, the spiritually immature  
Reside in a succession of lives, inexorably revolving like a water mill,  
Appropriating individual bodies and life-spans.*



*The Tantra of the Sun and Moon's Intimate Union* discusses exactly how this appropriation takes place:<sup>190</sup>

*Having then entered into the womb's gateway,  
From the cause and conditional determinant of the father and mother respectively  
The embryo develops in the following stages:  
Quivering, Thickening,  
Elongated, Spherical,  
Firming-up, Fish-like,  
Tortoise-like, and Frog-like;  
The time period for such a process is seven weeks.*

*The bodily elements develop from the embryo's navel,  
And for nine months continue like this, such that on the face of the tenth (month),<sup>191</sup>  
The completed body comes forth out of the mother's womb.*

Immeasurably many sentient beings of the post-death intermediate state searching for new bodily existence are drawn to the womb's gateway when prospective parents join in sexual intercourse, such that they resemble flies converging on rotten flesh in the summer. Thus, most of those beings who reach a seventh day juncture in this intermediate state without completing their life span for existence in that intermediate state, then die within that state, [200] and should their overall life span (for remaining within this post-death state) be completed, in accordance with their karma they then enter the womb of their new mother via her anus (while the others are reborn yet again within this intermediate state).<sup>192</sup> The dyad of the subtle wind energy and mind of the being appropriating this new bodily existence, the white vibrant quintessence (the causal impetus emerging from the father) and the red vibrant quintessence (the condition emergent from the mother) are all four amalgamated together through a churning process, such that it resembles mixing blood and milk: as your body thus takes form, the dyad of this "causal impetus" and "conditional determinant" brings about functions pertaining to the four conventional elemental energies, thereby engendering the factors of increase and accumulation in your body's development; the dyad of your mind and energy wind brings about the functioning pertaining to the four supremely significant "ultimate" elemental energies, whereby you "take hold" and "sustain" this new body, and the ripening process of separating out and uniting (this new body's fourfold elemental energy) is

effected.<sup>193</sup> In this way your body develops (within your new mother's womb in embryogeny). Moreover, the rationale for classifying this embryo's development into seven day series is as follows: the four individual elemental energies predominate in influence for one day each (the first four days); they successively gather into dyads for two days (the fifth and sixth day); and they gather into one for one day (the seventh day).<sup>194</sup>

With respect to this, there are two sub-sections: a general discussion of phases in the embryonic developmental process driven by the four elemental energies, and a detailed explanation of the divisions of those elemental energies over the succession of days.

**II.1.i. A general discussion of the phases in the embryonic development process driven by the four elemental energies**<sup>195</sup>

**The First Week**

From the four modes of functioning corresponding to these four elemental energies, on the first day these embryonic constituents are gathered together via water energy's attractive force, differentiated out via its dispersing action, and then integrated into a single whole as it "balances" them.<sup>196</sup> Out of this, an extremely subtle water energy channel originates by stretching straight out towards the right side of the mother, roughly speaking the size of one hundredth of a horse tail's hair, and during this time, the mother feels correspondingly cold.<sup>197</sup> Then, on the second day, via the three functions<sup>198</sup> of earth energy taking place, an earth energy channel of similar size originates, stretching straight out towards the left side of the mother. Under the influence of this, the mother correspondingly feels dizzy and sluggish in thought. Next, on the third day, the threefold functioning of fire energy take place as with the previous elements, whereby a similarly sized fire energy channel originates towards the mother's back, and the mother thus perspires and feels hot. Through the three activities of wind energy then occurring on the fourth day,<sup>199</sup> first the embryonic energies are gathered together, intermediately they are scattered about, and finally they are re-integrated together. Thus, towards the front side of the mother, a wind energy channel originates the size of one

hundredth of a horse tail's hair, such that at this point the mother's cognition is correspondingly very clear.<sup>200</sup> In this context, by force of the relative extent of activity relating to each of the embryo's four elemental energies (at any given point), the maturation process of the corresponding elemental energies in the mother's body is also effected.<sup>201</sup> [201] On the fifth day, the water and earth energies respectively contract the embryonic constituents into one and firm them up, while on the sixth day the fire and wind energies respectively ripen and clarify the embryonic elements.<sup>202</sup> On the seventh day, the activity of the space energy (the "neutral" elemental energy) opens up space, thereby unifying all four of the elemental energies discussed above.<sup>203</sup> Thus within all four of these subtle energy channels, the corresponding "letters present within the energy channels" clearly originates, which in this case are the quartet of *Kham, Sum, Ram* and *Yam* respectively.<sup>204</sup> By force of the four elemental energies thus functioning in their respective ways, the dyad of the intermediate state being's mind and subtle wind along with the dyad of the "causal impetus" and "conditional determinant" (i.e. the father's sperm and mother's egg) visually appears to be "quivering", and is about two mustard seeds in size. Within this spherical seminal nuclei, two extremely subtle and tiny eye-like seminal nuclei originate.<sup>205</sup>

### The Second Week

Those processes are the functioning of the elemental energies' respective inherent properties, and at this point the "quivering" form is destroyed by water energy's moisturization; compacted by earth energy's heaviness; baked by fire energy's heat; and scattered around by wind energy's velocity.<sup>206</sup> The embryonic energies thus disperse into fluffy fragments, resembling how clouds appear when they dissipate within the sky. Then, on the eighth evening, by power of the incarnated consciousness' karmic actions and imprints the embryonic energies are gathered up into one by water energy, and from the basis of the "Thickening" embryonic phase (about the size of a tenth of a pea) an eastern energy channel develops.<sup>207</sup> On the ninth day, earth energy integrates the embryonic energies, and a

southern energy channel develops from the embryo's central basis (itself now a ninth of a pea in size). On the tenth day, fire energy ripens the embryonic energies, and a western energy channel develops from the embryo's central basis (now about a seventh of a pea in size). On the eleventh day, wind energy gets everything circulating, whereby a northern energy channel develops within an embryo the size of a fifth of a pea. On the twelfth day, water energy and fire energy respectively act to bring about cohesion and firming-up, and within this pea sized embryo<sup>208</sup> the two small eyes of this "Thickening" phase develop further, along with each of its four element-channels (the latter resembling the stretching of a rope). On the thirteenth day, fire energy and wind energy act to ripen the embryo. On the fourteenth day, the embryo's space energy opens-up space, whereby in the middle of these four energy channels' development (which stems from the navel's channel-knot at our body's center, like the stretching out of ropes) the two small "eyes" - the Eye of the lamp and the Eye of the elements - become much more clearly manifest than previously. Within these small eyes, the extremely subtle and difficult to analyze essence of primordial gnosis is also present.<sup>209</sup>

[202]

### *The Third Week*

The embryo's form having then again been destroyed by the churning of the four elements' functioning in conjunction with each other, the embryonic energies are gathered together as before (i.e. as on the eighth night) on the night in the middle of the month (the 15th day). Made into about the size of two peas, by force of karmic wind energy circulating and churning everything up, an extremely fine quintessence of heat<sup>210</sup> the size of one hundredth of a fly's wing originates within the western energy channel, whereby the quintessence of the child's consciousness becomes exceedingly clear. Then, as (the four elements) function and churn everything up for two days (16th-17th), colors become clear, while by force of (the karmic winds) then circulating around and churning up everything for two days (18th-19th), the bases of the child's consciousness are gathered together.<sup>211</sup> Then

from the karmic winds circulating around and churning up everything for two further days (20th-21st), the foundation of the "Elongated" embryonic stage is formed, roughly the size of a thumb.

### The Fourth Week

The embryo's form having again been destroyed, on the twenty second day its water energy gathers together and moisturizes, whereby a subtle seminal nuclei develops within the eastern energy channel.<sup>212</sup> Then, on the twenty third day non-conceptual consciousness<sup>213</sup> is brought forth within that seminal nuclei, while on the twenty fourth day the basis of our psyche and mind is brought forth as a minute seminal nuclei within the white colored quintessence of flesh that is present inside the southern energy channel. Subsequently, on the twenty fifth day water energy again gathers together and moisturizes the embryonic elements, whereby the quintessence of breath originates in blue and red color within the northern energy channel, like the vapor of gold buried beneath the ground.<sup>214</sup> The dynamic potencies of primordial gnosis and awareness are thus clearly present in dependence upon it, including the embryo's own psychic activity. Then, on the twenty sixth day water energy gathers together and moisturizes, whereby the following "bases" manifest within their corresponding energy channels: the basis of our cognition, intellect, and memory is made clearly manifest in the western channel; the basis of our dimmed awareness and emotional distortions is made clearly manifest in the eastern channel; the basis of our flickering movements (of thought) and psyche is made clearly manifest in the southern channel; and our mind and conceptuality are made clearly manifest in the northern channel.<sup>215</sup> All the preceding are thus the activities of the four dissimulating conventional energies, while the ultimate ("supremely significant") energies perform activities on which the four lamps depend.<sup>216</sup> On the twenty seventh day these four energies operate in dyads,<sup>217</sup> while on the twenty eighth day the foundation of "Spherical" embryonic stage is ripened by virtue of the functioning of all four energies together. [203]

### The Fifth Week

Having been destroyed by the churning or agitation of all four elemental energies acting together, on the night of the twenty ninth day, water energy gathers-together, earth energy firms-up, fire energy ripens, and wind energy "increases". Via these activities, the energy channels acting as the basis for our five sensory faculties originate within our four energy "wheels".<sup>218</sup> The "initial generativity wheel" (i.e. the navel) develops with sixty four channel-petals, as well as both the Eye of Elements and the Eye of the Lamps.<sup>219</sup> Then, by virtue of the four elemental energies acting just like before for one day (the 30th), the "memory storage wheel" (i.e. the heart) develops with thirty two channel-petals split off from its eight root channels, along with the two Eyes. As the four energies then again function in the previous fashion for two days (31st-32nd), the "flavors storage wheel" (i.e. the throat) develops with sixteen channel-petals and the two Eyes. Finally, by force of the four elemental energies further functioning in the previous fashion for two days (33rd-34th), in the "ordering summit wheel" (i.e. the head) three hundred and sixty four channel-petals along with the two Eyes are ripened. By force of these elements' activities subsequently operating for one day (35th), the embryo is said to be "Firming-up". Those elemental energies having become a single extremely compact embryo, our three main energy channels (the "flavor", "solitary", and "all encompassing" channels) become fully manifest, such that they resemble three columns running straight through the middle of these four subtle wheels.

### The Sixth Week

Next, on the thirty sixth day water energy's moisturization destroys this "Firming-up" phase, earth energy coheres (the embryo back) into a single form, wind energy differentiates out its respective elements and scatters them about, and fire energy ripens them, whereby the sensory faculties then develop over four days (the 37th-40th). Then, due to fire energy baking and thus "emptying out" the embryo,<sup>220</sup> wind energy differentiating out its respective elements, earth energy compressing them into one, and water energy acting to bring about

their increase in a single day (41st), the general features of our body develops. As its elemental energies then become unified for one day (42nd), the embryo becomes like the "fish incarnation of Vishnu", about the size of the mother's fist.<sup>221</sup>

### The Seventh Week

Then (for six days (43rd-48th))<sup>222</sup> the elements' activities again operate separately. During the first two days of this period, (on the first day (43rd)) water energy destroys the embryo's former shape and then regathers it together, thus impelling the formation of its physical form; on the second day (44th) earth energy takes hold, by force of which the sensory faculties, essential organs and hollow organs take distinct form. By force of next being ripened by fire energy for one day (45th), the sensory faculties' gateways clearly emerge.<sup>223</sup> [204] Then, as wind energy differentiates them out over one day (46th), the eyes and so forth take on their respective distinct forms. From this point on, the body develops by force of the elemental energies' activities taking place via their respective potencies, rather than their acting directly on the embryo.<sup>224</sup> It grows larger and larger due to water energy acting to moisturize for one day (47th), following which its physical form is established via earth energy solidifying and stabilizing for one day (48th). As fire energy and wind energy then respectively act to differentiate and ripen for one day (49th), the embryo's shape becomes tortoise-like in that the sensory faculties and general features of its body manifest without any limbs being clearly present, roughly the size of the mother's fist with thumb extended.

### The Eighth Week

By force of fire energy then acting to heat up and burn for one day (50th), the body's limbs develop. Then, by force of wind energy acting to "lighten" and circulate for two days (51st-52nd), the energy winds enter the Avadhūtī channel, at which point the embryo ripens in terms of its five elements' qualities.<sup>225</sup> Water energy next performs a chilling function for two further days (53rd-54th), which serves as the causal impetus for sickness ripening in terms of the body's four synthesizing constituents.<sup>226</sup> As earth energy then acts to make

heavy and harden for two days (55th-56th), flesh and blood take concrete form, and the embryo becomes the size of its mother's hand span with all its limbs completely present, thereby visually resembling the frog incarnation of Vishnu.<sup>227</sup>

From this stage onwards, the process is termed "the neutral elemental activities" due to the process' activities being those of an assemblage of elemental energies functioning in conjunction with each other - since it cannot be separated into exclusively one element's principal functioning, the elements functioning in groups of two predominates. Then, due to fire energy heating them up, the sensory faculties form in their clear and unclear dimensions,<sup>228</sup> and via wind energy differentiating them out, the limbs, sensory faculties and so forth are individually made clearer and morphologically emergent. They progress even further via water energy moisturizing them, while the foundation of their completion, development, and increase<sup>229</sup> takes firm root via earth energy firming-up and stabilizing them.

Thus up until the 49th day, the body originates and its various features are brought to completion within the mother's womb, while from that point on, embryogeny mainly involves the activity of the body's development.<sup>230</sup> The vibrant quintessences resultant from the mother's eating solid foods and drinking liquids descend to the child's navel, and thus act as the causal impetus for the ensuing development of the skin, head hair, and bodily hair of the child's body. On the twenty sixth of the second month, the Avadhūtī channel's latent energy winds and emotional distortions become activated, thereby causing the embryo to vibrate and pulsate.<sup>231</sup> [205]

### **II.1.ii. A detailed explanation of the divisions of these elemental energies over the succession of days in the embryo's development**

Though in general the embryonic process relies on all four elemental energies during the development of the body for those first seven weeks, I will now briefly explain the particulars



of which elements predominate (in each stage's formation and displacement) and the deeper causal nexus (each is involved in).

**I) The conventional dissimulating energies**<sup>232</sup>

(i) Initially, the "Quivering" embryonic stage takes form for seven days - it emerges by virtue of the functioning of earth energy's attractive force, while its subsequent destruction is caused by wind energy's attractive force.

(ii) The subsequent seven days of the "Thickening" embryonic stage is earth energy acting to disperse. Earth energy acts as the causal impetus of flesh, whereby it serves as the conditional basis for the emotional distortion of ignorance to become present. Its subsequent destruction by wind energy's dispersing action is the causal impetus of the embryo's karmic imprints and propensities.<sup>233</sup>

(iii) Then, by the embryonic energies being again gathered together by water energy and the other elements, the formation of the "Elongated" embryonic stage derives from earth energy acting to equalize. This acts as the conditional basis of flesh, and thus the chief impelling factor of desire is effected, while its subsequent destruction by wind energy's "equalizing" or leveling-out serves as causal impetus of the various karmic actions. Water energy's gathering together and so forth having then again taken place, from the 15th day until the 21st day the causal impetus of blood takes place via water energy functioning to attract and disperse. This acts as the condition of being motivated by desire, while its destruction via fire energy's attractive force is the causal impetus of sensual objects' emergence.<sup>234</sup>

(iv) Since the embryonic energies are ripened from the 21st day until the 28th day, there is a conjunction of both warmth and moisture via the activities of water energy leveling-out and fire energy attracting. This acts as the causal impetus of the individuating of the sensory faculties, and so forth, and is the karmic activity leading into future motivation by ignorance (as well as being motivated itself by past ignorance). Its destruction by fire energy acting to

equalize and disperse operates as the activity serving as causal impetus for varied non-virtuous acts.<sup>235</sup>

(v) The ripening taking place from the 29th day to the 35th day is the activity of fire energy dispersing and equalizing, the karmic process leading to future motivation through hatred (as well as being motivated itself via past traces of hatred). This form's destruction via earth energy's attractive force serves as causal impetus for the varied manifestation of karmic actions' specifics.<sup>236</sup>

(vi) The period from the 36th day to the 42nd day involves wind energy's activities of attracting and dispersing, which develops through hatred. This stage's destruction by earth energy's dispersion activity serves as causal impetus for accumulating the karmic activity of dreams.<sup>237</sup> [206]

(vii) From the 43rd day up to the 49th day, the activity of water energy equalizing is effected by ignorance and desire together. The parts of the body are clearly differentiated by the equalization of earth energy, a process comprised of multiple conceptual reifications.<sup>238</sup>

The activities thus occurring over the course of the first seven weeks take place in reliance upon the physical universal ground, with its karmic propensities for our sevenfold consciousness. With respect to fixing these initial processes' duration at forty nine days, it occurs that way through the karma and karmic propensities accumulated due to abiding in the intermediate state for forty nine days.<sup>239</sup> Furthermore,<sup>240</sup> the ripening of the body by the four elements operating in their own particular conventional capacities is as follows: flesh takes concrete form from earth energy; blood takes concrete form from water energy; warmth takes concrete form from fire energy; and breath takes concrete form from wind energy. An extension of this is that ignorance emerges from flesh, desire emerges from blood, hatred emerges from warmth, and multi-leveled conceptuality emerges from breath as the latter acts as the former's "mount".

The concrete ripening of our body via desire occurs in that originally it is motivated by desire.<sup>241</sup> The ripening of our speech by hatred occurs in that originally distinct linguistic utterances take place in dependence upon hatred.<sup>242</sup> The ripening into a varied psyche via ignorance occurs in that we originally stray due to our dimmed awareness of the Ground. These three (emotional distortions) thus mount the breath-horse and move forth, whereby reifying thought activity driven by these three different emotional poisons emerges. To expand on this,<sup>243</sup> the process of ignorance's ripening is revealed in drowsiness and sleep; the process of desire's ripening is revealed in laughter and jesting; and the process of hatred's ripening is revealed varied dreaming. Additionally, as a sign that flesh is generated by ignorance, whichever living beings have more flesh are more sleepy; as a sign that warmth is generated by hatred, we have more dreams during the hot months of summer; as a sign that they are generated by hatred, feeling flushed with bodily heat and eager to speak (usually accompany anger); as a sign that blood is generated by desire, laughter emerges in dependence upon the movements of blood, while moisture and so forth are evident when we feel desirous. [207] Those processes are the "development" or "generation" by the four conventional dissimulating energies.

Furthermore,<sup>244</sup> our component of physical form spreads forth in dependence upon flesh; our component of "discernment" or "perception" spreads forth in dependence upon blood; our perceptive consciousness spreads forth in dependence upon warmth; and our component of "habitual conditioning forces" spreads forth in dependence upon the inhalation of breath, while our component of feelings or sensation spreads forth in dependence upon the exhalation of breath-wind. Additionally, our energy channels develop in dependence upon flesh; our energy winds develop via those channels; and both our karmic winds and gnostic winds are engendered by these energy winds (the karmic winds encapsulate cyclic existence, and the gnostic winds encapsulate transcendent reality).<sup>245</sup> Moreover, our "lymph" develops in dependence upon blood; it in turn engenders our seminal nuclei; and our five sensory

faculties emerge in dependence upon those seminal nuclei in the conventional elements' ripening process.<sup>246</sup> Our sensory faculties' causal impetus is our fivefold emotional distortion, while their conditional determinant is the five types of sensory objects - their coming into conjunction with our host of conceptions (past, present, and future) operates as the causal impetus of cyclic existence and transcendent reality. These processes are reckoned as being the "growth" of the four conventional dissimulating energies.<sup>247</sup>

### **II) The ultimate supremely significant energies**<sup>248</sup>

The four ultimate elements which are supported upon those processes of the conventional elements are as follows. The white hue thoroughly spreading forth serves as the causal impetus of "the far-ranging water lamp", and emerges from the channel of water-energy winds. The intense redness of red serves as the causal impetus of "the lamp of the empty seminal nuclei", and emerges from the fire energy channel. The intense yellow of yellow serves as the causal impetus of "the lamp of the thoroughly pure expanse", and emerges from the earth energy channel. The intense green color serves as the causal impetus of "the lamp of self-emergent insight", and emerges from the wind energy as its pathway. Furthermore, awareness is engendered by the self-emergent insight lamp; luminosity is engendered by the far ranging lamp; the Spiritual Bodies are engendered by the seminal nuclei lamp; and primordial gnosis is engendered by the expanse lamp. The far ranging water lamp acts as the support of perceiving the vision of reality's immediacy; the empty seminal nuclei lamp acts as the support of perceiving the vision of intensifying contemplative experiences; the pure expanse lamp acts as the support of perceiving the vision of awareness' optimization; and the self-emergent insight lamp acts as the support of perceiving the vision of reality's exhaustion.

Therefore, when the functions of the body's origination and development are performed by the ripening processes of these fourfold conventional and ultimate energies, [208] first a "channel-knot" develops from the navel which is the body's foundation ( a "channel-knot" referring to a nexus of many energy channels visually resembling a "knot" or "wheel"), from

which "the memory wheel", "flavors wheel" (throat), and "ordering summit wheel" (crown) develop sequentially. Within those energy wheels, the translucent vibrancy of the body's five sensory faculties completely develops,<sup>249</sup> and then after nine full months, in the first part of the tenth month the body is fully completed and comes out of the womb. At that point, the appearances of external objects and sensual qualities are individually experienced.

## **II.2. The nature of the three factors based within the human body**

In explaining the nature of the three energetic factors based in the body (channels, energy winds and seminal nuclei), there are three subsections: the condition of the stationary channels, the impelling winds, and the arrayed/arraying "enlightened minds" (i.e. seminal nuclei).<sup>250</sup>

### **II.2.i. The stationary channels**

Though in general seventy two thousand channels and so forth are spoken of scripturally, they are encapsulated within four hundred and seventy two, which in turn are encapsulated within the four subtle wheels, which are themselves encapsulated within the three principal energy channels.<sup>251</sup> *The Wheels, the Site of the Energy Channels* describes it thus:<sup>252</sup>

*The channel-knots of the body are the four wheels consisting of energy channels; Though many channels are connected there in the manner of a network of "wheels", The three gnostic channels giving rise to the three Spiritual Bodies Are present in the manner of columns, supremely straight at the body's center.*

### **II.2.ii. The impelling energy winds**

Though there are many systems in the individual Tantras, here the energy winds will be explained in terms of the dyad of karmic winds and gnostic winds. To expand on this, 21,600 energy winds coarse through an individual in his prime ("middle age") within a given twenty four hour period, while for old people sixty of those winds cease and for young people there are (sixty) additional winds.<sup>253</sup> This is due respectively to our elemental energies' capacities and potencies not being fully matured yet in our youth, reaching their prime in our "prime", and beginning to deteriorate in our old age. With reference to an individual in the prime of his life, in the interval during which s/he takes 60 breaths ("moving

winds"), one emotionally distorted wind flows through.<sup>254</sup> One "coarse" wind (flows through) during the interval of 120 (breaths), and in three times that interval (i.e. 360 breaths), one "gross" wind (flows through). The (interval) during which one "balanced" wind (flows through) is one third of that number (360), i.e. 120. In every 20 breaths, one gnostic wind flows through (totaling 1080 in 24 hours). *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes it in this way:<sup>255</sup>

*Through the successive periods of a day  
The energy winds are reckoned to be  
Twenty one thousand and six hundred in number,  
And thus complete in a single day.*

*Via the particulars of how each one's physical constitution typically is, [209]  
For the young there are sixty additional winds  
And for the aged sixty winds cease -  
This is due to the activities/karma of the individual's bodily elements.*

*In every 60 moving winds (i.e. breaths),  
There is one "subtle" (emotionally distorted wind) as revealed by considering the  
reality (of the winds);  
In double that interval (of 60, i.e. every 120 breaths), there is one "coarse" wind,  
And in triple that interval (of 120, i.e. every 360 winds), there is one "gross" wind  
(Resulting in a grand total of 600 emotionally distorted winds  
In three divisions of subtle, coarse, and gross,  
Which together are a sub-division of the karmic winds).*

*In one third of that interval (i.e. one third of 360, 120) there is one "balanced"  
(sameness) wind.*

*In brief, every twenty breaths  
There is one (gnostic wind) of reality's sameness.*

Furthermore, 1530 virtuous gnostic winds flow through (our body in a single day); 3600 non-virtuous emotionally distorted winds flow through; and the remaining 15,400 (winds flowing through our body in a single twenty four hour period) are morally neutral winds (i.e. "indeterminate").<sup>256</sup> Yogic practitioners should desire to make these energy winds into their meditative path by identifying the gnostic winds, stopping the emotionally distorted winds, and bringing the morally neutral winds to a halt by simply leaving them as-is.<sup>257</sup> Additionally, (the energy winds can be classified into) "upward-flowing winds" which flow through the gateways of our mouth and nose, and "downward-eliminating winds" which

perform the functions of urination and defecation by flowing through the lower part of our body via the lower gateway (i.e. anus and urinary tract). *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>258</sup>

*These have two types of functions:  
The "upward-flowing" and "downward-eliminating".*

If we consider these energy winds in relation to the engendering of primordial gnosis' radiation, (the analysis goes as follows). The quartet of the flavor, solitary, central, and crystal tube channels acts as the conditional basis for the engendering of primordial gnosis' natural radiation in terms of luminously radiant seminal nuclei with their light rays, such that the "pure gnostic winds" are that which derives from our four elemental winds thus "entering" the five primordial gnososes' radiation (within those four channels, which thus function as their "condition").<sup>259</sup> Those energy winds deriving from the previously discussed karmic winds are posited in that they act as mounts for our cognition, while these gnostic winds are posited as such in that they engender the luminously radiant empty forms.<sup>260</sup> Thus, since the previously discussed (21,600 karmic winds) are classified as that which truly functions as winds (which ultimately must be purified away), while these purifying (gnostic winds) are not classified as such, the latter are not actual (winds)<sup>261</sup> other than merely being (nominally) classified under the rubric of the real winds (i.e. the karmic winds). *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* speaks on this subject thus:<sup>262</sup>

*With the identity of being impelled, vibrated,  
Pulsated, lightened, and shaken forth (by the energy winds)  
Through the four channels of its engendering,  
(The psychic energy of insight) revolves in the Tsitta's mandala  
As utterly vibrant quintessences of cognitive energy  
Characterized as scattering fire-sparks. [210]*

*This fivefold (insight energy) within these four (channels)  
As accompanied by the karmic winds  
Becomes intensely clear and aware cognitive energy,  
And thus, as the inner nature of all insight,  
Resides as the great natural cognitive energy of radiant clarity  
Within the flavor, solitary and all-encompassing channels,  
And the hollow interior of the crystal tube channel.*

*The Blazing Lamp Tantra* also says:<sup>263</sup>

*The dynamics of insight's clarity and unclarity  
Emerge from the vibratory impulsion of one's inner winds,  
And reside within the channels at the center of one's body.*

**II. 2.ii. The arrayed/arraying "enlightened minds" (i.e. seminal nuclei)<sup>264</sup>**

The seminal nuclei emerge from the three principal channels running up the middle of our four energy wheels. The dissimulating conventional seminal nuclei flow through the right channel, the ultimately significant seminal nuclei through the left channel, and the natural seminal nuclei through the central channel.<sup>265</sup> *The Wheels, the Site of the Energy Channels* says:<sup>266</sup>

*Awareness flows through you in the manner of seminal nuclei,  
And via the three types of these seminal nuclei  
The three Spiritual Bodies are engendered.*

*(i) The "conventional" seminal nuclei  
Are the seed of actualizing the Emanational Bodies;*

*These seminal nuclei of your mother's blood and father's semen respectively  
Are the basis for your psycho-physical components, and flow within your internal  
channels -  
Their presence engenders your body's radiant glow.*

*In males they flow through the right channel, and for females through the left.*

*(ii) The "ultimate" luminous seminal nuclei  
Shine in the size of a mustard grain,  
And are present in naturally radiant spherical forms divested of discursive  
elaborations,  
Uncontaminated and beyond the extremes of permanence and annihilation.*

*You may be aware of their flickering as engendered by your inner winds,  
Yet they are difficult to realize since their emergence is subtle.*

*In males they flow through the left channel, and in females through the right.*

*(iii) The natural seminal nuclei are originally pure in essence,  
And resemble the triad of primordial gnoses present within the Ground -  
Since primordial gnosis' luminosity, Spiritual Bodies, and awareness  
Are not established within themselves,  
They flow through the central channel  
As the triad of unimpeded emptiness,  
Unimpeded radiant clarity and unimpeded awareness.*



(i) As for their respective functions, the catalytic conventional seminal nuclei perform functions pertaining to the causal impetus, conditions, and activation/functioning of the four conventional elements (within our body). With the causal impetus of the conventional process (the four elements) and its conditional determinants (flesh, blood, warmth and breath), it functions to act as support of our body's development, progress and continued existence.<sup>267</sup>

To expand on this,<sup>268</sup> these seminal nuclei move upwards from the soles of our feet on the first day of the lunar month, thereby functioning to expand our psycho-physical components and so forth in the navel wheel via the vibrant quintessences deriving from food and liquid (which we have ingested). [211] By its bringing about such expansion (i.e. energization) on the first day within the navel wheel, on the eighth day within the heart wheel, on the twelfth day within the throat wheel and on the fifteenth day within the crown wheel, whatever spiritual accumulations you have amassed develop further and your "constituents" progressively expand. Thus a practitioner should not allow his/her body to be treated with moxa or bled (at this time) since such treatments would cause their body to deteriorate and become frail - in that they are the basis for the enlightened mind's expansion, it is not suitable to disregard these conventional seminal nuclei. By virtue of your sensory fields and faculties expanding there (on the fifteenth), if you shave the hair on your crown to a thumb's length and massage it with an ointment that is a mixture of sesame oil, musk, and white and red sandal wood, your body's vibrant constituents expand, and its elemental energies won't be agitated. From the fifteenth day onwards, the conventional "enlightened minds" move downwards in reliance upon the waste products deriving from the food you have eaten. On the nineteenth day, they bring about the expansion of the components and so forth in the throat wheel; on the twenty second day, this expansion is brought about in the heart wheel; and when the sky is empty (i.e. the thirtieth of the lunar month when the moon is no longer visible in the sky), the expansion takes place within the soles of your feet. Thus, by

massaging (the soles of your feet) with an ointment that is a mixture of a variety of grain-oils, honey, and nutmeg powder, and then warming them in the sun, your physical constituents expand, you naturally accomplish the practice of virtue, and your meditative states which depend upon these seminal nuclei intensify. In this way, the conventional seminal nuclei's functions pertain to the flourishing and deterioration of (your body's) four elemental energies.

(ii) The ultimate seminal nuclei<sup>269</sup> operate such that they function to ripen the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses with the causal impetus of primordial gnosis and the conditional factors of its lights and colors. To expand on that, they ripen the Spiritual Bodies within the Tsitta; they ripen the seminal nuclei within the channels; and they ripen the four lamps within the eyes, while their fruit ("climax") is the seamless identity of the expanse and primordial gnosis.

(iii) The natural seminal nuclei are as follows:<sup>270</sup> the reality nuclei are when we settle into contemplative equanimity; the thoroughly pure reality nuclei are when contemplative experiences develop therein; the expanse nuclei are when visions manifest; the thoroughly pure expanse nuclei are when those visions subsequently intensify; the Totally Positive One's nuclei are when those visions are complete and perfect; [212] and the great gnostic nuclei are when they manifest externally.

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes these seminal nuclei thus:<sup>271</sup>

*(i) (Reality) is present in terms of the Spiritual Bodies within your Tsitta:*

*The fivefold Bodies of its radiation  
Embody the characteristics of the individual spiritual families.*

*The sixfold Bodies of its rays  
Encapsulate reality in its natural presencing.<sup>272</sup>*

*The threefold Bodies of its purity  
Take hold of the interstice of passing beyond misery.<sup>273</sup>*

*The eightfold Bodies of its features  
Perform the activities of completing the spiritual levels and paths.*

*(ii) (Reality) is present as seminal nuclei within your energy channels:*

*The threefold engaging seminal nuclei  
Plant the seed for the linking of cyclic existence and transcendence.<sup>274</sup>*

*The five seminal nuclei of (primordial gnosis') engendering  
Perfect the mandala of yogic experience.<sup>275</sup>*

*The six seminal nuclei of (reality's) array  
Gather plurality into oneness within reality.*

*Through reliance upon these respective factors (i.e. these Spiritual Bodies and nuclei),  
(You realize) the identity of the sameness of all phenomena.<sup>276</sup>*

### **II.3. The manner in which the pervading elemental energies are completely present within our body<sup>277</sup>**

The five wind energies' twenty five internal divisions are completely present within our body in their pervasively propelling primordial gnosis' radiation; the five fire energies are completely present in our body in their impelling primordial gnosis' dynamism; the five earth energies are completely present in our body in their displaying primordial gnosis' essence; the five water energies are completely present in providing primordial gnosis' objective dimensions; and the five space energies are completely present in providing primordial gnosis' abode.

(i) The five earth energies' modes of abiding are as follows:<sup>278</sup> the all-manifesting earth energy abides in conjunction with awareness; the unchanging adamantine earth energy abides in conjunction with the lamps; the precious universally fertile earth energy abides in conjunction with the seminal nuclei; the "limitless and total displaying of appearances" earth energy abides in conjunction with both the expanse and primordial gnosis; and the "ultimate actualization" earth energy abides in conjunction with insight.

(ii) The five water energies:<sup>279</sup> the unchanging water energy abides in all our inner channels; the pure, clear "calming" water energy abides in all our bones; the dynamic qualities-expanding water energy abides in all our blood; [213] the non-clinging water energy abides in all our lymph; and the "completeness without fixation" water energy abides within our eyes.

(iii) The five fire energies:<sup>280</sup> the externally and internally all-pervading fire energy abides within our lungs; the externally and internally all-radiant fire energy abides within our two eyes and limbs; the externally and internally all-equalizing fire energy abides in our flesh and skin; the external and internal activities-realizing fire energy abides in our two soles; and the external and internal activities-actualizing fire energy abides in our two palms.

(iv) The five wind energies:<sup>281</sup> the vitality sustaining wind energy abides in our vitality-channel; the luster and glow engendering wind energy abides within the space between our eyebrows; the fire-balancing wind energy abides in our stomach; the all-pervading wind energy abides all over our body such that it pervades it; and the efficacious wind energy which mercilessly (ushers) in a (new) eon abides between our heart and its membrane (i.e. the pericardium).

(v) The five space energies:<sup>282</sup> the all-pervasive space energy abides indivisibly with the real awareness; the object-free bright and radiant space energy abides indivisibly with the five lights; the unadulteratedly pure space energy abides indivisibly with the thoroughly pure expanse; the reality-symbolizing space energy abides indivisibly with the symbolic primordial gnosis, i.e. the empty seminal nuclei; the "effecting freedom within the pure lands" space energy abides indivisibly with all the manifestations of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses.

The classification of the five wind energies into their own internal fivefold divisions is as follows:<sup>283</sup>

(i) The five divisions of the vitality-sustaining wind energy:<sup>284</sup> the root sustaining vitality wind engenders the glow of our awareness ; the preserving vitality wind engenders the glow of our seminal nuclei; the subtle-izing vitality wind engenders the glow of the lights; the unclean vitality wind engenders the glow of our mind and dimmed awareness; and the vibrating vitality wind engenders the glow of our egoic psyche.

(ii) The five divisions of the fire-balancing wind energy:<sup>285</sup> the vibrant energy/solidified waste differentiating wind is non-dual with our vitality; the warmth engendering wind is non-dual with our awareness; the clarifying wind is non-dual with our lamps; the gathering/synthesizing wind is non-dual with our seminal nuclei; [214] and the inspiring wind is non-dual with our insight.

(iii) The five divisions of the luster and glow engendering wind energy:<sup>286</sup> the perceptual consciousness engendering wind brings about the objects of insight; the "psyche engaging observable aspects" wind brings about apparent objects; the "glowing aspects" wind brings about the objective dimensions of the lamps; the aspects-incinerating wind brings about dimmed awareness' objects; and the aspects-agitating wind brings about the egoic psyche's objects.

(iv) The five divisions of the all-pervading wind energy:<sup>287</sup> the Ground-pervading wind brings about manifestation in terms of primordial gnosis; the present-pervading wind brings about manifestation in terms of the lamps; the fright and panic-pervading wind brings about manifestation to our cognition; the memory-pervading wind brings about manifestation to our thought activity; and the "pervading our entire body with apprehension" wind brings about manifestation to our mind.

(v) The five divisions of the efficacious wind energy which mercilessly (ushers in a new) eon:<sup>288</sup> the propelling wind pervades our psycho-physical components; the liberating wind pervades in an instant; the reversing wind pervades our intermediate state existence; the quickening wind pervades our ideation; and the instantaneous wind pervades the three instants.

*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* describes these elemental energies thus:<sup>289</sup>

*The five great energies are completely present in your own body. To expand this it, the five aspects of wind energy propel primordial gnosis' radiation; the five aspects of fire energy impel primordial gnosis' dynamism; the five aspects of earth energy constitute primordial gnosis' essence; the five aspects of water energy provide primordial gnosis' objective dimensions; and the five aspects of space energy provide primordial gnosis' abode.*

*The explanation wind energy's five aspects is as follows: the vitality-sustaining wind energy, the luster and glow engendering wind energy, the fire-balancing wind energy, the all-pervading wind energy, and the efficacious wind energy which mercilessly (ushers in a new) eon. Those winds pervade the body's upper and lower parts in all sentient beings.*

*The five fire energies: the externally and internally all-pervading fire energy, the externally and internally all-radiant fire energy, the externally and internally all-equalizing fire energy, [215] the externally and internal activities-realizing fire energy, and the external and internal activities-actualizing fire energy.*

*The five earth energies: the all-manifesting earth energy, the unchanging adamantine earth energy, the precious universally fertile earth energy, the "limitless and total displaying of appearances" earth energy, and the "ultimate actualization" earth energy.*

*The five aspects of water energy: the unchanging water energy, the pure, clear "calming" water energy, the qualities-expanding water energy, the non-clinging water energy, and the "completeness without fixation" water energy.*

*The five space energies: the generally all-pervasive space energy, the object-free bright and radiant space energy, the unadulteratedly pure space energy, the reality-symbolizing space energy, and the "effecting freedom within the pure lands" space energy.*

*Precisely these five elemental energies naturally abide within yourself.<sup>290</sup>*

*Furthermore, they can be further explained in the following manner.*

*The vitality-sustaining wind energy has are the following five internal divisions: the root sustaining vitality wind, the preserving vitality wind, the subtle-izing vitality wind, the unclean vitality wind, and the vibrating vitality wind.*

*As for the fire-balancing wind, there is the vibrant energy/solidified waste differentiating wind, the warmth engendering wind, the clarifying wind, the gathering/synthesizing wind, and the inspiring wind.*

*As for the luster and glow engendering wind, there is the consciousness engendering wind, the "psyche engaging observable aspects" wind, the "glowing aspects" wind,<sup>291</sup> the aspects-incinerating wind, and the aspects-agitating wind.*

*As for the pervading wind, there is the Ground-pervading wind, the present-pervading wind, the fright and panic-pervading wind, the memory-pervading wind, and the "pervading our entire body with apprehension" wind. [216]*

*As for the efficacious wind which mercilessly ushers in a new eon, there is the propelling wind, the liberating wind, the reversing wind, the quickening wind, and the instantaneous wind.*

This concludes my extensive explanation of the second adamantine topic within *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* - the stage of how we stray into fictive existence.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### *The Third Adamantine Topic: the Manner in which the Nucleus of the Buddha's Expansive Awakening Pervades Sentient Beings*<sup>292</sup>

Next I will discuss the manner in which the nucleus of the Buddha's Expansive awakening pervades and abides within all sentient beings' inner element, which involves two topics: a general discussion of the manner in which it pervades, and a detailed explanation of the qualities of its pervading presence.<sup>293</sup>

#### **I. A general discussion of the manner in which a nucleus of enlightened energy pervades all sentient beings**

There are two subdivisions: identifying the qualities of its pervasion, and a refutation of likely doubts one may entertain with respect to my presentation.

##### **I.1. Identifying the qualities of this nucleus' pervasion of sentient beings**

*The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* describes it thus:<sup>294</sup>

*The enlightened nucleus of realized-energy abides within all the sentient beings of the transitory worldly realms, like oil pervades a sesame seed.*

From *The Inlaid Jewels Tantra*:<sup>295</sup>

*Just as oil itself is primordially spontaneously present  
Within a sesame seed or mustard seed,  
The seed of the Realized Ones' enlightened energy  
Manifests along with its concordant luminosity  
Within the deceptive embodied experiences of sentient beings.*

From *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra*:<sup>296</sup>

*Self-awareness' primordial gnosis abides within the body,  
Like oil within a sesame seed;  
The body's luster and radiant glow  
Reflects its pervasion by the moisture of primordial gnosis.*

From *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness*:<sup>297</sup>

*The wisdom of the authentic Buddha's expansive awakening  
Abides within the mental stream of all sentient beings  
In the manner of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses.*

This is also taught in the Spiritual Discourses (Sūtras) and Tantras of the exoteric vehicle - for example *The Hevajra Tantra* says:<sup>298</sup>

*This great primordial gnosis resides in the ordinary body,  
Genuinely divested of all distorting ideation;  
As that which pervades all things,  
It resides in the body, yet is not produced from the body.*

*The Discourse on the Great and Exalted Total Passage Beyond Misery* says:<sup>299</sup>

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, analogically it's like this. [217] Even though there was actually a treasure of gold in the house of a certain poor woman, no one knew anything about it. Subsequently a man who was very ingenious asked the poor woman: "Oh woman, would you be interested in my sweeping for pay?"*

*The woman answered: "I'm not interested. But if you can unearth the treasure of gold my son hid, I'll do your work for you!"*

*The man replied: "Since I am quite ingenious, I know where your son hid the golden treasure, and will show you!"*

*The woman said: "If not a single person great or small knows where it is in my house, how can you know?"*

*The man replied: "But I do know, beyond the shadow of a doubt".*

*The woman said: "Then show it to me, since I want to see it!"*

*The man then entered her house, dug up the treasure of gold and showed it to the woman. Upon seeing the treasure, the woman was overjoyed. Filled with a sense of marvel and amazement, she showered the man with praise.*

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, the Buddha-nature present within all sentient beings is similar - none of those sentient beings see it, just like that woman didn't see the precious treasure.*

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, I show the Buddha-nature present in all beings, though they don't see it since it is obscured by the all-encompassing emotional distortions. This is just like the poor woman was shown the treasure which she couldn't see.*

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, the Realized One teaches/reveals this precious treasure of the manifest expansive awakening of Buddhahood to all sentient beings, to wit that they are endowed with the Buddha-nature. Upon seeing such realities, ordinary individuals are filled with joy, and they venerate and orient themselves towards the Realized One.*

*The so-called "individual who is skilled-in-means (ingenious)" is a metaphor for the Realized One. [218] The so-called "poor woman" is a metaphor for the limitless ordinary individuals. The so-called "treasure of gold" is a metaphor for Buddha-nature.*



Furthermore, having first given the metaphor of the Champion's jewel, the Realized One said:<sup>300</sup>

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, in this way the Realized One has spoken of the existence of the Buddha-nature in all sentient beings, just as the skilled physician revealed the adamant jewel of the Champion to the Champion.*

From that passage, up to the next passage, the Realized One speaks on this subject extensively:<sup>301</sup>

*O Son of the Lineage, the ten powers, the fourfold fearlessness, thirty two perfect characteristics and eighty exemplary and excellent forms of an enlightened being are also present within the bodies of all sentient beings.*

*The Unsurpassed Continuity says:*<sup>302</sup>

*Because the Spiritual Body of the Buddha's perfect awakening continues,  
The as-is is undifferentiated  
And the spiritual affinity is present,  
All sentient beings are eternally endowed  
With the nucleus of Buddhahood's expansive awakening.*

*The Two Sectioned Hevajra Tantra says:*<sup>303</sup>

*Sentient beings are themselves Buddhas,  
Yet are obscured by adventitious stains -  
When those are cleared away, there is only Buddhahood itself.*

*The Tantric Songs of the People says:*<sup>304</sup>

*Through the explanations in all the scholars' treatises  
You won't realize that the Buddha exists within your ordinary body.*

*The Unsurpassed Continuity speaks of nine analogies and their nine corresponding meanings:*<sup>305</sup>

*Were there an inexhaustible treasure  
Underneath the ground of a poor man's house,  
He might not know of its presence,  
And nor would the treasure tell him, "Here I am".*

*Just so, since all living beings fail to realize  
The precious treasure contained within their mind,  
The stainless reality devoid of anything negative to be cleared away or positive to establish,  
They continually experience the suffering of poverty and deprivation in a variety of ways.*

By means of a multitude of analogies and allegories such as that concerning a great roll of silk the size of the entire billionfold galaxy,<sup>306</sup> *The Flower Ear Adornment of the Buddhas* teaches the existence of an enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy (the spiritual dimension) within the mind stream of sentient beings.

## **I.2. A refutation of potential doubts one may entertain with respect to my presentation**

There are three sections within this discussion: the presentation of likely doubts, their refutation, and the joyful enthusiasm developing out of this special definitive understanding (resultant from clearing away doubts). [219]

### **I.2.i. Presentation of possible doubts or objections**

Those who haven't in past lifetimes fashioned the root of virtue, nor in the present met with a genuinely virtuous spiritual friend (i.e. authentic spiritual guides and thus studied the profound spiritual precepts of definitive meaning in the present, raise the following objection: "How is it possible that within the emptiness of mind-as-such, the enlightened qualities of the so-called "nucleus" or nature of the Buddha exists - his perfect characteristics, exemplary forms, powers, and so forth?<sup>307</sup> Since it is taught in all the canonical texts (*The Intermediate Length Divine "Mother" Discourse* and so on) that the abiding reality is like the empty sky devoid of any concrete identity, the Spiritual Discourses which teach this nucleus are of provisional meaning. If that's not the case, then it's really no different than the permanent self/identity of the "extremists", and it would seem that you have turned back on the doctrine of definitive meaning (i.e. emptiness)".

### **I.2.ii. My refutation of such objections**

Since this line of reasoning isn't correct, for the moment I will simply refute it on the basis of authoritative scriptures. From the three cycles of pronouncements in which the Victoriously Transcendent One taught, this topic of the "nucleus" was taught in the last doctrinal cycle which ascertains that which is of ultimate significance, and yet you have failed to understand it. If solely simple emptiness is ultimate, then what sense does it make

that the Buddha taught these three cycles separately?!<sup>308</sup> Thus he taught emptiness as a provisional doctrine, with the simple intention that beginners would be terrified by this abiding reality, and hence their beliefs in a concrete self would be negated. In the series of doctrines found in *The Discourse on the Great and Exalted Total Passage Beyond Misery*, the Buddha says the following, having first given the allegory of a woman curing her breast fed infant son:<sup>309</sup>

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, in order to similarly liberate all sentient beings, the Realized One as well teaches with a strong emphasis on the absence of any self within all sentient beings. By strongly emphasizing this, the thought of this so-called "self" will dissipate (for these sentient beings), resulting in their total transcendence of misery. Also, he taught thus in order to dispel the vile view of the "worldly materialists", to show the transcendence of the worldly materialists' doctrines, to show that the view of the worldly materialists concerning a "self" or "identity" isn't valid, and [220] to help bring about these (sentient beings') transformation into a totally pure body through meditation upon the doctrine of "no-self". Thus, just as that woman rubbed her breast with sour bile for the sake of her son, the Realized One likewise spoke of "the absence of self in all phenomena" so that sentient beings would meditate on emptiness.*

*Just as that woman subsequently wiped the bile off her breasts, and then called her son to her with the words, "Drink the milk from my breast", I also have similarly (subsequently) taught "the enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" (to those sentient beings). Oh monk, without your becoming frightened, instead just as the mother called the boy to her and he gradually drank the breast milk, O monk, you must also understand the difference - it is not the case that the "the enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" should be said to be non-existent.*

From the same text:<sup>310</sup>

*Previously, in my teachings in "The Discourses on the Transcendental Consummation of Insight", I have taught that all phenomena are empty, which was in order to lead the immature totally away from their attachment to concrete selves. In the ultimately valid explanation, it is this singular enlightened nucleus of realized-energy alone which is the ultimate truth.*

This is not similar to the permanent<sup>311</sup> self asserted by the Extremists - though this nucleus is primordially luminously radiant and present within our body as such, it transcends permanence or non-permanence, and hence is not held to be exclusively "permanent". In that its radiant light can become visible through relying upon your Spiritual Master's esoteric precepts, it is not held to be some type of hidden phenomena which no one at all can see; yet because its empty and radiant essence is beyond all limitations, it can't be phenomenally

correlated to a characterizable thing existing concretely on its own terms as such, like a "thumb" and so forth.<sup>312</sup> Since it lacks any such substantiality or concrete qualities, this enlightened nucleus is not held to be of variable size or variable positive/negative character (in relation to the particular) physical sizes and (ethically) positive/negative (characters of the endless variety of living being it is located within). There are exceedingly many special features like this (in our view of an enlightened nucleus or Buddha-nature, which differentiates it sharply from the "permanent self" asserted by the Extremists). Though such discourses by the Extremists are completely dissimilar to this Buddha-nucleus ("the nucleus of expansive awakening"), you might think they are alike by virtue of the mere (similarity in) the names or verbal expressions utilized - by making this error, you are all exposed to us as being intellectually foolish! It resembles the story of how first a king's sword was lost, and (subsequently) a poor man dreamed of that sword in a dream, such that he talked about it meaninglessly in his sleep. By then disputing about that sword (on the basis of his meaningless ramblings), they were trying to establish (the whereabouts and characteristics) of a sword they hadn't seen, since apart from its name (being mumbled and heard) the real sword wasn't even seen.<sup>313</sup> [221] The same Discourse describes it thus:<sup>314</sup>

*All the childish fools say "A self exists!", which is similar to the poor man falling asleep in another's house, and then meaninglessly exclaiming, "The sword! The sword!" When the Listeners and Self-Awakened Ones ask these sentient beings what the characteristics are like of this so-called "self", some of their opinions are as follows: one opinion claims in its view of a self that this so-called "self" can be characterized as being the size of a thumb; another opinion claims that it is the size of a grain of millet; another opinion claims that it is the size of a grain of sesame; and another opinion claims that this self's characteristic is that it resides in the mind, blazing and radiant like the sun. Thus these ordinary beings don't understand the real characteristics of the so-called "self", just like the ministers who don't know the excellent sword (yet prattle on about its supposed characteristics).*

*Since these childish fools don't understand this teaching by the Spiritual Hero on the characteristics of the authentic "self", they make up and distinguish-out a variety of supposed features, and then fixate on these fabricated characteristics of a "self". This is similar to the claim (by those who have never seen the sword or caught only a hazy glimpse of it) that "It is like a horn!" when asked "What is the sword shaped like?" Thus these vulgar childish people develop vile views which continue unabated. Therefore in order to eradicate such vile views, the Realized One taught "no-self",*

*which in the allegory correlates to the King telling his ministers, "I have no sword like that in my treasury".*

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, the Realized One's teaching of a "self" is thus termed "the Buddha-nature" ("nature of expansive awakening"), and in that way this "Buddha-nature" is included within the spiritual precepts taught by the Buddha, resembling the intense radiance and purity of the King's actual sword (which does exist, though not at all like the false descriptions of it).*

**I.2.iii. The joyful enthusiasm developing out of your special definitive understanding of this teaching**<sup>315</sup>

Herein there are three topics: [222] (i) how feeling joyous is appropriate, since via an authentic Spiritual Master you have met with this fundamental reality, which is inaccessible to your vision if not thus pointed out to you by a genuinely virtuous spiritual friend; (ii) feeling an upsurge of joy by force of these being adamant, esoteric topics that are the exclusive province of the Buddhas' realization (if they are topics difficult to realize even by Spiritual Heroes residing on the spiritual levels, what need to say the same of the short sighted?!); (iii) and the appropriateness of feeling joyous since if you are thus taught by a genuine Spiritual Master, you will directly see (reality) and the self-presencing visions will shine forth in full manifestation in this very life time, the so-called "ordinary or natural intermediate existence".<sup>316</sup> As for the first topic, the same Discourse says:<sup>317</sup>

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, all sentient beings are like this - if they don't venerate a spiritual friend, they will be unable to see this Buddha-nature, even though it exists within them.*

The second topic is explained extensively in *The Discourse on the Great and Exalted Total Passage Beyond Misery*:<sup>318</sup>

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, it's like the following allegory. A blind man goes to a skilled physician for the purpose of getting his eyesight cured. The physician uses a golden scalpel to cut through the film blurring the patient's vision, yet if after this the physician raises one of his fingers and displays it to the blind man, he will say, "I don't see it". However, if the physician shows him two or three fingers, he will say "Now, I see a little bit!".*

*Oh, Son of the Lineage, if I don't teach this discourse-series of The Great Passage Totally Beyond Misery, the immeasurable Spiritual Heroes and Heroines will not see Buddha-nature, even though they reside on up to the tenth spiritual level following their total completion of the transcendental consummations - the situation is just like in the*

*above allegory. Thus the Realized One teaches it to them, whereby they gain a glimpse (of this Buddha-nature). The great ones, the Spiritual Heroes and Heroines, having thus come to see, utter these words: "How incredibly marvelous! O Victoriously Transcendent One, we have revolved in cyclic existence for countless eons, and were totally deceived by the "no-self" (theory)." O Son of the Lineage, if these Spiritual Heroes residing on the tenth spiritual level don't thus clearly see this Buddha-nature, what need is there to say the same of the Listeners and Self-Awakened Ones?*

As for the third topic, *The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* says:<sup>319</sup> [223]

*The pure lighting-up of primordial gnosis resides  
Within every sentient beings' own body,  
Though unable to manifest in its full extent;  
Analogically, it's just like a child isn't directly manifest  
In the encasing of its mother's womb or egg, yet although now obscured,  
Will eventually emerge when its own inherent dynamism completely ripens.*

*As soon as this neurosis-ridden body is flung aside,  
You will directly encounter the self-presencing objective display,  
And see primordially present self-awareness itself  
In its non-conceptual essence;  
Within this pure lighting-up of primordial gnosis,  
You see the truth of the Buddha's expansive awakening.*

## **II. A detailed explanation of the qualities of this nucleus' pervading presence**

This explanation involves six sections:<sup>320</sup> the nucleus' gnostic energy primordially is present as the five Spiritual Bodies, the five primordial gnososes, the five lights, the fivefold dimension of the spiritual affinities, the five gnostic winds, and the fivefold dimensions of the essence, nature and compassionate resonance respectively. The corresponding signs of these fivefold dimensions' presence within our impure experience are our five psychophysical components, five emotional distortions,<sup>321</sup> five elemental energies, five sensory faculties, five sensual qualities, and the five natural dimensions of our three gateways.<sup>322</sup>

*The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* sums it up:<sup>323</sup>

*Thus this very nucleus itself  
Totally pervades everything with its five Spiritual Bodies,  
Five primordial gnososes, five lights  
And their five types of color, five dimensions (i.e. of the spiritual affinities),  
Five gnostic winds, fivefold essence,  
Fivefold nature, and fivefold compassionate resonance.*

### **II.1. Awareness' primordial gnosis present as the five Spiritual Bodies**<sup>324</sup>

(i) Awareness' primordial gnosis brings about the illumination of spontaneous primordial radiation from within reality's facets (gnosis' own objective sphere), and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of the Illuminator. (ii) Awareness' primordial gnosis is unshakable like an indestructible diamond scepter, immutable and unchanging, and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of the Unshakable One. (iii) Awareness' primordial gnosis is primordially endowed with the dynamic qualities of radiant light, which manifest in an intensified fashion when you contemplatively take it into your experience, and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of Precious Matrix. (iv) Awareness' primordial gnosis' own natural light is limitless, and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of Limitless Illumination. (v) Awareness' primordial gnosis primordially takes the aim of Buddhahood's expansive awakening into its own experience, such it spontaneously ascertains the two spiritual aims, and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of the Efficacious One. [224] Since these five Spiritual Bodies are thus primordially present within awareness, they manifest as our five psycho-physical components in the present. *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness*:<sup>325</sup>

*The freed components are the Spiritual Bodies of the Buddha.*

*The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>326</sup>

*The branches of the adamantine component  
Are known to be the five perfect Buddhas.*

*The Tantra of Overflowing Nectar* (details the correlation):<sup>327</sup>

*Our component of form is the Illuminator;  
Sensations are the Precious Matrix;  
Discernment is Limitless Illumination;  
Karmic conditioning forces are the Efficacious One;  
And perceptual consciousness is the Unshakable.*

## **II.2. Awareness' primordial presence as the five primordial gnoses**<sup>328</sup>

(i) Awareness itself clearly reflects phenomenon in general as well as their individual forms, which is the mirror-like primordial gnosis. (ii) Awareness itself lacks such oppositions as positive/negative or large/small, and as such is the same throughout like the sky or a jewel, which is the sameness primordial gnosis. (iii) Within awareness the specifics

of all phenomenon and of (all living beings' individual intellectual and spiritual) capacities are radiantly clear without any confusion, which is the discerning primordial gnosis. (iv) Awareness itself is naturally and inherently free without any obstacles or impediments, which is the efficacious primordial gnosis. (v) Awareness itself is beyond all limitations of discursive elaboration, which is the "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis. Since these five primordial gnoses are thus primordially present within awareness, they manifest as our five emotional distortions in the present. *The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism*:<sup>329</sup>

*The five emotional distortions are the five primordial gnoses.*

*The Tantra of Accumulated Preciousness* describes it thus:<sup>330</sup>

*The five emotional distortions which shackle you to the notion of a self  
Are primordially awareness' own manifestation,  
And hence primordial gnosis, yet aren't recognized as such!*

*The Tantra of the Flirting Māmaki Overcome with Bliss* (details the correlation):<sup>331</sup>

*Ignorance is the "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis,  
Hatred is the great mirroring primordial gnosis,  
Pride is itself the primordial gnosis of sameness,  
Desire is the universally discerning primordial gnosis,  
And jealousy is the efficacious primordial gnosis.*

### **II.3. The five lights**<sup>332</sup>

(i) In that awareness is totally unsullied by any karmic actions or emotional distortions, it emerges as what seems to be white. (ii) By force of enlightened qualities being primordially perfectly complete within it, it emerges as what seems to be yellow. (iii) The four empowerments - present without being sought - are perfectly complete within (awareness) itself, and thus it emerges as what seems to be red. [225] (iv) Awareness transcends vacillation and exertion, and thus emerges as what seems to be green, (v) while in that it is without change, it emerges as what seems to be blue. Since the five lights are thus present, they manifest as the five elemental energies in the present. *The Golden Garland*:<sup>333</sup>

*The quintet of blue, white, yellow, scarlet  
And green - by your clinging to a concrete identity therein,  
They inherently manifest as the five elemental energies:  
Space, water, earth, fire and wind.*



*The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra* further correlates those (five elements) with the five consort's purity:<sup>334</sup>

*Earth and water correlate to Vision Lady and Māmaki respectively;  
Fire and wind correlate to the White Cloaked Lady and the Savioreess respectively;  
Space correlates to the Mistress of the Expanse.*

*Each and every phenomena of the three states of existence  
Are all without exception the Buddha's pure land -  
As for phenomena which are other than this expansive awakening of Buddhahood,  
The Victor himself will not find them even should he seek to!*

#### **II. 4. The five spiritual affinities**<sup>335</sup>

(i) Previously the Buddhas of the past were expansively awakened through their vision of awareness itself (i.e. the enlightened nucleus), and "thus proceeded" to the level of Buddhahood, such that there is a "Realized affinity" (literally "thus-proceeded" affinity). (ii) Awareness itself never undergoes mutation or change at any time no matter where a living being may be born (hell, the human sphere, etc.), and thus there is an "adamantine affinity". (iii) Because the enlightened qualities are spontaneously present within awareness, there is a "preciousness affinity". (iv) Since awareness is unsullied by defects though it resides in cyclic existence, there is a "lotus affinity". (v) Since the enlightened activities are spontaneously present within awareness, there is an "activity affinity". Because awareness is thus primordially present as these five affinities (within sentient beings' stream of existence), they manifest in the present in the symbolic form of our five sensory faculties. *The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror*:<sup>336</sup>

*The eyes are explained as the affinity of adamantine reality;  
The ears are explained as the affinity of efficacious and meaningful activity;  
The nose is explained as the affinity of the lotus;  
Likewise the tongue is explained as the affinity of preciousness;  
And the body is explained as the affinity of the Realized.*

#### **II. 5. The five winds**<sup>337</sup>

These five energy winds are correlated to the five sensual qualities which are sensually experienced in objects near at hand; at this point I will only explain them briefly, since (in Chapter Two) I detailed these winds in great detail. (i) In that awareness brings down the

heat of primordial gnosis, it is present as the "fire-balancing wind". (ii) By force of its sustaining the vitality of cyclic existence and transcendent reality, it is the "vitality-sustaining wind". (iii) Since the five lights of primordial gnosis are present naturally in its own being, it is the "luster and glow engendering wind". (iv) Since it delivers you to the level of ultra-purity, it is present as the "propelling wind". [226] (v) Since it "liberates" cyclic existence within the transcendence of sorrow, it is present as the efficacious wind which mercilessly (ushers in a new) eon. In the words of *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness*:<sup>338</sup>

*Awareness thus resides within all sentient beings  
In terms of the dynamics of these five winds.*

Also,<sup>339</sup>

*Because it propels one to the level of ultra-purity, it is termed "the propelling wind";  
Because it sustains the vitality of pure primordial gnosis, it is termed "the vitality-sustaining wind";  
Because the five lights of primordial gnosis are present naturally within its own being, it is termed "the luster and glow engendering wind";  
Because it enables one to be liberated within the ultra-pure expanse through insight, it is termed "the efficacious wind which mercilessly (ushers in) a new eon";  
Because it is in a seamless identity with the visions of primordial gnosis, it is termed "the fire-balancing wind".*

## **II.6. The five qualities of the essence, nature, and compassionate resonance respectively**

The significance of these can be encapsulated as the grounding triad of gnostic Spiritual Bodies.<sup>340</sup> The five qualities of the essence are correlated to the five Spiritual Bodies in their pure potential;<sup>341</sup> the five qualities of the nature are to be correlated with the presencing of the five lights; and the five qualities of compassionate resonance are to be correlated with the five primordial gnoses. Compassion thus manifests at the level of an Awakened One in five ways: (i) his/her naturally present compassion; (ii) his/her compassion consequent upon encountering an objective condition evoking it; (iii) his/her compassion consequent upon others' exhortations and supplications; (iv) his/her compassion as expressed in various activities; and (v) his/her unchanging compassion towards those to be trained.<sup>342</sup> These manifest in Buddhahood via their pure source-potential being spontaneously present within awareness' primordial gnosis at this very moment (in each and every living being).

Awareness itself is also present as the following five modes of insight:<sup>343</sup> (i) by force of awareness being present as "differentiating insight", it clearly and distinctly differentiates out phenomena both in terms of external appearances and internal psychic activity; (ii) since it exists as "subsuming insight", everything is perfectly complete within itself; (iii) since it totally pervades all appearances and psychic activity, it emerges as "pervading insight"; (iv) since awareness is impelled into the sky in dependence upon the gnostic winds, it is present as "impelling insight"; and (v) since it cuts off the vitality of both cyclic existence and transcendence via reality itself, it emerges as "liberating insight". Furthermore, awareness itself is present as a vertically ordered triad of Spiritual Bodies, lights and primordial gnoses: through its essence abiding as the Spiritual Bodies, the knowable shines forth in its self-radiance; through its nature abiding as the lights, radiant light expands into vastness; and through its compassionate resonance abiding as primordial gnosis, [227] impartial enlightened activities shine forth.<sup>344</sup> If we consider a meditative practitioner in the present, the Reality Body is present at the time of his/her contemplative equanimity; the Perfect Enjoyment Body is present when there is utterly no distinguishing between contemplative equanimity and post-contemplative awareness; and the Emanational Body is present in his/her post-contemplative state.<sup>345</sup> *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness:*<sup>346</sup>

*Awareness remaining without conceptuality is the Reality Body;  
Awareness in its unceasing radiance is the Perfect Enjoyment Body;  
Awareness manifesting as anything whatsoever is the Emanational Body.*

In this triune manner in which awareness abides, awareness is present in us with an identity such that the three unique jewels (of Buddhism) are primordially completely present within ourselves/itself. *The Six Spaces Tantra:*<sup>347</sup>

*The Buddha, religious teachings and practices, and spiritual community  
Reside within your own body, primordially perfectly complete.*

*The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra:*<sup>348</sup>

*The stainless pure Body of Reality resides  
Within this body ridden with distorting reifications,  
Such that is present without being sought.*

An expanded explanation of just how these three jewels are present (within all sentient beings) by correlating the latter's impurity with the former's purity is given in *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness*:<sup>349</sup>

*Likewise, the Buddhas of the three times  
Are explained as your own great manifestation,  
To wit, the triad of your ordinary body, speech, and mind.*

*Ordinary speech is the past Buddha;  
The ordinary mind is the future Buddha;  
And the ordinary body is the present Buddha -  
The three types of Buddhas are thus present (within sentient beings).*

*The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* provides further details:<sup>350</sup>

*The Buddha, spiritual teachings, and spiritual community,  
The Teacher, place, retinue and time,  
The Bodies of Reality, Perfect Enjoyment, and Emanations,  
The canons on monastic disciplines, spiritual discourses, and analytical  
phenomenology,  
The Listeners, Self-Awakened and Spiritual Heroes.*

It also says:<sup>351</sup>

*The "white" qualities of transcendence  
Are perfectly completely within the body and mind.*

And:<sup>352</sup>

*Since that itself is perfectly complete within yourself,  
There is no place it can be found through seeking elsewhere.*

When impure phenomenon are correlated with their pure counterparts, all the phenomenon which presence and are interpreted in terms of cyclic existence and transcendence are taught to be completely present within our ordinary body and mind. The same work says:<sup>353</sup>

*(i) The earth, water, fire and wind,  
Space/sky, sun and moon,  
The forms of men and women,<sup>354</sup> [228]  
Planets, stars, and clouds,  
Trees, mountains, and rocks,  
Roots, trunks, and branches,<sup>355</sup>  
Petals, flowers, and fruits,  
Scents, tastes, sounds, and tactile sensations,  
Musical instruments, pillar hangings, parasols,  
Victory banners, and canopies as well.*

*(ii) These are the phenomena in which cyclic existence manifests,*

*And are completely present within the visionary's body in the following manner:<sup>356</sup>*

*Earth is flesh, which is your body's substance;  
Water is blood, which coheres;  
Fire is warmth, which ripens all the bodily factors;  
Wind is breath, which sustains bodily energy;  
And space is your mind, which maintains your body's glow.*

*The sun and moon are your eyes, which illuminate;  
Men are your birth itself,  
While women manifest as your death;  
Planets are your mouth, and stars are your teeth.*

*Clouds are the hair on your head, and trees are your channels;  
Mountains are your body, and rocks are your bones;  
Roots are your heart, and tree trunks are your marrow;  
Branches are your limbs,  
Flowers themselves are your five sensory faculties,  
Fruit is the formation of your body.*

*Scents are your bodily hairs, and flavors are your skin;  
Sounds are your voice, and tactile sensations are your body's illnesses.*

*Musical instruments are your internal organs, and pillar hangings are your bodily fluids;  
Parasols are your legs, and victory banners are your names;  
Ritual canopies are your vapors.*

*Thus within the visionary's body these are perfectly complete.<sup>357</sup>*

*(iii) Their presence within awareness is like this:  
The five elemental energies are its five lights,  
The sun and moon are its insight and efficacious means;  
Man is its ground, and woman its path;  
Planets are the signs and measures (of meditative progress), and stars the doctrines;  
Clouds are its all-pervading compassion.*

*Trees are the path of its compassionate energy's expansion;  
Mountains are its unchanging view;  
Rocks are the Body of Reality, beyond origination or destruction;  
Roots are its being the single cause of all phenomena;  
Branches are its limbs of Enlightenment;  
Trunks are its single flavor within emptiness;  
Petals are the pervading expanse of reality;  
Flowers are its gnostic lamps;  
And fruits are its naturally complete three Spiritual Bodies.*

*Sounds are the sound of reality's sphere;  
Scents are the renown of the Buddha's speech;  
Tastes are the flavor of bliss in its contemplatively felt experience;  
And tactile sensations are the clothes of its great meditative state.*

*Musical instruments are the perfectly complete mandala of its five lights;  
 Pillar hangings are the radiant glow of its five colors;  
 Parasols are the protecting radiation of its insight;  
 Ritual canopies are the key points of the most important esoteric precepts;  
 Victory banners are the realization of its manifest expansive awakening of  
 Buddhahood. [229]*

*Phenomena primordially abide in a spontaneous manner  
 Within the dimension of the mind-as-such;  
 Therefore all the phenomena  
 Involved in intellects and things are mere imputations.<sup>358</sup>*

To expand on this, if all phenomena weren't completely present within Ground-awareness, then they wouldn't be completely present within the appropriated ordinary body and mind (which impel cyclic existence);<sup>359</sup> if they weren't completely present within our body and mind, then they wouldn't be completely present in terms of the external objective sphere appearing to our mind: analogically, it resembles how a barren woman lacks a son, and thus the face of her non-existent son is also non-existent, while due to his face's non-existence, it won't appear in a mirror.<sup>360</sup> Appearances emerge from being already completely present within our ordinary body and mind, which derives from their being completely present within awareness: analogically, it resembles how since Lhajin<sup>361</sup> has a head, his face exists, and since it exists, his reflection will manifest in a mirror. *The All-Creating King* describes it thus:<sup>362</sup>

*However they may appear is my essence;  
 However they may manifest is my essence;  
 Phenomena which are not included within me  
 Are totally absent within this process encapsulated by appearances and the life-worlds  
 therein.*

*The Inlaid Jewels Tantra* says:<sup>363</sup>

*Analogically like a face and mirror,  
 Whatever appears appears thus.*

And:<sup>364</sup>

*All the Buddha-realms without exception  
 Are a great vastness, empty and devoid of self or concrete identity.*

This concludes my extensive explanation of the third adamantine topic within *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* - the manner in which the nucleus of the Buddha's expansive awakening pervades sentient beings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *The Fourth Adamantine Topic: A Discussion of the Presence and Location of Primordial Gnosis*<sup>365</sup>

The systematic presentation of primordial gnosis' presence and location (within all living beings) involves two topics: a general discussion of its actual location and presence, and a detailed explanation ascertaining the key points relating to the King of Supreme Esotericism.

#### **I. A general discussion of primordial gnosis' actual presence and location**

Herein are three subdivisions: the site where it resides, the manner in which it is present, and analogies (for its triune presence).

##### **I.i. The site of primordial gnosis' presence**

The real site of awareness' primordial gnosis is within the precious sacred knot of our heart, while its radiation resides in the divine palace of our blazing Conch Shell House skull, the divine palace of our eyes (which enable vision), and the divine palace of our internal channels (which enable movement of our mind and inner energy currents).<sup>366</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra*:<sup>367</sup>

*Within the divine palace of the precious Tsitta  
Comprised of precious materials with gateways at its eight corners,  
The five primordial gnoses and five Spiritual Bodies are present, [230]  
While their dynamic efflorescence as the energy winds and psychic activity are fivefold  
as well -  
Everything has the nature of being a quintet.*<sup>368</sup>

That Tantra further describes it thus:<sup>369</sup>

*Pure unfabricated reality resides  
Within your (body's) general (structures), Tsitta, and inner channels.*

*The Inlaid Jewels Tantra*:<sup>370</sup>

*The Great Secret of all the Secret Mantras  
Resides within these four great divine palaces:  
The divine palace of precious materials and eight corners,  
The divine palace of the internal channels which enable internal movement (of energy);  
The divine palace of the Conch Shell House (i.e. skull),  
And the divine palace of the eyes which enable vision.*



*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness:*<sup>371</sup>

*Within all sentient beings, self-awareness  
Resides within the mandalic center of their heart.*

*The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism:*<sup>372</sup>

*The wonder of it! Awareness' primordial gnosis itself  
Is present within all Buddhas and sentient beings  
Without the slightest variation or change.*

*The manner in which it abides (within humans) is like this:  
The precious divine palace of the Tsitta,  
The divine palace of the precious channels,  
The divine palace of the thoroughly pure Conch Shell House,  
And the divine palace of the Briguta ("eyes").*<sup>373</sup>

*Awareness' essence manifests in its dynamic modes*<sup>374</sup>  
*Within these four great divine palaces,  
And these modes are explained thus:  
In some, it is present as the Spiritual Bodies;  
In some, as the seminal nuclei;  
In one, it is present in the manner of light rays;  
And in one, it is present as the linked chains.*

*This reveals the crux of awareness' presence (within all living beings).*<sup>375</sup>

*The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra:*<sup>376</sup>

*The Spiritual Body of the Buddhas is perfectly complete  
Within the mandalic center of the Enlightened Heart-Mind,  
Without being engendered as such:  
The single unchanging Spiritual Body  
Resides there in an all-pervading manner  
As the totally pervading solitary mind  
Present within yourself, natural and pristine.*

*The Spiritual Body of the adamantine linked chains  
Is present uninterruptedly,  
And since these "linked chains" have many enumerations  
This Spiritual Body's dimensions are pluralized to an inconceivable extent -  
Not-existent apart from a single existence,  
Yet all appearances/visions are completely manifest.*

*The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction:*<sup>377</sup>

*As for its presence, this great primordial gnosis resides  
Within your body's mandalic center. [231]*

*The Eloquent One's Web of Magical Transformations:*<sup>378</sup>

*The sacred knot blazing with excellent light...*

## I.2. The way in which primordial gnosis is present (within all humans)

This involves three topics: primordial gnosis' essence present as the Spiritual Bodies, its nature as the luminous seminal nuclei, and its compassionate resonance as the gnostic lamps.<sup>379</sup>

### I.2.i. The way in which primordial gnosis' essence is present as the Spiritual Bodies

Primordial gnosis resides in our heart as the peaceful Spiritual Bodies, while via its radiation's dynamism it is present as the wrathful deities in the Conch Shell House (i.e. skull).<sup>380</sup> According to *The Inlaid Jewels Tantra*:<sup>381</sup>

*The wonder of it! Awareness' manner of being present (within living beings)  
Involves its location within the mandalic center of each person's Tsitta,  
Where it is present in the manner of efficacious means and insight  
Embodied in the pairs of Father-Mother consorts:  
The Spiritual Body of Efficacious Means is embodied in the Male consorts,  
And the Spiritual Body of Insight is embodied in the Female consorts.*

*These Spiritual Bodies reside in the manner of light and light rays  
And are beautifully adorned by the expanse and awareness,  
Such that they are present in and as a great spontaneously perfectly complete seminal  
nuclei.<sup>382</sup>*

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra:<sup>383</sup>*

*Reality pervades the general structures of all sentient beings' bodies  
In the manner of wind currents:  
Subtle, lighten-ing, moving and differentiating.*

*It is present as the Spiritual Bodies within your Tsitta -  
The fivefold Bodies of its radiation  
Embody the characteristics of the individual spiritual families...*

*The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism:<sup>384</sup>*

*In the treasury of the great source of phenomenon which is the Ground of All,  
Awareness' primordial gnosis is present as a sphere (of inner light).*

*In the treasury of the objective sphere devoid of any grasping at appearances,  
Awareness' primordial gnosis is present as the expanse.*

*In the treasury of the precious eight cornered esoteric assembly,  
Awareness' primordial gnosis is in the manner of Father-Mother consort pairs.*

*In the four cornered precious treasury comprising life-vitality,  
Awareness' primordial gnosis is present as seminal nuclei.*

*In the treasury of the divine palace of the skull where meanings spiral,  
Awareness' primordial gnosis is present as the wrathful deities.*

*In the treasury of the two gateways (i.e. eyes) of unimpeded clarity,  
Awareness' primordial gnosis is present as the expanse and linked chains.*

*In the treasury of the empty sky beyond all possible characterizations,  
Awareness' primordial gnosis is present as light.*

*This reveals the treasury of the esoteric.*

**I.2.ii. The way in which primordial gnosis' nature is present as the luminous seminal nuclei<sup>385</sup>**

*The Inlaid Jewels Tantra says:<sup>386</sup>*

*The mode in which it is present as the seminal nuclei is like this:  
Within the energy channels, it resides in the manner of the seminal nuclei's Spiritual  
Bodies; [232]*

*The largest are equal in measure to the limits of the sky,  
While the smallest are merely a tenth of a horse tail's hair in measure;  
The extent of their radiance is similar to the discs of the sun and moon;  
Furthermore, endowed with such radiant luster and splendor  
They go, come and abide.*

**I.2.iii. The way in which primordial gnosis' compassionate resonance is present as the lamps**

*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness says:<sup>387</sup>*

*The four types of lamps  
Are unceasingly and unobstructedly present.*

**I.3. Analogies (for primordial gnosis' triune presence)**

(i) Primordial gnosis' essence is present as the Spiritual Bodies, which resembles a Body within a Vase; (ii) primordial gnosis' nature is present as luminosity, which resembles a butter lamp within a vase; and (iii) primordial gnosis' compassionate resonance is present as light rays, which resembles the light rays of the sun.<sup>388</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra describes it thus:<sup>389</sup>*

*In the divine palace of the precious Tsitta  
Primordial gnosis' essence is the dimension of original purity,  
The radiation of its Spiritual Body comprised of emptiness and clarity  
With "face and hands" completely present in the manner of a Body within a vase.*

*Its nature is present as a sphere of spontaneously present luminosity  
And its compassionate resonance is the way it shines in distinct colors.*

*The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* gives this analogy for the luminosity of its nature:<sup>390</sup>

*Its internal radiance is like a butter lamp in a vase.*

That same tantra gives this analogy for its compassionate resonance:<sup>391</sup>

*The lamps' light rays are like the solar disk;  
The lamps' thousand-fold light rays are endless.*

Vimalamitra himself said:<sup>392</sup>

*The Spiritual Body's internal radiance resembles a Body within a vase;  
The light is like a butter lamp within a vase;  
And primordial gnosis is analogous to a peacock's egg.*

As for (these Tantras') explanation of primordial gnosis being present as a Body the size of a mustard seed with "proportionately sized (*Phul Thag Tsam*) Eyes", *Phul Thag* should be understood as ancient terminology meaning "suitable" or "proportionate". The explanation from some sources of this as indicating primordial gnosis undergoes transference (such as in Direct Transcendence contemplation) is utter nonsense - if it were to actually undergo transference, the body and mind would be rent asunder (and the individual in question would die).<sup>393</sup>

## **II. A teaching on the key points relating to the Supreme King of Esotericism**

This involves two sections: the key points pertaining to our universal ground and Reality Body, and the key points pertaining to our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis.

### **II.i. The key points pertaining to our universal ground and the Reality Body**<sup>394</sup>

This section has two subdivisions: a general discussion of the differences between these two, and an explanation of their respective distinctive qualities.

#### **II.1.i. A general discussion of the differences between our universal ground and the Reality Body**

Since the universal ground is the root of cyclic existence, it is the support of all our karmic imprints and propensities, like a reservoir.<sup>395</sup> Since the Reality Body is the root of the transcendence of misery, and as such beyond all our karmic imprints, contamination is totally exhausted within it. [233] *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* puts it like this:<sup>396</sup>

*It is the universal ground since the karmic propensities accumulate there;  
The Reality Body involves the exhaustion of contamination.*

That Tantra also says this:<sup>397</sup>

*This universal ground which involves causes and conditioning  
Resembles a reservoir, since the karmic imprints accumulate within it;  
The Reality Body is beyond such karmic imprints.*

*Via the ordinary psyche, mind, and so on coming together,  
The universal ground of embodied beings manifests as a plurality;  
Since the Reality Body is beyond the psyche and concordant dimensions,  
It is devoid of a psyche to which a plurality of forms would manifest.*

*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* provides an analogy which clarifies the relationship between these two:<sup>398</sup>

*An analogy for the universal ground and Reality Body is that it involves going on a journey with a boat on the ocean.*

The analogy unpacks like this: in the range of the grounding Reality Body (resembling a lucent ocean), there is the boat-like universal psychic ground filled up with many passengers (the plurality of ordinary mind with its consciousness aggregate) and cargo (i.e. karma and karmic propensity-traces), which then sets out on the path through the range of awareness' Reality Body.

Despite this, some scholars have failed to understand the underlying intention of passages found in certain Discourses and Tantras that refer to the dimension of the Ground as the "universal ground" (literally "Ground of All"), and thus they claim that these two are identical (i.e. the universal psychic ground and the Reality Body).<sup>399</sup> Since such a claim is a grave error, I will briefly point out a few of the many defects entailed by identifying these two with each other. Since the universal ground involves karmic propensities, it would necessarily follow that the Reality Body involves such karmic propensities; since the

universal ground must undergo transformation (to attain enlightenment), it would follow that the Reality Body as well must undergo transformation.<sup>400</sup> Since the universal ground is temporary due to its mutual dependence upon the provisional phenomena of cyclic existence, it would follow that the Reality Body as well would be temporary (and adventitious).<sup>401</sup> Along these lines, *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* gives a dialogue in the form of a logical debate which summarizes the contradictions in these two being identical.<sup>402</sup>

*\* Some claim that the universal ground is the Reality Body.*

*In order to show the proper response to this, you ask "What are the characteristics of this universal ground like?"<sup>403</sup>*

*\* They then respond to you thus:*

*"Since everything is completely present therein, it is called the universal ground."*

*You then counter this response with a series of questions.<sup>404</sup>*

*"(Assuming your thesis is accepted),  
It would be possible for the Buddha's expansive awakening to undergo change,  
Why? Because the universal ground manifests diversely,  
And since everything is completely present within it."<sup>405</sup>*

*Within Buddhahood itself, the state of sentient beings would be possible. [234]  
Why? Because everything is completely present therein.*

*Alternatively, the state of Buddhahood would come to vacillate.  
Why? Since it manifests diversely.<sup>406</sup>*

*Sometimes it would become a Buddha,  
And sometimes it would become a sentient being.  
Why? Because vacillation is present."<sup>407</sup>*

*The Tantra of the Totally Positive One's Enlightened Spirit-Mirror also speaks on this.<sup>408</sup>*

*The assertion that the universal ground is the Reality Body is a deviation away from me.*

Since that's how it is (i.e. these two should be strictly differentiated from each other), you must clearly differentiate between the respective grounds of cyclic existence and transcendence based upon this distinction - *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness*:<sup>409</sup>

*The ground of sentient beings and the ground of Buddhas  
Are clearly differentiated via one crucial difference.*

## **II.1.ii. An explanation of our universal ground and Reality Body's respective distinctive qualities**

This involves two topics: the explanation of the universal ground's distinctive qualities, and of the Reality Body's distinctive qualities.

### **II.1.ii.a. The universal ground's distinctive qualities**

These will be discussed in five divisions: its essence, etymology, classifications, functions, and the rationale for terming it the "universal ground".

#### **I.1.ii.a.1. The universal ground's essence**<sup>410</sup>

Since the universal ground is encapsulated by the ordinary mind and its specific operations/experiences, it acts as the support of all the karmic actions and karmic propensity-traces of cyclic existence and transcendent reality; it is the morally neutral or indeterminate dimension of dimmed awareness.<sup>411</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>412</sup>

*Its essence lies in serving as the vessel-like container of the karmic propensities and traces.*

*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness:*<sup>413</sup>

*The universal ground is adulterated by diverse cognitive processes  
By force of its sustaining neurotic conceptuality;  
The universal ground is the real dimmed awareness.*

#### **I.1.ii.a.2. The etymology of "universal ground" (literally "all-ground")**<sup>414</sup>

Since it is the *ground* of many karmic propensities, it is termed the "universal ground".

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>415</sup>

*The etymology of "universal" lies in its subsuming everything;  
The etymology of "ground" lies in its accumulation and hoarding (of karmic imprints and propensities).*

#### **I.1.ii.a.3. The fourfold classification of the universal ground**<sup>416</sup>

(i) "The universal ground of primordial presence" is the dimension that primordially from the very first innately arises upon awareness, like gold and tarnish; it is the dimmed awareness itself dependent upon awareness, and which serves as the initial foundation of all

phenomenon in cyclic existence. (ii) "The universal ground linking-up to all states of existence" is the foundation of karmic factors, the morally indeterminate fundamental basis which individually links-up and impels us to either cyclic existence or transcendent reality (via our particular) karmic actions. (iii) "The universal ground of varied karmic propensities" is the morally indeterminate dimension of the diverse latent karma which perpetuates the vicious cycle of our ordinary mind and its specific operations (i.e. our ongoing ensnarement in cyclic existence). [235] (iv) "The universal ground of the karmic propensities-derived body-image" is the base of dimmed awareness serving as the foundation for the respective manifestations of the following three types of bodies: a coarse body manifest in parts formed from atomic particles (i.e. the major limbs (arms, legs, etc.) and their secondary appendages (toes, fingers, etc.)); a lucent body of light; and a body manifesting in accordance with one's deep contemplation. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>417</sup>

*If divisions are made, there are the physical,  
Linking-up, varied, and primordial grounds.*

According to one opinion, our fundamental awareness is termed "universal ground" in the context of its becoming stained. However, since this position entails the defect of the primary reality (i.e. awareness) being identified with one of its qualities (i.e. the universal psychic ground), my definition of the universal ground solely in terms of the karmic imprints and propensities is preferable.<sup>418</sup> Furthermore, these four aspects of the universal ground are identical in relation to their essentially being the dimension of dimmed awareness' indeterminate cognitive energy with its morally neutral karmic propensity-traces, and as such are merely distinct as conceptual isolates.<sup>419</sup> Along these lines,<sup>420</sup> (i) since (this dimension) functions as the universal ground acting as foundation for karmic propensities pertaining to our ordinary body, it is the key dynamic of our current physical manifestation (i.e. our "body"). (ii) Since it functions as the foundation for karmic propensities pertaining to our ordinary mind, it manifests as our current pluralized aggregate of consciousness along with its specific mental operations. (iii) Since it functions as the foundation of our karmic



propensities in their full diversity, it manifests as the luminous presences currently experienced by us as distinct (external) appearances. (iv) Since it functions as (our) primordial foundation, all (our present experience) is totally in conjunction with dimmed awareness. Since all four aspects of this universal ground are an indeterminate morally neutral latent dimension (see above), they resemble a seed buried beneath the soil: they are not directly visible in themselves, but rather exist merely as the causal impetus or catalyst of directly manifest phenomena. (i.e. our body, mind, and external appearances). They thus function as the key dynamic in this fourfold dimmed awareness (relating to the dimensions of our body, mind, and perceived appearances) becoming directly visible,<sup>421</sup> like sprouts or seedlings (emerging from their seeds). Uniting all these factors under the single term "universal ground" is posited by virtue of their identical essence, while the four divisions are posited in view of their being conceptually distinct isolates.

#### **I.1.ii.a.4. The universal ground's functions**<sup>422</sup>

The universal ground acts as the support of our previous and subsequent karmic propensities, as the causal impetus of our karmic actions and emotional distortions, as the foundation-source of our physical body and its pluralized constellation (of qualities),<sup>423</sup> and as the factor which links us up to either cyclic existence or transcendence with a particular body/mind complex. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* sums it up thus:<sup>424</sup>

*It is the universal ground because it accumulates.*

#### **I.1.ii.a.5. The rationale for terming this the "universal ground"**<sup>425</sup>

Since it acts as the linking juncture between our previous and subsequent karmic propensities, as the connector between previous and subsequent maturations of our karma, and as the support for the respective positive and negative causal forces (of our corresponding ethical and unethical actions), it is termed "universal".<sup>426</sup> Since it is the site wherein all these processes assemble together, it is termed the "ground". [236] *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* defines it thus:<sup>427</sup>

*Here I will explain the "universal ground" to start off:  
It is the "ground of all" phenomenon and non-phenomenon.*

According to the commentary to *The Unsurpassed Continuity*:<sup>428</sup>

*The universal ground is the foundation of everything;  
It is the foundation of purification as well.*

If you should then wonder "While the universal ground makes perfect sense as the foundation of cyclic existence, how can it be the foundation of purification?!", my explanation is as follows. In general, it is the "ground" (of cyclic existence) in the sense that it is the foundation of (impure phenomena's) very substance, like the sun (with its rays).<sup>429</sup> However, as the foundation linking us up (to transcendental reality, the universal ground instead) resembles the way in which virtuous acts function as the foundation of higher rebirths (being attained in the future), and thus it is labeled "the linking-up ground". This function derives from karmic propensities existing upon our universal ground,<sup>430</sup> which have accumulated by force of our performing physical, verbal and mental virtuous acts conducive to liberation, and thus possess the potency to link us to the transcendence of misery (i.e. enlightenment). (The universal ground) is termed the "cause" of transcendent reality in the sense that these karmic acts conducive to liberation function as the causal impetus of eliminating the stains which obscure the transcendent dimension (in our own psycho-physical being), yet it isn't (the cause of transcendent reality) in the sense of a causal relationship between that which is generated and the agent of generation. The reason is that transcendent reality's essence is unconditioned, which contradicts any description of it as newly formed via causes and conditions - *The Unsurpassed Continuity*:<sup>431</sup>

*Buddhahood is unconditioned and spontaneously present,  
Not realized through extrinsic conditions,  
Endowed with enlightened knowing, love and potency,  
And possessed of the twofold spiritual aim.*

While the universal ground's milieu and the Reality Body thus resemble each other in their having an identical ground in terms of (the Ground's) cognitive capacity,<sup>432</sup> some people misinterpret this and claim "awareness involving stains" is the universal ground, and

"awareness devoid of stains" is the Reality Body". Such scholars thereby confuse and mix up the two, such that they are unable to properly differentiate (the Reality Body and universal ground's) individual significance. Because they fail to comprehend the meaning of the distinction involved in (the universal ground and Reality Body) being of one essence but distinct as conceptual isolates, such people will gain no benefit from (these teachings) despite their verbal differentiation (of the two). *The Six Spaces Tantra* points this out:<sup>433</sup>

*Therefore, if you don't properly differentiate the Reality Body from the universal ground, their respective capacities will be unable to function as such, like two forms only apprehended as distinct in your cognition.*

Since these two are a potential source of grave error, you should put a high priority on differentiating between them properly.

#### **II.1.ii.b. The Reality Body's distinctive qualities**

These will be discussed in five divisions: its essence, etymology, classifications, functions, and the rationale for terming it the "Reality Body".

##### **II.1.ii.b.1. The Reality Body's essence**<sup>434</sup>

The Reality Body's essence is sky-like awareness unsullied by cyclic existence. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>435</sup> [237]

*The Reality Body is beyond discursiveness,  
Devoid of any of the characteristics ordinarily instinctively grasped at,  
And in essence is indivisible emptiness and radiance.*

From *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra*:<sup>436</sup>

*The Reality Body is the exhaustion of contamination;  
Empty and radiant, it is pervasive in that radiance;  
Not polluted by ordinary thought, it is cleansed of instinctive ego-memory.*

*It is beyond any discursiveness,  
And is pervasive and empty like the sky,  
Utterly beyond any illustrations or indications in its inherent purity.*

##### **II.1.ii.b.2. The etymology of "Reality Body" (here interpreted as "the Body of Spiritual Teachings" or "the Body of the Spiritual Way")**

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>437</sup>

*Its etymology: "Reality" indicates the authentic spiritual path;  
While "Body" evokes the accomplishment via it.*

### **II.1.ii.b.3. The classifications of the Reality Body**<sup>438</sup>

According to the same text, it has three classifications::<sup>439</sup>

*By distinguishing-out its three classifications - the Reality,  
Enjoyment, and Emanational Bodies - its distinctive dimensions are revealed.*

### **II.1.ii.b.4. The Reality Body's functions**<sup>440</sup>

It acts in a stainless fashion through the playfulness of its view, meditation, conduct, fruit, enlightened qualities and activities, as explained in *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness*::<sup>441</sup>

*Unobstructed, without clinging, and unattached -  
This is the Reality Body's conduct.*

*Serene, vividly alert, and undistracted -  
This is the Reality Body's meditation.*

*Not to be seen, always already seen, the perfectly complete view -  
This is the Reality Body's view.*

*Uncreated, not emergent in the past, nor emerging (in the present/future) -  
This is the Reality Body's fruit.*

*Not actualized, always already actualized, completely actualized -  
This is the Reality Body's enlightened activity.*

*One emerging, two emerging, all emerging -  
This is the Reality Body's enlightened qualities.*

### **II.1.ii.b.5. The rationale for terming this the "Reality Body" (Chos sKu here interpreted as "the Body of Qualities")**<sup>442</sup>

Since the "qualities" of the enlightened powers, fearlessness, and unique attributes are perfectly complete within this empty Spiritual Body devoid of substantiality or concrete characteristics, it is termed the "Spiritual Body of Qualities" ("Reality Body").<sup>443</sup> The same text points this out thus:<sup>444</sup>

*That all styles of fearlessness, powers, clarity,  
And activities are all completely perfect therein  
Is the etymology of the Reality Body.*

As for the Reality Body spoken of in this context (i.e. in the Great Perfection tradition), the grounding Reality Body's thoroughly pure nature is seen as possessing the triune characteristic of essence, nature and compassionate resonance. *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* describes it thus:<sup>445</sup>

*The triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance  
Is the Reality Body's characteristics.*

## **II.2. The key points pertaining to our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis**<sup>446</sup>

Herein are two sections: [238] a general discussion of their joint exoteric classifications,<sup>447</sup> and a detailed explanation of their respective natures.

### **II.2.i. A general discussion of our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis' joint exoteric classifications**

Herein are five topics: their respective distinctive qualities (and the consequent difference between them), the defects of not understanding their proper differentiation, the instructional method for understanding their differentiation, their respective essences, and their respective abodes.

#### **II.2.i.1. Our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis' distinctive qualities (and the difference between them)**

The mind is basically the phenomena of cyclic existence, and thus when awareness is associated with this defect (i.e. the mind) of engendering the stained actualities of karma and karmic propensities, it is termed a "sentient being" (literally "endowed with a mind"); as this ordinary mind causes us to stray into the six transmigrations time after time. On the other hand, when awareness is divested of this ordinary mind, it is termed a "Buddha (literally "awakened and expanding") divested of adventitious stains". Primordial gnosis is basically the phenomena of transcendence; it is like a fire in that it incinerates karma and karmic propensities, and it is endowed with the nature of an empty and radiant sky beyond all proliferating conceptions. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* describes the two thus:<sup>448</sup>

*(i) The mind is the ground of all the karmic propensities,*

*And is the stain permeating embodied beings;  
The mind, in its dualistic apprehension of perceivable objects,  
Is therefore the reality of cyclic existence.*

*When you are divested of this mind, you are expansively awakened into Buddhahood,  
And the stains of your ordinary embodiment are entirely purified away.*

*The transmigrating beings transmigrate via the mind,  
And if the mind were absent, they would have no capacity to transmigrate;  
It is thus like the device or mechanism of transmigrating beings.*

*(ii) The Enlightened Mind is beyond all agitation  
And yet is not like inert matter:  
Conscious and aware, it manifests radiantly  
And incinerates all distorting conceptuality,  
As primordial gnosis itself consumes it like a fire.*

*It is similar to the sky,  
Empty and radiant, yet also aware.*

*Primordial gnosis thus displays itself through lighting-up,  
And by virtue of its undifferentiated compassionate resonance naturally manifesting  
It pervades and is interlinked with all, such that all phenomena are perfectly and  
completely present within it.*

*Since your memory is itself devoid of memory,  
Primordial gnosis is beyond the basis of memory.*

**II.2.i.b. The defects of not understanding (the difference between our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis)<sup>449</sup>**

If you don't differentiate between the mind and primordial gnosis, it entails the defect of your not becoming liberated from the vicious cycle of distorted appearances (the mind's objects), since the root of these apparent objects won't be cut. *The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* describes it thus:<sup>450</sup>

*If you don't differentiate between the mind and primordial gnosis,  
You won't be able to cut the root of apparent objects, [239]  
And hence realization via defect-free reality's presence will be difficult.*

"Realization via reality's presence will be difficult" is said in view of the presence of the mind's distorted objects. The distorted appearances of the mind's objects are the phenomena of cyclic existence itself, and can be summarized into the sextet of visible form, sound, scent, taste, tangibility/texture and mental objects, all of which manifest from the mind's karmic

propensities like imagined strands of hair;<sup>451</sup> as for where they manifest, they manifest to a distorted mind. The objective dimension of primordial gnosis, on the other hand, is sky-like pure reality, and the manifestations of radiant light within it as the extremely vast pure land-presences of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses.<sup>452</sup>

People very frequently err in interpreting certain explanations found in these texts - "If you recognize the mind's own condition, it is primordial gnosis", "these current appearances are the radiant light of primordial gnosis", or "when you realize the mind, it is primordial gnosis" - and thus claim that primordial gnosis is simply the non-conceptual dimension of our ordinary mind, and so on<sup>453</sup> Since this is a tremendous error, at this point I will give a rough sketch of its defects though they should be obvious. Since the mind involves (dualistic) fixation, it would follow that fixation is present in primordial gnosis as well. Since the mind is stained, it would follow that primordial gnosis also is. Since the mind manifests as a phenomena of cyclic existence which, as such, must be overcome (to attain enlightenment), it would follow that the primordial gnosis does so as well. According to *The Distinction Between the Two Truths*:<sup>454</sup>

*Conceptuality is the reifying activity  
Of the ordinary mind and its specific operations in the three realms.*

Furthermore, since these appearances are distorted appearances, it would follow that radiant light is a distorted appearance;<sup>455</sup> since these appearances are present to ordinary sentient beings as their common frame of reference, it would follow that radiant light would be part of ordinary beings' common frame of reference as well! If you believe that, it would follow that everyone would be freed just like the real visionaries. Since these ordinary appearances and mind seem to be born, die, mutate and change, it would follow that primordial gnosis and its manifestations would do likewise.<sup>456</sup> By considering these defects and the many others I haven't even mentioned, you must realize the stupidity of relying on the positions of people who are even more ignorant than ignorant dimwits! Having advised you thus, I will now show that asserting the fruit of Buddhahood involves the mind as its ground is totally

confused as to the cause and effect (or "ground and climax") operative here, and thus is a perverted position to hold.<sup>457</sup> [240] Along these lines, *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* has the following dialogue (asterisks mark the protagonist's words):<sup>458</sup>

*\*Some people's claims involve (erroneously) searching  
For the "climax" (the "fruit" of enlightenment) within their ordinary mind.*

*To counter these claims, you should ask them this:  
"What's the extent of the mind's substantiality?"*

*\*Their elaboration in response to your question will be like this:  
"Since the mind has no substantiality... (how can I answer your question?)"*

*You should follow up by asking "Then what are the mind's characteristics like?"*

*\*Their response to that question will be along these lines:  
"The characteristic of the mind is reality".*

*You should move to counter that statement by asking them  
"Does subject-object dualism exist within reality or not?"*

*\*Their elaboration in response to your question will be like this:  
"How could subject-object dualism exist within reality?!  
Analogically it's like the characteristics of the sky,  
Since there is no subject-object dualism..."*

*You should then again counter them by asking  
"Does subject-object dualism exist in the mind or not?"*

*\* Their elaboration in response to your question will be like this:  
"Though subject-object dualism exists in the mind,  
It is because subject-object dualism don't exist within reality  
(That we made that statement)."*

*Again, you must counter them with this follow-up:  
"You have contradicted your previous thesis,  
Since the mind and reality were supposed to be identical.*

*If subject-object dualism is operative within the mind  
Buddhahood would be unobtainable through meditative exertion,  
The reason being that subject-object dualism exist within the mind."*

*\* They will then attempt to counter you with this objection:  
"If the absence of mind is Buddhahood,  
Then how can it ever be attained?"*

*Your elaboration in response to this question should go like this:  
"We don't seek for the "climax" ("fruit of enlightenment") in the mind,  
Since a variety (karmic propensities and so forth) emerges within the mind..."*



Since our ordinary mind is an adventitious obscuration, it isn't feasible as the support and cause of Buddhahood; on the other hand, since primordial gnosis is primordially present, it can be the Buddha-nature. Presenting these two (mind and primordial gnosis) as if they were one is utterly untenable, just like the ludicrousness of maintaining the sun and a bank of clouds (obscuring it) are identical. We don't maintain that the "fruit" (of enlightenment) is within the ordinary mind, but rather we describe this climax ("fruit") as emerging from empty, radiant pure primordial gnosis, just as *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* says:<sup>459</sup>

*I don't maintain the "fruit" is within the mind,  
Since awareness' primordial gnosis does exist.*

*The Tantra of the Totally Positive One's Enlightened Spirit-Mirror* also speaks on this:<sup>460</sup>

*Assertions that appearances are the Reality Body obscure me.  
Assertions that whatever appears are the mind obscure me.  
Assertions that primordial gnosis is the mind obscure me.*

To expand on this,<sup>461</sup> nowadays common fools say, "Appearances are your own mind! [241] Appearances are the Reality Body! Primordial gnosis is our mind!" Really there's no difference between such people and the insane who say whatever pops into their mind: "The head is the ass!" "Fire is water!" "Darkness is light!" Thus I consider these people ignorant, since they are even more conceited than such madmen. If appearances are our mind, then it follows that our mind has colors and so forth. It would entail that even when you are absent, your mind would exist in the area where you previously were, since the appearances there continue to exist (despite your leaving). Furthermore, it would entail that through one thing being born, everything is born; and through one thing dying, everything dies. When ten million people see a vase, it would entail that the entire vase is (part and parcel of each person's own particular) mind, and just so, all those individuals would be of a single mind. Since all phenomena appear in the scope of a Buddha's "enlightened knowing of things in all their plurality", it would entail that cyclic existence is the Buddha's primordial gnosis. When a sentient being sees a Buddha, it would necessarily follow that this Buddha is distorted, since s/he is the sentient being's mind. Additionally it would entail that this sentient being is

a Buddha, since the Buddha is the sentient being's mind. This position would also entail that these appearances could become totally adrift in a single instant, just as in a single instant our mind's movements drift here and there. Thus these and many other absurdities are entailed (by identifying appearances with the mind).

If appearances are the Reality Body, then it would entail that appearances are beyond appearance and non-appearance, since the Reality Body is beyond appearance and non-appearance. It would follow that the Reality Body would be a distorted appearance, and that it would be apprehensible in terms of a substantial thing and its concrete qualities, since these appearances are distorted appearances apprehended in terms of substantial qualities. Alternatively, it would follow that it would be impossible for these appearances to appear to (ordinary beings') distorted perspective, since the Reality Body is the ultimate reality and, as such, can never appear to a distorted perspective. This is very clear in the following quotes, such as *Engaging in the Spiritual Heroes' and Heroines' Way of Life*:<sup>462</sup>

*The ultimate is not an object that your intellect can experience;  
The intellect is said to be totally obscured (i.e. "conventional").*

From *The Adamantine Cutter Discourse*:<sup>463</sup>

*The Guides are the Reality Body,  
Yet this reality isn't something for you to turn into an object of knowledge,  
And you cannot know it as such.*

As for identifying primordial gnosis with the ordinary mind, I have already refuted such a claim above (pp. 238-240). [242] To sum it up in brief by putting this entire herd of "bulls" in a single corral,<sup>464</sup> they aren't worthy of my countering them with scriptural citation and logical reasoning, just as Dharmakīrti explains in his *Ascertainment of Valid Cognition*:<sup>465</sup>

*Since the perverted paths are limitless in number,  
I won't elaborate on them here.*

### **II.2.i.c. The instructional method for understanding the difference between our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis**

Therefore, intelligent people should understand the differentiation between the mind and primordial gnosis, just as *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* indicates:<sup>466</sup>

*Since the mind gathers-together and accumulates  
(Emotional distortions via karmic propensities),  
It is stained and polluted,  
And thus a long list of stains come about therein -  
"The mind as the universal ground's retentive and synthesizing function", and so forth.*

*For this reason, the differentiation of the mind and primordial gnosis  
Must be understood by the learned.*

#### **II.2.i.d. Their respective essences**

As *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says, the essence of the mind can be defined as distorted appearances and experience, which vary in correspondence with the three realms:<sup>467</sup>

*The "mind" is distorting conceptuality.*

That same tantra defines the essence of primordial gnosis as non-conceptuality:<sup>468</sup>

*Primordial gnosis doesn't involve conceptuality.*

#### **II.2.1.e. Their respective locations**

As *The Six Spaces Tantra* says, the mind's location is the universal psychic ground, while primordial gnosis' location is the Reality Body:<sup>469</sup>

*Oh Great Being! The mind's location is the universal psychic ground. If you ask why that is, it's because the universal ground comprises and synthesizes all mental objects, and cognizes in terms of the ordinary mind.*

*Primordial gnosis' location is the Reality Body. If you wonder why that is, it's because the Reality Body doesn't possess any memory-based conceptuality, and is devoid of any psychic activity which fixates on objects and their "possessors" (i.e. subjects) as distinct from each other.*

In this way, the cloud-like mind obscures primordial gnosis, and any identification of it with the sun-like primordial gnosis is simply impossible - they are distinct from each other as "the obscured" (i.e. primordial gnosis) and "the agent of obscuration" (i.e. the mind).<sup>470</sup> Thus when you understand how your ordinary mind and the appearances it perceives are distorted, you realize that these externally appearing objects and the mind which apprehends them are

adventitious and groundless; when you understand (and tune into how) primordial gnosis and its lighting-up is undistorted, you attain mastery over the mandala of awareness' Reality Body. [243] Thus the mind and primordial gnosis must be differentiated from each other! Their non-differentiation entails the defect of primordial gnosis' continuing obscuration by your mind, such that its own essence (which links you back to reality) can't manifest.<sup>471</sup> *The Six Spaces Tantra* explains it thus:<sup>472</sup>

*Oh Great Being! If you don't differentiate between your mind and primordial gnosis' own essences, it'll be just like when the sun is obscured by a bank of clouds - you will be unable to differentiate out the presence of (solar gnosis') external manifestation. Therefore, visionaries who are learned as to the mind realize that external objects are without any enduring "self", while those visionaries learned as to primordial gnosis obtain mastery over awareness' own primordial gnosis.*

## **II.2.ii. The detailed explanation of the ordinary mind and primordial gnosis' respective natures**

This involves two topics: a detailed explanation of the difficult to realize topics concerning the mind, and a detailed explanation of the difficult to realize topics concerning primordial gnosis.

### **II.2.ii.a. A detailed explanation of the difficult to realize topics concerning the mind**

Herein are two subdivisions: the exoteric classifications of the mind (i.e. as discussed in standard Buddhist texts), and the ascertainment of topics concerning the mind which are specific to the Great Perfection tradition.<sup>473</sup>

#### **II.2.ii.a.1. The exoteric classifications of the mind**

Herein are three sections: its essence, its etymology, and its classifications.

##### **i) The mind's essence**

Since the six types of different beings' ordinary instinctive cognitive activity is engaged in constant dualistic conceptualization of subjects and objects, it clings to concrete identities ("selves") within appearances, and thus ordinary egoic memory-driven thought manifests within their own mental stream. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* puts it like this:<sup>474</sup>

*The so-called "mind" is distorting conceptuality;*

*As its essence is to enter and pervade,  
It is the foundation of ordinary memory-driven thought.*

*The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism says:*<sup>475</sup>

*The mind synthesizes and gathers-in the karmic propensities in all their diversity.*

*The Six Spaces Tantra says:*<sup>476</sup>

*In brief, "the individual grasping mind operating with its own particular characteristics" is all the phenomena in cyclic existence, i.e. all the ordinary instinctive appearances of the six types of living beings.*

In clarification of that, appearances are termed "the mind" since it is the mind which apprehends (something) as appearing or not appearing (in a given way)<sup>477</sup> - I have already explained above that we are not asserting appearances to be the mind.

### **ii) The etymology of "mind"**

The etymology of "mind" derives from its mentally reflecting on objects: since it mentally reflects on gross conceptualized objects, and mentally rests holistically on subtle, non-conceptualized objects in the state of a total lack of grasping, it is termed "the mind". *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra says:*<sup>478</sup> [244]

*Its etymology: mental activity gives rise to the objects of memory-attention:  
Where it occurs is the mind, the agent by which it takes place is the mind,  
That which it is in itself is the mind, and the reason for which it takes place is the mind.*

### **iii) The classifications of the mind**

Herein are two topics: the bipartite classification of the mind's own essence, and the classifications in terms of our aggregate of consciousness modes.

#### **The bipartite classification of the mind's own essence**<sup>479</sup>

The mind can be classified into "pure" and "impure" dimensions. The "pure mind" is non-conceptual primordial gnosis (which isn't engendered by gross distorting conceptions) remaining still within itself, of which there are nine manifestations: the four meditative states (in the form realm), the four formless meditative absorptions (in the formless realm), and single pointed inner calm (in the desire realm). The "impure mind" is (i) the diverse proliferating conceptual activity (of ordinary individuals in the desire realm), (ii) the mind as

involved in relishing meditative experiences (with attachment), and (iii) all the subjective activity you engage in subsequent to these formal yoga-sessions of the meditative states and formless absorptions. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>480</sup>

*Its divisions are the pure and the impure.*

### **The classification of the mind into our eight-part consciousness aggregate**

(i) Our mind as the universal ground consciousness is radiant, non-conceptual, morally neutral, and indeterminate, like the surface of a mirror. (ii) Our visual consciousness (perceives) visible forms without conceptualizing them, and similarly (iii-vi) our auditory, olfactory, gustatory and physical modes of consciousness (register) the appearance of their own particular type of objects without conceptualizing them, just like the manifestation of reflections is taken hold of in a mirror. (vii) Our psyche's own particular objects (or "noematic correlate") are the plurality of notions and (fabricated) images:<sup>481</sup> via its conceptualization, it engages (the input) from our sensory consciousness of directly manifest sensory objects in a fixating process of apprehension; in other words, it involves clearly appearing but non-existent conceptual objects, i.e. generic images. Thus when you think of something like the "Adamantine Seat", the development of the cognitive apprehension which initially conceptualizes it is the "psychic consciousness."<sup>482</sup> (viii) The subsequent development of feeling either attachment, aversion, or neutrality towards that object, is the subjectively fixating cognitive activity termed the "emotionally distorted psyche". Since the different elements, classifications, and scriptures related to these (eight modes of consciousness) are exceedingly many, I won't elaborate any further than this for fear of prolixity.

### **II.2.ii.a.2. Delineating the topics concerning the mind which are specific to the Great Perfection tradition**<sup>483</sup>

Herein are five sections: the mind's essence, location, pathway, functions, and fruit (or "overall effect")

**i) The mind's essence**<sup>484</sup>

The mind's essence is cognitive activity dualistically fixated on subjectivity and objectivity, i.e. the proliferating conceptuality of those inhabiting the three realms (of cyclic existence): (i) "the mind", which is the universal ground consciousness; (ii) "the psyche", which experiences and processes objects of all types; and (iii) "consciousness", which is our five sensory modes of perceptual consciousness. [245] (Thus the mind) is the cognitive energy that is the single essence of these three, i.e. our lack of self-awareness which is the root of the five emotional poisons.

**ii) The mind's location (or "residence")**<sup>485</sup>

The mind resides within the channel connecting the lungs to the heart, which resembles the hollow tube of a straw: what could be described as like its "movement dimension" (i.e. the winds) moves in from the lungs towards the heart, and in this channel mixes with its awareness dimension, the natural radiation that could be described as like its eyes, such that our so-called "mind of wild diversity" emerges due to these adventitious conditions.<sup>486</sup>

**iii) The mind's pathway**<sup>487</sup>

The mind moves upwards, since from this channel it runs up in the proximity of the vertebrae as a single channel, where via the "small tip" channel it is linked to our mouth and nose.

**iv) The mind's functions**<sup>488</sup>

The mind causes our amassing (of karmic propensities) via the varied karmic actions (it motivates).

**v) The mind's fruit (or "overall effect")**<sup>489</sup>

The mind ripens in terms of the distorted appearances of cyclic existence.

Alternatively, we can speak of a "vertically ordered impure triad" since awareness' radiation mounted on its horse (our breath) in this channel-petal running from the heart to the lungs forms the following triune assemblage: (i) its essence is dimmed awareness; (ii) its

visible "look" is the mind; and (ii) its conceptualization (of objects) is termed the "psyche".<sup>490</sup> *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* touches on all these points:<sup>491</sup>

*(Awareness') impure mode of being present  
Is its residing as a vertically ordered impure triad  
Within the mental stream of all sentient beings.*

*To expand on this, its mode of being present is thus:  
It resides in three vertical layers  
In between the heart and lungs,  
And then flickers forth from that (heart-lung channel),  
Such that it emerges into its pathway via the vitality channel;  
As for its gateway, it emerges from the mouth and nose.*

*The eighty thousand (emotional distortions) are thus present here,  
And these emotional distortions accumulating herein  
Emerge in a bewildering variety.*

*The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* says:<sup>492</sup>

*This so-called "emotionally distorted dimmed awareness" predominates in all sentient beings (who are epitomized by their dynamic life-vitality). It resides in the space between the heart and lungs, in dependence upon the support of their physical component of form.*

*Dimmed awareness does not exist by itself alone: the "mind" signifies its being present as ornamented by its synthesis and retention of karmic propensities, while the "psyche" refers to its being present in conjunction with the conceptualization of objects. By encapsulating these three (dimmed awareness, mind, and psyche) into a single term, their unity is termed "dimmed awareness", which is precisely what is meant by "cyclic existence". The five emotional poisons, and the sixth (i.e. anger) emerge from it; [246] the eighty thousand emotionally distorted states emerge from it.*

*If one wanders through what pathway they emerge, they move upwards within the so-called "red vitality channel" located in-between the lungs and heart, and resembling the hollow tube of a straw. To expand on this, they move upwards in the proximity of the vertebrae, and are thus linked to the left "little tip" channel. They move in this manner having mounted the horse of the breath, and flow out through the mouth and nose. From that, a variety of karmic and emotional distortions emerge.*

### **II.2.ii.b. A detailed explanation of the difficult-to-realize topics concerning primordial gnosis**

Herein are two subdivisions: its exoteric classifications, and the ascertainment of the great secret, i.e. its interpretation specific to the Great Perfection tradition.

#### **II.2.ii.b.1. The exoteric classifications of primordial gnosis**

Herein are three sections: its essence, etymology, and classifications.



### **II.2.ii.b.1.i. Primordial gnosis' essence**

According to *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra*, primordial gnosis' essence is luminously radiant awareness, our enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy.<sup>493</sup>

*Primordial gnosis is not conceptual:  
Its essence is the naturally radiant dimension of the nucleus.*

### **II.2.ii.b.1.ii. The etymology of "primordial gnosis" (Ye Shes, literally "primordial cognition" or "primordial understanding")**

Since it is a primordially present authentic cognitive capacity or knowing (*Shes Pa*), it is termed "primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*). *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* puts it thus:<sup>494</sup>

*The etymology of "primordial gnosis" is that in the present  
It understands its primordially present dimension.*

### **II.2.ii.b.1.iii. The classifications of primordial gnosis**

Primordial gnosis can be classified into the following triad: the grounding primordial gnosis, the characteristics-endowed primordial gnosis, and the objects-pervading primordial gnosis.<sup>495</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* refers to this:<sup>496</sup>

*Its classifications are held to be three.*

From *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra*:<sup>497</sup>

*Primordial gnosis itself is like this:  
The pure grounding primordial gnosis,  
The (gnosis) functioning with characteristics, and that pervading objects.*

To expand on this, the primordial gnosis abiding in and as the Ground ("the grounding gnostic energy") is the triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance. The primordial gnosis functioning with characteristics ("the characteristics-endowed gnostic energy") is the quintet of reality's expanse, mirror-like, sameness, discerning realization, and efficacious action. The primordial gnosis pervading objects ("the objects-pervading gnostic energy") is the two enlightened ways of knowing - being attuned both to reality just as it is,

and in all its plurality. I have explained these three previously (see Chapters One and Three), and will deal with them at length subsequently (see Chapter Eleven).

**II.2.ii.b.2. The delineation of the great secret: the topics concerning primordial gnosis which are specific to the Great Perfection tradition**<sup>498</sup>

Herein are eight sections: primordial gnosis' essence, support, location, palace, pathway, manifestation (or "lighting-up"), functions and fruit (or "overall effect"). [247]

**II.2.ii.b.2.i. Primordial gnosis' essence**

Primordial gnosis' essence is the previously explained Ground, your enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy (see chapter three).

**II.2.ii.b.2.ii. Primordial gnosis' basis**<sup>499</sup>

Primordial gnosis' basis or support is our psycho-physical component of form (i.e. our physical body).

**II.2.ii.b.2.iii. Primordial gnosis' location (or "residence")**<sup>500</sup>

Primordial gnosis' location (in us) is the precious Tsitta.

**II.2.ii.b.2.iv. Primordial gnosis' palace**<sup>501</sup>

Primordial gnosis' palace is the divine palace comprised of all the five lights.

**II.2.ii.b.2.v. Primordial gnosis' pathways (within human existence)**<sup>502</sup>

Primordial gnosis' pathway is the quartet of the flavor, solitary, all-encompassing, and crystal tube channels, and in particular it is the channel resembling a thread of white silk, which connects the heart to the far ranging lamp (our eyes) as the pathway for (our inner gnostic energy) to manifest in the objective sphere (i.e. as a direct object of our perception in the Direct Transcendence visions).

**II.2.ii.b.2.vi. Primordial gnosis' manifestation (or "lighting-up")**<sup>503</sup>

Primordial gnosis' lighting-up is the two lamps. The essence of the thoroughly pure expanse lamp spreads out from its (initial) deep blue manifestation that resembles the "Naro" letter (like a bird's two wings), and thus fills the sky. The essence of the empty seminal

nuclei lamp manifests like the eye on a peacock's feather, a naturally radiant sphere with an enclosing aura of five encircling rims.

**II.2.ii.b.2.vii. Primordial gnosis' functions**<sup>504</sup>

Primordial gnosis functions to liberate cyclic existence within the transcendence of misery, and to enable you to take hold of the reality's original site via maturing your awareness into the Spiritual Bodies.

**II.2.ii.b.2.viii. Primordial gnosis' fruit (or "overall effect")**<sup>505</sup>

Primordial gnosis' "fruit" lies in its bringing about the attainment of the Reality Body as the climaxing fruit (of the spiritual path), as you arrive at the ultimate seamless identity of the expanse and primordial gnosis.

*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* touches on all these issues in the following:<sup>506</sup>

*Oh friends, listen up! I will indicate the suchness of all phenomena (i.e. awareness) by means of analogies.*

*The wisdom energy of the genuinely and perfectly awakened Buddhas is dependent upon your physical body as its supporting basis, analogically like a hawk resting in its nest.*

*As for its location, it resides in the heart, analogically like a Body in a Vase.*

*As for its pathway, it emerges through the four channels, analogically like the stringing of a garland of pearls.*

*As for its spiraling, it spirals and swirls within the white Conch Shell House, analogically like lighting a butter lamp in a vase.*

*As for its gateways, it emerges through the eyes; analogically the lamp of the empty seminal nuclei is like the eye of a peacock feather, and the lamp of expanse-awareness is analogically like the "Naro" letter.*

*Its objective sphere is the empty sky.*

*Its "time" is the lighting-up of the post-death intermediate state, analogically like a mirror disc.*

*Its destination is the precious body, analogically like a path that splits into two.*

*Its site of freedom is the lighting-up of original purity, analogically like the Body in a vase.*

*The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* says:<sup>507</sup> [248]

*Incredible! Listen up you mistresses of vast space!*

*The enlightened nucleus of realized-energy resides within all sentient beings in the worldly realms, like oil pervades a sesame seed. Furthermore, as to its basis or support, it is based upon their physical body.*

*As to its residence, in the mandalic center of their heart is "the wisdom of the closed amulet of the Totally Positive One", which is analogically like a closed amulet of red-gold enamel. Within it is five-colored light, in the center of which the mustard seed-sized Peaceful Spiritual Bodies reside, with the lights resembling their luminous home. That is the residence of awareness, analogically like a Body in a vase.*

*As for the primordial gnosis which emerges from that (i.e. its radiation shining out from the heart), it resides in the site of the brain, the Conch Shell House. To expand on this, it is present as the mustard seed-sized wrathful Bodies, with proportionately sized eyes. They are also present in the manner of light rays. The light emerging from that is radiant and lucent like the center of a mirror-disc, or it can be said that it is present amidst light rays, analogically like a fish's eyes.*

*The connection-site between this and awareness is a channel up from the heart's tip that runs as a mere thread of white silk up in the proximity of the vertebrae. (Awareness' radiation) having emerged on its pathway through this, it enters into the head: this channel proceeds upwards from the left "little tip" (channels in the throat), and thus links up with the brain. Having then proceeded onwards from the right and left areas near the ears, it links up with the eyes.*

*Via this (channel), having upturned your eyes towards the sky and applied pressure to this channel, when you look the sky will be filled with the luminous presences of primordial gnosis.*

As for the key to these luminous presences shining forth by force of stimulating the luminous channel here, it is this:<sup>508</sup>

*With the application of the looks and the gazes  
You stimulate this luminous channel in proximity to the left "little tip",  
And the visionary appearances thus shine forth, filling the sky;  
This is the profound seal of the ultra-profound instructions.*

As for this explanation of these mustard seed-sized Spiritual Bodies having "proportionately sized eyes" (*Phul Thag Tsam*), some claim, "The eyes are bigger than its body, and while their bases are slender, their tips are vast".<sup>509</sup> These are thoughtlessly uttered words, nonsensical talk without rhyme or reason! If this body has eyes, it's impossible for the eyes to be bigger than the body; while if they claim that the eyes are like that in that they diffuse out from the body, this would have the faulty consequence that the eyes would be unrelated to the body, or that they would become detached eyes. [249]

Therefore, "*Phul Thag Tsam*" is an old local term meaning "accordingly" or "proportional", and from the mere words it obviously refers to eyes suitably sized for a Body the size of a mustard seed, which thus must be smaller than the tip of a hair. Thus it isn't something that's visible to those with the "water bubble eyes" of ordinary individuals (i.e. ordinary physical eyes). Not understanding this, those who are not well versed in orthography err in interpreting these words, even though they lack the main points of error otherwise. In order to clear up any confusion stemming from their explanations which perverts the meaning of the words, I have explained it clearly here.

\*\*\*\*\*

Therefore, in that this topic of the King of Secrets is an extremely important key point of the Great Natural Perfection's Seminal Heart-Essence, without concealing anything I have explained it to open the eyes of the intelligent in order to illuminate this excellent path to liberation for future generations of people with the good fortune to encounter it. Since we, who have studied extensively and attained the eye of reality,<sup>510</sup> are illuminating all that is difficult to understand in such beneficial topics, it is profound and vast.

This concludes my extensive explanation of the fourth adamantine topic within *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* - the discussion of primordial gnosis' presence and location.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *The Fifth Adamantine Topic: a Discussion of Primordial Gnosis' Pathways (Within the Human Body)*

The discussion of the pathways through which primordial gnosis shines forth involves two sections: a brief discussion and an extensive explanation.

#### **I. A brief discussion of the internal pathways through which primordial gnosis shines forth**

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>511</sup>

*As for the pathways of awareness' primordial gnosis,  
The three Spiritual Bodies are present inherently and perfectly complete  
Within the energy wheels of your own inner channels,  
And thus these three channels sustain the body:  
The flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channels.*

*The central channel acts as support for the four energy wheels,  
While the divisions of conventional and ultimate energies  
Flowing via these three channels being present  
In your upper torso's right, left and center respectively,  
Develop your body and limbs  
As well as bring the lamps themselves into maturity.*

#### **II. An extensive explanation of the internal pathways through which primordial gnosis shines forth**

There are three subdivisions: the identification of primordial gnosis' pathways, an extensive explanation of these channels' nature, and a detailed discussion of the manner in which the seminal nuclei are arrayed within them (i.e. the energy flowing within those channels).

##### **II.1. The identification of primordial gnosis' pathway [250]**

The real primordial gnosis is present as a solar mandala within our heart, radiating rays outwards like a butter lamp within a vase. Via the four great channels within our body, its luminously radiant seminal nuclei thus light-up within our secondary channels, and are

thereby present as the supports of primordial gnosis' own fivefold essence.<sup>512</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>513</sup>

*Within the flavor, solitary, all encompassing and crystal tube channels,  
The moving and non-moving seminal nuclei  
Are present as the support for the perfection of the natural dynamism  
Of the mirror-like, sameness, discerning,  
Efficacious, and "expanse of reality" primordial gnoses.*

Just as this inner radiation emanates from within our channels, it comes-into-presence externally (within the sky) via that (emanation) as the shining forth of the lamps' natural radiation. There are four luminous channels that (thus act as) "gateways" from the heart's radiant light:<sup>514</sup> "the great golden kati channel", "the crystal tube", "the white silk thread", and "naturally free emptiness" channels. To expand on that, (i) the shining forth of radiant light from our heart is brought about through the great golden channel; (ii) its dissolution down inside takes place in the crystal tube channel; (iii) its shining forth objectively within the external sphere is via the white silk thread and the slender coil channels; and (iv) its dissolution within the (sky's) expanse (in the form of awareness' non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies) is via the naturally free empty channel.<sup>515</sup> Along these lines, (i) the great kati golden channel signifies the luminous radiation of the essential channel self-emergent from the heart,<sup>516</sup> (ii) while the crystal tube is the shining of primordial gnosis' radiation within the vitality channel.<sup>517</sup> (iii) The white silk thread/slender coil channels<sup>518</sup> are explained as a single constellation, but although they are thus presented as a single channel by virtue of having the identical function of bringing about the external manifestation of this gnostic light, they are enumerated in terms of two distinct names - the white silk thread and the slender coil. The luminous channel which runs to the right eye is the white silk thread, while the one running to the left eye is the slender coil. Not only are they distinguished thus, but in addition within the slender coil an arc-shaped channel of light splits up at the four wheels, whereby the center of the four wheels are each pervaded by the luminous channels' radiation.<sup>519</sup> For this reason some sources explain the "four" luminous channels by omitting

the naturally free empty channel. (iv) The naturally free empty channel runs from within the central channel to the Brahma's Aperture (i.e. the crown of our head), whereby it acts as the pathway for the Spiritual Bodies of non-conceptual awareness shining forth from within such that they can dissolve within the external sky's expanse.<sup>520</sup>

If presented in this manner, these five luminous channels can be symbolically correlated with the five primordial gnoses, while when they are considered as four in number they can be correlated with the four lamps.<sup>521</sup> [251] From the brightness of the luminous channels - which runs from the heart to the Avadhūti, then from the vertebrae to the right "little tip" channel, and finally from the conch shell house to the far ranging lamp (i.e. eyes) - the natural radiation of gnostic energy shines forth in the sky in the form of the four lamps.<sup>522</sup>

*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness says:*<sup>523</sup>

*The wisdom of the ultra-pure Buddhas  
Resides in the manner of Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses  
Within the inner being of all sentient beings.*

*To expand on this, it exists within their Tsitta's center  
In the size of a mustard seed or sesame seed,  
Perfectly complete without any development as such.*

*The Tsitta's four gateways are unobstructedly radiant:  
They bring about the ongoing shining forth,  
The ongoing dissolving,  
The instantaneous shining forth,  
And the instantaneous dissolving (of radiant light).*

*Furthermore, the articulation of their names is like this:  
The great kati golden channel,  
The crystal tube with hollow interior,  
The white silk thread/slender coil,  
And the great naturally free empty channel.*

*These four gateways are the channels for primordial gnosis' natural self-presencing:  
Emerging onto the path from the heart, the gnostic light dissolves into the Avadhūti,  
And from within the Avadhūti, the light emanates outwards;  
Having emerged onto the pathway through the right side of the vertebrae,  
It dissolves from the right "little tip" into the Conch Shell House.*

*Light then emanates from that, and the four lamps  
Are present within the unobstructed empty sky  
As Spiritual Bodies of light, vividly lucent and intensely clear,  
In the manner of linked chains.*



*The four lamps are like this:  
 The lamp of empty seminal nuclei,  
 The lamp of awareness' expanse,  
 The lamp of self emergent insight,  
 And the lamp of far ranging water,  
 Which exist within all sentient beings.*

## **II.2. An extensive explanation of these channels' nature**

There are four sections: the flavor, solitary and all encompassing channels, as well as the luminous channels as the (special) support of primordial gnosis.<sup>524</sup>

### **II.2.i. The flavor channel (*Ro Ma*)<sup>525</sup>**

The etymology of "*Ro Ma*": this channel is similar to salt in that it functions to extract (or "taste") the flavor (*Ro*) in everything, and it engenders an uncommon experiential savoring in dependence upon the blissful nature of the seminal nuclei (within it), which is what is meant by terming it "flavor" or "taste" (*Ro*). Furthermore, (its second syllable) *Ma* ("female" or "mother") derives from its developing out of desire, and also relates to its impelling the expansive awakening of Buddhahood in dependence upon desire for those dominated by desire. [252] Alternatively, "*Ro*" etymologized as "corpse" refers to there being little activity (within the flavor channel), while "*Ma*" relates to how its experiences savored on the basis of the seminal nuclei's dynamics (within it) are difficult to express in words ("*Ma*" as the negative particle meaning "no" or "non-"). The flavor channel is thus filled by the supreme bliss of the seminal nuclei's flavor by virtue of the conventional nuclei's movements through it. Furthermore, it brings about the psychic attainment of food via inner winds spurring on (its vibrant flavors) in the flavor channel's petals at the place where "flavors are gathered and stored" (i.e. the throat energy wheel). The bliss of this channel's vibrant quintessential "flavors" (*Ro*) expands our body and mind, while "*Ma*" ("mother" or "foundation") indicates its bringing about the pervasion, serving as the ongoing site for, and serving as the basis (for the vibrant energies or "flavors" of the conventional seminal nuclei).<sup>526</sup> With regards to this, *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>527</sup>

*(Energy) is spurred on by your inner winds and propelled by your seminal nuclei  
 Within the throat's "flavors wheel" via the flavor channel (Ro Ma):  
 "Ro" ("flavors") indicates the bliss thus based in this channel  
 Which expands your body and mind,  
 While "Ma" ("Mother") indicates its gathering-in or storage of these vibrant energies  
 And its acting as the mother-foundation of their upper and lower sites.*

*Here is the key point in the yogic practices of "damming up" and "stimulating",  
 While if any of its six branches are "bled" or "burnt" (i.e. moxa or cauterization)  
 Primordial gnosis will be blocked (within you);  
 When you desire to attain "warmth", with the key points of massage  
 You must pull the winds and seminal nuclei (into the flavor channel).*

### **II.2.i. The solitary channel (rKyang Ma)**<sup>528</sup>

Since it has no bends or branches it is called "solitary" (rKyang). In naturally operating as the causal impetus or catalyst of both the ultimate seminal nuclei and conventional seminal nuclei, this channel brings the ultimate and conventional elemental energies to maturity, as well as differentiating between them. Because it is "solitary" (rKyang), (these functions) come about via its simply abiding in its own natural dynamics; since it is thus the ground of everything, it is termed "mother/foundation" (Ma). Through reliance upon it, you will be effortlessly expansively awakened into Buddhahood, and it thus (operates as the) condition (leading to the manifestation of) singular ultimate primordial gnosis' essence. The key points of planting the seminal nuclei, revitalization and massage pertain to this channel.<sup>529</sup> *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>530</sup>

*The inner winds' oscillating movements as they propel away and gather-in, along with  
 the seminal nuclei,  
 Are concentrated within the navel's "generativity wheel" via the solitary channel  
 (rKyang Ma):  
 "Solitary" ("rKyang") signifies that via its lack of companions  
 The singular wisdom energy (of the Universe) is displayed;  
 "Ma" ("negate"/"mother") indicates its clearing away of solidified toxic energies,  
 And its engendering the lustrous glow of (gnosis') essence.*

*Here is the key point of revitalization and massage,  
 And because no branches are manifest in it,  
 The seminal nuclei are planted in the four maturation sites. [253]*

*Those who desire to attain mastery over food  
 Should dissolve the inner winds (within here), not let go of "water",  
 And properly focus your attention (on this practice) with (these) rules.*

### **II.2.iii. The all-encompassing channel (Kun 'Dar Ma)<sup>531</sup>**

This central all-encompassing channel includes and subsumes everything ('Dar as "encompassing"); since all bliss relating to the seminal nuclei and channels, and the bliss relating to the inner winds, are engendered in dependence upon it, it is termed "all" (Kun); and in that it is extremely pervasive in general, it is termed "Ma" (i.e. "mother").<sup>532</sup> Moreover, it is principally within this channel that the inner winds and seminal nuclei enter and function at the two wheels of "memory" and "the ordering summit" (the heart and head respectively), and the lighting-up of the three Spiritual Bodies is revealed. Since primordial gnosis is present within it, the all-encompassing channel is the key to revitalization and "unification". *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>533</sup>

*(The triune Spiritual Bodies) are ripened through the concentration (of winds and nuclei)  
Within the heart's "memory" and head's "summit" wheels via the all-encompassing channel (Kun 'Dar Ma),  
Such that karmic winds are reversed and primordial gnosis take hold of:  
The term "all" (Kun) refers to its bestowal of the enlightened qualities of the Emanational Bodies;  
The term "encompassing" ('Dar) indicates the enlightened qualities of the Enjoyment Body;  
And "Ma" ("grounding mother") indicates the direct revelation of the Reality Body.*

*Here in its twelve branches  
Are the key points for "revitalization" and "unification";  
To extend your life span, you must rely on the application of salves here  
And do (the yoga) with your seminal nuclei, body and mind.*

To expand (on these channels' pathways through our body), the flavor channel spirals around from the solitary channel's left (at the navel), and then runs on the right (side of the body on up through our upper torso).<sup>534</sup> The solitary channel itself emerges from the left side of the heart's tip, and having come up through the throat's web of channels, it enters hither within the skull and projects to the gateway in the left eye, while the flavor channel projects into the right eye. The all-encompassing channel exists straight up the middle of our body, and then divides into three tips, the central gateway of which manifests at our Brahma's Aperture (i.e. the center of the head's crown), via which the Spiritual Bodies of non-

conceptual awareness shine forth. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* describes it thus:<sup>535</sup>

*The linked chains of non-conceptual awareness  
Manifest through the gateway of Brahma, the center of great bliss.*

The karmic winds flow through it via its right tip's presence at our right ear, while the karmic winds flow along with (their psychic) functions via two additional slender branches proceeding from there to our two nostrils. The gnostic winds' shining forth is brought about via its left tip, which runs to the left ear. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* makes note of this:<sup>536</sup>

*Through the right ear karmic winds are manifest,  
While the experience of sound through the left ear is primordial gnosis itself. [254]*

The natural seminal nuclei flow in the left (solitary) channel, and the conventional seminal nuclei flow in the right (flavor) channel.<sup>537</sup> The right channel impels our body's maturation in dependence upon its conventional seminal nuclei, and thereby itself performs functions related to our physical experiences of bliss or comfort, suffering or pain, and equanimity or indifference, the increase and deterioration of our body's elemental energies, and so forth.

(I) To expand on these, there are four subtle "knots" within the flavor channel:<sup>538</sup> the four wheels of the navel, "memory" (heart), "flavors" (throat), and "the summit" (crown). (i): Since the channel of the navel's "generativity" wheel first develops via this "catalyst", the causal impetus or catalyst deriving from our current father resides within that channel as a white seminal nucleus about the size of one tenth of a mustard seed. Because our body is "generated" in an upward development in dependence upon it, it is termed a "catalyst". (ii) The catalyst deriving from our current mother resides within the heart's memory wheel as a red seminal nucleus the size of one tenth of a mustard seed, and thus exists as the support for our memory-based thought activity in its diverse flickering movements, which is why (this wheel) is called "memory". (iii) A seminal nucleus of wind-energy the size of one tenth of a mustard seed resides within the throat's flavors wheel, where it acts to separate out the

vibrant and solidified energies of food. The solidified factors then bring about the external elimination of urine, feces, and so forth, while the vibrant factors bring about the luster and radiant glow of the body, and thus this wheel is termed "flavors". (iv) The mind's nature resides within the crown's summit wheel as a luminous nucleus the size of one tenth of a mustard seed, which is what the name "summit" derives from.

These (four wheels' seminal nuclei) are termed "the support of conventional processes", and when they transfer locations, the body and mind become dissociated from each other (i.e. death). (The way in which they account for our physical elements is as follows:) blood is ripened via these conventional catalysts (i.e. the conventional seminal nuclei which "trigger" the entire process); flesh ripens from blood; ligaments ripen from flesh; lymph ripens from ligaments; fat ripens from lymph; bone ripens from fat; marrow ripens from bone; the spinal cord ripens from marrow; and the conventional seminal nuclei in turn ripen from the spinal cord.

(II) The knots of the solitary channel are as follows:<sup>539</sup> (i) two extremely small seminal nuclei resides within the navel's generativity wheel as the seeds of the "far ranging water lamp"; (ii) an extremely radiant fiery seminal nucleus resides within the heart's memory wheel as the support of the self-emergent insight lamp; (iii) a mustard seed-sized five-colored seminal nucleus with encircling rims resides in the throat's flavor wheel as the support of the thoroughly pure expanse lamp; [255] and (iv) a luminous nucleus (half of your thumb's length in diameter) resides within the crown's summit wheel as the support of the empty seminal nuclei lamp.

Uncontaminated primordial gnosis directly shines forth in dependence upon these (nuclei of the solitary channel's centers), such that you are naturally expansively awakened into Buddhahood in dependence upon (the solitary channel). Therefore these are referred to as the "natural seminal nuclei", which operate as the four lamps through the pure gateway, and as the four elemental energies through the impure gateways.

(III) The middle "all-encompassing channel" (*Kun 'Dar Ma*) includes or encapsulates the nature of "all" the channels, and furthermore "vibrates" (*'Dar*) with the wind-currents' oscillating movements back and forth, and is the "mother-foundation" (*Ma*) by virtue of thus functioning as the ground of cyclic existence and transcendent reality.<sup>540</sup> The "seminal nuclei of the ultimate reality" flow through this channel, while its four knots are as follows:<sup>541</sup> (i) the support of all the Spiritual Bodies resides in the navel's generativity wheel as a mustard seed-sized (nucleus) shining with Faces and Hands of light; (ii) the support of primordial gnosis resides in the heart's memory wheel as the perfectly complete mandala of the deity which has befallen you, with its mustard seed-sized individual deities' particular bodily colors and hand-held symbols radiantly clear in a divine palace with four gateways and four porticos - by virtue of this key point, (it is easier) to contemplatively evoke and actualize your own particular spiritual "family" (from the five main spiritual affinities), which is indicated by the particular mandala on which the flower falls (in the empowerment ritual); and (iv) the support of all the lights resides in the crown's summit wheel as the mandala of wrathful deities.

\*\*\*\*\*

Since there is an unimpeded open emptiness devoid of blood or lymph flowing through the central channel, it is "the wind-currents in action"; since water, blood, and "enlightened minds" (i.e. seminal nuclei) flow through the right channel, it is "the seminal nuclei in action"; since the elements' vibrant energy as well as primordial gnosis flow through the left channel, it is "the channels themselves in action".<sup>542</sup>

#### **II.2.iv. How the luminous channels function as primordial gnosis' support**<sup>543</sup>

Four gateways separate out from your heart's radiant light, which become the following four (luminous) channels: (i) the great golden Kati channel serves as the support for this radiant light's presencing *emerging* from your heart; (ii) the white silk thread channel serves as the support of (that radiant light) *entering* the external objective sphere; (iii) the slender

coil channel serves as the support of its *natural shining forth*; (iv) and the crystal tube channel serves as the support of its natural *presencing*. The naturally free empty channel serves as support for the linked chains' Spiritual Bodies by its running up to your Brahma's aperture (i.e. top of the head) - if you add it (to the other four channels), these five inner channels<sup>544</sup> are the luminosity of the five primordial gnosés; if you focus merely on the first four instead, they reveal the progressive intensification of the four lamps. *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* says:<sup>545</sup> [256]

*Although one can enumerate many thousands of channels  
As branching out from the divine palace of the precious Tsitta-heart  
At the center of all sentient beings' bodies,  
In particular there are these four great channels:*

*The great golden Kati channel,  
The channel like a white silk thread,  
The slender coil channel, and the crystal tube channel.*

*(The luminosity of the seminal nuclei lamp) resides  
Within these four (channels) in particular: riding upon the wind-horses,  
It has the identity of emerging,  
Entering, naturally shining forth, and presencing...*

These luminous channels are thus explained as the "channels of the great ultimate primordial gnosis".

### **II.3. The detailed discussion of the manner in which the seminal nuclei are arrayed throughout our inner channels<sup>546</sup>**

This involves three sections: a general discussion of the seminal nuclei's principal sources, a detailed explanation of their various locations, and a concluding summary (of this discussion of the seminal nuclei with a presentation of) the pure seminal nuclei of radiant light.

#### **II.3.i. A general discussion of the seminal nuclei' principal sources<sup>547</sup>**

In general the interior of the three channels' four energy wheels is entirely pervaded by light and rays, while in particular (the situation is as follows): (i) the catalytic conventional seminal nuclei are in the flavor channel with the nature of "efficacious means" and

contaminated bliss; (ii) the ultimate gnostic seminal nuclei are in the solitary channel with the nature of insight and uncontaminated bliss; and (iii) the natural reality nuclei are in the all-encompassing channel with the nature of spontaneously present radiant light wherein the expanse and primordial gnosis are non-dual. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* says:<sup>548</sup>

*Within the channels are seminal nuclei,  
Which are characteristically subtle and swiftly moving,  
And are adorned with light rays.*

*To expand on that, they are threefold:  
(Those in) the right (flavor channel), the left (solitary channel), and the central (all-encompassing channel).*

*(i) In the right (flavor channel) are the conventional seminal nuclei  
Which are an auxiliary of great bliss,  
And as the source comprising bliss  
Are the great secret of all the Buddhas;  
Their nature is symbolized by "efficacious means".*

*(ii) Possessing the nature of the ultimate Reality Body,  
Present in terms of a single empty and radiant seminal nucleus,  
Residing in the central (all-encompassing channel), naturally shining,  
Beyond expansion and contraction or the objects of speech and thought,  
Beyond conceptuality and its karmic propensities,  
Devoid of the dualistic extremes of existence and non-existence,  
Not abiding within the limits of permanence or nothingness,  
Spontaneously present without conceptuality, [257]  
Ineffable and naturally empty,  
Is the seminal nucleus of the ultimate essence.*

*(iii) In the left (solitary channel) the natural seminal nuclei are present,  
Which pervade the dyadic integration (of the conventional and ultimate) with bliss and  
ease;  
Without (making these nuclei) utterly still,  
You obtain the bliss of intimate union.*

*They are the causal impetus of the Great Seal itself,  
The path of the intensely blissful primordial gnosis,  
And the mandala which is the identity or force of all the Secret Mantras;  
They are the great means for protection from cyclic existence,  
And the blazing light of the esoteric primordial radiation;  
They are the essence of great bliss.*

### **II.3.ii. A detailed explanation of the seminal nuclei's locations**

*The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* says:<sup>549</sup>

*The seminal nuclei of the thoroughly pure Spiritual Bodies  
Reside in the Tsitta of all sentient beings.*



*The seminal nuclei that signify emptiness  
Reside in the Dhūti of all sentient beings.*

*The seminal nuclei of blazing empty radiance  
Reside in the white crystal of all sentient beings.*

*The excellent path seminal nuclei  
Reside within the white silk of all sentient beings.*

*The seminal nuclei of non-dual radiant light  
Reside within the empty path of all Buddhas.*

*The seminal nuclei of manifold shining forth  
Reside within the objective scope of all sentient beings.*

*Thus these seminal nuclei  
Are inseparably present within all sentient beings.<sup>550</sup>*

**II.3.iii. The concluding summary (of this discussion of the seminal nuclei with a presentation of) the pure seminal nuclei of radiant light<sup>551</sup>**

The seminal nuclei flowing through the four luminous channels are as follows. (i) In the great kati golden channel, the excellent ground seminal nucleus reside with the triune identity of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance in dependence upon the heart. (ii) In the white silk thread channel, the excellent path seminal nuclei reside in the right water lamp (i.e. eye) along with the four lamps. (iii) In the slender coil channel, the "peak of excellences seminal nuclei" reside in the left water lamp (i.e. eye) as the diversified "vision of contemplative experience's intensification" (the second vision). (iv) In the crystal tube channel, the support of "the vision of awareness' optimization" (the third vision) resides as the ground for the shining forth of internally radiant primordial gnosis. The Spiritual Bodies of the adamantine linked chains reside in the naturally free empty channel. *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* says:<sup>552</sup>

*It resides within the channels as  
The excellent ground nucleus,  
The path nuclei which is similarly excellent, [258]  
The peak of excellences nuclei,  
And the nuclei endowed with the ornaments of excellence.*

Furthermore, it is taught that ordinary minor psychic attainments and depth-contemplation (which involves the mind's stabilization) can be accomplished on the path in reliance upon the conventional catalytic seminal nuclei, yet the supreme spiritual attainment (the meditative state wherein the Reality Body and primordial gnosis naturally flow) can be made directly manifest only in reliance upon the ultimate seminal nuclei of radiant light. Since along these lines the tradition of the Great Perfection doesn't view the conventional seminal nuclei as an essential part of the spiritual path, it advocates meditation on radiant light in reliance upon the ultimate seminal nuclei.<sup>553</sup> However, some individuals' psychic makeup is such that engaging the conventional seminal nuclei here (in the Great Perfection tradition) becomes necessary. In this sense, the means of meditation on the conventional seminal nuclei, reliance<sup>554</sup> on a sexual consort and so forth are taught simply as kind of special method or "efficacious means" for taking care of those otherwise blocked from the Great Perfection path, so that those people obsessively addicted to the conventional seminal nuclei can circuitously enter (the path of the Great Perfection). Then, subsequently the stage of engaging the ultimate seminal nuclei is taught to such individuals. As for that prior stage (of yogically manipulating the conventional seminal nuclei), *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:<sup>555</sup>

*Since you desire to rely on the reality of seminal nuclei,  
(I will discuss the contemplative techniques)  
Relating to the ultimate and conventional (seminal nuclei).*

*(i) Those who for the time being desire Buddhahood  
In reliance upon the conventional seminal nuclei should do as follows:*

*Your consort should have the complete requisite characteristics -  
When you spot one with the perfect characteristics  
Whether she be a goddess, demi-goddess, Brahmin,  
Low caste, or a heretic,  
You begin with the techniques for attracting her,  
And then you must perfect your bodies  
Via the object of reliance (i.e. consort), the channels,  
And the focus of visualization (i.e. the seminal nuclei, etc.).*

*Then, you must bring the conventional seminal nuclei down, retain them, reverse them  
(back upwards)*

*Disperse them within the channels, and mix them with the winds;  
You then must rely upon emptiness, eradicate your intellect,  
And reverse your ordinary body and mind.*

*(ii) On the other hand, through reliance upon the ultimate seminal nuclei  
You can meet with the objects of the empty Reality Body:*

*Stimulating the lamp of the empty seminal nuclei  
You train on awareness' efflorescent dynamics,  
And when you finally gain deep attunement such that (their luminosity  
Is vividly clear) without ordinary distinctions between daytime and nighttime,  
These (luminous nuclei) directly manifest without any exertion on your part -  
This is the measure indicating experiential mastery (of this practice). [259]*

Therefore, the two classifications of seminal nuclei are related as follows: the conventional seminal nuclei are not the real spiritual path, aside from simply being a belief and interest-inspiring efficacious means of entering (certain types of people) into this path (of the Great Perfection). Thus, here in this text these systems of practice will be left at that, while since the ultimate seminal nuclei *are* the real path, I will discuss them extensively. The stimulation of the (empty seminal nuclei) lamp is discussed in particular within the chapter on the "objective sphere" (Chapter Seven), and thus you should take (those discussions) as the point of departure for understanding it. This is an extremely important point, since nowadays some people assert that both the conventional and ultimate seminal nuclei are the Great Perfection path, and in particular, those people fixated upon the conventional seminal nuclei don't see these (luminous nuclei's vital) significance. They advocate many strenuous practices in training on the conventional seminal nuclei such as "binding" with yogic physical exercises (yantras) and forced visualizations, while as fruit of such training they desire the bliss and emptiness of depth-contemplation within the coarse body. The Great Perfection tradition is quite the opposite: in its advocacy of a series of triadic key points in contemplation (your body being unshakable from the "watching postures" and so on) and its desired attainment of a body of light, there is a very important distinction.<sup>556</sup>

This concludes my extensive explanation of the fifth adamantine topic within *The Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings* - the discussion of primordial gnosis' pathways (within the human body).

**Part III**

**Annotation-Commentary to Longchenpa's *Treasury of Words and Meanings***

## ANNOTATION-COMMENTARY TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. "The adamantine nucleus of radiant light" (*'Od gSal rDo rJe'i sNying Po*) refers to the final reality of the macrocosmic universe as well as our own microcosmic being ("nucleus" signifying the ultimate inner quintessence of all phenomena beyond/within the sound and fury of evolution), a reality which is dynamic light energy devoid of materiality and utterly indestructible beyond the fluctuations of conditioned cycles of origination and cessation ("adamantine" signifying indestructibility, like the unyielding, glittering hardness of a diamond). Since this final reality of light is the ultimate source of both our own inner psychic life (as we say "an inner light") and the external material environment (the main material elements being merely impure and congealed derivatives of this light's various hues), it is primordial and enduring rather than an adventitious phenomena that is created and destroyed. It is also possible to translate *'Od gSal* ("radiant light") as an adjective ("luminously radiant nucleus") rather than a noun, but it seems to me that in this particular context its nominative form has more evocative force and as such is more appropriate. Literally *'Od* signifies "light" while *gSal* can denote both "clarity" and "radiance", thus leading to the frequent translation of *'Od gSal* as "clear light" relying on the image of it as resembling the extremely pellucid light of Asian autumns following the clearing of the monsoon season. However in the Great Perfection tradition's emphasis on evolutionary perspectives, this term's connotation is equally on the light's "radiance" in its projective capacity to evolve outwards into complex forms of energy, rather than merely its utter fluidity and emptiness of materiality as indicated by "clear". Thus I have chosen to translate *'Od gSal* as "radiant light" despite the prevailing translation of it as "clear light" in studies of the more recent Tibetan Tantric traditions as presented in the Gelukpa sect for instance. It is the "unsurpassed secret" in that not only in that it is concealed from normal perception, but also in that beyond its reality there remains nothing that may be revealed since all orders of material and spiritual realities are enfolded within its expanse. "Illuminate" indicates that with the linguistic treasury of images and discourses contained herein, Longchenpa will "clarify" or illuminate this final reality and thus dispel the gloom of ignorance hovering about our minds and preventing our clear perception of what is always already clearly and radiantly present within and without.

"The three sites" in general refer to the triad of Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind as the three locales of the Universe's dynamic light-energy functioning optimally and thus where the deities symbolizing this enlightened energy in its multifarious manifestations reside and operate. In particular, within the Great Perfection tradition it also connotes the triad of the Universe's essence, nature, and compassionate resonance as discussed in detail within Chapter One, which correlates directly to the triad of Spiritual Bodies and gnostic energies. Thus the Universe itself is fundamentally triadic (its light-core being empty, radiant and intelligently self-organizing), and this triadic nature expresses itself at all levels of evolution and devolution.

2. For ease of reference I have included the "Western" style page enumeration of the "Sherab Gyaltzen" edition of TDD in brackets throughout the translation. All other references to TDD in the commentary thus refer to this pagination rather than the pagination of the thesis itself.

3. Literally "the treasury (*mDzod*; *Kosha*) of precious (*Rinpoche'i*; *Ratnasya*) words (*Tshig*; *Pada*) and meanings (*Don*; *Artha*)", this can also be understood as referring to the present text as a wealth of precious language and the search for meaning, or even connoting reality as the wellspring of all language and significance. While *Tshig* simply means "words" or "language", *Don* is an extremely resonant word that not only signifies words' "meanings" or references, but also presence, spiritual value, aims and so forth. *Nāma/Ces Bya Ba* then simply signify that the preceding is a title, such as we might use quotation marks or italics in English.

4. The following lines are in versified quartets with each set of four lines internally having the same number of syllables, and each quartet's overall syllabic count sequentially decreasing from one quartet to the next - the first quartet has twenty three syllable lines, the second and third fifteen syllable lines, and the fourth only nine syllable lines.

*Whose mandala of radiant light, wherein the spontaneously present Spiritual Bodies, primordial gnoses and enlightened qualities are totally complete:* "complete" (*rDzogs*) could here also be translated as "perfected" or "perfectly complete", and connotes the *Great Perfection* (*rDzogs Chen*) itself. This ambiguity of *rDzogs* in the term *rDzogs Chen* I will discuss at length subsequently, which includes *rDzogs* in the sense of "exhausted", "complete", and "perfect".

*And thus illuminates the isle of liberation from fictive existence and peaceful calm:* "liberation from fictive existence and peaceful calm" could also be translated as "of liberation wherein fictive existence is calmed" in accordance with following mention of "the peace of enlightenment" which transcends all oppositions, but I have translated it otherwise in accordance with the following page's clear mention of "fictive existence" and "peaceful calm" as a false opposition which must be fully transcended. At any rate, certainly as you obtain the liberation of enlightenment the illusion of fictive existence subsides or is calmed, though a fixation on the experience or goal of peaceful calm itself it just as illusory as its opposite. This opposition of cyclic existence and transcendence is often presented as itself an illusion, with both elements to be passed beyond in the nameless vibrancy of the ultimate.

*Arising from time without beginning as the unprecedented Teacher of the path, the glory of all of cyclic existence and transcendent reality:* "unprecedented" connotes the Totally Positive One's primordially as he is enlightened right at the evolution of the Universe's inception and marks a hitherto unprecedented phase of self-recognition for the Universe itself; "glory" indicates his being imaged as the sun, which is the first phenomena to arise in this cosmos, and is thus always already there before any thing else, gloriously present without fail in the sky as it effortlessly illuminating the furthest reaches of the universe with its rays naturally shining outwards from its dynamic core of light-energy.

*This solar force of auspiciousness and prosperity shakes open the thousand petals of my pistil-like mind and I worship him in all my being with a crown of joy:* less literally, "I worship him in all my being with a crown of joy" can be understood as "I offer praise out of the gladness of my heart", indicating the natural joy and faith that wells up from within at the sight or thought of his magnificence. In addition it refers to worshipping the Totally Positive One via continually visualizing him upon your head at all times, thereby causing his inspiring blessings to flow down into your head and throughout your being. Finally, the inner wheel of channels located in our crown is referred to as the wheel of "great bliss" in that it is the locus

of the white seminal nuclei (the subtle essence of semen) which flows down the central channel during yogic meditations of mystic fire or sexual practices, thereby igniting the intense experience of the four joys.

*And the ocean-like assembly of Sky Dancers and Oath Bound Ones today look after the lotus-lake of my mind:* the "Oath Bound Ones" (*Dam Can*) refer to powerful non-human beings of different types to whom the great eighth century saint Padmasambhava had given teachings during his visits to Tibet, and who thus have taken vows to protect his teachings, followers, and the buried "treasure" tradition as a whole that he instituted by concealing texts in the depths of his disciples' individual psychic energy and the Tibetan physical environment, as well as various ritual items and statues. These beings include males and females as well as peaceful and wrathful forms, and while in general unmanifest to ordinary beings they tend to be especially attracted to powerful spiritual figures, just as "groupies" and "hangers on" flock around a famous person. The life-giving rain of all these beings' compassion infuses our psyche with fresh life, itself imaged as a lake of fluid psychic energy covered by a mass of lotus flowers rooted in the depths and blooming towards the sky, beautifully adorning the cosmos.

*Though involved with all sentient beings without exception, he is undefiled by the stains of fictive existence and calm:* the Totally Positive One enters cyclic existence for the benefit of sentient beings via diverse natural emanations, yet he remains undefiled by its illusions and stains, as he doesn't lapse into either extreme of fictive existence or transcendent reality's calm. Thus, unlike we who in our obsessive belief in these illusions cannot truly act for our own or others' welfare, he can truly accomplish sentient beings' welfare. While the following reference of "calm" refers to the Universe's final reality of still purity beyond all opposition, "calm" here is an illusion in dichotomous relation to fictive existence's bustle and worries, the feeling or desire to separate from evolution and cyclic existence to remain in a timeless state of peaceful bliss divorced from all else. Rather the enlightened state is a dynamic condition of ceaseless activity, though that activity remains divested of all illusions and attachment. Along these lines, STCP 351,2 says the following:

"...One might be led to think in the following manner: "Just as the conventionally meritorious virtuous acts fuel our straying into cyclic existence, won't these so-called "liberative" virtuous acts function likewise?!" However the answer is no. By meditatively practicing with an awareness of karmic actions' lack of any real substance or coherence, you will be lead to liberation - just as taught by appropriate analogies, this is a means for freeing yourself from fictive existence rather than conditioning you into it. Even should you remain in fictive existence to protect others from it with your great compassion, you will be undefiled by the faults of fictive existence since you recognize that all phenomena are unborn, while with the efficacious means of great compassion, neither will you lapse into one-sided obsession with the calm of transcendence's peace. This is just as *The Adornment of Realization* says:

*Through recognition you don't remain in fictive existence,  
While through compassion you don't remain in calm..."*

The conventionally meritorious actions include conventional morality and ordinary meditation, both which are positive actions ("virtues") that will lead to consistently good rebirths yet are ultimately pointless in terms of attaining final enlightenment. However, when accompanied by penetrating insight into all phenomena's emptiness and the altruistic



aspiration to gain enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings, these positive karmic actions become transformed into "liberative" virtues that have the power (unlike conventionally virtuous acts) to take you beyond the karmic world of cyclic existence into the unconditioned realm of liberation, no longer simply functioning as a positive force within the framework of cyclic existence but rather acting to destroy the entire system from within.

Though he has obtained the calm of direct enlightenment, he has not changed into anything other than the supreme of events (that he always already is): this enlightenment is the supreme, crowning event of the universe, yet in fact it merely involves the Universe's self-recognition rather than some new reality or phenomenon being created: in the whole vast, variegated process of evolution and devolution nothing ever comes into being that is other than awareness, this indestructible nucleus of empty, radiant light. The cosmos is a luminous mandala (*dKyil 'Khor*) with awareness at its center (*dKyil*), and the beautiful play and adornment of awareness forming its surrounding display (*'Khor*). Thus even though the Totally Positive One in a timeless moment attains the peace of manifest enlightenment via recognition, it entails no ontological transformation since apart from the supreme of events, awareness which is the heart and reality of the cosmic mandala, nothing ever has or will come to pass. Though from the beginning the opposition of purity and impurity is an illusion, such enlightenment unfolds that primordial purity into its full potential, making that which was latent manifest, rendering that which was in the background into the foreground.

5. For more details on these two collections of texts, see my introduction. *The Seventeen Tantras* (*rGyud bCu bDun*) form the canonical core of the Great Perfection tradition, being seventeen closely interlinked texts of varying length that relate dialogues between transcendental non-historical Buddhas and their retinue, and the teachings stemming from these dialogues. These texts are all still existent within the various recensions of the *One Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Ancient Ones* (*rNying Ma rGyud 'Bum*), the major collection of tantras belonging to the *Nyingma* sect of Tibetan Buddhism, and purporting to have been received by great Masters in India and surrounding areas over thirteen hundred years ago, and translated into Tibetan language in the Dynastic Period of Tibet during the eighth and ninth centuries. Their actual origin is quite controversial both within the Tibetan tradition itself, as well as Western scholarship, with many claiming that they were originally put into writing in Tibet rather than being translated into Tibetan from other languages as the tradition holds (for example, KGNT1 471,1 mentions the seventeen tantras as being taught by Shri Simha to Padmasambhava, both famous figures in the tradition preceding its transmission to Tibet). While *The Seventeen Tantras* are held to be of transcendental authorship, *The One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts* (*Man Ngag brGya Dang bCu dGu*) are human-authored texts explaining the significance and practices of the former in clearer and more expansive detail, with the authors being the initial non-Tibetan Masters of the Great Perfection tradition beginning with Garab Dorji (*dGa' Rab rDo rJe*) and ending with the great Masters who brought these traditions to Tibet - Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava. In general the distinction between "Tantra" and "esoteric precept" as literary classes lies not only in their authorship (transcendental, revealed tantras as opposed to human-written compositions), but also stylistically - the former is often in verses and extremely dense/terse, while the latter is often in prose and more readily accessible to straight forward interpretation (though such an opposition is only a generalization, which certainly cannot be applied across the board). The two bodies of literature complement each other quite nicely - the Tantras themselves are masterpieces of language and thought that actually fully embody their thought processes in their style (including a dramatic structure that takes the form of a dialogue between two or more figures), making for difficult encounters that are

as rewarding as they are difficult; the esoteric precepts then tend to be more concerned with content, giving clearer settings and details. Obviously this relationship is reduplicated throughout the world's religious history, with a core of ambiguous, revealed texts of unquestionable profundity whose ritual, philosophical, and psychological inner meaning then is unpacked by a series of men and women whom thus initiate and form a living, structured tradition based upon those texts. With regards to the Great Perfection tradition, we find its root in a few shadowy Indian figures of whom we have few historical details while its full flowering takes place only in Tibet, where we have at least a thousand years of increasingly well chronicled religious, philosophical and literary activity based upon this small body of root texts. Thus *The Seventeen Tantras* and *The Collection of One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts* together form the small revealed and exegetical inheritance that the Tibetans purportedly received from non-Tibetan figures such as Padmasambhava, and which form the inner core of all that follows - thus it is these that Longchenpa bases himself on in the current text, which in reality is a structurally masterful direct interpretation of these core texts' main topics. As GTD 403,2-407,5 explains, normally these esoteric precepts are divided into two classifications, both of which are currently found in *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Vimalamitra* (VNT): the "profound" *Four Volumes* (*The Gold Lettered, The Copper Lettered/The Jewel Lettered, The Conch Shell Lettered, The Turquoise Lettered*) and the "vast" *One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts*. GTD 404,5-407,1 lists out all one hundred and nineteen titles, but they appear to be incomplete within the currently existent editions of VNT.

6. These eleven topics correspond directly to the eleven chapters of the *Treasury of Precious Words and Meanings*, and encapsulate the entire range of the Great Perfection tradition's philosophy and practice in its essentials. Since they thus summarize the entire text, I have discussed them at length in my introduction. The "adamantine topic" of course refers to the Great Perfection itself, which is adamant or indestructible in that it is difficult to penetrate intellectually or spiritually and is the final quintessence of all reality, what remains after all the illusions are destroyed.

7. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 85,2; Ati1 102,4). The full name of this Tantra is *The Direct Consequence of Sound* (*sGra Thal 'Gyur*), which plays off the use of the term "direct consequence" in logic where the opponent's thesis is shown to be absurd by indicating the unacceptable "consequences" that logically follow from it. In the hands of some followers of Nagarjuna, this technique was advocated as a technique for showing the ultimate falsity of all assertions as internally contradictory (when subject to an ultimate analysis), and thus evoking a sense of the emptiness beyond thought and language in the opponent (without requiring any independent assertion or theory beyond merely pointing out the "consequence"). In the present context, Khanpo Jikphun indicated that *Thal 'Gyur* signifies the natural sound of self-emergent adamant reality, which is totally unimpeded and penetrating (*Thal 'Byung*); such an interpretation is reflected in Dorje and Kapstein's rendering of it as *Penetration of Sound* (see their NSTB). Alternatively, by turning to your naked self-awareness, empty and radiant, you "directly" bypass and undercut conceptual reifications, which are naturally freed as a "consequence", without relying on any other antidote or remedy. Thus "direct consequence" is synonymous with "natural freedom" or "free in and of itself" (*Rang Grol*), as a snake unraveling its own knots, and implies the Great Perfection as the "direct path" to enlightenment - rather than sequential and lengthy cleansing of one purification after another, you merely relax and look directly to awareness, whereby the entire path spontaneously unfolds without any need to fabricate or purify anything beyond that. The term "sound" then refers to the "language" of the Tantra itself, which points to this self-awareness by which you

become naturally freed, as well as language and sound in general, which if examined is revealed as inherently empty, thereby leading us directly to the freedom of empty luminous awareness beyond the limitations and confinements of our linguistic blinkers. This etymology is provided by *The Conch Shell Lettered* (VNT2 49,1ff):

"...This Tantra's essence is that within the great bliss of self-awareness the defects of other-oriented debates are abandoned. Its etymology has two aspects: since it teaches the emergence, functioning, and cessation of sound, "sound" is explained (as the indivisibility of sound and emptiness), while since that itself is naturally freed from intellectual imputations (without relying on other antidotes) it is explained as "direct consequence"..."

*Where is the dwelling site of self-awareness' primordial gnosis?*

The term "self" in "self-awareness" and other such terms is crucial in the Great Perfection literature, and has a multivalent significance that penetrates to the heart of Great Perfection philosophy and meditation (see the glossary for a detailed treatment). Here the term emphasizes that awareness' pure enlightened gnostic energy is present within ourselves at all times even though we fail to recognize it, and should not be thought of as something to be fashioned newly through yogic efforts - it is the primordial and ongoing source-dimension of our very existence's fabric, and thus meditation simply involves clearing away its impure derivatives that cloud our view and recognize this ever present core of radiant light within and without.

8. *Mu Tig Rin Po Che 'Phreng Ba'i rGyud* (NGB1 392,3; Ati2 535,3). The title of this text is not only an image for the Tantra's verses which are like glittering pearls, but also is a frequent image for the visual appearance of the "linked chains" discussed at length subsequently. As mentioned above, the different editions of the *Seventeen Tantras* come with apparently different sets of annotations which may stem from now lost commentaries, and I have utilized these annotations whenever appropriate (often in translating the terse verses, without necessarily explicitly pointing that out). However only this Tantra is consistently heavily annotated in all editions I have had the opportunity to consult. This passage is also explicated at length in *The Conch Shell Lettered* (VNT2 84,6ff) in its analysis of this Tantra. For the sake of clarity, I will here explain this citation in terms of the individual eleven topics it outlines (the numbers correspond to those given in the quote, as well as to TDD's eleven chapters):

(i) *The Primordial Ground*: The first line is glossed as "the Ground wherein the expansive awakening of Buddhahood consequent upon realization as well as cyclic existence consequent upon non-realization is absent", indicating this refers to the state of pure potential that precedes, and endures through, everything; that which was before any-thing is, and continues to pervade all that comes to be. Glosses also indicate the triad of primordial gnoses are the standard triad of the originally pure gnostic energy of the essence, the spontaneously present gnostic energy of the nature, and the universally pervading gnostic energy of the compassionate resonance.

(ii) *Straying into Cyclic Existence*: In essence, "spontaneous presence" refers to the Ground's nature while "compassionate resonance" refers to the Ground's third dimension (along with the Ground's empty essence), and it is these two factors that spur the Universe/Ground into self-evolution and exteriorization from the state of pure self-contained potential (where its empty essence is in the ascendancy). The Ground's nature primarily

indicates that its total emptiness is coincident with radiating light energy, while the Ground's "compassionate resonance" involves the predisposition of that light energy to organize into complex forms, and especially its capacity for the most complex of self-organizing forces, that of intelligence in sentient life. It is then this exteriorization and evolution into an intricate display of light and the capacity for self-reflection, or consciousness, of that light-display, that acts as the foundation for the possibility of straying (with pure potential alone there can be neither self-awareness or lack of it - the game has not yet begun). Once this rupture takes place, it is now possible for that self-consciousness capacity to fail to recognize itself and hence become alienated into the fragmented world of cyclic existence dichotomized into self and other, subject and object, consciousness and matter. Thus it is the Ground's capacity for evolution and manifestation as summed up in the two terms "spontaneous presence" and "compassionate resonance" that is the foundation of straying, that which is the very condition for straying's possibility, as well as the basis for the possibility of freedom - freedom is no other than self-recognition in full consciousness (as opposed to the state of pure potential that precedes this rupture), and this self-recognition can only be accomplished by daring to enter the abyss and chance non-recognition. The rupture of movement from pure potential to actualization is a moment when all hinges on the unprecedented capacity for self-recognition and non-recognition, and the entire panorama of cyclic existence and transcendence hangs in the balance, whether we stray or become free, sentient beings or Awakened Buddhas, in the distinction between the Ground itself and this emerging consciousness' awareness of that Ground. See Chapter One for a detailed discussion of the foundation of straying and foundation of freedom, as well as the term "general site" to indicate the indeterminacy of this initial movement into exteriorization and evolution (with dynamics summed up as the "eight gateways to spontaneous presence").

KGNT1 348,4 explains these two lines as follows:

"...Although the three primordial gnoses are devoid of any impetus towards straying, straying takes place there by force of the conditioning of dimmed awareness. Analogically it resembles how the sun is devoid of any basis for, or impetus towards, darkness, yet in the meantime becomes overcast with fog and mist. The "causal condition" (of straying) is like this: the empty essence's radiant dimension is present as primordial gnosis' natural glowing in the form of a "luminous home", which (the cognitive capacity) thinks of as a concrete thing without recognizing it as empty radiance. That thought is the dimmed awareness referred to as "the causal condition" (of straying). Via that causal impetus it then directly fixes on the notion of a "self" which subjectively possess those objects, and thus there is the referential condition. By force of its fixating on those objective appearances as materially solid, the five elements take concrete form: the five elemental energies are formed from spontaneous presence's fivefold natural glow (i.e. the five lights). Via that, this world realm called the "Indomitable" originates out of primordial gnosis' inspiring waves of energy ("blessing"). The sentient beings which are the "inner quintessence" (of the material environment) originate from vibrant energies of those external five elements....

In brief, though such straying takes place, it is absent within the causal impetus and Ground: not recognizing the Ground's abiding reality, we stray in our clinging to its self-presencing as materially solid (discrete entities). Analogically its just as how we apprehend a particular appearance even while there is no real (external) cause (correlating to such an appearance): a rope appears as a snake (\*a classic misperception), or a white conch appears yellow (\*to someone with jaundice). In the same manner, we fail to recognize the Ground's

abiding reality, and thus stray in our clinging to its self-presenting as materially solid. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* sums it up thus:

*Though the foundation of straying is explained in many ways,  
It can be summed up as spontaneous presence and compassionate resonance..."*

In KGYT2 132,1-143,5, Longchenpa provides a detailed explication of the foundation for straying culminating (142,2) with an explication and quotation of the two lines cited above, which clearly indicates that "spontaneous presence" accounts for the exteriorization of lights forming an objective sphere, while "compassionate resonance" accounts for the evolving capacity for self-reflection or consciousness which thus apprehends these external lights (the "subjective" pole). These dual facets of the Ground thus provide the possibility for recognition and non-recognition, the latter being in the eventuality that the consciousness (stemming from "compassionate resonance") should fail to recognize the lights (stemming from "spontaneous presence"), and thus stray just as we may mistake a mirage for water, a cairn for a person, or a rope for a snake:

"...Despite all these explanations of the foundation of straying being threefold, in fact there is no foundation of straying apart from this: via compassionate resonance grasping at spontaneous presence's objective manifestations, (living beings) circle endlessly through the six life forms within the cyclic existence's three realms. *The Garland of Precious Pearls* sums it up thus:

*Though the foundation of straying is explained in many ways,  
It can be summed up as spontaneous presence and compassionate resonance..."*

(iii) *The Uninterrupted Pervasion of all Life by the Enlightened Nucleus*: While "indwelling" (*Rang gNas*; literally "self-dwelling") can refer to the perfectly complete presence of these pure dynamics within the Ground as latent internal radiance prior to any rupture or exteriority, here it primarily refers to the presence of these in latent form within a single human life, the dynamics of which are detailed in the following. The relationship of "awareness" to "primordial gnosis"/"gnostic energy" is generally that the latter signifies the former's particular dynamics, though "self-emergent primordial gnosis" is identical to awareness. While awareness is discussed in the Great Perfection tradition as the one and only dimension throughout evolution, its dynamics are discussed by classifying primordial gnosis into a dyad, triad, quintet, and so forth, and thus here it is glossed as a quintet. "Spiritual Bodies" could be read separately from "gnostic energy", but since in fact the two terms are merely different ways to poetically image and conceptually isolate various aspects of the one and same energy, I have translated it as a single term and dimension.

(iv) *The Presence and Location of Primordial Gnosis within Us*: The gloss and VNT indicate that within all living beings, gnostic energy resides within the mandalic center of our "Tsitita" in a vertically stacked triad, referring to the gnostic energy of empty essence, radiant nature and all-pervading compassionate resonance. The "Enlightened Heart-Mind" (*Thugs*) signifies the Enlightened Mind or Spirit as the cognitive dimension of an enlightened individual in the triad of Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind, and is in contrast to what we usually term the "mind" (*Sems*), which is a neurotic activity wrapped up in dualistic delusions. In Tibetan, the honorific form of each term is used to indicate the Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind, while the normal non-honorific forms are used to indicate normal, non-optimally functioning body, speech and mind. Buddhist psychology as well as cultural

beliefs locate the mind in the heart, not the head/brain. In the present context, this line indicates that in ordinary living beings this gnostic energy is primarily present within their inner latent enlightened core of energy, rather than their normal distorted mental activity which is a mere derivative of this gnostic nucleus. *Tsitta* is the Tibetan transliteration of the Sanskrit *Citta*, normally translated by the Tibetan *Sems* as mind. However when Great Perfection literature refers to this untranslated term, it has a technical sense with the Sanskrit nature of the word giving it a certain evocative force, and thus I have left it untranslated here with the thought that it may become part of the English language in the specialized context of Great Perfection philosophy and practice, just as such words as mandala and mantra have previously become standard parts of the English language.

In particular the term *Tsitta* refers to the psychic heart region imaged as a palace of the peaceful deities' mandalically arrayed energy, and is associated with processes described as quiet, tranquil and calm. This is contrasted to the brain/skull imaged as a "conch shell house" that is home to the wrathful deities' mandalas, and associated with processes that are wrathful and fierce. These two mandalas together form the famous "one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities" which manifest in post-death experiences, and are described as such in the so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead* popularized in the West earlier in this century. In our current text these mandalas play an utterly essential role in the contemplative practice of Direct Transcendence, and are no other than stylized forms of our inner nucleus of radiant light normally present latently within all life, the pure energy which is present within us no matter how much we have obscured its active presence. Thus *Tsitta* connotes this pure psycho-physical energy fueling our consciousness, and as such is quite distinct from the ordinary mind (being related to it as the sun to its rays, or the sun to the clouds which indirectly derive from its function).

(v) *The Pathways of Primordial Gnosis within Human Existence*: The "four main channels" has two distinct references in the current work, and are discussed in detail in Chapter Five. The first reference is to the three main channels of our subtle energy body that are discussed in all tantric Buddhist works - the flavor, solitary, and all encompassing channels - along with a fourth channel called "the kati crystal tube" (or "luminous channel") which is found only in Great Perfection texts. Alternatively the "four channels" can signify a quartet of "luminous channels" unique to the Great Perfection tradition, namely the kati great golden channel, the crystal tube channel, the white silk channel, and the natural freedom channel (which Ati's gloss indicates). In general, all psychic energy (whether in its neurotic distorted/distorting form or its optimal pure form) is propelled by our inner winds, and since the luminous channels are a conduit exclusively for pure energy the annotation indicates that our gnostic energy is propelled forth from within these channels by the gnostic winds and thus emerges (see Chapter Six's discussion of the movements of gnostic light energy outwards in the Direct Transcendence visions).

(vi) *The Gateways of Primordial Gnosis within Human Existence*: The term "gateways" or "doors" is quite important in Buddhist thought, with the most basic usage being the encapsulation of human existence in terms of three "gateways" - body, speech, and mind. These are the principal thresholds of interchange between the interior psychic personal reality and the external transpersonal environment we find ourselves in, and from the flows of energy (physical, verbal, and cognitive) passing through them worlds of experience are articulated. Our body, speech and mind are thus openings through which the external worlds (the material environment, social reality, cultural heritage, and so forth) can enter our own being, and through which in turn can move outwards to engagement of them. In the Great

Perfection tradition, the "gateways" concern how the gnostic light energy normally present within all of us (the "light" of our awareness) can pass from our interior depths out into the external sphere, so that in this way it may be experienced in direct sensual immediacy, enabling us to awaken and "tune into" its enduring presence and vital significance - in externally visible intricate designs of rainbow light the reality of our psyche (and coincidentally the universe) is revealed. This occurs via our heart's radiant light emanating outwards through a slender channel of light running upwards to our two eyes, such that it is our eyes above all that act as the "gateway" for this inner luminosity to shine into sky, and thus form the exteriorized images of light that evolve into the four sequential visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation. Though the eyes are thus usually understood above all to be the "gateways", the current line says "and so forth", indicating that the eyes are the primary gateway for this inner gnostic radiation to shine outwards into external space, but not the only one (the prioritizing of the eyes is in lines with our general prioritization of the visual sense above the other four senses).

NGB and Ati read the "four gateways acting as the foundation of its shining forth", with a gloss reading "within your two eyes, two ears, and crown, the empty seminal nuclei lamp, the far-ranging noose water-lamp and the Spiritual Body of awareness' adamantine linked chains (manifest)". VNT2 86,6 specifies these gateways are "five", i.e. the two eyes, two ears, and Brahma's aperture at our head's crown. The gateways of our existence through which this light energy passes are our two eyes, two ears, and the crown of our head. The significance of the eyes and ears are easily understood - these two sets of sensory "doors" or passageways are the preeminent senses in human experience (particularly the cognitive aspect of it) as they account for all dimensions of language (written and spoken), most art, and are the primary sensory metaphors by which we image our life (most such images being visual and auditory) internally and externally. Thus it is natural to think of them as the threshold of gnostic light energy-flowing from the interior to the exterior, the vital points at which communication with the outside world takes place in the form of sensory input symbolically arranged. In the context of Direct Transcendence practice, sensation becomes radically active - rather than passively "receiving" sensory input which is then manipulated internally with cognitive and emotive "frames" or "cages", the sensed presences initially flow out from our heart's depth and only then do they retroactively impinge upon our senses as exteriorized images. As for the "crown", the image of this as one of the primary gateways for this gnostic light is based on the following considerations. The spot on the crown termed the "Brahma's aperture" refers to the top of our head where the hair swirls outwards, and should not be confused with the anterior fontanel (*mTshogs Ma*), i.e. the spot on the skull in front of this where the different plates of the skull intersect, and which in infants is still "open" such that their skulls are "soft" at that point (Tibetan medicine identifies it as four finger widths up from the hair line). The "Brahma's aperture" is thus located back from this fontanel at the very "peak" of our head, and is thus termed "Brahma's aperture" since "Brahma" is the supreme of gods who lives at the summit of the Cosmic Mountain ("Mount Meru"), which often is used to image the human body. As for "aperture", it is located above the center of the skull where the two bone plates of the skull are compressed together in an adult (initially somewhat separate in the embryo), and also marks the "opening" of the upper end of our body's central channel (it is the spot in our head that marks the exact vertical center of our body), and thus a major site of psychic activity (both gross nervous energy, and more subtle forms). As such, it is the main point at which consciousness-transference techniques aim to propel our consciousness out from our body into a pure land. Thus when our psychic energy is stimulated and begins to reach an optimal level of excitation, it is natural that the flow through the central channel would "overflow" at the upper opening, and "seep" through the skull at that point, which

happens to coincide with a juncture of bones. In general it is said (see Chapter Five) that a luminous channel named "naturally free empty channel" runs from the heart to the Brahma's aperture, which thus operates as the gateway for our awareness' radiation visually experienced as resembling minute linked chains of light. In this way the activated gnostic light overflows from our heart, and emerges through our eyes, ears, and crown in the form of "lamps", which ultimately light up and reveal the final significance and mystery of our own being, and that of the Universe, dissipating all darkness as the gateways to light are flung wide open. While normally we think of the door opening to the outside from which light floods in, here the light floods out from within and lights-up the external sky across the horizon. The eyes can be correlated to the physical dimension of life and Being (*sKu*) (we see forms), the ears to the verbal dimension (*gSungs*) (we hear sounds), and the crown to the mental dimension (*Thugs*), thereby linking up to the classical formulation of the three gateways as body, speech, and mind. These gateways and lamps form the topic of Chapter Six, where they are discussed in extensive detail, while Chapter Five as well as mentions the ears as being the gateway for the gnostic winds, playing off the term *gDangs* meaning both sound "tones" and the "radiation" of primordial gnosis. Thus we can speak of "four gateways" (the pairs of eyes and ears), or a quintet when the "crown" is included. For further references see "gateway" in the glossary.

(vii) *The Objective Sphere of Primordial Gnosis*: Once the gnostic light energy in Direct Transcendence practice reaches the critical momentum necessary to pass through your eyes' threshold, it is the sky opening up before us which serves as the clearing for the lights' presence to inhabit, while practically speaking a sky free of "conditions" such as clouds, mist and so on is the optimal background for these visions. Imagistically, the sky is reality's expanse itself, while all particular impure phenomena are adventitious distortions of its open, stainless vastness which the expanse itself is inherently free of. Thus against the backdrop of this vast expanse the following two practices must be experientially accessed to clear away the adventitious conditioning factors and distortions which have clouded our vision, and for this reason the sky is said to be this light energy's "objective sphere" (*Yul*; both in the sense of the sphere where it appears, and as an external perceptible appearance rather than an internal invisible latency).

(viii) *The Contemplative Way of Taking Primordial Gnosis into your own Experience*: The practices of Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence form the dyadic core of Great Perfection meditation, and as such are explained in detail within Chapter Eight. Breakthrough meditation is related to non-analytical contemplation of emptiness but is oriented towards the realization of all phenomena as self-presencing and self-liberated within the range of awareness, and emphasizes keeping an alert mind and senses so as to steady our usually wildly fluctuating awareness. Direct Transcendence contemplation centers around a series of spontaneously unfolding light visions that assumes the practitioner has previously developed a stable sense of vivid self-awareness via the former practice. Thus this dyad is the meditative correspondent to the Universe's dyadic nature of original purity and spontaneous presence, emptiness and manifestation, being no-thing and every-thing, as well as relating to the ancient Buddhist meditative dichotomy of techniques for developing concentration ("inner calm") and developing clarity of vision ("incisive vision"). Chapter Eight also discusses a wide variety of other contemplative techniques in the Great Perfection tradition which function as preliminary and/or auxiliary meditations designed to complement the main practices of Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence.



(ix) *The Signs and Measures of the Successful Spiritual Realization*: "Optimal measure" refers to the diverse signs which the practitioner must watch for to monitor his/her progress in a given meditative practice, ranging from intense experiences of bliss to strange images appearing in one's flesh. The optimal measure of the Great Perfection practices is in particular the inner attainment of four "assurances", mental states which derive from our successful mastery of these meditative practices and indicate our transcendence of neurotic oscillations between hope and fear. As such they are explicated in Chapter Nine thus (411,6): the assurance devoid of fear towards even the sufferings of the cold and hot hells; the assurance devoid of any dread of revolving in the pleasures and sufferings of cyclic existence; the assurance devoid of any hopes for the state of transcending misery; and the assurance devoid of any exultation in the enlightened qualities of the awakened state of Buddhahood. See Chapter Nine for an extensive treatment of the full range of signs and measures.

(x) *The Intermediate States where Primordial Gnosis Shines Forth*: "Intermediate states" indicate the liminal phases of human existence where we are in a process of transition from one state to another, ranging from the lengthy interim period between a given birth and death to the relatively rapid process of dying (passing from life to the post-death states). While there are various classifications of these intermediate states, in Chapter Ten Longchenpa structures his discussion around a quartet: the intermediate states of our present life (between birth and death), dying (between life and death), reality (between dying and rebirth processes), and rebirth (between initial post-death experiences focused on the trauma and contraction of dying, and consequent post-death experiences focused on impending rebirth). In the present context Longchenpa focuses on the dying and post-death intermediate states as affording opportunities for realization even if you were unable to actualize it doing the preceding lifetime. "The mother" images the foundational radiant light inherent in all sentient beings as their fundamental enlightened essence (though obscured by adventitious defilement), while "the son" images the experience of radiant light meditatively cultivated on the spiritual path by an accomplished practitioner. In dying and post-death intermediate states, a sharp practitioner instantly recognizes the former as it flashes before his/her eyes (like a child recognizes its mother and jumps into her lap), and thus unites the "mother" and "son" radiant light, which mingle inseparably as the liberation of en-lightenment is achieved.

The tantra's glosses give an alternative explanation of "mother" as reality and "son" as awareness, which both manifest clearly in post-death experience. When you die, if you have been introduced to awareness by your Spiritual Master and experientially familiarized yourself with it, then at death you recognize the mother (the foundational radiant light of reality) and proceed to original purity with the instant recognition of a child running straight to its mother without any need of pointing out or prodding. If you lack the introduction and experiential familiarization, then there is no joining or recognition, like a child separated meeting for the first time his mother from whom he was separated at birth.

(xi) *The Ultimate Fruit of Enlightenment*: "The site of freedom" is none other than the manifest fruit of Buddhahood, which forms the subject of the eleventh, and final chapter. The gloss indicates that "original beginning" refers to the site of freedom being within the primordial original purity, and in addition NGB reads "joined" in the instrumental, thereby indicating that the "joining of mother and son" is the means by which this site of freedom is attained. The question of exactly where to locate the site of freedom as related to the foundation of freedom is rather controversial, and is discussed in Chapter One.

## ANNOTATION-COMMENTARY TO CHAPTER ONE

9. Each of these eleven chapters is termed a "stage" or "level", which images the present text as a journey for the reader (with each topic/chapter marking a stage progressed along the intellectual/spiritual path to comprehending the universal drama it lays out), as well as the eleven topics themselves being eleven stages in the Universe's own internal drama from its primordial "beginning" to the evolutionary "end". Thus Longchenpa's use of "stage" in each chapter's title fits in well with the resolute evolutionary emphasis of the Great Perfection tradition, as well as reminding us of the critical importance of these topics' sequencing as the text's internal structure.

10. The Ground, the abiding reality of that which is real in its fundamental character prior to the emergence of Awakened Ones ("Buddhas") in consequence of their realization of it and the emergence of sentient beings in consequence of their non-realization of it: This phrase - "the Ground, the abiding condition of that which is real in its ultimate character" (*gZhi dNgos Po gShis Kyi gNas Lugs*) - reoccurs over and over in these texts, indicating the state of pure potential that precedes all galaxies' and life forms' actualized emergence, that which exists before there was anything (whether that emergence of actual forms is characterized as a "Big Bang" or otherwise). Not only is it an attempt to think cosmogonically back to the pre-evolution and pre-cosmos state of the Universe as such ("Uni-verse" signifying the final reality of all that exists, the enduring unity ("Uni") in all the diversity ("verse")), it is also an attempt to analyze and linguistically denote the primordial reality of all phenomena at any given point in time, the empty light-energy that forms the source, reality, and final destination point of all life forms, psychic activity, and material existence. Thus "Ground" picks out this pure potential of energy both cosmogonically and ontologically, in terms of our worlds' initial onset and ongoing reality, and as such is neither a dimension which becomes impure or materialized, nor a dimension which is ever absent, even though our awareness of it may be utterly unconsciousness. Obviously it has parallels with Heidegger's philosophical notion of "Being", Taoist speculation on the "nameless", Christian thought on the nature of the Godhead, and so on, being that which eludes all linguistic and conceptual attempts to frame and pinpoint it, as it is beyond any particularized and actualized forms. It is the wellspring of everything and reducible to nothing, the nameless from which all names derive, though paradoxically we have already named it, calling it the "Ground" despite the frequent assertion that all phenomena are "without ground" or "groundless".

"That which is real" (*dNgos Po*) could also be translated as "concrete things" (since the term usually means "things", but also can denote "essence" or "fundamental nature"). While here we could interpret it as referring to the Ground being "things" ultimate reality or this Ground being the "real" or "fundamental" Ground, it seems more likely it simply refers to that which has ontological "density" - in terms of our conventional perception we grant such status to "things" at hand, but ultimately such density only accrues to the Ground itself, the true "stuff" or energy of evolution. Thus this first section deals with the Ground as it is present beyond all evolution of particular forms and prior to the rupture of otherness, and this appositional remark can be viewed as emphasizing that the subject here is that which is present in our own current horizons as the final reality of all that is, and which will be returned to in full consciousness in the post-rupture enlightenment experience of Buddhahood. The movement into evolution termed "Ground-presencing" is not an absolute break, as this pure potential termed the "Ground" continues to linger on in these dynamic

actualized forms that we experience and which we are, the abiding condition primordially present within the concrete, that to which we only need to turn our attention to, and we become free.

*The manner in which the Ground-presencing manifests from the Ground:* the Ground-presencing must be understood in contrast to "the Ground, the abiding reality", with "abiding" connoting the seamless, timeless tranquillity beyond all movement, and "presencing" connoting the dynamic fury of evolution that evolves right within that tranquillity. While the Ground indicates utterly still pure potential without any particular life forms or worlds, the Ground-presencing signifies the fissuring worlds that rupture forth from that purity and are in perpetual movement. The Ground-presencing (*gZhi sNang*) is a compound consisting of two syllables - *gZhi* signifying "ground", "base" or "foundation" (a nominative form), and *sNang* signifying "appearance", "manifestation" or "presence" (which can have a nominative or verbal sense). The Tibetan language often has compounds without any particles explicitly indicating the separate terms' grammatical relationship, which can thus be quite difficult to render in English without losing the full range of potential meanings resonant in the compound. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that in literary Tibetan the line between nouns and verbs is not nearly as strict as in English, an ambiguity further exaggerated when such terms appear in condensed compounds, as well as the rather looser demarcation between singular and plural forms of nouns. Thus the term *gZhi sNang* could be translated "the Ground's appearance" or "the appearance of the Ground" (*gZhi'i sNang Ba*); "appearance within the Ground" or "appearing within the Ground" (*gZhir sNang Ba*), "appearances within the Ground" (*gZhir sNang Ba rNams*); "presencing from the Ground" (*gZhi Nas sNang Ba*); "manifestations from within the Ground" (*gZhi Las sNang Ba*) and so forth, while in fact both forms *gZhir sNang* and *gZhi'i sNang* are at times specified in Longchenpa's corpus. To maintain this ambiguity I have chosen to hyphenate the term in translation as "Ground-presencing", which indicates that it is a transformation-status of the primordial Ground without grammatically limiting the consequent nature of the relationship between "Ground" and "presencing".

At any rate, the term "Ground-presencing" is partially analogous to what we understand by the word "evolution" - it indicates that from out of the Ground's state of self-contained pure non-manifest potential utterly devoid of the diverse worlds of neurosis and enlightenment, there is a movement into actualization, exteriorization, and self-consciousness as in some sense the Ground embarks on an exploration of its own reality. Thus the initial manifestation of the Ground-presencing is the Universe's initial awakening and exploration of itself, as from "no-thing" comes "every-thing", from a point of pure potential comes expanding worlds of actualized manifestation, from singularity comes diversity, and thus the entire panorama of particular evolutions and involutions becomes possible. In simple language it is an attempt to pinpoint the beginning of the Universe in manifest actuality as we know it, to go back to that initial point when there was nothing at all aside from pure light-energy that contained everything in potential, an "original purity" within which infinite worlds of possibility were/are enfolded. Thus the term "Ground-presencing" denotes for a single localized consciousness ("the Universe's diversified capacity for self-reflection") the period from the moment that timeless pure potential becomes ruptured into exteriorized, actualized, and temporalized forms until it undergoes an en-lightening experience of self-recognition (called a "Buddha"), whereby the Ground-presencing dissolves back into itself and the Ground's ever-present empty reality. The crucial difference between the "Ground-presencing" and an enlightened one's subsequent dynamic activities, as well as the nature of the obscure impulse driving this initial transition from the Ground to Ground-presencing, from pure unfragmented

potential to the diversified and fragmented manifestations of worlds, are two subjects which will preoccupy us throughout the present text-exploration.

11. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 436,6; Ati2 169,1; VLDC explicates this passage on 250,7-251,1). This tantra takes the form of a dialogue between *The Totally Positive One* and an interlocutor, and as I mention above is the only one of *The Seventeen Tantras* for which we still possess a commentary (purportedly authored by the great Indian scholar Vimalamitra). I of course draw on this commentary extensively for the explication of these very terse passages, referring to it by the abbreviation VLDC (*Vima kLong Drug Commentary*).

12. The first topic thus deals with the Universe in its timeless pure potentiality before anything exists ("the Ground"); the second topic treats the nature of evolutionary manifestation that evolves out of the pure potentiality ("the Ground-presencing"); and the third topic treats the possibility of the Universe self-recognizing its own newly emergent manifestation right at the rupture, and thus becoming free as a perfectly self-aware Buddha ("the Totally Positive One's freedom"). The alternative possibility of the Universe not recognizing that manifestation, and thus becoming alienated into the wildly varying states of sentient beings, is treated separately as the central topic of the second chapter.

13. TCD devotes an entire chapter exclusively to the Ground itself (TCD1 274,4-294,7; Chapter Eight).

14. The "seven Grounds" are in fact seven classical views, or ways of describing, the primordial Ground, and as such are all found within the canonical Great Perfection scriptures. Despite each possessing a kernel of truth, each view is also liable to misinterpretations that entail ridiculous consequences, and in addition becomes reductionist when dogmatically asserted as the exclusive truth. Thus Longchenpa structures his discussion of each view with the following triad: first, he briefly articulates the particular view in a very literal interpretation; second, he demolishes such an interpretation by pointing out the absurd consequences that must follow from such a view; and third, he puts forth his own positive interpretation of the given description of the Ground, ferreting out the kernel of truth that the literalists have obscured with their dogmatic interpretations, and emphasizing its transcendent nature totally beyond thing-based thought and language. One cannot but help be struck by how the entire discussion resembles mere variations on how you may go astray with respect to Heidegger's ontological difference - the inescapable difference between Being and beings. It must keep in mind that the Ground refers to the primordial state of the individual as well as the essential condition of the Universe, the transcendental condition for the microcosm and macrocosm's very existence. As such, it is precisely that which eludes any attempt to intellectually or linguistically enframe and pinpoint it, resulting in these seven views' failure to capture its entire reality, despite each having a certain limited validity. Rather than attempting to reduce its vibrant reality to a single exclusive description that becomes no more than another intellectual theory ("I'm right, You're wrong"), such discussions are intended to impel you towards meditatively experiencing it for your self beyond all such limited "frames".

However, despite the inevitable inadequacy of language to precisely describe the Ground's pure and dynamic no-thingness, it remains true that as linguistically obsessed creatures we must nonetheless attempt to do so anyways, and as a result there are various positions as to the most valid way of describing the Ground. In our current context Longchenpa asserts the proper view to be seeing the Ground as "original purity" (which emphasizes its emptiness, or

openness), while other texts grant that status to the description of it as "spontaneous presence", and in TCD Longchenpa refers to it as "the inseparability of original purity and spontaneous presence" (TCD1 282,2ff). This also points out the complex relationship of TDD to TCD, which in many ways resembles that of a root text (TDD) to its detailed commentary (TCD). In addition to differing in their specification of the authentic description of the Ground, while TDD fails to criticize the seventh view (seeing the Ground as "originally pure") and thus presents only six defective views, TCD repeatedly treats this seventh view together with the other six as unsatisfactory (treating it as a reductionist view that overemphasizes original purity such that it resembles a sterile vacuum devoid of the light-dynamism necessary for evolution). After rejecting each one of these seven extremist views since they are intrinsically bound up with fixation on a partial realization of awareness' true reality (including specifying seven blindmen in the elephant analogy rather than six), it is the "Ground of indivisible original purity and spontaneous presence" that is put forth as the authentic view of the Great Perfection's own scriptures. While certainly there is no contradiction here when one carefully looks at the two texts side by side, it would seem that TCD's position is the more sophisticated, precisely formulated, and in accordance with the Great Perfection tradition overall, although TDD's emphasis on "emptiness" rather than "appearance" fits in more with the normative Indo-Tibetan tradition's tendency to see emptiness alone as the final ultimate truth.

15. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 152,3; Ati1 181,3; also cited by TCD1 275,5).

Since the Great Perfection can appear in any way, there are a great number of diverse assertions about it drawn from the specific particulars of such descriptions; yet within the view turned towards its abiding natural flow, it is revealed as neither this one nor two, and in fact is utterly free of any such characterizations at all: the Great Perfection simultaneously referring to a philosophical view, an experiential outlook, and an ontological state of affairs, and in particular here refers to the Ground as a plenum wherein all light-energy is perfectly complete, and as pure potential can appear as anything at all, depending on the perceiver's perspective. It's not the case that this completeness of the Ground is a distinct reality separate from our experience and psycho-physical being, requiring us to somehow turn the evolutionary clock back, but rather all activity and manifestation is in itself the Ground's own dynamics. Thus it isn't necessary to renounce anything, but rather we must simply recognize all energy's intrinsic perfection and freedom, seeing the unimpeded light-energy-flow that constitutes consciousness as well as the seeming solidity of our own corporeality and the materiality of the external environment and life forms. By breaking through to this fundamental dimension, energy is experienced free of our perceptual limitations and discursive demarcations, and the boundary between "self" and "other" fades in a cosmos of interwoven light-energy patterns. Thus all our activities and all appearances may be part of our meditative practice since all fully participate in this dimension, and hence there is nothing to renounce or correct. Not only can the Great Perfection appear in any way, but also whatever appears and however it appears remains the Great Perfection - the necessary concomitant of being no-thing is that in some sense it is every-thing. Thus the Ground can't be described in any one way, or two ways, or in any linguistically bound way at all; though in its giving rise to everything and all possible states of affairs, it may appear in all sorts of ways depending on the perceiver's own perspective, in reality as the condition for everything its dimension is beyond the entire notion of "things", and our entire linguistic, perceptual, and conceptual apparatus is hopelessly interwoven with the experience of "things". Once we make the self-other opposition and set up a universe of particular things/selves relating to each other as independent entities, then we naturally move into a web of context-relative

characterizations such as "family" and "outsider", "good" and "bad", "large" and "small", "beautiful" and "ugly", with commitments to particular sets of appearances and groups; while these tools have a certain conventional validity in living our lives day to day, when dealing with that which is no-thing, and thus can appear as every-thing, how do we interact with "it"? How can we think it, express it, refer to it, when all our tools for communication and interaction are based on the notion of "self" and "other" conceived as "things", and now we confront that which is both self and other, no-thing yet totally and perfectly complete right from the beginning? It is here that theory ends and poetic meditation upon our lives begins, utilizing our concentrated consciousness on a variety of image-techniques and perceptual deconstruction to reveal "the view turned towards its abiding natural flow", and thereby overcome the entitative-based limitations of our normal range of thought, language, and perception.

16. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 437,2; Ati2 169,3; VLDC explicates this passage on 251,1-266,1, divided into seven sections corresponding to the views of the Ground; also cited by TCD1 275,7). In the first line, the other three texts' reading of *Babs Kyis* is preferable to TDD's *Babs Kyi*. Each one of these seven views by itself is a partial perspective on the Ground, resulting from becoming attached to a particular intellectual filter that we fictively construct into an absolute. While the Universe's essence is singular awareness, the Sameness running through Awakened Ones' purity and sentient beings' impurity, the presencing its inherent dynamism impels leads to the possibility of self-recognition and non-recognition. In this way the foundation of straying, the basis for the illusion of plurality, is no other than the singular self-same Ground's own dynamism as it ineluctably leads to exteriorization and fissure.

(i) *In virtue of the Ground spontaneously presence, it appears as the nucleus comprising all variety*: this position asserting the Ground to be "spontaneously present" is explained on VLDC 251,2-254,4.

(ii) *In virtue of the Ground's indeterminacy, it appears with observable features involving the psyche's flickering movements*: this position asserting the Ground to be "indeterminate" is explained on VLDC 251,2-256,5. "Indeterminate" means that the Ground's nature isn't any one thing in particular with a definite essence that can be identified as such, and thus it appears in particular modes to us by force of an intellect imputing it to be thus (as if we are staring at white light, and the light itself changes color in correspondence to what type of colored glasses we wear).

(iii) *In virtue of the Ground's being determinacy within its own condition, it appears devoid of transmutation caused by mental activity*: this position asserting the Ground to be "determinate" is explained on VLDC 266,5-258,1. In this view, the Ground's own essence is always already totally determinate and definite independent of how we conceive it to be, and thus it is merely our own distorting conceptual activity that results in these different appearances or perceptions of it. These mind-effected transmutations have epistemological and not ontological force, as the Ground itself remains as it is in its own nature, totally impervious to any change or transference spurred by the manipulations of human cognitive processes. However, if this absence of change is asserted across the board as applying not only to the Ground's essence but also all its manifest processes as well, then the obvious change that we see all around us would no longer make any sense. In particular, given this utter dominance of the status quo, spiritual transformation involving the elimination of prior obscurations would be impossible, and in fact evolution from its inception would no longer be tenable.

(iv) *In virtue of the Ground's transformation-capacity, it appears to a mind's perception in accordance with the perceiver's actions:* this position asserting the Ground to be "transformable" is explained on VLDC 258,1-7, and the second line literally translates as "with exertion, it appears in observable features to the intellect". Here the Ground is imaged as a seed-potential, which gives rise to different "fruits" or effects in accordance with the context, and in particular is affected in its "fruition" or "appearance" by the actions or exertions of a given individual sentient being to whom it appears and is experienced by.

(v) *In virtue of the Ground being the essence of all that is possible, it manifests as the intrinsic essence of whatever appears:* These two lines relate to the position asserting the Ground to be "describable", and are explained in two parts on VLDC 258,7-260,5. Since the Ground is the essence of everything that appears, and within its range everything does appear, these thinkers hold that the Ground be validly described in any terms whatsoever.

(vi) *In virtue of the Ground's being variegated, it appears in the mode of individualized variety:* This position asserting the Ground to be "variegated" is explained on VLDC 260,5-262,6.

(vii) *In virtue of the Ground's original purity, it appears as primordially stainless:* This position asserting the Ground to be "originally pure" is explained on VLDC 262,7-265,4.

17. Since elsewhere "awareness" is in opposition to "dimmed awareness", and as such neither term has a foothold within the primeval Ground (being a dichotomous opposition applicable only at the level of the Ground-presencing), it may initially seem odd that "singular awareness" is often used as a synonym for the Ground. "Singular awareness", also referred to as "self-emergent primordial gnosis" or the "singular seminal nucleus", refers to the essence of awareness which spans the gap between consciousness and matter, and indicates the intrinsic intelligence of the Universe in its final reality; awareness is not an adventitious epiphenomena, but rather is fundamental to the fabric of all reality. Although when considered in its own innermost reality this essential grounding aware-ness is beyond description as any particular thing, its great completeness' dynamic movements manifest the vast panorama of worlds that we experience, and hence as viewed from the resulting different perspectives is seen in various manners (which are classically summed up in these seven broad categories). However, despite this pervasive fissuring of perspective, the singular essence of awareness remains beyond their conceptual and linguistic manipulations that attempt to classify it, sterilize it into a thing which can be exhaustively described, mastered, and eventually discarded.

18. *Zhan* must be corrected to *Zhen* on the basis of DD.

19. This opposition between (i) "those who adhere to the tenet systems" and (ii) "those who adhere to the spiritual path" relates to (i) those whose interaction with the tradition is primarily intellectual, and as such still very much confined within their linguistic frames ("adherents to the tenet systems"), and (ii) those who go beyond mere intellectuality to engage in the tradition's physical, verbal and mental meditative techniques, whereby they are able to progress along the evolutionary path in an particularly intense sped-up fashion and thus experientially encounter the Ground's original purity in direct immediacy beyond intellectual, second-hand experience of it ("adherents to the path"). In this way the former cannot transcend their fixation on the tenets' formal expression to get at the deep realization-

vision of the Great Perfection within their own life and cosmos (remaining stuck on various intellectual theories about the "Ground" as summarized here in six standard positions), while the latter do penetrate these depths, without immense consequences for their own body, speech, and mind, as well as the Universe at large.

This opposition is clearly illustrated by the analogy with the "blind men and an elephant". The blindmen (the number six corresponding not only to the standard classification of intellectual views of the Ground, but also to the standard classification of six types of living beings) are unable to directly see the elephant due to their lack of sight, and thus utilize their less developed sense of touch to try to gain a rough idea of the elephant's nature and appearance. Each grabbing onto different parts of the elephant and then extrapolating exclusively from that limited experience, they absurdly claim the elephant is flat (like its ear), round (like its legs), and so forth. In addition to this ignorance of the overall shape of the elephant, there are many dimensions of it in terms of its coloring that they cannot even conceive of with their lack of eyesight. Likewise, the intellectual theoreticians have failed to allow their awareness to develop to its full potential, and hence can only grope in the dark; additionally the image of blindmen is extremely resonant in the context of the Great Perfection, since in the Direct Transcendence practice the eyes and visual appearances are crucial. As for the mention of a "divine" elephant, or "an elephant of the gods", one must recall that here the elephant is analogous to the originally pure Ground, and hence the specification of "divine" reinforces that connection to the intensely pure dimension of the Ground.

STCP 327,2 quotes from *The Sutra on the Nucleus of Buddhahood's Rich Awakening*, which illustrates how difficult it is for ordinary beings to realize the presence of the Ground within them as the primordial nucleus of enlightened energy:

"...A king brought together many blind people in front of an elephant and ordered them, "Describe its particular characteristics!" Those who touched the elephant's trunk described the elephant with "It resembles an iron hook!"; those who touched its eyes described it with "It resembles a bowl!"; those who touched its ears described it with "It resembles a winnowing basket!"; those who touched its back described it with "It resembles a sedan chair or stretcher!"; and those who touched its tail described with "It resembles a cord!" While these blind people were not describing something other than the elephant, nor were their descriptions totally unrelated to the elephant, it remains true that they lack comprehensive understanding of the elephant's reality. Similarly, though you may describe this Buddha-nature in various ways such as "emptiness", "like a magical illusion", or "a radiant light", you lack any comprehensive understanding of its true reality..."

20. These are the last two lines of the above quotation from *The Tantra of the Six Depths*.

21. As I discuss above, Longchenpa's discussion of each of the seven views concerning the Ground are divided into these three subsections: (i) presenting the erroneous view of the Ground under discussion; (ii) refuting that position by showing the fallacious logical consequences it entails; and (iii) pointing out the kernel of truth involved in the initial assertions when properly contextualized and interpreted.

22. The analogous discussion can be found on TCD1 276,5-277,6.



23. While it is permissible to explain reality's expanse as all-pervasive, totally unfragmented, and spontaneously present, the precise connotation of "spontaneous presence" must be considered quite carefully. In Longchenpa's view, the attribution of "spontaneous presence" to the Ground indicates its utter fluidity being dynamic and not sterile, the source of all activity and not some still dimension utterly divorced from evolution. However if proponents of this view maintain that all the capacities and dynamics of the Ground are "spontaneously present" in the sense of actualized manifest forms, this will lead to the endless list of absurdities discussed above (usually given by pointing out how it conflicts to what we generally know to be the case). For this reason, Longchenpa repeatedly delineates "spontaneous presence" from actualized manifestation, going into the foreground, or into the ascendancy (*mNgon Du 'Gyur*); internal radiance from external radiance. While the rainbow-colored light (the Ground's "dynamic qualities") of a crystal (the Ground itself) may be spontaneously present as potential within that crystal, its actual display and form doesn't shine externally until the sun's rays strike the crystal (the eon of the Ground-presencing). This state of pure self-contained latent potential is technically termed "internal radiance", a light energy that is as yet completely non-actualized and non-exteriorized, while that potential becoming actualized into particular forms as the Universe expands outwards in a gamble/game is termed "external radiance", that self-same light energy now exteriorized into constantly shifting structures making up what we experience as "matter" and "consciousness". Thus in the context of the Ground Longchenpa stresses these dynamic resources being spontaneously present as internal radiance within the Ground, but resolutely rejects that entails any actualized movement or "things". Thus when he speaks of "spontaneous presence" in his ensuing refutation, Longchenpa is assuming that what is meant is spontaneously present in manifest, external radiance as when a sun's rays strike a crystal and its rainbow light leaps outwards.

24. TCD1 277,1 specifies the "causal impetus" as cyclic existence and the "fruit" as transcendence, while VLDC 258,5 makes a similar identification, labeling the "causal impetus" as sentient beings ("having an ordinary mind") and the "fruit" as the Buddha ("richly awakened", purified and unfolded to one's full potential"). Also TDD 166,2 identifies "causal impetus" as "distorted appearances, while TDD 164,2 mentions "freedom" as the fruit. Describing enlightenment as the "fruit" indicates not only that this is the crowning result of all spiritual and intellectual exertion (the "path"), but also that this complex and unprecedented state of a Buddha is the crowning event of all of evolution, the blinding moment when the Universe finally sees, waking up it self as itself, and ushering in the third eon balanced between the pure self-contained potential of the Ground, and the out of control dynamics of the Ground-presencing. Impure cyclic existence then is the "causal impetus" for this liberation not in the sense of forming its substance, but rather in that its inherent suffering and general unsatisfactoriness is the driving force which propels us down the path to freedom, its impure energy is the same energy (albeit at a reduced intensity) that functions in enlightenment, and finally its alienation and estrangement are, for most, the necessary precondition for the recognition of enlightenment to take place as the Universe awakens to itself, a re-turn in full consciousness enabled only by its preliminary fissuring that resulted in cyclic existence - we can only truly know when we risk, and when we risk the game is beyond control. Finally, in all animate life the nucleus of enlightened energy (Buddha-nature) is present as the core empty light-awareness from which their being stems, and is this Buddha-nucleus which acts as the seed-potency that can be nurtured into manifest enlightenment with all its capacities fully matured ("its fruit"). Thus this latent Buddha-nature is the direct substantial "cause" of a manifestly Awakened Buddha, its fruit which

ripens under the conditions of spiritual exertion, and in that it exists within all life forms, those life forms can be termed the "cause" of enlightenment.

Thus, in that cyclic existence and transcendence are related to each other in this way as cause and effect, and, as with all causes and effects, cannot temporally coexist with each other in a particular case (being different and distinct in their respective essences). For example, when considering a particular seed (the cause) growing into a particular mature plant (its fruit or effect), it is patently absurd for that same seed and the mature plant which stems from it to come into existence simultaneously - such a situation renders the whole terminology of "cause" and "effect" as absurd, since the entire notion involves a preexistent cause bringing about a subsequent effect (a sequential rather than simultaneous process). Yet if everything is spontaneously present right from the start, just such an absurdity is entailed as both the cause and its effect will come into existence together, totally contradicting our own experience and intuition. TCD1 277,1ff clarifies this passage in particular:

"...Such a view logically entails that cause and effect are simultaneous, yet if that is asserted, it is shown to be fallacious since when the cause (cyclic existence) is present, its fruit (transcendent reality) is absent. If the cause and its effect are the same, then it would follow that cyclic existence is transcendent reality, and transcendent reality is cyclic existence, since the two would be one. If this is asserted, their difference would be untenable, which is shown to be fallacious by virtue of purity and impurity both existing..."

25. Another aspect of this incoherency of everything being spontaneously present right from the beginning is that there could be no changes or transformations in the Universe. While our experience shows us that clearly there is ignorance in the world (expressed in Great Perfection terminology as "sentient beings have strayed due to their non-recognition of the Ground's essence"), if the externally manifested and recognized dynamic qualities of enlightenment are present primordially, then such alienation and estrangement would be impossible! This would also entail that the temporal occurrence of liberation, such as in the historical Buddha's attainment of enlightenment, would be impossible, as such strenuous spiritual, intellectual and physical exertion would be totally irrelevant, since all the facets of enlightenment would be manifest from the start. Alternatively, if this alienation were a primordial fact, then it would be an unalterable fact of existence, and its transformation in recognition (i.e. "enlightenment" or liberation) would be impossible (just as charcoal is intrinsically black, and cannot be "cleaned" to a sparkling white color by scrubbing it - see following example). In summation, with a Universe where every possibility was spontaneously present right from the beginning, such dynamic occurrences (vs. being a static *fait accompli*) as straying and clearing away would be untenable, since right within the causal impetus its fruit would always already be present (in this case transcendence within cyclic existence. Phenomena involving a shift or altered state would be strictly speaking impossible, as that would entail some state or quality that was previously non-existent coming into existence at a given point, and that in turn would contradict all qualities being spontaneously present right from the start.

26. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 438,4; Ati2 171,5; also cited by TCD1 277,2). VLDC explicates this debate surrounding the seven theories of the Ground in seven corresponding sections, with the present section ("the Ground as spontaneously present") found on 266,1-272,2. This passage starts out rejecting such a position, and gives a series of logical rebuttals.

*That very Ground of spontaneously present variety is not the genuine Ground itself, since if it were, it would entail the following: by sentient beings properly exerting themselves in meditation, the freedom of Buddhahood wouldn't ensue, since spontaneously present dimmed awareness would continue to pollute them. If you respond by saying they become free via the presence of awareness, won't even the fruit (of enlightenment) still not involve freedom?*

While this could also be translated as "this re-freedom of the fruit will not come about", I have translated otherwise in dependence upon TCD, NGB and Ati's readings (VLDC gives an extensive interpretation of this final line, but below I have only mentioned a simple interpretation). Ati reads *gNyis* for *Yang* (glossed as "simultaneous", i.e. the "cause" and "effect/fruit"), while NGB and TCD have 'Ang; NGB, Ati, and TCD read 'Gyur Ram for 'Gyur.

The first criticism points out that since dimmed awareness would be primordially spontaneous present, it would continue to be present no matter what meditations you might engage in to try to eliminate it, and thus freedom from its distortions would be impossible. A possible response to this is to assert that somehow primordial gnosis ("awareness") can function as an antidote to dimmed awareness, thereby accomplishing the "fruit" of the Buddha's enlightenment. Yet if this fruit is spontaneously present from the beginning and thus freedom always already present, what would a "subsequent freedom" (i.e. via spiritual exertions, we become free "again" in addition to primordial freedom) mean? In addition, from the point of view of cyclic existence being manifestly present within the Ground primordially, how could its continuing spontaneous presence ("black charcoal") now be changed into something that by definition it is not (i.e. transcendence, analogically "white color"), no matter what agent of cleaning (i.e. awareness) you resort to? Again there is this fundamental dilemma revolving around the consequent lack of change: if primordial gnosis is spontaneously present, there can be no alienation; if dimmed awareness is spontaneously present, there can be no enlightenment-experience, both consequences contradicting our experience.

27. Original purity indicates the utter emptiness of the Ground's essence, and emphasizes its as a pure potential totally devoid of actualized forms. This term is typically in opposition to "thorough purity" (literally "aspect-pure"), which applies to the Ground's nature of being pure light energy that naturally evolves into spontaneous form, indicating these light displays nevertheless are thoroughly free of distortion or materiality right within their very movement. Because of this continuing purity within its own innermost essence as well as within its own self-structuring, the Ground is pure light energy that remains potential rather than actual, internal rather than external, the very condition for all thought and language rather than an object for conceptual and linguistic manipulation. Thus, although the Ground-crystal has all these internally radiant dynamic qualities spontaneously operable within it as its natural luminosity (its reality being empty radiant light, or luminous emptiness), they remain uncommitted and unrestricted to any actualized evolution or conceptualization of themselves, whether as the distorted, suffering worlds of cyclic existence or the shimmering, fluid universe of a particular Awakened One (such as the historical Buddha Shakyamuni's temporal transcendence of all misery). Thus there is no ultimate "truth-status" that can be verified for either, as in our search for their origins and ultimate status their very structures dissolve under our gaze, the fate of all structures of "external radiance" as you enter into the twilight realm of the Ground's pure internal radiance, the crystal in shadowy depths as the sun sinks from sight. The Ground's pure empty luminosity ("emptiness" being its original

purity, and luminosity beings its "thorough purity") is the crystal out of the sun's rays' reach, devoid of external visibility despite its internal vibrancy, devoid even of the Buddha's dynamic qualities since they are manifest, and here is only pure potential. "Neither" can refer to it thus being devoid of cyclic existence and transcendence's duality, the duality of subjects and objects, or simply the fragmentation of duality in generally ("non-dual") in its seamless light-energy reality.

28. "Pure source-potential" (*'Char gZhi*) translates literally as "the ground of its shining forth" or "the foundation for its manifestation", with the connotation of "blueprint" or source. Thus while the Ground itself cannot be accurately described as having all its facets being spontaneously present in external actuality, it is the foundation of all such exteriorization, whether in the spontaneous presence of the Ground-presencing's evolution, or the climaxing process of the Buddha's enlightened display. All the dynamic qualities and light-energy of the Universe are present within its depth-radiance in latent form (as a "glow" (*mDangs*), just like rainbow light is contained within a crystal ball's inner glow; the spontaneous presence of this light-energy in exterior movement then issues outwards *from* that Ground (as "radiation" (*gDangs*), just as rainbow-colored light will leap out from a crystal ball when the sun strikes it. Thus in this context Longchenpa carefully delineates two distinct references for the term "spontaneous presence": the pure potential of all manifest dynamics and evolution (which applies to the Ground), and those manifest dynamics themselves (which applies to the Ground-presencing instead), while in that both usages are intimately linked to the Ground the Tantra says it "has an identity indicated by spontaneous presence". This need to constantly differentiate latency from manifestation, "internal radiance" from "external radiance", internal "glowing" from external "radiation", the still point from the moving world, and yet understand each pair's elements' subtle relationship with each other is a constant theme throughout the text. In particular, this crucial moment at which a transition from the former to the latter, from no-thing to everything, takes place such that the shadowy "Ground" now recedes in the face of the expanding light-filled universe of the "Ground-presencing", is a mysterious transformation that this first chapter continually circles around. It involves a curious need or impetus of the Ground to move outside itself even as it remains within itself, an intimation that the Universe has embarked on self-exploration because of an odd lacunae in its state of pure energy, that Being has felt the impulse to know itself through self-fissure into beings, that despite its omnipresence God itself has been overcome by the need to look into the mirror, gamble away its security, and play the only game going. In the succeeding pages we will look very carefully into this vital moment when the worlds we now know became actual, and the nameless became the named.

29. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 438,3; Ati2 171,4; VLDC 226,1 chooses to not comment on these lines, saying they are self-evident in meaning).

30. The analogous discussion can be found on TCD1 277,6-278,5.

31. This position involves asserting that the Ground as well as all that evolves out of it, is completely indefinite and indeterminate without any determinable rules, forms, or status, and thus appears as a given way merely due to a perceiver imposing such determination on what is actually a formless chaos. Yet this violates the very principles of reason, since to say it is anything involves determination, and any statement such as "it is the ground of cyclic existence" will involve determining it as such, and hence contradict your own position (TCD1 277,7-278,1). Whatever is conceived of as determinate (i.e. definitely the case) would automatically become indeterminate (since utter indeterminacy prevails), while

anything indeterminate would have to automatically become determinate (since otherwise its very indeterminacy would become predictable, and hence determinate), such that there would be an utterly inchoate swirling madness without rhyme or reason. Again the problem stems from viewing Ground as a "thing" among other things (with the caveat that it has this protean indeterminacy), ignoring Heidegger's ontological difference by applying thing-based thought and descriptions to that which is no-thing. The flip side of this problem, even should such utter uncertainty be logically feasible and/or conceptually coherent, is that everything would become totally uncertain and unpredictable as indeterminate randomness and continual vacillation holds sway - cyclic existence could in an instant become transcendence without any particular reason, a Buddha's enlightenment could instantaneously be reversed back into the impure experience of an animal, and so on ad infinitum. Yet this contradicts our own experience of regularly observable patterns in nature and life, as well as the basic Buddhist tenet of the definitive permanence of total enlightenment.

32. "Not taking hold of the site" indicates that since the Ground would be this highly unstable vacillating dimension, it wouldn't "maintain its own stability" ("site-take hold") as the abiding reality of the Universe, and thus we could not take hold of it as the ultimately secure "site" (*bTsan Sa*) in the enlightenment experience, the unchanging depth-dimension of our own being which would serve to secure the permanence of a Buddha's awakened state. With its utter instability (it being whatever you impute it to be) there would be no abiding, constant reality that could be accessed (such as fire is always hot, not sometimes cool), and hence Buddhahood itself would become a trivial, unstable matter that could not "take hold". A secondary connotation could be "the non-attainment of the spiritual levels/sites (*Sa*)", since there would be no determinate causal relations operative within the path, and thus within this complete indeterminacy spiritual practice would not lead to the attainment of the spiritual levels (which culminates in the enlightenment experience of taking hold of your "own-site" within the Ground).

33. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 439,3; Ati2 172,6; VLDC explicates this passage on 272,2-276,3; also cited by TCD1 278,3). "I" refers to the Spiritual Hero who is questioning the Buddha Totally Positive One on these matters. The *gLo* in the third line must be corrected to *bLo* on the basis of the other texts.

*If the real Ground were like this, the fruit (enlightenment) would vacillate, or, in other words, would come to include its own reversal:* everything would vacillate such as one thing would first be a horse, then suddenly an elephant and so forth, and in particular enlightenment would be true for only a brief time, then suddenly would become its un-enlightenment. In this way everything would come to involve its own opposite, water becoming fire, Buddhas becoming sentient beings, white becoming black without any external factors involved.

*The indeterminate would become determinate, and the determinate as well would become indeterminate:* TCD and Ati both read this line as basically repeating the previous line, while TDD reverses the ordering of the two terms. As for the Ground's indeterminacy paradoxically entailing that the Ground itself becomes determinate, TCD1 278,3 makes this clear - the simple proposition that the "Ground is indeterminate" must be determined as being exclusively true, and hence becomes a determinate fact or characteristic in and of itself. Thus, as mentioned above, its indeterminacy would have to become something determinate to avoid its determinacy as indeterminate, and yet once determinate it would have to again

become indeterminate to avoid out and out determinacy. Thus the entire position becomes a self-contradictory nonsensical farce mirrored by the above description's own farcical thought.

*Since there would in fact be determinacy by virtue of indeterminacy as such existing in itself, this view of the Ground is just like the extremes of karmic actions (and their results):* since this position asserts that the Ground itself is indeterminate, that assertion of indeterminacy itself would become an object of cognition, and hence determinate. This leads to the Ground being treated intellectually as a thing, and hence is merely a philosophic topic to be analyzed and discarded (as is the view concerning karmic mechanisms), and not a reality that should be made the focus of your meditative practices. The true Ground which we must contemplatively encounter cannot be explained as something, and its Great Completeness is not a thing we can epistemologically pinpoint, but rather a no-thing which can be experienced if only we enter a radically different way of knowing beyond normal perceptual, conceptual, and linguistic models. If you dogmatically assert indeterminacy exists as such, by virtue of asserting that, it becomes an object of knowledge which is ascertained and when it is ascertained you're talking within the confines of karma, the framework of cause and effect, and that is cyclic existence. So the upshot of the entire lengthy discussion in the commentary is that the realization of the Great Perfection is not an epistemological matter (not just another thing we can intellectually know and dominate), and thus we must go beyond intellectual distance to contemplative immediacy, thinking logically to thinking poetically, thought to experience.

34. Longchenpa indicates the true meaning of indeterminacy is that reality's expanse is a seamless flow of empty energy, which isn't some particular object of our knowledge that can be described as "This is it", "It is here", and so forth, just as the sky can't be pointed out by such limited, reductionist means, or cut up into determinate segments that aren't utterly artificial. Just as the sky is a vastness that opens up the space where all things may be, and hence is an altogether different category of presence, the Ground is totally devoid of any foothold for divisive thought and language which would chop it up into particular parts according to their biases. "Indeterminacy" is simply a way to point to how the Ground is precisely that which eludes all our conceptual and linguistic categories, though in its escaping all classification we must not then convert into some type of super-thing that constantly transforms into various shapes (like a super silly putty)- the last resort of entity-obsessed thought is to construe the Ground along the lines of a thing, but grant it extraordinary attributes such as the chaotic "indeterminacy" detailed above in a desperate attempt to avoid the final leap into the abyss of that which is no-thing. All these "frames" are simply transcendently insufficient to capture the Ground's reality, rather than being the case that the frames are sufficient but the Ground's constant transformations (into a succession of things) requires the matching frames to constantly be correspondingly shifted.

Although Longchenpa thus asserts that this light-energy source of everything can't be fixed or pinpointed as anything, unlike the above he doesn't apply this indeterminacy to the manifest worlds that evolve out of this source, and thus is able to maintain the conventional order. Illusions have their own coherence and internal structure, and while in their ultimate, utterly empty reality no words can suffice, at the phenomenological level of how we experience an obvious, and undeniable, determinacy is applicable at many different levels in interlocking, intricate structures. In this way it can be seen that Longchenpa, no less than the great Gelukpa founder Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), is extremely concerned with delineating the proper hermeneutics, and ways of knowing, that can be said to apply to the conventional realms of ordinary language, perception, and experience, and the ultimate dimension of pure

enlightened light-energy - how do we interpret/spark our experience of each, and what are the rules/models for those interpretations, and their expression in symbolic media? Perhaps their difference lies in Longchenpa's being more concerned that the latter (the Ground) is not reduced to the former (the worlds of manifest forms), while Tsongkhapa is often seen as stressing the former's limited validity, so that it is neither belittled nor confused in light of the latter's explosive revelation (who needs morality? who needs learning?). Thus while Tsongkhapa seeks to show that referential language and thought processes continue to have a conventional validity despite their rupture in the visionary's entry into emptiness, Longchenpa instead continues to root out the persistent tendencies of our referential language/thought to reassert itself subtly in philosophical discourses (embracing not only intellectual discourses, but also a solitary contemplative's attempts to sort out his/her own experiences linguistically as well as utilize language contemplatively in conjunction with meditations of light and silence), a project that simultaneously tries to linguistically encounter this twilight zone of emptiness through modes of language and thought that implicitly attempt to transcend their supposedly referential origins.

35. The analogous discussion can be found on TCD1 278,5-279,5.

36. This position thus claims that the Ground is determinate, or devoid of change, in its essence as well as its nature, the latter being how it manifests in particular ways (and interpretable in terms of both cyclic existence and transcendent reality). The point of mentioning "fire and water" here (as the analogy for how the Ground's ways of manifesting are determinate) is that fire and water both have their characteristic attributes which defines them, and which make it impossible that they could be interchanged with each other without ceasing to be what they are by definition supposed to be. Each is determinate in its own way, and thus are not mutually interchangeable or transformable into each other - water and fire can't coexist in the same temporal and spatial coordinates without negating each other (VLDC 276,6). For example if fire is fire, it is by definition hot, and it would thus make no sense to "transform" fire into heat; similarly fire could not become or be water, because then it would by definition no longer be fire.

Yet if cyclic existence and transcendence were totally unchanging in this manner, all status-change and evolution would be impossible - straying couldn't emerge due to non-recognition (TCD1 278,6), while attaining freedom (as opposed to freedom automatically pertaining from the start) would be utterly impossible since impure awareness would be determinate as impure, and not liable to any type of transformation or alteration despite your exertions on the spiritual path. If one tries to respond to this by saying cyclic existence's essence is transcendence from the beginning like fire's essence is heat, then "freeing" cyclic existence would be as pointless as "heating" fire (TCD1 278,7).

37. Since this position maintains that the Ground/Universe is totally invariant in its essence as well as its nature (with causes and effects already being fixed and in place right from the start), it is tantamount to accepting the non-Buddhists' view of an eternal, static and permanent "self" underlying all phenomena (whether referred to as "Brahma", "the godhead", and so forth), a denial of evolution, flux, emptiness, and the eternal dynamism of the universal process.

38. As pointed out above, since the mode of appearance of cyclic existence would be determinate and thus not liable to transformation in the enlightenment experience of the Ground's original purity; if straying's mode of appearance were liable to transformation, it

would be at least partially indeterminate and hence the original theses of total determinacy would be vitiated.

39. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 439,6; Ati2 173,5; VLDC explicates this passage on 276,2-279,1; also cited by TCD1 279,3; ). "Authentic nucleus" indicates both that such a description is not the authentic core teaching, and also that it fails to accurately describe the "ultra-pure" (*Yang Dag*) core of the universe in its final reality. Here translated literally as "core" or "nucleus", *sNyng Po* has a very dynamic connotation in the Great Perfection texts, with connections to the fiery core of the sun from which our galaxy's light derives, or the intimate nucleus of a cell from which all organizing activity stems. Thus it should not be understood as a type of sterile core or essence, but rather a dynamic nucleus which is the intelligence and vital source of a complex display deriving from it.

Since its own true condition is inverted (by the perceiver who determines it), analogically just as a white conch shell will itself appear yellow to the jaundiced eye, determinacy of both self and other fails to pertain to the Ground, which is thus beyond the confines of such determinacy: VLDC 270,2 first mentions this analogy of an ill person perceiving a white conch as yellow, and uses it to indicate how perceptions vary in dependence upon the perceiver, thus making it impossible to use the perceptions of a given person or group of people as the uniform standard of "truth". VLDC analyzes our current position of the Ground's determinacy into two broad possibilities - that this supposed determinacy is with respect to "self", or with respect to "other". It is in rejecting the latter possibility that the conch shell analogy is cited, since if this determinacy is a determinacy ascertained by others, it would follow that one person's ascertainment or perception should hold true for all others (analogically this would mean that all people would see the conch shell as yellow in accordance with the diseased viewer). Yet in fact each perspective contradicts the other, and since we thus have a variety of different "determinations" in mutual contradiction with each other (and each valid from their own particular perspective, i.e. they actually do experience it in that way), where can this abiding, utterly determinate Ground be located? The supposed determinacy of its modes of appearance is to be ascertained by a perceiver, and in that it is determinate in its mode of appearance to perceivers, there should be no discord between one's own perception and others' perceptions, no duality or difference in the perspectival ascertainments by self and other. Yet just as the conch is ascertained as white by one person and as yellow by another, without what one person sees being true for what another sees, this uniformity of perception obviously isn't the case, and thus the Ground's reality is beyond the limitations of such determinacy, whether with regard to self or other.

Ati glosses "its own true condition is inverted" by "if the conch itself is yellow, then by what will you realize that the conch's reality is not yellow?", and glosses "determinacy by both self and other fails" as "both your own perspective and the other's perspective fail", i.e. neither perspective applies since there is this manifest duality between one's own and others' perspectives. Thus "since its own true condition is inverted" (literally "own-place-opposite-distinction" could also be translated as "because of the differences between the perceptual and conceptual isolates of its own true condition" - its own reality is experienced in different ways by virtue of how each perceiver experiences it, "isolate" connoting that each experience is a partial, and conditioned perspective on its own reality. VLDC 277,1-2 interprets "determinacy by both self and other" as referring to a last ditch effort by the protagonist to salvage his position by saying this determinacy applies in a non-dual fashion to both self and other, which Vimalamitra rejects since "self" and "other's" coexisting simultaneously is



conceptually incoherent (being "self" negates its being "other", being "other" negates its being "self").

Thus if you consider the Ground's own reality in itself, this entire opposition of "self" and "other" dissolves, with neither perspective being definitively true - there is no definitive answer, no "clear and true" statement that would pinpoint its reality for all time beyond interpretation, beyond perspective. Once we ascertain the Ground from a particular conditioned perspective, the Ground is converted from a vibrant reality to an abstract object of thing-based knowing, and this perception itself then becomes valid in the framework of that perspective and cannot be refuted at its own level (just as you can't argue with the ill person that s/he does indeed see yellow). As discussed above, the true Ground must be contemplatively encountered, and cannot be reduced or captured by our normal modes of thought and language.

40. Longchenpa here gives the true meaning of the Ground's determinacy, which is that its empty essence remains without change or transformation in all contexts, whether there has been a non-realization of it (and hence conventional distortion) or a realization of it (whereby its pure dynamics are optimized into the manifest activities of a Buddha). Thus it isn't the case that the Ground is somehow in itself different in these two contexts (straying and freedom), as its pure empty light energy remains the abiding reality of all that is, yet simultaneously this unchangingness can't be construed as a determinate thing that we can conceptually pinpoint, nor does it apply to the constantly changing evolutes that stem from it. Since its dynamic manifestation is in constant flux, and in particular affords the constant opportunity for consciousness to self-recognize or not, in these conventional realms it is possible to purify your own experience/perception via exertions on the spiritual path. Thus Longchenpa does not accept those who falsely reason from the Ground's constant essence that freedom is automatic, and hence purification of obscurations necessitating strenuous exertion is pointless - it is essential to keep a sense of the appropriateness of a given analysis in relation to the level/dimension it is being applied to, and above all with regards to the distinction between the ultimate no-thing and the conventional worlds of things. Though ontologically purity is primordially, phenomenologically it is true that we experience impurity as such, and hence in terms of own experience it does make sense to speak of purifying ourselves through exertion.

41. The analogous discussion can be found on TCD1 279,5-280,4.

42. Similar statements are quite frequent, describing reality as the seamless abiding condition of all phenomena, and as such devoid of any oppositions such as pure/impure, good/bad, and so forth, yet operating as their protean source since via its dynamics anything at all can manifest.

43. If it is the abiding reality, or condition, of all phenomena, then it must be of a single constant essence, just as fire's enduring characteristic is heat, and emptiness is always that which is devoid of substantiality. The very meaning of "abiding" or "single essence" is contradicted by this utter instability that such a position ascribes to the heart of the Ground.

44. At the spur of the moment, manifestly non-free sentient beings (shackled within cyclic existence) could become Awakened Ones (who are already freed from those shackles) without any particular conditions (such as meditation) driving that transformation, and vice versa. This would make a mockery of the entire evolutionary emphasis of the Great

Perfection texts, as well as the entire network of cause and effect with its uniform rules and mechanisms which we observe so clearly in our own experience, and history.

45. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 440,1; Ati2 174,2; commentary is on VLDC 279,1-280,7; also cited by TCD1 280,3). Obviously this assertion of "transformation" is quite similar to the previous assertion of the Ground being "indeterminate", and hence the problems with such a position are quite similar (in particular the problem of the ultimate reality accessed in attaining the Buddha-fruit becoming an endless succession of things that we can never have definitive realization of (see Ati's gloss on the first three lines)).

46. The Ground is the constant, enduring reality of the macrocosm (the Universe as such) and the microcosm (individual worlds, such as the experienced human world), and remains as this pure light energy nucleus throughout all. Thus when our distorted perceptions and manipulations dissipate, we are free to see what has always been our own true condition, just as fleeing clouds reveal the sun that was always there. If this condition were itself in constant flux and transformation, then there would be no enduring dimension or reality that we could access in this way, and enlightenment would become impossible. The Universe itself then would have no coherence or viable structure, while its precise involutory and evolutionary self-exploration would be replaced by a mad carnival of flashing images devoid of rhyme or reason. There would be no definitive reality remaining within the panorama of the worlds' displays, no enduring emptiness, no telos to the entire process, no intimate dimension that we could finally adhere to because it is utterly our own, no communality of pure unfragmented energy wherein all our manifest forms and experiences would equally dissolve into a Sameness which has no names, no fluid immediacy beyond all fabrication and biased commitments.

47. The analogous discussion can be found on TCD1 280,4-281,2. VLDC 259,6-7 and 260,4 give a clear analogy to clarify this position that "the Ground may be described in terms of anything whatsoever": when you put a crystal within a red cup, you can describe it as being red since it then appears red. However, if you put that same crystal in different colored cups, you can equally describe it as being blue, white, multi-colored, and so on, all of which are valid descriptions in their respective contexts. In the same way, this position claims that the Ground is the essence of whatever appears (which is its presencing-process), and thus it can be described in terms of these various appearances as they appear.

48. As TCD1 280,5 indicates, within awareness' reality there are no restrictions as to what can and can't arise, and there are no partializing limitations that the Ground imposes on what manifests. Thus this could also be translated as "all things in their essence are without ground, and manifest in a utter free flow without restrictions", or "since things arise without restriction in the groundless essence of all". "Substantial" things are without any concrete foundation or basis, and hence in that this "Ground" is in fact an abyss rather than a foundation, anything can diffuse out from it without any restrictions at all being applicable - the abyss is amenable to all. However, this position is still talking the Ground as a thing, as if Being could be reduced to the sum total of beings (all "things" in their numerical totality being the Ground), and hence yet again the ontological difference is being run roughshod over.

49. Construing the Ground as no other than the totality of all things, one after another, not only violates the principle of the ontological difference, it also entails a the Ground being inaccessible to our comprehension ("enlightenment") since it will be an infinite number of

entities corresponding to the infinity of possible and actual things in the Universe. "Limit" (*mTha'*) means that not only that this endless (*Thugs Med*) list of things couldn't be known in its entirety, but also connotes that the Ground itself couldn't be the ultimate limiting state (*mThar Thug*) of all experience and phenomena since we would be reducing it to the mere status of those conventional things' totality.

50. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 440,5; Ati2 175,3; VLDC explicates this passage on 280,7-284,5-286,7; also cited by TCD1 280,7).

*Yet all of that seems to be a partial presentation:* this line is slightly ambiguous, and could also be interpreted as this teaching being "merely a propelling force for those with partial understanding", or even referring to all those descriptions as "partial and biased propositions". At any rate, the basic thrust is that the Spiritual Hero speaking doesn't see such a position as having any real coherence.

*Since it involves establishing the Ground on the face of everything's superficial being, such a position entails the Ground being endless:* VLDC 285,1 glosses "everything" with "pure and impure", while Ati glosses with "it's not determinate as purity or impurity, such that purity and impurity are mixed together". Since the Ground is being construed in terms of the mode of existence of particular things (*Yin*) rather than the abidingness of all existence (*gNas Lugs*), it is given attributes and understood with standard epistemological models. However, with such an approach you will never arrive at the abiding reality of this no-thing, since this Ground which is no Ground cannot be encountered by attempting to treat it as a thing, or the sum total of things (the ontological difference). These people are only concerned with things, and what things are - it is, or isn't; this exists, that exists - and thus they can only deal with partial things to which attributions can be easily attached, while with the whole (not the totality) they are paralyzed, and thus retreat to the partializing presentations they know and love. They give this descriptive quality to the Ground, but remain on the surface in the superficial appearances of things, and are unable to get to the Ground itself in its abidingness, as they become lost in the endlessness of these things fabricated by the conceptual flow. If the "Ground" is whatever things you desire it to be, then you can never approach its limit, since its limit would be equivalent to never ending conceptualization; thus the Ground can't be established as the abiding reality, and you can never realize it, as your surface investigations spiral on down the endless reaches of cyclic existence.

51. Although no metaphor or example can totally capture the Ground - they are all inevitably partial, visible/audible attempts to evoke the invisible Ground, with the result you necessarily remain within the framework of the presentation - such imagistic language/thought is still the best intersubjective means available to suggest, and lead us to, the Ground's final reality. Thus when utilized in full consciousness of its inadequacy, as well as the appropriateness of hermetic, self-referential language rather than logical, thing-referential analysis, linguistic images are not to be forsaken, and indeed are the core of a vast body of Great Perfection literature, even though in the final analysis they can only suggest, not delineate; guide to, not capture (VLDC 288,1-2). See KGNT1 64,5-65,5 for a very clear discussion of the limitations of such analogies, in that context treating the image of "emptiness" as the "sky" - while useful in terms of evocation given some striking partial similarities between the two, in the final analysis there is no "real similarity" between the two (as space is purely empty, while emptiness is endowed with awareness).

52. The analogous discussion can be found on TCD1 281,2-6.

53. Their assertion claims that the Ground's own identity is varied, and that its essence directly arises as any phenomena whatsoever.

54. Since the Ground would itself become plural, a multiplicity of itemizable things, it couldn't serve as the basis for freedom - with the Ground's multiplicity, you could run into anything in your attempts to realize its reality, and there could be no stability or definitive realization in its heterogeneity. Also the Ground couldn't serve as the utterly pure "own-site" which we enter in enlightenment-experience, and where all our illusions dissolve: the Ground itself would be fissured into the pure and impure, and thus it would be no refuge at all from the wild turbulence of cyclic existence. Primordial gnosis is about knowing as known, rather than being like a referential model where you are certain about something independently existing with perceivable facets.

55. Ascertainment and realization refer to ascertainment and realization of the Ground's essence, since you will just be interpreting beings and their patterns, without ever entering the presence of **Being** itself. Again these revolve around ignorance of the ontological difference - the attempt to treat **Being** (the Ground) as if it were like beings, or the sum total of beings, when instead it is precisely that which eludes any attempt to delineate it, to capture it with frames we use so efficiently in dealing with "concrete" things and beings.

56. TCD1 281,1-5 makes this discussion clearer by structuring it around three possibilities pertaining to the precise nature of the Ground's diversity: it can apply to external appearances, internal consciousness, or the conjunction of both. If one construes it as applying to external appearances, then the single ground will become exteriorized diversity which is in constant flux, and thus totally nonviable as the unchanging abiding reality beyond all actual forms. Rather than being **Being** as such, it could only be then a series of some-things (a being or beings) that could move from one place to another, sometimes this, sometimes that. Alternatively, if one construes it along the model of cognition's diversity, then it would become awash with constantly fluctuating emotional distortions just as cognition manifests all varieties of plurality instantaneously. In its trembling instability brimming over with these pollutants, it would be no different than any other phenomena of cyclic existence, and surely not the transcendently pure Ground beyond either cyclic existence or passage beyond. Rather than the Ground being the secure citadel of **Being** beyond change and turmoil, it would be this bubbling pool of energy boiling over with pollutants, cleansers, etc., awash with a new flood of concepts and emotions every instant, just as with the highly unstable, constantly transforming ordinary mind we all know so well.

57. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 440,4; Ati2 174,6; VLDC explicates this passage on 280,7-284,5; also cited by TCD1 167,4;). This passage is again spoken by the Spiritual Hero acting as interlocutor with the Buddha Totally Positive One. "Varied" is expressed as "variegated", literally meaning "multi-colored".

*Yet this also isn't feasible in terms of my own position:* I have translated this on the basis of TCD and Ati reading *Phyogs Dang* rather than *Phyogs Nas*, and the commentary's *bDag Gi Phyogs*.

*This assertion's faulty consequences are like this: by force of its essence manifesting in accordance with various descriptions, its effects or "fruits" would be differentiated, and there would be internal contradiction with the resultant multitude of claims about it:* following

VLDC's exegesis (281,1-6), if the Ground is in fact variegated, there are two possibilities: (i) it's variegated in terms of change (281,2-5), or (ii) its variegated even though it is unchanging and unfabricated (281,5-6). The former involves a line from the tantra not quoted by TDD or TCD (*rGyu gCig 'Bras Bu Tha Dad Par/Pas*), while the last three lines quoted by Longchenpa here are indicated as analyzing the latter possibility. Change would mean the Ground somehow kept alternating between different things or appearances, while "unchanging" would entail that it from the start consisted of different and distinct parts that constituted its "variety". The commentary on the latter possibility is as follows:

"...If the Ground is asserted as variegated though unchanging and unmodified (i.e. since it can't be one essence changing, its diversity must be due to the Ground having a number of distinct parts, each with their respective features - unchanging vase, unchanging pillar, etc.), then the fault of the Ground becoming differentiated applies (i.e. the Ground is a pot, vase, white, yellow, and so forth). Because of this, by virtue of its essence appearing in accordance with whatever (*Gang Gis* in commentary and *Ati, Gang Gi* in TDD and TCD) descriptions are made ("it is also white" or "it is also yellow"), there will be no freedom within a single dimension due to its effects being differentiated. The assertion of the Ground as being variegated is like that. Since the statements of the multitude of assertions about it will mutually impair each position, this view isn't valid..."

Thus, although variegated modes of presencing arise from the Ground, it is not the case that the Ground itself can be reduced to those modes of presencing. Should the Ground's essence appear in these varied ways without itself changing, it will mean as a result that the Ground itself is differentiated in accordance with each part. However then there would be no one single "dimension" or reality that you could realize and become liberated within, while all the resulting assertions about the Ground (each stemming from a distinct part of it) would mutually contradict each other. The Ground's essence is actually singular, though the presencing stemming from it involves different perspectives and appearances; but if one takes these different perspectives to reflect the Ground's own ultimate reality, they will all contradict each other and no coherent formulation of the Ground will be possible. The Ground would again be reduced to the status of things, a multi-faceted "super" thing with a wide range of effects that we could describe forever, but no clear cut singular dimension which we can realize, and become free within.

58. This triad can be easily clarified by a particular example. If that which is characterized is given as "monkey", then it is this term which must be defined and clarified. The particular basis for characterizations would then be an individual, existing monkey, say the one called "Ringo" living in the San Diego Zoo, which is an "illustration" of this "definiendum" ("monkey"); "monkey's" "characteristics" or "definition" would then be having a tail, warm blooded, and so forth. In the case of the Ground, then, the thing to be characterized would be the generic concept of the Ground; its characteristics would be the special qualities or attributes involved in this concept as characteristically applying to the given thing; and the grounds for this characterization, i.e. particular instances of the Ground. However, while this triad serves well as an analytical tool with regards to entities, the Ground is precisely that which is no-thing, a dimension rather than a thing, and hence such entity-based analysis can find no foothold in describing it. It is pure seamless light energy, and as such cannot be dealt with by our linguistic and conceptual frames despite its being the pure potential-source from which all flows, all of which are based upon an intuitively referential model of the universe, that significance derives from a "label" or "tag" being attached (however artificially) to some "thing" that exists out there. To the degree that we self-consciously embrace an alternative

model of language and thought (a "hermetic" or "coherence"-based model that acknowledges the ability to make contact with the cosmos beyond its own frame of reference, yet understands that cosmos to be fluid processes rather than solidly existing things), then perhaps with "poetic thought" unconcerned with such logical devices it may still be possible to linguistically/conceptually zero in on the Ground, and while exhaustive definition may be impossible perhaps meaningful communication of its reality is still a practical possibility.

59. As mentioned above, TCD first rejects the position which exclusively treats the Ground as original purity (TCD1 281,6-282,2), basically treating it as an assertion of utter and sterile emptiness devoid of "internal radiance" dynamics, and hence utterly incapable of being the source of all of evolution, and in particular the pure gnostic energy of an Awakened One. Longchenpa then proceeds to set out the authentic view of the Ground as the indivisible unity of original purity and spontaneous presence in the remainder of the chapter (TCD1 282,2-294,7).

60. While original purity is the Ground's emptiness-dimension, spontaneous presence is its appearance-dimension, the latter being empty pure potential's inherent radiation which shines forth as the unobstructed radiant clarity wherein anything at all can light up. This dyadic and indivisible nature of the Universe means that it can be neither termed "existent" or "non-existent", since its primordial emptiness ensures it never becomes a "thing" fragmented and isolated out, while its unceasing dynamic light-flow is transcendent of an sterile, inert nothingness. Thus "empty radiant light" (*'Od gSal sTong Pa*) is an inseparable integration of these two dimensions (the Ground's empty essence and radiant nature), an integration is expressed as "the thoroughly pure reality".

61. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 331,1; Ati2 455,3).

*By force of its essence's original purity, its nature is spontaneously present:* NGB and Ati gloss original purity as "the unimpeded and transparent essence devoid of all stains", and spontaneous presence as "present in primordial gnosis' depth-perfection/completeness".

*Beyond levels, partializing restrictions, and segmentation, it is devoid of existence, non-existence or something that can be see:* "levels" simply means it isn't a thing with a specific site or level on which it can be located, as well as connoting the sites of cyclic existence and transcendent reality along with the many stages or sites (spiritual and other) that we discriminate within these two dimensions. In essence, all such notions of restrictions, segmentation and so forth involve things which we can conceptually and linguistically delineate in outline, and as such are inapplicable to that which is beyond things, the no-thing in-visible to ordinary perception. Ati glosses the second line as "no concrete substantiality that is permanent or annihilated can be apprehended therein".

*It isn't within the scope of linguistic or logical analyses, nor is it something single, dual, or even an itemizable object at all:* Ati glosses "single" as "transcendent reality"; "dual" as "cyclic existence" (i.e. with transcendent reality); and "an itemizable object" with "rootless awareness appearing objectively in a plurality".

62. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 441,2; Ati2 17,2; VLDC explicates this passage on 287,2-288,1).

No phenomena, and no conceptions of phenomena: not only are there no things such as a "vase" within the Ground's range, but even the mere perception or thought of "vase" is absent.

There is nothing, nothing whatsoever, nothing at all: VLDC 287,6 explains this triad "nothing, nothing whatsoever, nothing at all" in terms of three distinct references, which together entail that the Ground is totally beyond any type of description: "nothing" is glossed by "within its essence, nature and compassionate resonance there are no manifest objects at all"; "nothing whatsoever" is glossed as "objects and awareness' primordial gnosis are absent"; and "nothing at all" is glossed by "it is devoid of any type of mind and mental operations".

63. Longchenpa's point is that although such oppositions have no ultimate validity within the Ground's domain, in that we experience them from our perspective they retain a phenomenological validity, and as such cannot be dismissed as totally meaningless. Dreaming serves as the perfect analogy, since while dream images aren't substantially existent outside the dream's parameters, they are vividly present to the dreamer, and capable of stirring up his/her emotions and physical state - lying in bed lost in our own dreams, our hearts race, sweat breaks out, orgasm is experienced, the wild fear of a dark nightmare, the exhilaration of flying through the sky. Thus, although in reality there is nothing but the self-presencing awareness (just as there is only the dreamer's own mind and body), its playful dynamics result in a wide diversity of experiences, and from those experiences' perspectives these oppositions are all to real. Thus we mustn't belittle the distinction between the way things appear (*sNang Tshul*), and the way they really are (*gNas Tshul*); when we search for their ultimate status and origin nothing survives, yet their presence is an inescapable fact that we must confront. The dynamics of awareness whereby its singularity becomes an experienced multiplicity are the subject of numerous discussions, and the various terminological expressions evolved to explicate it are dealt within the glossary under "play".

64. "This primordially coming to the fore" could also be translated as "they (the gnostic energies) come to fore within this primordial-beginning" in the context of being separated from the adventitious stains that obscure them. Although these Spiritual Bodies are primordially present, and thus might lead one to be confused as to how sentient beings could be ignorant of them, enlightenment involves bringing these spiritual energies into full blown ascendancy in addition to being "present", so that instead of being a latent background dimension they move into a fully energized foreground-state. when these forces thus become fully manifest, we term it "freedom" as the dream visions of self-imposed enslavement cease, and our long nightmare of solitary, cut off selfhood oscillating madly between desire for union and desire for dominance fades away in the warm glow of the new day's sun.

65. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 441,6; Ati2 176,6; VLDC explicates this passage on 288,2-291,4).

The Teacher replied: "Oh Great Hero, because the Ground's nature is spontaneously present, it too manifests in unceasing play: the Teacher points out that the Ground is not merely empty, but also vibrantly dynamic with its spontaneous presence of the Spiritual Bodies' and gnostic energies' dynamic qualities. Thus rather than being mere stillness, it is in constant movement as it unceasingly "plays", "play" connoting how singular awareness sets up a self-fissuring game of seemingly separate players ("evolution"), which despite its risks (we forget the game) remains a "play" and not a deadly serious world of "self" and "other"

beyond all contact with each other. "Unceasing" could also be rendered as "unobstructed", and indicates that this play is constant, and within it anything can arise - just like any reflection can play across a mirror's surface without any being a priori blocked (if some could arise and other's couldn't, you would instead have an obstructed or restricted space), this playfulness is free flowing, and hence can emerge as cyclic existence's distortion or transcendent reality's freedom, as well as all the various within each. Thus in this gap enabled by the Ground's dynamic exteriorization of itself, the possibility for its losing itself in the shuffle and forgetting its own singular unity looms, and thus dimming awareness evolving into sentient beings manifests.

*The Teacher replied: "As for these sentient beings, since the essence is originally pure, Their freedoms also manifest playfully":* the Teacher points out that since emptiness is utter, not even freedom has any distinct truth status within its pure energy-essence, and thus in the Universe's spontaneous presence only exists within awareness' play, where it is alternately present and absent. In that it has no essence outside of that play where cosmos are dreamed, should we fail to recognize our own essence and dream we are not free, then within that dream we indeed are not free and freedom can be experienced anew by awakening from that dream.

*The Spiritual Hero questioned him yet again: "Yet with its essence being originally pure, there's no need or rationale for its being spontaneously present as well; alternatively, by virtue of being spontaneously present, its original purity comes to naught". The Teacher replied: "The Ground's mode of abiding can't be expressed in words by anyone, and thus is beyond verbal and written expression; since it can't be established as having an essence of any type, saying "it's originally pure and spontaneously present" is impervious to such verbal attacks:* the upshot of these lines is that the Spiritual Hero senses a logical problem here, that these two attributions of "emptiness" and "appearance", stillness and movement, to a single thing (the Ground) are in contradiction with each other since they are normally construed as opposites (and how can opposites be construed to a single thing?), and as such cannot possibly both be ascribed to the Ground simultaneously. The Teacher, however, refuses to be drawn into a debate based on the Spiritual Hero's two unstated presumptions - that the Ground is construed as a "thing", and that any linguistic utterance must be reduced to logical assertions with analytically discernible "truth claims". Since he doesn't pretend that he has logically established the Ground's reality, or that "original purity" and "spontaneous presence" are syllogistically verifiable predicates, he refutes the Spiritual Hero's attempts to find logical fault with them. Of course the natural response of the thing-based thinker to such statements is to automatically feel "Then you're not saying anything at all! Who can talk/think with you?!", and resort to last ditch efforts to force the other into line with his assumptions by such statements as "But even your denial of making a logical assertion, that itself is a logical assertion!"

Yet, as VLDC 290,3-291,4 makes quite clear, the Teacher denies making claims to be evaluated on the basis of logic and referentiality, and hence rejects the assumption that his line of thought is vulnerable to an attack based on such thinking. Even so he does very much want to preserve his right to say something, and the very fact of his engaging in dialogue shows that he does believe it possible to "think" with him, though in that process it may be necessary to revolt from what we have thought "thought" is. Implicitly, Vimalamitra is making the case for an alternative model of philosophical thought that can't be reduced to analytically logical claims and counter claims, yet has its own rigorous "logic" that has closer analogies to the "thought" of a poem than that of a syllogism. Thus although conventionally



sylogistic devices are resorted to along with aphoristic analogies, striking images, and pseudo-dramatic structures, the driving force and internal rationale of his line of thought is not syllogistic in nature but rather hermetically poetic. Its rules and rigor derive from an ongoing linguistically mediated encounter with the depths of our own being and universe, "hermetic" in that it is self-referential in its refusal to construe the encounter along the lines of a perceiver and a divorced other-thing, and "poetic" in that it derives its "logic" from the encounter rather than apply it as a predetermined structure forming the transcendental conditions for knowing anything. In this pointing out of the limitations of formal logic and its "perfect" language, and the possibility of thought/language continuing beyond those limitations, the connections with Heidegger's later works on what may be termed "poetic thought" should be obvious - both refuse to be reduced by the traditionalist logician and epistemologist's claim to supremacy, yet simultaneously also insist on the right to their own brand of "logic" (in the sense of linguistically expressed rigor in thought that can be intersubjectively accessed) and "epistemology" (again, in the sense of rigorous knowing with intersubjective validity) beyond thing-based and syllogistically expressed referential thought and language. To properly interpret what is going on here, we must seriously ask ourselves the differentiation between what has been traditionally expressed as "poetry" and "philosophy", and what the meaninglessness of syllogistic logic and referential models of thought in the former might entail for the latter. When we do so, it appears the traditional strict demarcations that the guardians of "poetry", "theology", "philosophy", and so on have jealously protected are more expressive of the need for institutional perpetuation than any internal reality.

"Spontaneous presence" here is on the lines of the Buddha's spiritual activity. If everything is already pure there's no need for it. On the other hand, if it is spontaneously present, there is no point to the original purity. Here, as usual, original purity is the emptiness dimension, and spontaneous presence is the appearance dimension. Recall that with the Ground, the essence of Awareness, there is neither straying nor freedom; but conventionally, within the process of presencing, they are both present.

66. This section examines the Ground in view of what emerges out of its "flow" or "natural settling" (*Babs*) as it operates as the unmanifest depth-radiance of everything that is and can be, instead of the previous section's emphasis on the Ground's own reality in and of itself. We confront the question of how can freedom and distortion, purity and impurity, stem from the same unitary foundation, and thus our discussion begins to move beyond the Ground's inner radiance-potency (a crystal sphere glowing in the shadows) to the external radiance and evolutionary dynamics of the Ground-presencing (the play of rainbow-colored light leaping across space as the sun's rays strike the crystal sitting in its own shadows).

67. While the first triad of the Ground's essence, nature and compassionate resonance is a common reference throughout our text, the second triad of the Ground's range (*Ngang*), actuality (*Rang bZhin*; though in actuality the same word as "nature", I have translated it differently to highlight its distinct significance) and great identity (*bDag Nyid Chen Po*) is much rarer. However ZMYT2 383,7-384,4 elaborates on this triad, correlating it to the three Spiritual "Bodies, and explicitly indicating it is merely a different way to describe the standard triad of essence, nature and compassionate resonance: reality's emptiness (its "essence" or "range"), its luminous light-energy (its "nature"), and that empty radiance's ceaseless self-organizing and evolution into patterns of consciousness and display-forms (its "compassionate resonance" or "great identity"). These triads thus emphasize not only that the Universe's final reality is a perfect union of emptiness and light energy, but also that this

union is inherently "alive" with intelligence that is constantly "re-thinking" itself and self-organizing. The dyad of "original purity and spontaneous presence" then is merely an alternative way to characterize the Ground which focused on the clear contrast/simultaneity of its pure openness and its inherent dynamism. In the context of the primordial Ground, all eight dimensions here referred to (the triad of its essence, nature and compassionate resonance; the triad of its range, actuality, and identity; and its original purity and spontaneous presence) are only unmanifest depth-radiance (i.e. pure virtual reality devoid of any actualized instances), and thus this octad analyzing the Ground-in-its-shining forth is a discussion of the dynamics inherent within the primordial Ground, without descending ontologically into a discussion of the actuality-dynamics of the Ground-presencing (which are also characterized by an octad, i.e. "the eight gateways of spontaneous presence's shining forth" - it would seem Longchenpa has detailed this octad here (which is comparatively rarely mentioned) to correlate with the Ground-presencing's own eightfold analysis, which is a standard feature of these texts). These dynamics are however complementary to and operative in the dimension of the Ground-presencing, and while not temporally prior (since they pertain to the timelessness of pure potential) they are ontologically more profound.

68. The common Ground (*sPyi gZhi*) in this context is quite distinct from the so-called "universal ground" (*Kun gZhi*), which only applies post-fragmentation and exclusively to the condition of cyclic existence. This "universal ground" is dealt with at length in the fourth chapter, and (as KGYT2 174,1ff. indicates) connotes the foundational cognitive energy that strays in its non-recognition of the Ground-presencing's nature. While we remain characterized by an inner nucleus of indestructible empty-light energy (the "Ground" proper), its remains latent, even as all our normal neuroticized psychic activity diffuses outwards via its radiation or lighting-up. This radiation in its pure intensity remains present within the slender network of luminous channels (*'Od rTsa*) within our body, while that radiation's own efflorescence emanates further outwards in distorted form under the general conditions of non-recognition, and it is this that is termed our individual "universal ground" (it being the conventional foundation of all our mental activities, and long series of life tracks), while that brightness' capacity to develop into particular forms of cognitive energy (mental and perceptual) is termed the "universal ground consciousness" (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes*), the latter being a term common to exoteric Buddhism though the former term is a more specialized and less frequent term. Thus this dimension of the "universal ground" forms the most subtle basis of our neuroticized consciousness, and is the location of the "karmic traces" or web of latent propensities exist that fuel our behavior life time after life time (thus constituting a type of past-life depository that is continually influencing our actions ("fate"), and in turn being influenced and altered by ongoing actions ("free will"). It is thus termed the "universal ground" since it acts as the "foundation" for "all" our distorted physical and psychic states and actions in cyclic existence, though it is not "universal" or "common" otherwise as it acts only as the substantial basis for cyclic existence, not for transcendence. The Ground-presencing on the other hand is "universal" or "common" in precisely this sense, as it forms the clearing space and condition for both cyclic existence and transcendence's emergence. In this way the Great Perfection tradition specifies cyclic existence as having a specific onset or beginning (*Thog Ma*), as marked by the Ground-presencing's emergence and consequent non-self recognition, in opposition to the common assertion in exoteric Buddhism that cyclic existence or "neurosis" (in its universal sense that we are all afflicted by, which in Buddhist theory includes psychotic tendencies in our mass hallucinations of illusory materiality and so forth) is beginningless (*Thog Ma Med Pa*). While in the Ground's essence there is no fragmentation or duality of cyclic existence and transcendent reality, as its spontaneous presence breaks free from this pure concentrated potential into manifestation, the two eons of

cyclic existence and transcendent reality dawn in correspondence with that manifestation's capacity for consciousness in its respective non-recognition and recognition.

The Ground-presencing can thus be analyzed in terms of its triune functioning as the "common Ground", the "ground of freedom", and "the ground of straying". The Ground-presencing in its initial manifestation acts as the "common Ground" since by virtue of recognizing it as self-presencing you become free (and thus it acts as the "ground of freedom"), while by virtue of not recognizing it as self-presencing you stray into cyclic existence (and thus it acts as the "ground of straying"). While from its own side, its pure dynamics are described in terms closely matching the vibrant experiences, displays, and qualities of an Awakened One (transcendent reality being the more "ontological" way of expressing such a state), when obscured by a distorted consciousness' manipulative perceptions it appears to be transformed into the dulled and solidified worlds of our experience (with the energies, however, being identical, as revealed by the intimate mandalic correspondences held to exist between the impure and pure at every level). Thus these alternative possibilities or pathways emerge within its singular presence - the Totally Positive One recognizes its manifestations as the dynamics of his own self-awareness, that nothing is established that is other since all has the identity of being awareness' gnostic energy in its inner radiation, while proto-sentient beings fail to recognize it as such and bifurcate reality into a perceived "self" and "other". This Ground-presencing in its more pure form also forms the substance of the post-death intermediate state visions, where again this crucial liminal phase of recognition and non-recognition's possibility plays itself out, with the consequent movement into freedom or straying.

This concept of recognition is thus inextricably linked with the notion of "self-presencing" as the most single vital issue of the Great Perfection philosophy and practice, with "self" signifying awareness itself, as well as your own most basic dimension, and that of the Universe itself, indicating that matter itself is self-organizing while consciousness and matter are intimately linked with each other. Thus the recognition is self-recognition as the Universe-in-you finally comes to know itself, which practically is accomplished in your divesture of all grasping and subjectivity in your experience of external light/matter - since in fact all material phenomenon derive from awareness' shining play, you must not become attached to that play as being something distinct from yourself, granting separate ontological status to your perceptual experiences of "white" or "yellow", "sentient" or "inanimate", and so on.

Thus the octad analyzes the depth-radiance dynamics of the pre-manifestation pure-potential Ground, while this triad analyzes the Ground-presencing's crucial triune significance (and "the octad of the eight gateways to spontaneous presence" discussed below sums up the latter's actual dynamics' mechanism). In general the Ground-presencing's essence should be understood as transcendent reality (*Nirvana*) rather than cyclic existence (*Samsara*), though that transcendent reality must not be confused with the recognized transcendence of a Buddha's manifest enlightenment which fully unfolds and actualizes the latent potencies of transcendence. Instead this Ground-presencing's transcendent reality provides a clearing space for recognition/non-recognition's dual possibility, the former self-recognizing it and thereby unfolding its pure potential, and the latter seeing it as Other and thereby obscuring its vivid unimpeded light-energy into the dull solidified world most of us now experience. While even in that latter eventuality the resulting world of experience continues to be characterized as the "Ground-presencing", and it cannot be said that the Ground-presencing in any way disappears in non-recognition's impure devolution, it can be

said that the Ground-presencing's vibrant essence becomes dimmed and obscured, just as we speak of cyclic existence being essentially transcendent reality though recognition of it as such is obscured. The second and third chapters here discuss in detail how all the impure phenomena that we normally experience are in fact primordially pure, and in the same way the Ground-presencing itself is primordially pure throughout cyclic existence, though adventitious obscurations hide that primordial purity from sight. Thus while the Ground itself is beyond either extreme of transcendent reality or cyclic existence, the Ground-presencing can be classified as the dimension of transcendent reality (though its *essence* remains beyond such polarized classifications). Though its essence is thus, it acts as the *condition* of both freedom and straying in that its essence can be recognized (freedom) or not recognized (straying) by the consciousness that contemplates it.

Alternatively, TCD1 305,7 clearly identifies both the Ground and the Ground-presencing as the conditions for freedom and straying, whereas in actuality both are beyond faulty or positive qualities, and some scholars have verbally identified the Ground as being the foundation for both freedom and straying. However this isn't really contradictory, as the Ground-presencing stems from the Ground's spontaneous presence and hence this triune characteristic of the former can be attributed to the latter both in that former derives directly from the latter, and as being present in potential within the latter, and in actuality within the former. Also even though above I spoke of the Ground-presencing as being conventionally correlated to transcendent reality ("positive flawless dimensions") rather than cyclic existence ("faulty or defective dimensions") in terms of its essence, it is also true that the essence of this essence continues to be the Ground's original purity or emptiness, and as such in the final or ultimate analysis is itself also beyond any such dualistic linguistic-based characterization. Thus TCD1 305,6 utilizes the analogy of camphor, which is an antidote or positive quality in treating "hot" diseases, yet is a harmful or negative quality in the case of "cold" diseases ("hot" and "cold" being a diagnostic classification of Tibetan medicine). Just so the shining-forth process of the Ground and Ground-presencing manifests as the condition of freedom for those who self-recognize it, and thus appears like a positive quality; by its acting as the ground for straying for those who fail to recognize the process, it appears like a negative or defective quality. Even so the Ground and its presencing is totally devoid of the establishment of such negativity or defective qualities in their own essence.

There is an interesting ambiguity or paradox present here in terms of the distinction between "internal radiance" and "external radiance", "internal radiance" referring to the non-manifest and non-exteriorized self-contained pure potential of the Ground, and "external radiance" referring to the manifest dynamic exteriorization of the Ground-presencing's actualization of the Ground's dynamic qualities. However, subsequent to the Ground-presencing's initial emergence in the temporal realization of Buddhahood, that enlightenment-experience is said to entail the pure dynamic qualities coming to the fore (*mNgon Du 'Gyur Ba*), though in fact those qualities already shifted from latent "internal radiance" to actualized "external radiance" in the emergence of the Ground-presencing from the Ground's pure potential. Thus it can be seen that there are two distinct phases involved here, the initial movement into external radiance in the Ground-presencing's onset, and those self-same dynamic qualities being brought to the fore in full self-consciousness within a Buddha's enlightenment. The key between these two phases is the crucial distinction between recognition and non-recognition: just like when meeting a long lost brother whom you don't recognize as such, your non-recognition doesn't change the reality of his being your brother or the fact of his manifest presence before your eyes, if when your own awareness shines externally in the Ground-presencing you fail to recognize it as such and discriminate it

as other, you stray; if you recognize it you become free. Thus just as if you should recognize that brother upon encountering him the entire situation and status of your relationship will be fundamentally altered such that not only will he himself (the "other") now act completely different towards you but also all sorts of new actualities will come into being (as your relationship now is actualized in all sorts of diverse ways), by recognizing the light-displays as your own self-display the entire world is transformed as the other (beings or material forces) no longer threaten you, and the infinite possibilities and potentialities of an enlightened one unfold.

Along these lines, these two phases of manifestation can be understood first as the "elevation" in external radiance of these dynamic qualities, and secondly as the perceptual and psychic accessing of these qualities' full range of potencies in a particular consciousness-experience by recognizing them as self-presencing. The luminously radiant manifestation of gnostic energy is primordially present in all sentient beings with its entire range of dynamic qualities, yet it is not optimally tapped into or accessed by those beings because of their lack of realization or recognition. However, because this empty light energy is ever present as our indestructible nucleus, at crucial junctures or liminal phases in our existence such as the beginning of the Universe's evolution ("Ground-presencing"), sleep, death, and so forth it shines forth in vivid presence and goes into a temporary ascendancy, thus again and again affording us the opportunity to tap into its high-energy potential if only we recognize it for what it is, our own self-display or self-organizing nucleus of energy.

A related and equally complex issue is the simultaneous dissolution and expanding outward that marks the enlightenment experience, which again indicates the intricate relationship between "internal radiance" and "external radiance". While we begin (cosmogonically speaking) with the Ground's original purity in its utter emptiness devoid of manifestation, we also end (soteriologically speaking) with the original purity of the freedom-site that enlightenment takes place within, as the Ground-presencing's original eightfold process of manifestation now is reversed in its tracks and self-dissolves. Thus the experience of enlightenment entails an unraveling of evolution and return to the original source of empty light-energy pure potential, and for this reason the actual attainment of Buddhahood primarily involves dissolution rather than manifestation. However this return to the empty source is vitally different than the primordial Ground's empty self-contained no-thingness since this return now takes place in full self-consciousness, and thus an unprecedented and utterly new relationship pertains between internal and external radiance, between the primordial Ground and manifestation via its spontaneous presence, between the enlightened one's existence and the Universe's dynamics. Out of this return into his/her pure empty energy, subsequently as a compassionate response to the plight of sentient beings who remain mired in cyclic existence the dynamic qualities of his/her Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses re-manifests in infinite diversity and pinpoint accuracy in order to guide those sentient beings to the city of liberation. These manifestation differ from the ontologically prior one (that of the amorphous Ground-presencing) in that it issues out of a deep realization and recognition of them as self-presencing, and thus are fueled and directed by the compassionate wisdom of the Buddha's manifest awakening.

69. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 372,2; Ati2 508,1). In Ati, "essence" is glossed as "unchanging", and "nature" as "manifesting as a diversity", while "range" is glossed as "unfabricated", and "actuality" as "unchanging". NGB however attributes the first pair of glosses to ""nature's" (*Rang bZhin*) two individual syllables, and the second pair of glosses to ""actuality's" (*Rang bZhin*) two individual syllables. NGB glosses "the common Ground, and

the ground of straying" with *Lhun Grub sGo brGyad gZhi Dang gZhir Shes Pa'i Khyad Par Las 'Grub*, which Ati also gives in slightly different form: *Lhun Grub sGo brGyad gZhi Dang gZhi sNang Zhes Pa'i Khyad Par Las 'Khrul*. "The eight gateways of spontaneous presence" are the dynamics of the Ground-presencing, and hence this indicates the "common Ground" refers to the Ground-presencing, the source of both straying into cyclic existence and freedom into transcendence. In particular, the Ground-presencing then acts as the foundation for straying in "the difference between the Ground and cognizing the Ground": unlike the pure self-contained world of the Ground, within the Ground-presencing the possibility of independent consciousness of its own exteriorized forms opens up, and in this cognitive capacity's consequent judgments about the Ground a vortex of new worlds evolves. While the Ground was like a timeless dreamless sleep beyond all recognition, with the Ground-presencing a dreamer stirs, and in his/her dreams evolution spins away out of original purity as the dreamer no longer remembers s/he dreams. Thus the critical juncture lies in the distinction between the Ground (which neither knows nor doesn't know), and the knowing of the Ground as it self-fissures in a quest for self-knowledge, that becomes a cosmic self-exploration. In addition the common Ground implies the Ground-presencing functioning as the foundation for freedom, though in the current context it is not emphasized as such.

70. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 377,1; Ati2 513,5).

*Its essence is original purity, devoid of any basis for expression; its nature is spontaneous presence, the perfect completeness of whatever appears; and its compassionate resonance is all-pervasive, the naturally self-arisen:* "original purity" is glossed as "stainless"; "spontaneous presence" is glossed as "endowed with the eight gateways of shining forth"; and "arisen" is glossed as "to sentient beings".

*Its range is automatic, spontaneous emergence; its actuality is universal, uncontrived presencing; and thus its identity is encompassing and comprehensive gathering-in:* "automatic emergence" is glossed as "uncreated" or "without being forced"; "actuality" is glossed by "primordial gnosis' lighting-up" (NGB) and "primordially lighting-up" (Ati); "identity" is glossed by "with respect to all objects"; and "comprehensive gathering-in" is glossed with "within the essence".

*Its original purity is the natural purity from stains; its spontaneous presence is the emergence of variety, and thereby the common Ground seems to be existent:* "the natural purity from stains" is glossed by "free from dimmed awareness", and the "emergence of variety" is glossed as "Awakened ones and sentient beings", indicating "spontaneous presence" refers to conceptually isolating out the Ground's depth-radiant dynamic qualities (the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosés) which form the substance of all manifest existence. "And thereby" points out the special connection with the "common Ground" and the Ground's spontaneous presence, indicating that the Ground-presencing as foundation for the dual tracks of straying and freedom ultimately stems from the Ground's spontaneous presence in its enabling diversity and manifestation.

As for the final line, both NGB and Ati have an alternative reading of *sPyi Sa'i gZhi Ni 'Khrul Par sNang* for TDD's *sPyi Pa'i gZhi Ni Grub Par sNang*, and gloss it with "the triune dimmed awareness and four conditions (impelling straying)": "As for the Ground-as-common-site (i.e. Ground-presencing), it appears to stray". Some scholars could find this reading controversial, since it would be read as implying that somehow distortion develops into the Ground and/or Ground-presencing itself, which is generally said to be distortion-free.

While this can be resolved as merely perspectival (i.e. it "seems" to be distorted to thus laboring under the illusion of ignorance - TCD1 306,1), it can also refer to the Universe itself as the one and only player, evolution being construed as something like **Being** playing hide and go seek with itself. However the traditional Great Perfection interpretation is ambivalent about these types of discourses, both because of the traditional Buddhist aversion to "personalizing" the ultimate, and the desire to maintain the strict continuing purity of the Ground. The same Tantra (Ati 513,3), just above our current citation, uses the term "common site" to refer to the Ground's fertile matrix, which contains everything in its pure potentiality and hence acts as the source for all (*gZhi Ni Kun Gyi Byung Khungs (sPyi Sa) Nyid, Lam Ni Rang sNang (Chos Nyid Kyi Bar Do La dBang Po 'Bring Sangs rGya) Bar Do Yul, 'Bras Bu sKu gSum Ye Shes lNga*), although of course it is through its "mask" as the Ground-presencing that it directly functions as this source, and hence this in no way contradicts with Longchenpa's identification of the "common Ground" as the Ground-presencing.

Ati's next two lines following the last line as quoted here (*'Di Kun gNas Lugs (De'i Don gZhi La Babs Kyis Grub Pas) Rang rDzogs Phyr, (Rang Gi Lus Las) gZhan Nas bTsal Bas rNyed Mi 'Gyur*) indicate all this is perfectly present within your own body, and thus you need not seek elsewhere than the fabric of your own existence in your search for the universe's ultimate reality, and origins.

71. Awareness exists within the Ground as latent internal radiance prior to its elevation and coming to the fore during the Ground-presencing, and thus here is synonymous with the primordial Ground itself (emphasizing its innate connection to intelligence and consciousness, rather than some "scientific" matter or density quite divorced from life's vibrant awareness), as are all the following terms. The subsequent mention indicating that awareness and dimmed awareness are absent within the Ground's primordially then refers to the actualized manifestation in terms of particularized awareness, which can function optimally ("awareness") or non-optimally ("dimmed awareness"). However, this specification of awareness as the Ground in this context shouldn't be confused with the classical Tibetan presentation of the "mind only" philosophical trend in Indian Buddhism (without getting into the problematic nature of that interpretation's accuracy, or own reductionist tendency). That presentation (in very simplified form) involves the ordinary mind as a substantially conceived non-empty self-established entity (also termed "self-awareness"), and then, in a classically idealist move, reducing the entire external world to the status of its derivative in a logically verifiable move. In contradistinction to this, the Great Perfection is at great pains to distinguish the "mind" (ordinary neuroticized mental activity) and the "mind-as-such" (the mind's empty radiant essence, also termed "awareness" or "self-emergent primordial gnosis"), with the former being a derivative of the latter. The latter then is mere naked, unimpeded, and free flowing awareness at the heart of the Universe, and possesses no entitatively conceived essence nor is syllogistically established as such - while operating at the core of each individual ("the nucleus of radiant light", or "core of enlightened energy"), it is, however, not reducible to individual perceivers, and instead emphasizes the fundamental intelligence operative in all structures of the Universe itself. Because of the striking similarities, and subtlety of differentiation, a clear analysis of the relationship between these two philosophies requires a full length essay exclusively devoted to it. In the present context, I would merely point out the subtle and extensive nature of Longchenpa's multi-dimensional analysis of the Universe's own inherent dynamics beyond the individual, and the relationship of those dynamics to both the optimal processes (physical, verbal, mental) of an enlightened individual and the non-optimal processes of ordinary sentient life,

as well as the refusal of Great Perfection scholars to seek out syllogistic verification as the highest authority, or allow their thought to be critiqued on the model of referential, logic-based philosophy.

72. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 335,1; Ati2 460,5). The glosses indicate that the subject here is the "Ground in its essence", or "awareness which is devoid of any distortion or straying from the pristine beginnings".

73. *gSang Ba Yi Ge Med Pa'i rGyud* (NGB2 299,5; Ati2 218,4). Obviously the first four lines summarize the possibilities of "objects" that we could analyze or experience into the three times when they could be present: past, present, and future. This passage's relentless assertion of absence pertains to the state of pure-potentiality wherein all exteriority or "external radiance" is absent, though dynamic energies do exist in this self-contained pure-potential or "internal radiance".

74. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (passage not located). This passage gives an etymology of the term "original (*Ka*) purity (*Dag*)", which uses the first consonant of the Tibetan alphabet (*Ka*) to signify that this purity pertains from the very beginning, i.e. primordially. In this dimension of utter purity, the Universe in its pre-evolution state of extra-ordinarily concentrated energy devoid of any actualized forms, "cyclic existence" as well as "transcendence" do not exist, and only have their onset in the Ground-presencing which stirs from within this state. Thus whereas classical Indian Buddhism speaks of cyclic existence as being "without a beginning", the Great Perfection tradition clearly specifies it as having both a beginning (when the Ground-presencing evolves, and a localized capacity for consciousness fails to recognize itself) and an end (when that an individual consciousness subsequently gains recognition, and hence sees through the illusion of separateness).

75. Since the Ground is termed self-emergent primordial gnosis, we can also analytically classify it into twofold primordial gnosis (empty essence and spontaneous nature), and threefold primordial gnosis (empty essence, radiant nature, all-pervading compassionate resonance). While this primordial presence of gnostic energy within the Ground is an important foundation for the subsequent emergence of its fully active dynamics within enlightenment (and points to the thorough intelligence of the Ground at all levels - literally "primordial knowing" (*Ye Shes*), it must be kept in mind that Longchenpa is here talking about its internally radiant potency rather than externally radiant actuality.

76. In describing the Ground's twofold gnostic energy, the first primordial gnosis is correlated to original purity's utter emptiness, while the second primordial gnosis is correlated to spontaneous presence's dynamic presencing. This correlation of "primordial radiation" with the Ground's nature is also found on TCD1 292,1 and TCD1 284,7 ("the depth-radiant primordial radiation of the nature within the originally pure essence's space"). "Primordial radiation" is also part of classification of three radiations, which I discuss extensively in the annotations below to TDD 172,2.

77. *kLong Drug* (passage not located).

78. The way in which the Ground functions as "the ground of shining forth", without its being reducible to that which shines forth or distorted by what ensues, can be suggested by the analogy of a mirror: a face may reflect in the mirror's surface, yet we don't speak of the



face as being in the mirror itself, or of the mirror being reducible to, or distorted by, that face, no matter how imposing or hideous it may be.

79. *Rig Pa Rang Grol* (NGB2 729,7; Ati3 40,2; also cited by NLD 66). "Naturally cleansed (*Rang Sangs*) refers to the first syllable/word of the Tibetan translation of Buddha (*Sangs rGyas*), which itself literally translates as "the one who has cleansed/awakened and expanded". Thus this dyadic quality of enlightenment reflects the Universe's own indivisibly dyadic nature, its emptiness "cleansed" of all materiality or distortion and its spontaneous presence in constant "expanding" dynamism. KGNT1 416,1, in prefacing this identical quotation, specifies that the Ground's primordial empty radiance is beyond the limiting extremes of these four classical oppositions: permanence and annihilation, existence and non-existence, being and non-being, radiance and obscuration. TDD 361,3 gives an alternate specification of "existence, non-existence, appearances and emptiness", while NLD explains this line thus: "...(i) Since awareness and all the phenomena presencing within its range are devoid of any independent existence or nature, it is beyond existence; (ii) since the presencing process is unceasing, it is beyond non-existence; (iii) since neither existence nor non-existence is thus established, it is beyond being both (i.e. both existent and non-existent); (iv) and since it is devoid of being neither as well (i.e. being neither existent nor non-existent), it is beyond that term. Whatever presences and however it manifests remains within the wisdom energy cleansed of these four extremes right from the very instant (they appear)..." Regardless of the particular specification of the four items, the main point is that such conceptual oppositions used to define and describe things is totally inapplicable to the Ground's reality (even conventionally it has no validity, whereas such schemes are often floated as having conventional validity for analyzing normal phenomena, though ultimately incoherent as such).

80. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 509,2-3; Ati1 632,2). Both NGB and Ati have intervening lines between "purity" and "endowed", and thus Longchenpa evidently is giving an abbreviated quotation here to fit his present purposes.

81. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 69,5; Ati1 84,4). In that reality is beyond being classifiable as exclusively and substantially "this" or "that", and thus can't be limited to our interpretations or concretistic perception, it is utterly pervasive emptiness, and the gnostic energy that is spontaneously operative within this emptiness' heart is dynamic in terms of these three characteristics (empty, radiant, and all-pervading in its unceasing self-organizing).

82. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 442,6; Ati2 178,4; VLDC explicates this passage on 294,7ff.).

83. *rDo rJe Sems dPa' sNying Gi Me Long* (NGB1 243,3; Ati1 385,1).

84. The "Unsurpassed Secret" (*bLa Na Med Pa*) exegetical tradition refers to the highest of internal divisions of the Great Perfection traditions (see *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Volume I* 319-333 for details in brief), and is in opposition to the "Secret Cycle" (*gSang sKor*) referred to later in this chapter. In general, the Great Perfection or "Atiyoga" teachings are divided into a triad of "Series", each with its own particular philosophical outlooks and meditative practices: the Mind Series (*Sems sDe*), the Space Series (*kLong sDe*), and the Esoteric Precepts Series (*Man Ngag sDe*). Among modern day representatives of the tradition, it is the third series which is emphasized above all, especially in terms of its main meditative practices of "Breakthrough" and "Direct Transcendence". This third series then can be classified in a number of ways, with one of the most common classification being

the following quartet: the Outer Cycle (*Phyi sKor*), the Inner Cycle (*Nang sKor*), the Secret Cycle (*gSang sKor*), and the Unsurpassed Secret Cycle (*gSang La Na Med Pa'i sKor*).

In addition to brief discussions in his corpus of various points of difference between the "Secret Cycle" and the "Unsurpassed Secret Cycle" styles of exposition, Longchenpa also has somewhat formulaic but fairly detailed presentations of all the above classifications on TCD1 102,7-119,6 and GTD 331,2-361,2. However, to exactly pinpoint existent textual examples for each category, each category's historical background and source, and their precise internal differentiations and relations (which appear to be exceedingly subtle from Longchenpa's terse descriptions) are all extremely problematic, and present distinct (as yet unexplored in the West) areas of investigation that promise to be partially quite futile.

85. These three "radiations" are, in order, "primordial radiation" (*Ye gDangs*), "natural radiation" (*Rang gDangs*), and "radiating radiation" (*Zer gDangs*), and in the present context are correlated to the Ground's nature in their pure-potential form, i.e. the Ground's internal radiance devoid of the Ground-presencing or distinct, segmented colors. ZMYT1 289-291,3 and LYT1 316,1 mention "threefold radiation" without specifying these particular names, and correlates them to the essence, nature and compassionate resonance - empty radiation, radiant radiation, and awareness' radiation in unceasing dynamism. In the context of explicating Direct Transcendence practice, ZMYT2 382,1-6 clarifies these three radiations by similarly correlating them to this type of triad, i.e. the empty essence, radiant nature, and pervading compassionate resonance. The primordial radiation of the pure sky is unimpeded free flowing empty awareness (sky which is the naturally pure object of vision), imaged as a clear night sky; the natural radiation of pure reality is unimpeded awareness within the essentially pure "water lamp", imaged as the sky at daybreak; and the radiating radiation of pure primordial gnosis are the luminous manifestations self-presencing in the objective sphere (including the seminal nuclei), imaged as the sky with the shining sun. Longchenpa then goes onto apparently correlate primordial radiation to the primordial time of the ground remaining within its internal expanse; natural radiation to the time of awareness' radiation shining in space; and radiating radiation to its self-presencing manifestations shining externally. These three "times" would appear to respectively signify the Ground's self-contained pure potential primordially, the Ground-presencing's manifestation, and the self-presencing visions an individual may experience in the Direct Transcendence meditations.

Our present reference, however, is different in emphasis, as it is correlating all three radiations to the Ground's nature in the context of its primordial reality, which points out that the originally pure Ground is not "mere emptiness" (*sTong rKyang*) but rather is inherently luminously radiant, alive with dynamic light energy. This dynamic light energy then is expressed as threefold radiation, which is present primordially as enfolded potency in the depth-radiant pure source-potential of the Universe, and then moves into actualization within the Ground-presencing transformations. Thus TDD is pointing out its virtual potential presence, while ZMYT indicates its wider range of significance in terms of actual manifestation; though this "radiation" primarily correlates to the nature as dynamic light energy (also TDD 173,1), the radiation itself can be further analyzed into its own triadic nature (ZMYT) - its empty essence ("primordial"), its radiant nature ("natural"), and its dynamic, pervading compassionate resonance ("radiating") - and as such can also be correlated to awareness' essence, nature, and compassionate resonance as well. In this way it is possible to interpret the threefold radiation in a variety of manners depending on the context (whether considering the Ground itself, or the triad of Ground, path and fruit, or internal potential vs. external actualization, and so on), and TDD's mentioning them within

the Ground's internal radiance isn't necessarily in contradiction with ZMYT's specification that the second two radiations apply to the external manifestations of the Ground-presencing. In the same way, the term "primordial radiation" can simply refer to the Ground's spontaneous presence when discussing the primordial Ground (TCD1 287,4; 292,2), even though if radiation is analyzed into a triad in relation to the Ground-presencing (such as the Spiritual Master giving an introduction to the identity of awareness as the three Spiritual Bodies for meditative practice), that term connotes its "emptiness" instead.

86. This indicates that the Universe at its very core in pure potential is inherently intelligent, though this doesn't entail the manifest presence of an Awakened One's unfolded wisdom. "Clarity" or "radiance" (*gSal Cha*) is often used to refer to cognitive processes just as we may speak of the "inner light" of awareness, and emphasizes the centrality of clarity to consciousness (i.e. clear perception and clear thought) as well as the inner core of indestructible radiant light operating as the source of all our psychic activities.

87. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 106,2; Ati1 127,4; also cited by TCD1 286,6; TCD2 521,7). TCD2 521,6 prefaces this quotation by discussing how the triad of primordial gnoses "present within the Ground" (corresponding to empty essence, radiant nature, and resonating pervasive compassion) act as the pure source-potential, or "foundation of shining forth": in the essence's acting as the pure source-potential of the three Spiritual Bodies, the three Bodies are devoid of any differentiated manifestation; in the nature acting as the pure source-potential of the five lights, there are no concretely existent colors; and in compassionate resonance acting as the pure source-potential of the two primordial gnoses, there is no concrete appraisals in terms of objects and their features.

(i) *Via this essence abiding in terms of the Spiritual Bodies, it is itself present in its natural flow as the dimensions of Reality, Enjoyment and Emanation in an indivisible and undifferentiated manner, yet devoid of mental objects such as bodily color:* "Reality, Enjoyment, and Emanation" of course refer to the standard triad of Spiritual Bodies, and are here being discussed in terms of their depth-radiant presence within the Ground, and as such merely qualities of energy without entailing any concrete characteristics. They are "indivisible" in the sense that the three together are complementary dimensions forming a seamless unity (rather than being totally distinct factors adventitiously lumped together), and "undifferentiated" in that they are pure internal radiance devoid of actualized and particularized forms within the context of the Ground's essence.

(ii) *Its nature's shining forth in the manner of lights is present in the natural flow of the unsegmented knowable: white, red, yellow, green, and blue without being segmented into concretized qualities:* I have corrected *Char Byed* to '*Char Byed* ("shining forth") on the basis of the two TCD citations and Ati. The Ground's nature comes to the fore in the manner of this light without the various colors being as yet granular and separated, remaining a coherent holism without specific entitative properties or attributes.

I have also corrected TDD's *Shes Pa'i* ("cognitive energy") to *Shes Bya'i* ("that which is cognized", "the knowable") on the basis of NGB, Ati, and both citations in TCD. TDD's reading would have to refer to primordial gnosis, which is singular and unfragmented in opposition to the many divisions of consciousness in sentient beings (visual, auditory, etc.), and from which the rainbow-colored lights flow forth in one-to-one correspondence with the standard quintet of primordial gnoses. Since we remain here at the level of depth-radiance prior to the break, this cannot be identified with the "cognitive energy" (*Shes Pa*) emergent in

the Ground-presencing which either recognizes (transcendence) or doesn't recognize (cyclic existence) these externally manifest lights as self (see the second chapter). While the latter refers to a derivative cognitive capacity termed "empty and radiant awareness", here it would denote self-emergent primordial gnosis, which cannot be sectioned as it remains in holistic unity with its source, devoid of manifest concretization.

However, in light of Longchenpa's prefatory remarks the much more likely reading is "knowable", the proto-noematic dimension that evolves into the light-based material elements, but is as yet a seamless light continuum. The proto-noetic dimension then is located within the Ground's compassionate resonance, which as yet is a mere unsegmented intelligence or sensitivity, but which may evolve into particularized and fragmentized modes of consciousness. Thus, with its essence there is emptiness, while its nature entails vibrant light-dynamics (that which can be known, i.e. a pseudo "objective" dimension) directly within that emptiness, and its compassionate resonance introduces a knowing, and self-organizing, dimension to the entire system.

(iii) Since within its compassionate resonance's diversified pure source-potential there is no determinacy of it as being one thing "like this", variety presences-forth, and thus it is termed "the Ground": not only does compassionate resonance enable the operation of knowing consciousness, this term also signifies that the nature's light energy is self-organizing into a vast diversity of structures and forms. On the level of Buddhahood this capacity surfaces in the Emanational Body, which manifests variably to living beings requiring teaching in accordance with their capabilities, while within the primordial ground it is this pure source-potential for diversity, and self-organizing into complex structures. Since the latter is nothing in itself, and can give rise to anything as there are no predetermined restrictions, it can't be fixed or identified as being one particular way, as being any particular entity or entities with concrete attributes that can be identified and comprehensively delineated as such.

The final "and thus" could simply refer to the entire preceding discussion of nature, essence, and compassionate resonance, which is summed up by referring to the "Ground" that has this tripartite character; alternately, it could be construed as merely an etymology of "source-potential" (literally "ground of shining forth") in the last three lines - since a variety manifests from compassionate resonance's potency, it is the "ground" upon which, or from within which, that variety is based.

88. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 443,1; Ati2 178,6; VLDC explicates this passage on 296,1-301,3). This lengthy passage is structured into three sections, corresponding to the essence, nature and compassionate resonance. Thus it begins with a discussion of the essence, the pure virtuality of the expanse wherein everything is said to be absent. However, it would be completely erroneous to extrapolate from these statements that the primordial gnosés and Spiritual bodies are totally absent within the Universe's core - instead, upon entering consciously into emptiness' domain, there is nothing you can conceptually identify as such since the very premises of referentiality begin to break down, while within the Ground itself there is only virtual existence, and not actualized manifestation.

89. Its nature: within its nature's lighting-up...: this section on the Ground's nature and below is quoted in TCD1 290,7, while the TCD2 510,6 cites only the next ten lines. The former clearly emphasizes the Ground's nature as the Ground of shining forth, while the latter emphasizes that the five lights' energetic potential is present, although the five lights as such

are absent: "other than the mere pure source-potential ("foundation of shining forth") of the five lights being present within the originally pure internal expanse's nature, nothing at all is concretely or directly established". Rather than granting emptiness itself sole status as the ultimate (as was common in more exoterically directed traditions in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist circles), the Great Perfection thinkers resolutely emphasized the primordial coincidence and utter co-emergence of emptiness (essence) and radiant light (nature) in the universe. Rather than lapsing into equally erroneous notions of a sterile emptiness totally devoid of dynamism or some positive reality with a substantial reality that can't be identified as empty (as well as a variety of positions oversimplified and reduced into the overly facile opposition of "self-emptiness" (*Rang sTong*) and "other-emptiness" (*gZhan sTong*), or construing emptiness as an "affirming negation" (*Ma Yin dGag*) vs. "non-affirming negation" (*Med dGag*)), emptiness itself is seen as dynamic, and dynamic manifestation as thoroughly empty throughout, seamless light-energy which is no-thing but becomes every-thing. The third member of this indivisible dyad (termed "appearances and emptiness", "original purity and spontaneous presence", "emptiness and radiance", or "essence and nature") is then "compassionate resonance", a term which points out that this fundamental reality is not only empty and radiant, but also is unceasingly intelligent and self-organizing in its empty radiance. Not only are we luminous beings, but we also live within an intelligent Universe, and eventually we discover three inescapable facts at every level of inner and external reality: it is empty, it is radiant, and it is intelligent. This is the "ultimate" truth in that such a truth may be expressible in linguistic terms, and, at least superficially, is firmly in opposition to positions claiming emptiness alone as the ultimate, with the radiant dimension as merely a conventionally valid dimension.

*Within its nature's lighting-up, there is primordially no apprehension of distinct qualities:* the nature (*Rang bZhin*) is original purity's "own" (*Rang*) "continuation" (*bZhin*), the inherent dynamism of emptiness which as yet is not any-thing - "color" would be a defining characteristic, but there is nothing so solid to pick out. Not only cannot no-thing such as vases and so forth be perceptually or conceptually distinguished, but even the Spiritual Bodies and lights are not divided up into frozen segmentations; there is only Being without any particular beings, a holistic flowing dimension of pure energy in virtual reality.

*And with its natural shining devoid of coloration, there is merely the factors of cognitive energy and awareness:* I have read *Tsam* ("merely") on the basis of NGB, TCD1 and TCD2, while TDD quotes it as *bCom* ("these factors are suppressed"), and VLDC and Ati read *Tshang* ("complete"). The second reading implies that nothing at all, not even simple cognitive energy and/or awareness, is operative here, and would necessitate reading "cognitive energy" and "awareness" as referring to in the context of the Ground-presencing. The passage would then be rejecting that these factors exist within the Ground in these externally radiant dimensions. The first and third readings then are complementary, with "merely" emphasizing that within the Ground it is this mere cognitive energy without any actualized differentiation, as well as connoting that only "self-emergent gnostic energy" exists therein in the final analysis. Reading "complete" then indicates (VLDC 296,6) that this tripartite gnostic energy is primordially completely present with all its qualities within the Ground's nucleus, and thus automatically continues to be present within sentient beings as a nucleus of "empty, radiant awareness" (the three terms corresponding directly to essence, nature, and compassionate resonance). If its presence within is then manifestly realized, its full potential unfolds, which is termed "expansive awakening", or a "Buddha". Thus Ati glosses "cognitive energy" as "empty radiance", and "awareness" as "the nucleus of self-awareness".

Since apprehendable objects that could be grasped are utterly absent, conceptualizing apprehension doesn't take place: the significance of these last two lines is that within the Ground neither side of our typical subject-object dualism exists - since there is only pure light energy devoid of particularized forms or colors, the corresponding pure cognitive energy is unfragmented into particular sense modalities and so forth as without object-things there is no neuroticized conceptual activity driven by attachment; conversely, in that there is no distorting subjective activity, it doesn't introduce divisions into the objective realm whereby "things" could emerge in karmic fabrication. Thus the subject-object distortion is a mutually self-sustaining cycle, and as such is totally absent within the seamless reality of the Ground - the flip side of this lack of division/differentiation, is that neither is there any opportunity or possibility for self-consciousness, or self-recognition. It is only in the Ground's self-fissuring within the Ground-presencing that the specter of the "Other" looms, and only in the Other's face may wisdom, and ignorance, take root.

90. In its light-transcendent primordial radiation, it is primordially pervasively present, and in its Spiritual Bodies-transcendent natural radiation, it is present as the great seal of thorough purity: "primordial radiation beyond light" signifies pure energy devoid of any concretization or segmentation subjective experienced as "light" opposed to "darkness", since its unitary potentiality is devoid of the dualism of objects ("colors") and subjects ("primordial gnosis"). While reality's primordial radiation is thus not an adventitious or polarized phenomena, it is unceasingly present within the Ground, such that from the primordial beginnings of Being (i.e. the Universe), dynamic vibrant energy pervades it throughout in a natural flow. As for "natural radiation beyond the Spiritual Bodies", VLDC 297,1-3 explicates its "great seal of thorough purity (literally "aspect-pure")" thus:

"...As for its presence as the great seal (*Phyag rGya Chen Po*) "purifying away and purified of" the aspects of dualistic objects and cognition, in the period of the individual it's "hand" (*Phyag*) as "that which is held" and its "seal" (*rGya*) as "that which is stamped" is "great" (*Chen Po*) in its remaining indivisibly present (within each living being)..."

Vimalamitra here creatively unpacks the term "seal" (*Phyag rGya*) in the sense of "hand" (*Phyag*) and "seal" (*rGya*), taking "hand" to mean "hold" and "seal" to mean "stamp", which appears to mean in these sense of this pure radiation being "held" within all living beings as their enlightened nucleus or "Buddha-nature", which thus indelibly "stamps" them. In a separate context (TCD1 216,7), Longchenpa interprets *Phyag* as "to hold a person to the level of Buddhahood away from cyclic existence", and *rGya* as "to stamp cyclic existence with the seal of the enlightened mind". Thus the natural radiance of the Ground's nature is a seal marking all phenomena as empty, with its thorough purity utterly pervasive of all subjective psychic activity and objective appearances, such the entire range is indelibly stamped as a seamless continuum devoid of its seeming dualistic characteristics. This "seal" continues to apply without interruption to the experience and manifestations of all life forms, "the period of the individual" when, as opposed to the primordial time of the Ground's formless nothingness, particularized centers of consciousness laboring under the conditions of ignorance distort their perception into the comprehensive illusion of duality. It is a "thorough purity" in that it applies simultaneously to the dynamism itself, whereas "original purity" emphasizes virtual energy in its own utter emptiness devoid of all manifestation all together, and as such connotes the empty pure energy (referred to as "the dynamic qualities of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses") that lies at the core of all life, pervading their mental continuums in the darkest of times. Again this ties into Heidegger's notion that every being is marked by

the imprint of **Being**, just as a King puts his seal on things, and thus marks his property. "Thorough purity" signifies it is pure in its dynamism, that with the Universe's evolutionary manifestations the imprint of **Being** continues to appear in its observable aspect. Thus this natural radiation of light is present as the seal of purity, the seal marking all manifest processes as pure through and through: in this dynamic appearance (as opposed to the originally pure essence where is virtual no-thingness devoid of visual aspect) it remains within this purity marked by **Being**. "Thorough purity" (*rNam Dag*) could thus be interpreted as "aspect" (*rNam*) referring to beings (**Being** in its evolving self-fissuring), and then "pure" (*Dag*) signifying that they remain within **Being**, since purity is "observed" (*rNam*) within their observable quality, and within that purity is the imprint of **Being**.

91. Nonetheless, within the lighting-up of its nature, there is primordially no objectifications of discrete qualities, and it abides in the following (fivefold) manner within its fundamental dimension: VLDC 297,2-4 explicates these three lines thus:

"...Nonetheless (i.e. even from the perspective of appearing to individuals), the lighting-up of the originally pure Ground's nature manifests as self-presencing, such that it is primordially devoid of appearances objectified as having discrete qualities, i.e. the cognition of various observable aspects (literally "white and red"). To expand on this, the fundamental dimension of originally pure in essence primordial gnosis abides in the following manner, with these (light hues) presencing as the dimension of its dynamic qualities..."

Although it lights-up in dynamic movement, the Ground's nature is not definable in terms of concrete substances and their particularized qualities even in the period of "individuals" (i.e. our current distorted experience), and is utterly self-presencing devoid of rupture into an "other". However, even this pure possibilizing dynamism of its fivefold primordial gnosis can be conceptually delineated along the lines of the five colors of the spectrum, with each quality relating to that particular color's particular richness of symbolic associations (white being the color of purity, red the color of majesty, and so forth). Thus the Ground's depth-radiant nature is imaged as a five-hued "rainbow" ontologically prior to the Ground-presencing, with energy values (like "frequencies" of light) of its virtual pure potential being indicated rather than the mere visual appearance of those colors.

92. Engendering reality's natural radiation is its white dimension, which yet remains within the great depth-radiance itself: Ati and VLDC indicate "white" relates to it being "pure from stains" (just as we normally conceive "white" to be immaculate, stainless, virginal, etc.), and my addition of "reality" to the text is drawn from VLDC. "Depth-radiance" indicates this is still a kind of virtual presence, something shining from deep within but not yet there as an actualized form.

93. Engendering the depth-radiant essence's dazzling luster with appearances self-extinguished, its yellow dimension shines in its own essence from the unmanifest depths: Ati and VLDC indicate that "yellow" relates to the shining forth of its dynamic qualities ("yellow" relates to the fertility of rich soil), though its operating as source-potential is not material-dominated/contaminated process. Thus "extinguished" signifies that there are no external or concrete appearances within the Ground, just a mere luster that glows, with that glow simultaneously exhausted of being anything in particular. Again "reality" is indicated as the subject, and "unmanifest" is glossed as being in terms of "solidly characterized appearances".

94. Engendering radiation devoid of clinging within reality's own essence, divested of being fettered by anything at all and with clinging self-extinguished, its red dimension abides as the great unadulterated depth-radiation: "unadulterated" with any exteriorization or solidified "things", reality's red-hued gnostic energy is its utter dynamism which is totally unrestricted - not only can it become anything, but in its virtual dimension it isn't limited to anything either. "Clinging" could also be translated as "settling", "clinging" being when you "settle" on something, resisting all movement from a given state, person, location, or thing, and refusing to move on, to let go. This energy glows but it stops sort of settling on anything, and thus involves no clinging - it is totally unimpeded by any concretizations or limitations, nothing holding back its free flow. Red of course is the color of fire, of dynamic metamorphosis which resists being held back, or settling down into frozen patterns, and explodes any such tendencies to open the way to constant renewal.

Ati, NGB, and VLDC read *Rang Gis* for TDD's *Gang Gis*, and VLDC explains it as referring to awareness (which isn't "self-fettered", or "itself doesn't fetter primordial radiation"). Another interpretative possibility is reading "divested" as "freed from", and thus rendering it as "the clinging of being fettered by and freedom from something (extrinsic) is self-extinguished."

95. In maintaining (the five lights') respective dimensions without adulteration, green is free of goal-oriented exertion's agitation and thus devoid of even optimal activity, such that as the rays of (the Ground's primeval) beginnings, it forms the relationships pervading (gnosis') depth-radiance in these unmanifest depth-radiant dimensions: VLDC 297,6-298,1 tersely explicates these ambiguous lines on reality's green-hued radiation:

"...Green maintains (their) respective characteristics without any adulteration (away) from reality's own-site, which means the (concrete) colors white, red (and so on) don't manifest. Because it is inherently divested of any agitation relating to goal-oriented exertion, winds and so on, its naturally devoid of even optimal activity in light of the Ground's original purity. As such, it is present ultra-purely as the rays of the Ground's primeval beginnings. Furthermore, it is completely present within the depth-radiant dimension not manifest to material sensory organs and so on aside from a mere natural flow devoid of both appearing objects and referent objects, and additionally forms the relationships which pervade the depth radiance of primordial gnosis's own essence..."

In general "green" is the color which images activity and as such corresponds to wind energy (that which causes movement), which is based on it being the color of vegetative growth after winter as the earth reawakens and springs into a bewildering surge of activity and renewal. In our present context, it seems that "green" images that quality of the energy which self-monitors the integrative aspect of the system, that each color-imaged energy has its own character yet remains perfectly interrelated in a seamless unity. However this "distinctness" doesn't entail entitative differentiations, and their harmony is still complete, without any of the confusion and distortion that ensues in the Ground-presencing. This "monitoring" or "relating" dimension of green doesn't entail any type of conscious exertion that would stir things up such that a non-fluidity were introduced, or even "optimal activity" such as an Awakened One engages in (as the honorific form of *Byed Pa*, *mDzad Pa* signifies activity in its most optimal form, i.e. that of a Buddha). Thus this "activity" of green-hued energy is termed the "rays of beginnings", with "rays" indicating a purely natural emission of energy such as the sun's, and previously indicated in the triune radiation as "radiating



radiation" (*Zer gDangs*). "Beginnings" refers to the Ground's primordality, and can connote a degree of liminality as opposed to "primordial" (*Ye Nas*) and "primeval" (*gDod Ma*), indicating that in this proto-activity we have the virtual beginnings of all that may ensue. The plural in "beginnings" (*rNams*) could be interpreted as referring to these five light-energies, which in their "ever fresh beginnings" or "primordality" radiate with dynamism, a dynamism impelled above all by green light. These rainbow-colored rays are not manifest, but each is already present in their respective virtuality, as a beginning that is still radiation-dominated energy (yet already "rays") yet forms the foundation for the gradual drift into matter-dominated energy ("the five elements"). Thus this virtual presence is "radiant from unmanifest depths", not yet quite there in any perceivable sense, but virtually present as pure potential, with green sustaining the seamless interrelationships between these five hues. It is the very beginning that is not yet divided, though neither it is fused, with each aspect reflecting the whole while maintaining its distinctiveness (as in a hologram) .

96. As unchanging and perfectly complete blue, it abides as primordially perfect without having been made so: blue's evocative quality derives from the vast, unsegmented depths of the blue sky and ocean, which appear to be unchanging, totally devoid of fragmentation or being a particular "thing", and primordially thus without being initially created or subsequently alterable by an outside agency. VLDC 298,1 explicates these two lines thus:

"...As blue which is perfectly complete from the unchanging depths in light of the essence's intrinsic purity, within the Ground it abides as primordially perfect without having been made so in the absence of any objects involving segmented white or red ("white and red" signify diversity)..."

97. In its thus described nature, the Spiritual Body is without manifest characteristics, and abides as the peak of perfections within its great primordial intrinsic purity: VLDC indicates these three lines are the beginning of a new section - it identifies the previous section as "a discussion of how the abiding condition inherent to the Great Perfection's action-free original purity manifests as the three primordial gnoses, yet transcends distinct qualities", while this section is described as "a discussion how primordial gnosis' own essence is present within the distinctive character of the Ground-presencing stemming from the Great Perfection's original purity". Thus, as Ati's gloss indicate at well, the first line refers to the "essence's nature", or the "continuation intrinsic to the essence", signifying how emptiness itself is inherently radiant and intelligent without becoming concretized into a "thing". "Spiritual Body" primarily refers to the Reality Body, as is clear in VLDC 298,3ff.'s explication of the first two lines:

"...Thus" refers to all three of those previously described primordial gnoses being the dimension of the Reality Body's sensitivity or wisdom-energy. "Its" refers to that since its essence abides as the originally pure primordial gnosis in that this Reality Body is unchanging, the Ground is devoid of change. Since the unobstructed space of wisdom-energy is internally radiant within the Reality Body, its nature abides as the spontaneously present primordial gnosis, and thus its intrinsic radiance is not impaired. By virtue of the Reality Body's wisdom-energy shining forth utterly without partialization or restrictions, its compassionate resonance is present as the universally pervading primordial gnosis, and thus the Ground never lapses at all into the partialities of transcendence or cyclic existence.

As to its nature, the Reality Body wherein these three primordial gnoses are perfectly complete doesn't exist in terms of segmented concrete characteristics. This Spiritual Body is

naturally self-exhausted of anything involved with the relationships of the ordinary physical body, and from its own side is devoid of differentiation or manifestation. However, a lighting-up can be discerned if you conceptually isolate on this Spiritual Body, though that manifestation appears without the manifest characteristics of conceptual referent objects..."

VLDC clearly links the second pair of lines with the first pair in its explication of the latter:

"...That mere presencing isn't something fabricated or adventitious, but rather from the primordial beginning is present in a great intrinsic purity. By force of its perfectly exhausting the elemental energies' limitations, it is present as the peak of light devoid of any segmentations in its radiance; the limiting state of the physical body is its seamless identity of the three Spiritual Bodies; by force of its exhausting the limitations of phenomenal appearances and their realities, it is the site of original pure reality; by force of its exhausting the limitations of insight and the mind, it abides as the peak of intrinsically pure enlightened knowing, and for the preceding reasons it is termed "the Ground's Great Perfection" (literally, the "perfectly complete super-exhaustion")..."

The key term in this discussion is *mTha' rDzogs*, which could be rendered as "the limitations of the given factor are exhausted", or "the ultimate reaches of the given factor are completely present", derives from the ambiguous etymology of *rDzogs Pa Chen Po* (here rendered as the "Great Perfection", but simultaneously signifying an "utter completeness", with the "total exhaustion" of all impurities and frozen forms). It is a great exhaustion in that within its purview all limitations and concreteness have no relevancy, while its great completeness derives from the ever-fresh vibrancy that is perfectly complete within the Universe/Being; *mTha'* literally means "extreme", "boundary", or "limitation", and thus is simultaneously the outside periphery of something, and the liminal region wherein limitations are overcome and a new region entered, a region whose boundaries and map is as yet unknown. Thus in the transcendence of ordinary limitations, whether the material "elements" or neurotic ordinary "mind", there is only "peak" energy, which signifies high-intensity, optimally functioning energy totally unlike our usual concretistic notions of how processes operate. Also "peak" connotes the top of a mountain, from which you have the total view of the complete panorama, an undivided hologram within which each aspect is a whole onto itself, a comprehensive picture experienced as a whole rather a totality of individual parts.

98. It doesn't manifest to sensory perception, and since it is naturally cleansed of corporeality and concrete qualities, it abides as the foundation of the great depth-radiance: TCD2 522,2 cites the remaining lines from "and since it is naturally cleansed". VLDC 298,7ff. explicates these three lines thus:

"...That Spiritual Body also doesn't appear in terms of a manifest or visible mouth, eyes, hands, and face, and thus doesn't manifest to the five sensory organs. Furthermore, since it isn't there in a visible way, it is devoid of the corporeality of things, along with the physical body and mind, and is naturally cleansed of colors which are segmented and concrete in character. Thus its knowable dimension is present in a natural flow in terms of its own characteristics (i.e. unadulterated by our grasping and projections), and thereby it abides as the foundation of reality's great depth-radiance..."

99. That which is pervaded (awareness) is empty via the pervader itself (expanse), yet it lights-up without being a sterile nothingness, and the factor of its radiant presencing is

unceasing; because its nucleus includes the quintessence of everything, stains are absent and purified in their own-place: VLDC 299,2ff. explicates these five lines thus:

"...In the time of the individual, that which is pervaded is awareness, and the pervader is the empty expanse of awareness itself - by its pervasion, the expanse and awareness are in a seamless union. If you should then object "Doesn't that mean a simple utter emptiness?", my response is like this: without being like a sterile discontinuous emptiness - the emptiness of inert matter devoid of any movement or the sky permanently empty of appearances - it unceasingly enables the manifestation of primordial gnosis in its wisdom-energy, whereby in its own essence the complete presencing within radiantly illuminating primordial gnosis is unceasing.

Thus the previously described Spiritual Body is pure within the condition of that which can be known, and thus is the "nucleus": the nucleus of the physical body is the Spiritual Body; the nucleus of the ordinary mind is primordial gnosis; and the nucleus of color is natural radiation, which are all present within this great original purity, the quintessence of everything.

For this reason, within reality thus described, the stains of dimmed awareness' straying and emotional distortions, the stains of self/other duality and conceptuality, the stains of subjectivity/objectivity and subtle/coarse mental operations, and the stains of the body and erroneous views are absent, and they are purified in their own place. Thus it is termed "original purity"..."

Even in the "time of the individual", i.e. the evolutionary epoch brimming with actualized forms and illusion, awareness remains pervaded by emptiness devoid of any actual solidification, and yet within this emptiness remains a vibrant force capable of unceasing activity and radiance. In this way neither the extreme of frozen "thing-hood" nor that of total nothingness pertains in this "nucleus" of all existence. A "nucleus" (*sNying Po*) indicates an energizing force from which structuration spreads out, a matrix of development where everything is present in its quintessential form. "Quintessence" or "elixir" connotes each dimension's corresponding core of dynamic pure energy, which must be extracted from the concretized and rigid incrustations they become solidified into. Since in the nucleus-dimension there is only this quintessence of things (Ati glosses "everything" as "the observable processes of the Spiritual Body), all stains (i.e. concretizations) are pure in their own state. These intensities or vitalizing energies operative within the Ground never cease even should they go into the background as their frozen forms go into the ascendancy, since they are a primordial dynamic inherent to emptiness itself. Emptiness itself, or "original purity", is the final nucleus of all, and within it we find only these alchemical elixirs, the distilled energy-quintessences of everything, which are the self-structuring organizing forces that give life to the Universe, yet remain themselves utterly fluid and pure.

100. Thus within this great secret of the Buddha's expansive awakening, the dimension of its nature is present: VLDC 299,6 identifies this "great secret" as the essence itself, and explains these two lines with an etymology of "Buddha" ("expansive-awakening/cleansed/dissipated"):

"...The Ground abiding in this way is termed "originally pure" by force of being naturally cleansed of striving and exertion, and primordially cleansed of such factors as dimmed awareness. By force of its dimension of wisdom-energy expanding without obstruction, it is

present as simple primordial gnosis. Its abiding as the great secret of the absences in manifestations is the essence, while from the dimension of its nature existing in a natural flow, it is present without abiding in any extreme whatsoever..."

101. Compassionate resonance: via its compassionate resonance's varied presencing, emptiness itself is unceasingly dynamic; and with the manifestations from this presencing dimension in terms of the twofold primordial gnosis of that which can be known, this presencing of absence is naturally cleansed of reified appearances: Ati gives a somewhat different reading which, with glosses indicated parenthetically, goes thus:

*"The variegated presencing-dimension of (the Ground's) compassionate resonance shines forth,  
And via the empty dimension being unceasing (in the manner of the source of all)  
There is shining presence of the lighting-up,  
Though that manifestation of absence (in light of its emptiness) is inherently cleansed".*

The basic idea of these four lines is again the indivisibility of emptiness and appearance, that the Ground's manifest dimension or "presencing" in no way obstructs or vitiates even partially its emptiness. Equally, the presence of this twofold gnostic energy within the Universe's core is what differentiates this vibrant original purity from the pure absence of the sky (since it has the capacity for dynamism in terms of appearances and consciousness), although it is not as yet involved in reified, frozen forms of appearance. VLDC 299,1ff. explicates this passage thus:

"...Via the diversity of the presencing-dimension of the Ground's compassionate resonance that varies in accordance with the perspectives of those living beings needing spiritual training, the lighting-up dimension is unceasing and obstructed within reality's emptiness in the manner of its being the source of all. Thus it is present with the identity of the quintet of characteristic-sustaining primordial gnosises pertaining to the Enjoyment Body, which I discuss elsewhere. Also from the dimension of the Ground's compassionate resonance, there is this twofold gnostic energy within the Emanational Body: the primordial gnosis of the knowable just as they are in their final reality, which is sensitive to the very abiding reality of that which is real; and the primordial gnosis of the knowable in all their plurality, which is sensitive to the mind-sets of those living beings needing spiritual training. If this twofold gnostic energy weren't present within the Ground, no difference would obtain between this and the empty sky..."

Since that primordial gnosis is not established in terms of a substantial thing either directly or indirectly, it is merely that its dimension of lighting-up is present observably via conceptually isolating on primordial gnosis, and thus from the side of emptiness primordial gnosis is "absent" and naturally cleansed of reified appearances. In this, the extreme of "non-existence" as well should be understood to be negated, since in its ultra-purity it isn't within the perspective of discursive elaborations..."

102. Thus compassionate resonance as the Ground-nature's automatic force is primordially devoid of any striving-involved activity, and thus presences forth primordially without any differentiation in the manner of uncreate manifestation: just as light from the sun, it is not the case that it is created by itself, but rather its own nature lights up as such (without any fabrication or artificiality): "nature's automatic force" indicates that this compassionate resonance is the spontaneous expression of the Ground's "nature" (its "ownmostness", or

"inherent continuance"), the further extension of its spontaneous presence, just as rays issue forth from the sun automatically and spontaneously, without any question of purposive activity bringing it about. The originally pure essence is indivisible from the spontaneously present nature, and their spontaneous indivisible expression is summed up in the term "compassionate resonance", which "presences forth primordially" as the seamless unity of the three Spiritual Bodies, without any fissuring between the knowable and the knowing - pure intelligence and pure luminosity coexist at this virtual level, both with intrinsically self-organizing capacity that points the way to the Ground-presencing. In a sense the Ground cannot help but "tumble" on to the Ground-presencing, just as the sun itself cannot help but emit rays, its innermost and ownmost expression. VLDC 300,7-301,3 explicates this last set of lines thus:

"...Analogically it resembles how by virtue of the sun's presence, the sun's light automatically emerges without there being any way to block it. Just like that, the automatic force of the originally pure Ground's nature appears to disciples needing spiritual training and whom have pure karma. Primordially devoid of any striving-involved direct activity as it doesn't involve any exertion on its own part in terms of its appearing or appearance, its manner of manifestation is primordially without exertion and uncreated by anyone at all. In this way there is no differentiation between the threefold Spiritual Bodies, as it presences forth primordially without any differentiation in terms of primordial cognition and the cognized object's own characteristics. Analogically, it's just like light from the sun: in terms of its light, the sun itself is totally devoid of either acting to make the light manifest, or acting to make it unmanifest. Similarly, primordial gnosis as well is not created by reality's originally pure essence itself, but rather emerges automatically via its natural force, such that reality's own nature lights up as such primordially..."

In CBD 323,6-7 Longchenpa also quotes this final section, and in his preface (323,3-6) emphasizes "compassionate resonance" as referring to the spontaneous, effortless compassionate activity and manifestation of an Awakened Buddha for the welfare of all living beings. In the Awakened One's enlightenment, all the visionary presences dissolve into the undifferentiated singularity of the originally pure Reality Body, yet without wavering from that in the slightest, the Buddha's spontaneously present compassion results in his/her playfully emitting countless emanations to act for the welfare of all living beings. This unceasing activity for all living beings' welfare to the ends of the Universe until cyclic existence is completely emptied is not, however, "altruism" or self-sacrifice", since it spontaneously manifests out of his/her enlightenment without the slightest exertion or striving being involved.

103. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 435,1; At1 529,5). Imagining the Ground's compassionate resonance as like a cloudless sky (which can also serve as an image for the essence, indicating its "emptiness") is based upon the pervasiveness of a cloudless sky, as well as how it is a luminous and expansive presence without, however, involving any concrete and circumscribable things within its expanse.

104. *bKra bShis mDzes lDan Chen Po'i rGyud*. (NGB1 174,3; At1 210,1; also cited by TCD1 285,2). This passage is structured around the respective manifestations, appearances, or "lighting-ups" of the Ground's triune identity - its essence, nature, and compassionate resonance. This triune lighting-up is not conditioned or distorted as with normal appearances, but rather remains an integrated, fluid process devoid of dualistic fissuring. The following lines are part of the preface to those three sections.

*This vast space of its great presencing abides as the super expansive awakening which never strays from the great unwavering Body of Reality:* the Reality Body is the dimension of pure potential, its empty light-energy never wavering into any fragmentation, exteriorization, or partialization. Thus "unwavering" connotes the absence of being "raised-up" or "divorced" (*'Phags Pa*) from the Ground, the key term signifying the coming to the fore of external radiance which takes place in the process of the Ground-presencing.

*The Essence's Spiritual Body is unceasingly present: its essence is unchanging and its means secret; it has never wavered, it is unwavering, and it is without agitation:* "its means secret" is glossed in NGB by "the son doesn't recognize the mother", and in Ati by "not recognizing, it isn't realized". The "means" or dynamics of the Ground's essence is secret in that it is obscured from our perspective, such that we beings (the "son") don't recognize Being ("the mother"), the absurdity and artificiality of which is evident.. Such "mother/son" imagery is frequent in the present text, and in particular can be used with respect to our meditatively cultivated experience of radiant light (the "son") and the indestructible nucleus of radiant light at the core of the macrocosmic and microcosmic Universe ("the mother").

The last three attributes of the Spiritual Body given here appear to correlate to the three times, i.e. it has never wavered in the past (glossed as "from the first" (NGB) and "from what is real" (Ati), it is unwavering in the present (glossed as "awareness"), and it is without agitation in the future.

*This abiding reality's lighting-up is unobscured by its manifestation-modes, and is a total Great Perfection with its essence, nature, and compassionate resonance devoid of fragmentation:* unlike coarse appearances, this lighting-up of the essence is totally diaphanous, and completely unimpeded - it is pure energy without any frozen concretizations or fixations into sedimented patterns. Thus the simple fact that it lights up, or manifests (as opposed to being a perfect stillness), doesn't at all vitiate its utter clarity and purity. NGB and Ati gloss "total Great Perfection by "in that enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy".

### *I. The essence's lighting-up*

*The essence's great abiding reality manifests in the manner of Spiritual Bodies, yet isn't at all present with a manifest mouth, eyes, or ears:* "in the manner of" (*ITar*) could also be translated as "what seems to be" or even simply "as", and points to the metaphoric or symbolic nature of the language used here, highlighting that these are virtual processes rather than concrete "things". Thus this term's use in describing spontaneous presence's eightfold shining-forth process indicates how each of the eight aspects are "masks" that spontaneous presence assumes, or "interpretations" we enframe spontaneous presence with, and shouldn't be misunderstood as simply referential statements picking out discrete entities as such. This is signified in the present context by describing its manifestation as resembling "Spiritual Bodies" from our perspective, but totally unlike what thing-based thought would try to limit or reduce such a description to (a concrete body with sensory organs, and so forth).

*It manifests in the manner of emptiness, yet isn't at all present as an inert emptiness:* NGB's glosses indicate that although awareness' essence is empty, it is a dynamic emptiness intelligent to its core, rather than the sterile nothingness of the sky devoid of awareness.

*It manifests superbly in the manner of five lights, yet isn't present at all with differentiated colors:* NGB's glosses indicate that the five lights stem from the radiance dimension in awareness' essence, with each hue relating to a quality of awareness (deep blue being its unchangingness, white being how it is unsullied by the emotional distortions, and so forth - see Chapter Three for further details).

*It manifests devoid of fragmentation, yet isn't present at all in the manner of relatedness or integration:* without our constant obsession with "things", we automatically try to construe this absence of fragmentation into an interwoven system of "things", individual entities that are then related to each other in some way. However we must resist the temptation to construe this in terms of things, as instead a seamless identity-singularity is here being pointed to - the whole rather than a totality, the "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum" rather than particular three dimensional objects.

*It manifests in the manner of unceasing ornamentation, yet in its loftiness is utterly devoid of any manifestation in terms of upper and lower:* this ornamentation is the luminous self-presencing of awareness, which unceasingly operates within the Ground's emptiness. Thus this beauty is always there without cessation, and the Universe's core-reality is not only primordially empty, radiant, and intelligent, it is also primevally beautiful, with beauty indicating that in our own experience this must be accessed as an aesthetic dimension. Epistemologically, the Ground can be seen as an undifferentiated aesthetic continuum normally in the background of our ordinary manipulative and obsessive perception focused on particular discrete things and "selves", yet without entailing a mere formless emptiness since an inherent vibrancy or dynamism adorns it in an utterly indivisible manner. It is this perfect simultaneity of the complete interpenetration of form and emptiness that we experience as beautiful, such as a Taoist painting consisting of a few brush stroke on a largely empty space. While ontologically "lofty" in the sense of its utter purity, cosmogonic primordially, and epistemological priority (since all else is localized differentiations abstracted out from within its "presencing" stirring from its formless potential), it is not the case that we are talking about a thing that we can localize relative to other entities, saying it is "higher" than that, or "lower" than this. Its "loftiness" is a feeling we experience in experientially encountering its presence within our own being, and not a temporal-spatial coordinates specifier.

## *II. The nature's lighting-up*

*In its manifesting in the manner of blue, it is devoid of differentiated "parts":* blue's imagery is that of the sky or ocean's vast unbroken depths, and thus here is related to the nature's undifferentiated continuum devoid of distinct "parts" related to each other entitatively.

*In its manifesting in the manner of green, the dynamic qualities are perfectly complete:* NGB reads "it is present without being sought" instead of TDD's repetition of "the dynamic qualities are perfectly complete", but TCD agrees with TDD.

*Unceasing, yet unconditioned:* I have corrected *sKyon* to *rKyen* on the basis of the other texts. Although it is unceasing (and not just a still nothingness), it remains unconditioned by the web of causes and effects that forms cyclic existence's impure domain.

Self-radiant, yet including the internal and external: this glossed in NGB by "arising in the manner of cyclic existence's gateway to impurity".

Devoid of striving and accomplishment, yet present in a natural flow: this glossed in NGB by "When you meditatively take it into your experience, and recognize it within the post-death reality intermediate state, it arises in primordial gnosis' gateway to purity".

### III. Compassionate resonance's lighting-up

Compassionate resonance's lighting-up: NGB glosses this with "as for the totally stable Ground-awareness, if it isn't taken hold of with primordial gnosis, it is the site of cyclic existence".

A great absence by force of its being unobstructed and unceasing: prefixing "great" to "absence" indicates that this is not "absence" in its ordinary sense, but rather is a super absence - while normally "absence" or "non-existence" refers to something that has finished or never was, here the "great absence" never ceases or finishes, "absence" meaning it is devoid of any concrete thing-hood, totally unimpeded in its free flow. Because it is without obstruction, the limiting confines that would delineate some type of existent thing, the great absence is this self-organizing energy in a pure flow, without the obstructions or limitations that would allow it to be picked out as some particular thing which we could then pigeon hole as either "existent" or "non-existent" in the ordinary sense of those terms.

Empty in a natural flow, yet a great shining-forth everywhere: I have corrected *Bags Kyis* to *Bab Kyis* in accordance with Ati and TCD's readings. In its flow it is nothing, and thus it can give rise to everything - if it weren't empty, then it would be limited and could not shine-forth "everywhere", but rather would just be another localized phenomenon among many, enmeshed in the net of particular causes and effects.

Devoid of confusion, yet a great holistic total presencing-forth: this lighting-up is not an amorphous confusion, nor is there any rupture or adulteration with impure tendencies and interpretations; rather, the colors are in perfect harmony with each other as in a rainbow, the whole in its holistic unity. Though the lighting-up is total, it remains this harmonious unity devoid of fissure or disruption.

Perfectly complete, yet a great lighting-up as a singularity: thus while there is a perfect completeness within the Ground, i.e. within its pure energy all that may come is present within enfolded potential, in its "great" manifestation it remains an unbroken singularity devoid of the disruption of entitative differentiation into a succession of things that we could then itemize (and thus lead into an endless list of problems such as "fate", and so forth).

105. As discussed above, the "Secret Cycle" is one of the lower classifications of Great Perfection Teachings in the Esoteric Precepts Series, and Longchenpa at times mentions its teachings in opposition to those of the "Unsurpassed Secret Cycle" that is the highest classification in that Series. The present misconception concerning the Spiritual Bodies evidently stems from a characteristic teaching found in these Secret Cycle texts, though at this point I have been unable to look into the matter any deeper. LYT2 254,1-5 indicates that in general the "Secret Cycle" texts don't deal with the practice of Direct Transcendence and its four visions, and thus don't discuss the lighting-up of primordial gnosis to the eyes.



Generally the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism is based on a number of tantras not shared or necessarily accepted as canonical by other sects, and those texts are classified into three separate groupings referred to by Sanskrit terms: Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga (which is, roughly speaking, a synonym for the Great Perfection teachings); translated, they refer to something like "the Great Yoga", "the Subsequent Yoga", and "the Transcendent Yoga", with "Yoga" meaning "a holistic tuning-in" (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism I* 275-345 discusses these three divisions in some detail). In particular, the Mahāyoga literature and meditative practices place a great deal of emphasis on the "generate phase" of tantric meditation, which involves extremely detailed creative visualization of deities and mandalas. Though in fact all such visualizations are ultimately to be dissolved within emptiness and are to be understood as non-substantial from the start, with such vivid images it is obviously an extremely prevalent, though still quite dangerous, pitfall to become attached to or fixated on those deities' visual appearances as having some type of ultimate status.

106. The "desire", "form" and "formless" realms are a tripartite exhaustive classification of cyclic existence (see "three realms of cyclic existence" in glossary), and as such involve impure, distorted, and non-optimal states of existence. The "formless" realm is a very attenuated state accessible to advanced meditative practitioners where only a subtle consciousness exists without material corporealization. It can be conceptually differentiated into four distinct meditative states, or "sensory fields" (*sKye mChed*), of increasing subtlety: "the sensory field of the infinite sky"; "the sensory field of infinite consciousness"; "the sensory field of nothing at all"; and "the sensory field devoid of either discernment or non-discernment". Thus if these supposed sensory organs of the Essence's Spiritual Body existed in material form, it would reduce the Universe's essence to a simple phenomena of coarse existence; alternatively, if they existed in a mere psychic form, they would be identical to these rarefied "formless" states of existence, and as such the Universe's essence would again be reduced to distorted cyclic existence, and to the status of a discrete thing that can be analytically delineated as such.

107. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 588,1; Ati1 729,5).

108. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 588,3; Ati1 730,1). This particular passage is in a chapter that is structured around a debate with other positions.

109. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 444,6; Ati2 182,2; VLDC explicates this passage on 301,3-304,3; the first four lines are cited by TCD2 520,2, with the remaining lines cited on 522,6). The twofold primordial gnosis refers to (i) the gnosis which is sensitive to phenomena in all their detailed surface plurality, i.e. how they are actually perceived and interpreted by the vast diversity of life forms, and (ii) the gnosis which is sensitive to phenomena in their immediate suchness, or depth-reality. From the viewpoint of their manifest actualization within an Awakened One's enlightenment, the latter is what enables his/her own spiritual enlightenment as s/he becomes directly and totally aware of the undifferentiated aesthetic continuum, Being-as-such, the pervasive dynamic emptiness which is the matrix of all that comes to be, rather than our ordinary obsession with what is at hand, the things which we desire and fear. The former primordial gnosis then is the extraordinarily expanded awareness of all forms or "beings" that continue to exist within this emptiness, as well as their own infinite variety of feelings, perceptions, and personal histories. It is thus particularly vital in the Awakened One's charismatic and efficacious activities within cyclic existence for the

sake of enlightening those who continue to labor under the illusion of the Other, enabling his/her precise knowledge of the physical and mental states of those living beings, and what it takes to jolt them out of their normal complacency and/or obsessive patterns to re-orient towards the spiritual dimension of their lives. These two primordial gnoses' corresponding names literally read "however many they may be" and "just how they are", which underlies NSTB's translations of them as referring to "quantitative" and "qualitative" respectively, though it seems to me such a translation is not particularly precise. KGYT2 80ff. has a particularly clear explication, saying that the former sees "the great appearances" and the latter sees "the great emptiness".

The main point here is that primordial gnosis is not some special, advanced capacity that is developed newly through super human concentration and contemplation, but rather is present primordially in the Universe's very fabric. If this pure psychic intelligence were not existent from the start, then there would be mere inert lumps of matter without any life, consciousness, or creativity. If its pure source-potential were absent within the Universe's abidingness, its ultimate depths, then it would be no different than simply material atoms, and one would be forced to accept a materialist interpretation reducing everything to inert matter (VLDC 302,1-3); if it were absent from all life forms' inner being, then "life" itself as well would be the same as inanimate matter, and the fact of consciousness would become impossible to account for. Emptiness would then be a total nothingness, utterly devoid of its inherent dynamic radiance that contradicts the nihilistic view of the Universe, and thus no different than the sky, i.e. empty space with its utter stillness devoid of any life or dynamic energy. In addition, the first line here connotes that there isn't any duality between primordial gnosis and the knowable, since it an uninterrupted aesthetic continuum devoid of the normally strict dualism we introduce between our perceiving selves and that which is known, a dualism based on our entitative interpretation of internal consciousness and externally apparent presences (three dimensional objects as such being a perceptual and conceptual construct "after the fact").

Compassionate resonance's primordial gnosis which is sensitive to the knowable just as they are ultimately, knows the abiding condition of its own intrinsic reality: primordial gnosis is the aspect of the Ground's compassionate resonance that is sensitive to and aware of what it encounters, that which is "knowable", and hence embraces a self-awareness or cognizance of its own abidingness. Thus VLDC 301,7 explains that this primordial gnosis remains within its "own intrinsic essence" of knowing the Ground, and thus it is sensitive to the abidingness of what is real in its internal radiance".

Thus the primordial gnosis sensitive to everything manifests within the Ground's compassionate resonance: VLDC 303,1-4 indicates this primarily refers to the primordial gnosis "sensitive to the knowable in all their plurality", and signifies omniscience - the Awakened One's cognition is utterly unimpeded, and capable of knowing in detail the mental states of all sentient beings, the external environments, the pure lands, and so forth.

All of this is not something apprehended via referential thought - aside from remaining within its own-being itself, it is not present in terms of coarse subjectivity and objectivity; lighting-up as and within the subtle dimension of depth-radiance, it is the pathway of sentient beings, as, like a seed, it intensifies upwards: "all of this" refers to primordial gnosis itself as discussed above, as well as all the infinite variety of things that are within the scope of its knowing. "Referential thought" (*Dran Pa*) can also mean "memory" or "attention", but in the context of Great Perfection texts is often used to refer to ordinary consciousness with its

instinctual conceptuality based on an intuitively entitative-referential understanding of itself, and the Universe around it. However primordial gnosis itself isn't something that you grasp or access intellectually, and its stunning psychic capacities for knowing won't ensue from such limited and limiting mental activity with its obsessive "enframing". In fact, this primordial gnosis merely remains within its own-being, i.e. naturally within the Ground's nature as its ownmost intensity, without being distorted and alienated into the "otherness" of divorced presences that underlies coarse dualisms of subjectivity and objectivity. In contrast, ordinary cognitive activity reflects derivative, dimmed energy that has become distorted from its natural intensity, and which is continually moving out from itself towards objects it is attached to, obsessively forming libidinal cathexis that, on top of creating the other, grant its energy over to the other.

CBD 326,1 quotes this section in the context of discussing the relationship of the Buddha to sentient beings and the impure interpreted worlds the latter experience. Sentient beings' ordinary distorted perceptions and experiences are analogized to classic disease-influenced misperceptions such as seeing a white conch as yellow, or non-existent falling strands of hairs. Once the disease has been cured, its corresponding misperceptions naturally fade away, and that person no longer experiences them in his own perception (identical to how our dream-experience seems totally real, yet fades away automatically upon awakening from sleep). Just so, when the Awakened One fully activates his/her own inner gnostic energy and thereby destroys the dualistic underpinnings of cyclic existence's disease/dream, s/he naturally no longer experiences its distorted environments and life forms in his/her own perception for his own sake. However, though s/he no longer sees these appearances as the concrete self-existent entities we normally conceive them to be, s/he is aware of their vivid dream-like hallucination within others' experience, and it is on this basis that he /she does, and is able to, move back into our worlds to engage in soteriological activities. It is as if someone has been drugged and hooked up to a virtual reality machine, such that they become immersed in a videotaped horror film that they can't help but believe is utterly real, while we, as outside observers, can watch that same film and thus completely understand the other's experiences, without, however, ourselves becoming emotionally immersed in those experiences nor granting them any separate ontological reality (apart from their undeniable phenomenological reality - *Sems Can La'ang 'Khrul sNang sNang Ba Tsam Las Ma Grub Pa 'Di*). Thus "remaining within its own-being" indicates that an Awakened One remains unwaveringly within his/her own pure nature, i.e. the indestructible nucleus of radiant light, without any deviation into coarse appearances. The Buddha's psychic energy is completely un-neuroticized and hence at peace within his own enlightened heart/mind, without being compulsively driven to exteriorization chasing "external" objects and people (such as "girl/guy watching", "watering at the mouth" over a desired possession, and so forth). But this does not mean that he is oblivious to the world and its vast array of aspects, for in his omniscience he "knows all observable features" (*rNam Pa Thams Cad*) *mKhyen Pa' Ye Shes*) yet this knowledge is a natural effortless reflection without any clinging or forced attempts to enframe and capture the reflections. Since it is not aggressive, manipulative perception, it is of a single essence with the sensitivity to phenomena's depth-reality (*Thams Cad mKhyen Pa'i Ye Shes*), an effortless and natural extension of it, without involving any investiture of psychic energy into the objects (which is the essence of Freudian thought, that we invest our psychic energy and ourselves in external objects and drama - the Mother, her breast, our excrement, our wealth and so forth - and in doing so surrender our independence for being held in thrall by the other, the dead and lifeless, though we do so in the hopeless delusion that in this act we are asserting ourselves in dominance and union). See TCD2 313,1-3 for a brief description.

In addition, this pure gnostic energy is present in all life forms as a latent source-potential of subtle depth-radiance, though absent in its manifest, actualized dimensions. It is this inner seed-core of enlightened energy or "Buddha-nature" then that forms the soteriological path for all sentient beings, since by turning towards it we may experience its pure energy-intensification in our own being. The spiritual path is thus not a fabrication, or something extrinsic that we must traverse or access, but rather is our own luminosity, our own gnostic energy that is always already present in our vibrant, empty depths. In particular, within Direct Transcendence practice this inner potency awakens, and shines forth via our eyes into the sky, so that its full potential unfolds in sequential phases culminating in the enlightenment experience. Between the Ground's timeless potential and the fruit's enlightened self-awakening is evolution, the path between the foundation and the climax, the formless Ground and the enlightened Buddha. This path is the enlightened energy-intensity of awareness present within us subtly, from which all derives - one way goes into materiality and the worlds of dream, and the other way towards the light of becoming fully awake. Thus this gnostic energy is both paths, the path of sentient beings in that it is via this that they have come to where they are (it being the ultimate source of their psycho-physical energy), and the path of sentient beings in that it offers the sole means to move forward towards the climaxing experience of a Buddha. Thus throughout all its seed-potency remains until it flourishes and intensifies into the ripening of a Buddha's full awakening, this inner potential that is light, not in what you have confined the light, which we must have some light experience of but must resist capturing its virtual subtle presence in terms of a reductionistic scheme concretizing it into green, and so forth.

In follow-up remarks to this passage, TCD2 523,2 emphasizes that the "seed" or pure potential of gnostic energy is present right within the original formless ground, which in Buddhahood then flourishes into direct manifestation. In this sense, "seed" indicates its pure potential state within the Ground's self-contained primordiality, which as such survives in all subsequent life forms:

"...When the Emanational Bodies manifest from this pure source-potential dimension, these two forms of primordial gnosis also directly and substantially accomplish the welfare of those beings in the six types of life forms who need, and are receptive to, spiritual teachings; while absent in any direct manifestation within this time of "original purity", its dimension is present nevertheless in the manner of a seed..."

VLDC explicates these last lines thus (304,-7):

"...Since it is present in a natural flow within reality, it lights up as the extremely subtle dimension of reality's latent depth-radiance. Since in the time of the "individual" (i.e. individual life forms in between the Ground's pure potential and its climax in the Awakened Ones) there is primordial gnosis' shining via the above described dynamism, it is present in the shining of the five lights, and thus this dynamism of the five primordial gnosises is the foundation of the gnostic shining on sentient beings' pathway. From this seed-potency which thus brings about the intensifying manifestation of the experience of reality, just as the shoot grows from its seed, and from that the stalk, petals, flowers and fruit flourish, this path-vision of the colors and shapes of the light emergent from primordial gnosis arises in an unobstructed and unceasing lighting-up..."

110. By virtue of this twofold primordial gnosis existing in this form of pure potential within the primordial Ground, it isn't something that must be newly created out of nothingness at the time of enlightenment's expansive awakening - rather it simply undergoes a transition in terms of its active energy level. There is no contradiction in its entering a new phase ("emergence") with the attainment of Buddhahood despite its being primordially spontaneously present, since at the point of this reawakening primordial gnosis come to the fore (*mNgon Gyur*) such that it kicks into an actualized ascendancy state from its previous background-latency phase. This can be readily understood from an analogy such as a person who possesses a treasure buried in house yet knows nothing of it, and subsequently finds the treasure such that its riches become available to him, and thus transform his/her entire life; alternatively, it is similar to how a virus may be present in our body for a number of years, but only kick into active functioning at a later date, or how we may possess a long lost father who lives in the same city, but whom we only come to recognize as such in a startling moment of truth. We must keep in mind that Buddhahood is not a mere dissolving in the formless Ground, but rather is located in a liminal boundary area between the Ground and the Ground-presencing, between pure empty Being and evolution; a Buddha is Being in full awareness of its Being post-rupture, through and in beings. In enlightenment, what the intricate web of material things and entitative "selves" that formerly dominated our experience dissolve into their source, while the pure gnostic energy formerly hidden in the background ("esoteric") of our own being and that of the Universe at large now unfolds into its optimal intensity of active manifestation. Thus an Awakened One entails a wholly unprecedented relationship between "internal radiance" (or "virtual energy") and "external radiance" (or actual evolving manifestations) effected by his/her self-consciousness recognition, which is quite unlike not only the pure internal radiance of the Ground, but also the precisely reverse relationship that characterized (and characterizes) cyclic existence. Although the Awakened One does return back to his/her source of pure potentiality, s/he does so in full consciousness and differentiation, and thus certain capacities unfold to their highest degree in this return. The Awakened Ones continue to engage in activity and manifestation, yet they fully and constantly realize the dream-like insubstantiality of those activities, and thus fail to concretize or entitize the unimpeded fluidity of these manifestations, which directly proceed from, and directly return to, their own inner core of gnostic luminosity.

Finally, I must touch upon the significance of the possible implication here that primordial gnosis in "coarse forms" exists in Buddhahood becomes clear, which would appear odd as "coarse" is normally a pejorative term that wouldn't apply to the subtle state of a Buddha. One interpretative possibility is that in this context "coarse" (*Rags Pa*) refers to "external radiance" as opposed to "internal radiance" (which is characterized as "subtle" (*Phra Ba*)), such that it indicates in Buddhahood these gnostic energies are in full evidence with their optimized manifest operation following their ascendancy into the foreground, just as a seed finally emerges in its full destiny in autumn. In this way this primordial gnosis can become evident to sentient beings in their interactions with the Awakened One, and indeed "coarse" could be interpreted as meaning that within the Ground this gnostic energy is "absent to coarse perception", i.e. not manifestly evident but rather a pure energy potential. However, the most likely reading is that "coarse" doesn't apply to the state of Buddhahood but rather simply emphasizes the subtle nature of primordial gnosis' presence within the Ground, while the distinction between the latter and an Awakened One's primordial gnosis is that of latency-potential to actuality-manifestation. This is clearly indicated by the subsequent lines' emphasis on enlightenment as a state of pure potential devoid of concrete manifestations, and indeed ZLZN 7a 5 in the same context makes this distinction between "subtle" internal

radiance (in which sense primordial gnosis exists within the Ground) and "coarse" external radiance (in which sense primordial gnosis doesn't exist within the Ground).

111. *Shes Rab Kyi Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa sDud Pa Tshigs Su bCad Pa*; the original Sanskrit title is *Ratnagūṇasamcayagāthā* (Chapter 5, v.8cd - see Yuyama's *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratnagūṇa-samcaya-gāthā* 30 for the Sanskrit, and 165 for the Tibetan translation; English translation in Conze's *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary* 20; also cited by TCD2 520,7). "Attributes" (*Chos*) here can also be taken to refer to the oceanic spiritual teachings of the Buddhas.

112. Following the preceding discussion emphasizing awareness' state of pure internal radiant potential, the hypothetical questioner wonders how that harmonizes with these standard descriptions of awareness as having a "luminous house", or being a "subject of limitless light" - "in that case" implies that the questioner is wondering why, if nothing is directly present or concretely manifest in Buddhahood, is it described as being this luminous awareness with a house of light, and so forth. Longchenpa's response presents the following very subtle analysis of the interrelationship between potentiality and actuality in the context of the Ground's primordiality, the Ground-presencing's evolution, and the Universe's self-recognition in the enlightenment experience, the three phases summing up the Universe's drama/game.

KGYT2 81,3ff. and 83,3ff. use this imagery of awareness' "luminous house" and so forth in the context of discussing the Ground's pre-rupture primordiality (i.e. "internal radiance"), while in our present context "luminous house" primarily indicates "external radiance", i.e. how in the Ground-presencing awareness comes to be surrounded by its own manifest radiation (which is why TDD's second chapter specifies the "luminous house" as the cause of dimmed awareness (191,4) - with its exteriorization, it is then possible for the Ground to either self-recognize or not recognize its own display (a possibility absent in its state of pure self-contained potential), which in the latter eventuality is equivalent to straying and dimmed awareness. Thus TDD 178,4 distinguishes between the Ground-in-its-primordiality and the Ground-in-its-evolution by whether or not they involve the "actual" presence of this "luminous house", with "actual" referring to external radiance. If it is actually present (i.e. in external radiance), then it is the Ground-in-its-evolution, while if it is not actually present (i.e. only in internal radiance), then it is the Ground-in-its-primordiality. In particular, within our own existence awareness' essence is a subtle inner luminosity within our hearts, which TDD 247,1 describes as being within "a rainbow-colored divine mansion". It would appear that in this usage "luminous house" has a confining, localized connotation, as opposed to the utterly unimpeded free flow of light energy within the Ground, as well as implying habitation or dwelling, i.e. "individuals" living in a local residence with the split between what is "interior" to the house and the house's own exteriority with the numerous points of ingress and egress that always characterize a house. Thus in the pre- and post-Ground-presencing state of affairs, this limitless light is absent, since awareness is in a state of pure potential immersed within its background-emptiness, and as such devoid of even pure concrete manifestations.

Though here a "luminous house" is described as being between the Ground and a Buddha's enlightenment, TCD1, 313,7 uses precisely this imagery ("awareness possessing a luminous house, and manifestations of limitless light") in describing how the Buddha Totally Positive One abides within the expanse after he has become free. Thus, to avoid confusion, one must keep in mind these two separate dimensions of this imagery relating to awareness' "luminous

house": in the context of the Ground-presencing it implies exteriorization and a certain instability in awareness' energy, while in the context of manifest enlightenment the "luminous house" connotes awareness itself in its pure potentiality, "light" indicating how it shines after being divested of all the darkness and obscurity stemming from ignorance. Since in the former the light dims (just as the crystal's rays dim in proportion to their distance from the crystal/source), while the latter remains forever within its own source (as the crystal's interior glow of potentiality never dims), the latter is actually much more vibrant and radiant than the former, remaining purely potential even though manifesting radiant activity-visions, like the moon manifests its reflections within a lake without in any sense dissipating its own energy or being given over to that reflection as some type of concrete entity (since unlike the primordial Ground an Awakened One remains in a liminal zone participating in both the Ground and its evolutionary dynamic, the Ground-presencing - in essence, it constitutes a wholly distinct third "epoch" in the Universe's unfolding. Thus just above this passage in TCD (TCD1 313,3-4) Longchenpa describes the Totally Positive One as "by force of the dynamic qualities of original purity and spontaneous presence coming to the fore, he resembles light contracting into a crystal - he is internally radiant in his own essence, and abides as the Youthful Body in a Vase". This passage perfectly describes the dual edged "spiral" nature of enlightenment, characterized by a simultaneity of the dissolution process and manifestation process.

It must be kept in mind that ultimately the Ground and Ground-presencing are indivisible, and is only a matter of our shifting perspectives - the Ground naturally expresses itself as the Ground-presencing, while the Ground-presencing's reality continues to be the Ground's empty radiance. In the context of the Buddha operating as our Teacher, the entire concept of "Teacher" of course entails others, and as such is within the Ground-presencing, the Ground-as-contextualized, rather than the total immersion within the Ground's primordiality. Thus, as the Buddha emerges in our world for us, he appears to be resplendent, residing in a palace adorned by the sun and moon, with his awareness shining within a halo of light. Our own awareness within a halo of light is not an object of our experience, since it is one of the initial moments of the Ground-presencing (though a continuing dimension within our hearts) which we have long since dulled our senses to; yet in that the Buddha presents himself/herself in the direct vibrancy of the Ground-presencing (if not the Ground-presencing how could we interact), we experience its direct immediacy divested of the dulled and concretized materializations that subsequent accrue. Thus our experience of him/her is couched in the terms utilized to describe the initial emergence of the Ground-presencing (light, primordial gnosis, Spiritual Body) rather than the corresponding terms appropriate for describing the Ground-presencing's descent into cyclic existence (material elements, mind, ordinary physicality).

This consistent imaging of Buddhahood as a "Body in a Vase" suggests the seeming problem of the Buddha becoming completely unmanifest, which appears in tension with such descriptions as having his awareness in a luminous house, and being a "subject of limitless light". The real meaning of this image, however, is that you can't see its real essence (like a body in a vase is invisible from external view) because it is pure energy devoid of any concretized forms - all the Awakened Ones' visual appearances merely emerge via their pure inspiring intrinsically dynamic energy (*Byin rLabs*) interacting with disciple's limitations, and is no more materially substantive than a circle drawn on water, the afterimage of a circling torch in space. From his own side there is only pure energy, which continually radiates outwards straight from the condition of internal radiance, thus flowing directly from the source rather than our own energy, which is ontologically quite removed from its source, and

is filtered through our psychotic and systematic distortion (in that the material elements' own solidity is a consequence of our non-recognition, and hence in a very basic sense our fundamental perception of the world can be called "psychotic", while from the subjective, emotional side the Buddhist outlook is clearly aligned with what Freudians would call "the universal neurosis of mankind". This differentiation between the primordial spontaneous presence of all these dynamic qualities and resources (*Yon Tan*) and their optimization or full-intensity activation within enlightenment, is dealt with particularly clearly on TCD1 312,1-7, where Longchenpa characterizes the former as involving "spontaneous presence" (*Lhun Grub*) of these dynamic qualities while the latter involves their "coming to the fore" (*mNgon Du Gyur*), i.e. their optimal activation and transition from the background to the foreground. Thus enlightenment involves both an unprecedented manifestation (as these capacities of the Ground finally come into their fully actualized form) as well as dissolution (into the unmanifest internal radiance of the Body in a Vase), and in this resembles a spiral - there is a return to the center, and at this center we are perfectly situated to move in any direction outwards into the spiral. The center is the point of pure possibility which however is always actualizing itself straight from within its possibilizing virtuality, whereas we live within concrete, stale, fixed, and stalemated "actualities" that we cling to obsessively, no longer familiar with this ever fresh, possibilizing point of pure energy at the heart of being. At this centering point, energy is completely pure, and in constant dynamic transformation, such that its "actualizing" is totally unimpeded, always a holistic process of simultaneous dissolution (*Sangs*) and manifest expansion (*rGyas*) such that all its manifestation remains utterly empty and thoroughly self-conscious of its own seamless identity with that which confronts it, and the background both are present within. In the actual moment of enlightenment itself, what was formerly latent is brought to its full unfolding - there is nothing in the result which has not been latent in the cause - and in the eternal return, you return and link back to the origin, tracing the steps back to where you started. This is why the Emanational Bodies dissolve into the Enjoyment Bodies, and they in turn dissolve into the Reality Body, only to all subsequently reemerge in infinite diversity within the Awakened One's enlightened activity - we return to the source, but it is after the long journey of time, and thus we come to the source as a new beginning, not a meaningless dissipation into our origins. It isn't an absorption where now we are lost to the world, but rather an awakening out of which we give the world new meanings, reemerging in creative, dynamic patterns. Thus rather than mere cyclical repetition, it is a spiral, and thus never the same - a spiral can move up, and can move down, and just so life goes on, always coming back to it. The "dissolution" aspect is returning to the centering point of pure possibility, while the "manifesting" aspect is the rich, resplendent display which automatically emerges from the heart of this pure possibilizing energy. Remaining within this state of pure internal radiance means that we no longer play out our own psychic drama on the stage of other beings and things, enframing them in destructive images of our own desires and fears - we let go, and we let be, and thus continue in our own inner potential/light, divested of the ceaseless projection, and loss, of that energy in our infinite modes of neurotic cathexis in the symbolic, and largely unconscious, search to resolve the inherent contradictions of our perceived life, and death (see Brown's *Life Against Death*, Becker's *Denial of Death*, and Wilber's *Up From Eden*).

*At the respective times intrinsic to the original purity of the primordial Ground's expanse, and the original purity of the ultimate freedom-site, the dimensions of the Spiritual Bodies, lights, and lucid awareness engaging objects are not directly or substantially present, aside from the mere dimension of their depth-radiant pure source-potential:* the Spiritual Bodies, lights and lucid awareness are often given as a triad corresponding to the Ground's essence, nature and compassionate resonance (i.e. the essence correlating to the Spiritual Bodies, the



nature to the lights, and compassionate resonance to awareness), and thus this line indicates that the Ground's triune identity remains devoid of fissure or exteriorization in its state of virtual purity. I have chosen to translate "engaging objects" with "awareness" as referring to awareness in its typical manifest operations, especially since compassionate resonance is often explained as resulting in awareness' dynamic derivatives (mis-)perceiving the objective display of lights. Alternatively "engaging objects" could be read as "entering the objective sphere", and applied to all three of the preceding items, in the sense that at the starting point (primordially) and culmination (Buddhahood) none of this has entered into the exteriorized objective or cognitive domain and its concordant concretizations into distinct, dualistically conceived selves and entities.

A comparable discussion can be found on TCD2 520,4-521,1 (a passage including *The Verse Summation* quote TDD cites above), which says that the extremely subtle vertically organized triad of primordial gnoses (i.e. corresponding to essence, nature, and compassionate resonance) is present as the dimension of pure potential within the original purity's expanse, just like a crystal's internal light is present as a source-potential for external light without, however, itself being a direct object of vision. Thus terming primordial gnosis as "absent" merely refers to its essence being utterly unestablished as any type of concrete thing, while terming primordial gnosis as "present" refers to the dimension of its natural spontaneous presence as an undifferentiated continuity - their perfect interpenetration without contradiction indicates the non-dual nature of original purity and spontaneous presence. The two "original purities" here mentioned in Longchenpa's response refer to the original purity of the Ground prior to all evolution and fissure, and that pertaining to the Buddha's enlightenment post-evolution, and post-fissure, both points at which pure potential is devoid of all materialization or distorting interpretations. TCD2 523,5ff. describes the latter as being "the ultimate Reality Body of non-dual expanse and primordial gnosis", which is termed "the great original purity of the freedom site where original purity and spontaneous presence is non-dual". Though referring to it as "original purity" emphasizes its emptiness, TCD2 524,3ff emphasizes that subtle gnostic energy is indivisibly present with that "fruit" original purity, and it is from that subtle presence that the Buddha's activities of Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses issue forth. In doing so, he criticizes the "Consequentialist" (*Prāsaṅgika*) school of interpretation, which he characterizes as saying that the "real" Awakened One is the empty Reality Body, where the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses are non-established since all discursive elaborations and manifest activity is "pacified" therein. Thus the enlightened activity of an Awakened One's Form Bodies as only present to other living beings' experience, and derives from the prayers and aspirations of disciples in conjunction with the Awakened One's own compassion. This is compared to a "wish fulfilling gem" in that such a mythical jewel is said to grant whatever wish the person possessing it may entertain, though the gem itself responds in this way without any type of conceptual processing or inclination on its own part. In contradistinction to this position, Longchenpa sees the essence itself as inherently spontaneously present (i.e. emptiness is intrinsically dynamic), and hence believes it is inappropriate to say that these charismatic activities and displays are "generated" by the causal impetus of those disciples' prayers - instead, they naturally issue forth via the presence of subtle gnostic light energy within the empty expanse (though in our current passage the dissolution-purity of enlightenment is being emphasized - see above for the tension between emptiness and manifestation within the state of a Buddha). Thus Longchenpa emphasizes the state of Buddhahood (and the Universe itself) as being inherently dynamic and intelligent of its own accord, and criticizes mistaking its possibilizing energy with some inert emptiness that only engages in dynamic forms in response to, and as perceived by, extraneous life forms, or understanding it as somehow

deriving from the Buddha's own previous "good works" and yogically created "wisdom" (i.e. thinking of the Buddha's present "body" and acts as having been "produced" by his long eons of meditation and altruism as a "Spiritual Hero" (Bodhisattva). The Buddha's enlightened activity and penetrating intelligence directly stems from the Universe's own triune identity as self-recognized and cleansed of the adventitious obscurations of its former failure to recognize itself (this constitutes a major point of disagreement between Longchenpa and certain other Tibetan sects):

"...Adherents to the Middle Way "Consequentialist" (school) hold the thoroughly pure empty Reality Body to be the actual Buddha - since within its own essence the discursive elaborations of "existent" and "non-existent" are totally pacified, not even the mere Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses are established as such. They thus claim that the (Buddha's) Form Bodies, along with his enlightened activities, only manifest in terms of others' experience, and derives from (the conjunction) of the Buddha's compassion and the aspirations or prayers of his disciples... such that (the Buddha) is like a (wish-fulfilling) jewel, or a wish-granting tree. The *Entrance to the Middle Way* (\*one of the most important texts of this school) puts it like this:

*This Spiritual Body of Peace becomes radiant like a wish-granting tree,  
And is non-conceptual just like a wish-fulfilling gem:  
It appears without discursive or conceptual elaborations,  
Remaining permanently for the benefit of the world until all living beings are liberated.*

However, here (in the Great Perfection tradition), though original purity's own essence could be said to be similar to that (description), (in contrast to that we also hold that) subtle primordial gnosis is (in fact) present within its expanse, and thus the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses shine forth (therein). Those then act for the spiritual welfare of sentient beings who have made prayers that the Buddha directly assist them. Since those (Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses) are spontaneously present from within the dimension of the essence, we don't believe that they are generated by (those beings') prayers acting as their cause, which thus constitutes a major difference (between our tradition and the "Consequentialist" school). This is an extremely important critical point regarding the originally pure fruit (i.e. enlightenment within original purity)...."

*This can be illustrated by an analogy with a crystal globe: when the transparent crystal isn't in the sun, or when it is in the shadows separate from the sun's conditioning, in both periods rainbow colored light doesn't manifest externally other than a mere depth radiance or glow: see TCD2 133,2 for a brief reference to a "crystal" serving as an image for the Ground (or grounding awareness within us), since it is the pure source potential for the five lights' display even though those five lights are not clearly present within it. These five lights are then "activated" by certain "conditions" (i.e. the sun striking the crystal) into exteriorization such that they pervade the sky - these "conditions" with human existence are identified as sustained contemplative practice and post-death experience.*

As translated above, I have corrected "when the transparent crystal is in the sun" to "when the transparent crystal isn't in the sun", since the former reading (as interpreted in conjunction with "in both periods) would seem to indicate that a crystal displayed in the sun doesn't give rise to rainbow-colored light refracting through it, when it obviously does do precisely that. By making this correction, we have two periods corresponding directly to the two types of original purity mentioned above ("primordially" and "enlightenment"), with the first period

being when the sun simply isn't in a sunlit area but rather in darkness, and the second period being when the sun is in a sunny area but is located in a shadowy part of indirect lighting, and thus is isolated from the sun rays' influence. In both cases the crystal simply sits with its inherent glow, or capacity to refract light, whereas if sun rays were to directly strike the crystal, rainbow-colored light would immediately manifest from the crystal and reflect all over the surrounding area. Thus "conditioning" refers to the sun striking the crystal, the necessary precondition for the crystal's light shining externally as it is activated into crossing the threshold barrier for external manifestation, while in both of these times the crystal's light is merely virtually there below the activation-threshold.

With this emendation of "isn't" to "is", the analogical correspondences would be as follows. The "crystal" is be the Universe's core original purity, while the "rainbow-colored light" is the external manifestations of the Ground-presencing. If we then correspond the two variations of original purity with the two contexts of a crystal being without refracted light on the basis of their respective sequencing, the crystal ball not in the sun would correlate to primordiality's original purity while the crystal sun in shadows or shade would correlate to enlightenment's original purity. In this line of interpretation, the sun itself would then indicate the "elevation" or raising-up of external radiance in the Ground-presencing, which is totally absent within the primordial Ground (the crystal being altogether removed from sunshine), yet involved in a more complex relationship with the enlightenment state or "site of freedom" (see my discussion above), since this happens post-Ground-presencing, i.e. its taken out of the "sun" (the crystal put in shade, or shadows). After all, if Buddhahood and the Ground were utterly identical, then the achievement of enlightenment would have no implications for our world at large, as enlightenment would lead to a simple return to the unmanifest and internally radiant state of the Ground, the formless devoid of all manifest dimensions. To express this unique identity of an Awakened One who both participates fully in the dark formless depths of the Ground as well as the sunlight filled reaches of the Ground-presencing, it is analogized to the crystal sitting back in the shadows, a zone crisscrossed by shifting patterns of dark and light "shaded" from the sun's influence yet not all together removed from its domain.

TCD2 342,1-7 has a similarly worded passage, where Longchenpa explicitly compares the dissolution of the Emanational and Enjoyment Bodies into the Reality Body during enlightenment to a crystal being separated from the sun's conditioning, and stresses the importance of differentiating between the pristine Ground of the "beginning" and the freedom-site of the "end", a relationship which can be understood on the basis of the analogy of a sun which is obscured, and then freed from, clouds (i.e. the sun is present continuously, but its presence is alternately clear and obscured from the viewpoint of a given perceiver). This shows the fluidity of these images, as in the analogy of the "sun and clouds" it would seem sun serves a quite different role than it does in the analogy of the "sun and crystal". However certainly there is at least superficial tension in using "shade" (*Grib Ma*) as an image for Buddhahood, as generally enlightenment is compared to the cloud-obscurations (*sGrib Pa*) of emotional distortion dissipating such that the Reality Body's gnostic sun clearly shines forth (TCD2 342,4; VLDC 14,7; CBD 315,7, 318,7-319,1). However, TDCM defines "shadow" or "shade" as "a black color which doesn't obscure the vision of colored forms", which suggests how it could be read as referring to the Buddha's participation in the Ground-state, the dark cosmic night of un-being preceding the emergence of the world, the shadowy, mysterious dark of the Taoists within which the light of day (Ground-presencing) appears. The "darkness" thus is a metaphor for the Ground's internal radiance completely devoid of exteriority, which in the Ground itself (i.e. pre-Buddha and pre-sentient beings) the sun of

awareness is present in totally unmanifest potential, and thus can't shed light on any particular forms at all. This fits in well with the language which describes the Ground-presencing's initial emergence, which is impelled by "rending open the encasing seal" or "outer covering" - this directly implies that prior to this moment the encasing en-seals the Ground such that all external display of light is prevented, a shadowing effect that prevents light from being displayed without implying any impurity. The same imagery in reverse is operative in the process of achieving enlightenment, where the "outer covering" or "encasing" of the body of karmic propensities (the defiling obscurations) is finally rent open so that the Spiritual Bodies and gnostic energies can manifest in their intrinsic splendor (CBD 321,6ff.), which again shows the enlightenment's simultaneous expansion and dissipation as it returns to the darkness, and returns to the light.

If TDD's text were not amended (i.e. reading "when the crystal is in the sun"), then it would seem necessary to read it as "when the crystal is in the sun yet separate from its conditioning", taking it to refer to the Buddhahood's freedom-site, where awareness' intense solar light has burned away all shadows and obscurations - from the long cosmic night of darkness (the Ground), via the crisscrossed patterns of light and dark which mark our evolution (Ground-presencing), finally a place of full light has been arrived at, where all dark corners are flooded with light in its utterly unimpeded intensity that burns through the veils of matter. Although it is present in the sun, it is beyond any conditioning influences of the sun - in that the light is present in its full intensity without fluctuations or wavering, the empty plenum seething with abundance, it is not such that the crystal and sun can be distinguished, the former being dependent upon the latter for its display. It must be kept in mind that in the normal sun and crystal analogy, the sun is an extraneous force: since it is the determining factor in whether the crystal displays lights externally or not, then that display is dependent on a factor out of the crystal's control, i.e. whether or not the sun shines, and if it shines, whether there is no "shade" blocking its rays from the crystal. In a sense the crystal and sun have merged in the state of enlightenment, and now, though the crystal remains in a state of internal radiance, it thoroughly dynamic within itself such that the sun of awareness shines brightly from within, not inwards from without. Thus it is not a question of causal relationships with the sun striking the crystal, whereby five-colored rays issue outwards, but rather the crystal is now poised at the still point of evolution, in continual movement directly amidst its own continual stillness. In addition, rather than rainbow lights proceeding helplessly, any external display is merely for the benefit of others, a direct response to their needs and states of being, rather than being a uncontrollable response to the conditioning influences of external agencies. In the context of complete and utter light, there can no longer be any question of external radiance vs. internal radiance since it is utterly pervasive, although for sake of language it is called "internal radiance", to connote its lack of dependence on any external conditionings.

Thus the key difference between the primordial Ground and the freedom-site of enlightenment is that the latter is post-Ground-Presencing and as such embodies a perfect balance between the Ground and Ground-presencing, emptiness and presence, while in the case of the former emptiness is in the ascendancy and the Ground-presencing as yet absent. A perfect indication of the state of Buddhahood in this light is given on the TCD1 313,3 cited above: "As for how he abides within the expanse following freedom, by force of the dynamic qualities of original purity and spontaneous presence coming to the fore, he resembles light contracting into a crystal - he is internally radiant in his own essence, and abides as the Youthful Body in a Vase". In the very coming to the fore of the dynamic qualities of original purity and spontaneous presence, there is a re-contraction within,

indicating that those very qualities are pure core-energy devoid of dissipation, like a crystal glowing with its rainbow light-potency but not crossing the threshold of instability. The dynamic qualities are of pure potentiality, without being dispersed externally in haphazard transmutations that inevitably become dull (just as a crystal's shining rays will fade out at some point as they become more distant from their source). Thus despite their fundamental similarities, there is a crucial distinction between these two states, as revealed in such imagery for Buddhahood of "breaking out" from an egg or encasing, which would not be an appropriate image for the originally pure Ground. Longchenpa consistently warns against considering Buddhahood as a losing oneself within the formless, a total dissipation of "self" and dynamism in preference for the long night of nothingness. Rather Buddhahood is a distinct epoch from the Ground, as it is a coherent dynamic pattern as intimately involved with the manifest as with the unmanifest, as fully self-conscious as the Ground is fully unconscious.

Finally, a possible interpretation which seems the most likely to me (if TDD's text is not amended) would entail translating this line thus: "...The crystal globe's brightness is at the time of being in the presence of the sun (i.e. the Ground-presencing), while in the two times when it is free of the (sun's) conditioning and exists in the shadows ("shadows" being a metaphor for "internal radiance", the "two" referring to the primordial undifferentiated Ground and enlightenment respectively), its five lights don't appear externally other than a mere depth-radiance (i.e. internal glow)...". In this interpretation, we could also read "two times" as having the analogical correspondence of "nighttime" (when everything is in shadows) and "daytime when shadows happen to fall over the crystal's particular location" (even though sunlight continues to shine elsewhere). In that reading, it would seem viable to correlate "nighttime" with the undifferentiated Ground in its total absence of any manifestation, while "daytime with shadows" would correlate to enlightenment which continues to have relations to external manifestation, i.e. sunlight (in terms of an Awakened One's continuing enlightened activity - see TCD2 239,4 which describes the enlightenment experience in terms of a crystal ball in shadows). An even more powerful reading would be to interpret the "two times of shadows" as referring to pre-sunrise (i.e. the undifferentiated Ground), and after sunset (i.e. enlightenment), with the sun referring to the Ground-presencing (which in the Ground has yet to emerge, and in enlightenment has dissolved). While elsewhere Longchenpa correlates "day" with transcendent reality and "night" with cyclic existence (the former where everything becomes clear, and the latter being the murky darkness of ignorance), this simply illustrates again the total fluidity of symbolic images utilized by Longchenpa, which remain devoid of any type of referential anchoring outside of the moment of their use.

*However, having raised-up from within the Ground, awareness abides within a luminous house during the periods of its manifestation in the Ground-presencing, its current abiding within the physical body, and the post-death reality intermediate state:* "raised-up" ('Phags Pa) is a technical term, meaning to "manifest" or "break away" from the Ground's self-containment, "elevated" into actualization from the virtual, and as such marks the precise moment of the Ground-presencing's onset. Awareness in particular is the capacity for self-reflection on the part of the Universe, such that it can see itself and reflect on its own significance. As awareness breaks away into exterior manifestation, its own radiation is activated as a type of constant "halo" (here imaged as a luminous "house"), just as a burning flame emits light (rather than a still unlit wick) or a crystal in sun sparkles with color (rather than its subtle glow in the shadows) - in the two analogies, the lamp/crystal correspond to awareness, and their light corresponds to awareness' natural radiation in external

manifestation. The three periods here mentioned refer to the Ground-presencing's initial emergence (in the beginnings of time and the cosmos as we now know it) where this radiance is clearly present as it first breaks out of nothingness; its internal presence (though obscured from view) within our own bodies as the ultimate source for all our psycho-physical energy; and its re-manifestation into its initial Ground-presencing resplendence at our death, when we temporarily manifestly experience our inner core of luminosity due to the dissolution process of physical death that results in our being divested of the coarser, physical aspects of our existence. These post-death visions (termed the "reality intermediate state") are discussed in detail in the tenth chapter, and in fact the entire post-death journey is a mini recapitulation of the cosmic drama with the Ground-presencing emerging out of the Ground (equivalent to death's dissolution into empty radiant light), and then our consciousness proceeding one of the two possible paths that open up therein - one leading downward to the darkness of cyclic existence, and one leading upward to the light of transcendence. Thus in essence all three periods take place within the Ground-presencing, with the later two periods referring to the two main states all living beings find themselves in within that Ground-presencing. The second period is of ordinary existence where awareness' light has been dulled into a dim presence on the fringes of our consciousness, and the third period refers to the transition-shock from one state of existence to another, where in the gap the light reemerges for an instant, until, again, we forget and lapse into slumber of a new incarnate existence in our interpreted world. TCD1 344,4-6 has a similar mention, where it says the lights and Spiritual Bodies are awareness' radiation, and hence in the "Ground-abiding" time their colors are only a virtual presence, whereas in the Ground-presencing where awareness has externally manifested, the lights and Spiritual Bodies become concrete presences, whether within our body or externally visible in the post-death visions.

One could see a subtle distinction here between "awareness" breaking away "from within" (*Las*) the Ground, and "self-awareness" breaking away "from" (*Nas*) the Ground, with the latter perhaps indicating more of a break as the Ground-presencing becomes more individualized in that breaking away, and a distinct self-consciousness evolves. Thus whereas the former "awareness" could just as well recognize its self in a flash, and thus become the enlightened Totally Positive One, "self-awareness" perhaps connotes this has not happened, and instead the "age of the individual" dawns in non-recognition as awareness starts to conceive of itself as a self, and hence begin the fissuring that inexorably creates cyclic existence. From that moment until the moment of self-recognition where we seize hold of our ultimate reality and become enlightened, we remain in the Ground-presencing where awareness' light-energy's derivatives moving outwards unceasingly predominate (the body's elements, neurotic mental operations and so on) while the energy-source itself recedes into a latent dimension present only in the background. Thus this phase transition state of the Ground-presencing, these twilight states that are neither the one nor the other but rather exist in-between, is here specified from the experiential perspective as "self-awareness", that which has broken away but not yet returned (the "self" simultaneously asserts that break (it is mine, my own), and its source/reality ("intrinsic" to the Ground, "inherent" to Being). In this sense we could understand "awareness" as of ambiguous reference, whereas self-awareness is unequivocally part and parcel of the Ground-presencing as it begins its journey along the path.

*In brief, when awareness exists within the Ground-abiding internal expanse (as opposed to the Ground-presencing's exteriorization), the Spiritual Bodies and lights are not directly or concretely existent (aside from their depth-radiance) in either the beginning or the end: the "beginning" and the "end" refer to the two times of internal radiance - the "beginning" is the*

original purity pre-straying in the Ground's pre-evolutionary primordiality, while the "end" is the original purity post-straying in the Buddha's post-evolutionary enlightenment experience. The former is the origin and starting places of all evolutionary tracks, while the latter marks the return to this source as the Ground-presencing is brought to an end.

113. Though awareness is said to remain within the Ground-as-contextualized when it abides in our individual hearts, during this period cyclic existence is raised-up from the expanse and awareness hasn't arrived at the freedom-site - thus it is still classified as within the Ground-presencing: "the Ground-as-contextualized" (*gNas sKabs Kyi gZhi*) literally is "the particular states-Ground", or "the provisional Ground", connoting it isn't permanent or definitive. *gNas sKabs* ordinarily means "time period", "context", "temporary", or "temporal", and is in opposition to the "ultimate" (*mThar Thug*) - this time of awareness within living being's heart is not an ultimate, permanent state of affairs, but rather is only incidental and temporalized, a passing moment in the epoch of the Universe. The term is in opposition to the "Ground-in-its-expanse" (*dByings Kyi gZhi*), which itself signifies the Ground as totally beyond all temporal and spatial segmentation, all individualization or particular, actual modes and states of being. Thus term can be interpreted as the "Ground-in-its-contextualized-dimensions" or the "Ground-as-incidentally-enframed", i.e. no longer simply in its cosmic undifferentiated formless interiority, but rather now on the individual level as it is in us within our own heart. Like Heidegger's "enframing of Being", the light has been enframed such that the Ground is now as incidental capturedness, but this too is only temporary - the Ground enfames itself in passing, and so returns to itself in the end in a transformed way. The following comments in LYT2 17,6 lend yet another aspect to the complex relationship between "external radiance" and "internal radiance", as discussed more fully below:

"...Even while we continue to stray (in cyclic existence), from the range of indwelling primordial gnosis within our heart the Ground's presencings are present as pure source-potential without the slightest alteration (i.e. neither "increased" nor "decreased"). *The Mirror* describes it thus:

*The fivefold presencings within the Ground remain present  
In the manner of an internally radiant pure source-potential  
In all sentient beings within their heart even while they stray;  
The appearances and experiences of the six life forms are like that..."*

Longchenpa then goes on to relate this to how in the second vision of Direct Transcendence you see various physical forms of the six types of living beings within the luminous nuclei that appear at that time, while in the third vision you see mandalas of Buddhas therein. These appearances are actually none other than the exteriorized reflection of the Ground-presencing, which continues to be latently present within all living beings, and as such can be contemplatively activated so that these visionary presences spontaneously shine forth via our eyes into the external space around us, where we can again perceive them in direct immediacy (recapturing the primordiality of the Universe's early history). Thus the term "Ground-presencing" is not merely a general term for "evolution", but in fact itself principally signifies the pure "transcendental" dimension of evolution, which is somehow clouded over in the state of straying, and hence present only in latency within our hearts (that, however, continues to give rise to experience as a whole, which is an ongoing filtering of that energy). Even our ordinary twisted experiences merely represent transformations of these initially lucent and pure visions, which remain their fundamental reality waiting to be

recaptured in a moment of expansive illumination, at which point the Ground-presencing reemerges in its original magnificent splendor. In the state of sentient beings, the Ground-presencing goes into involuntary recession (i.e. its essence becomes obscured), since its essential dimension recedes into the background as frozen forms and neurotic stalemates at its periphery become primary (such that, though this period is the "Ground-presencing" in the sense of being "external radiance" as opposed to the Ground's pure "internal radiance", it can be separately characterized as "distorted experience" (*Khrul sNang*) since the Ground-presencing's own transcendent luminous essence recedes into the background during its reign). In this way, the experiences of the six types of living beings (which sums up cyclic existence) can be considered as the Ground-presencing interpreted through the impure gateway of cyclic existence (one of the eight gateways of the Ground-presencing's spontaneous presence), even though such interpretations have no real truth-status as to the true nature of the Ground-presencing - they are no more than drug-inspired visions, or the shifting dreams that haunt our sleep (LYT2 16,6-17,1). For this reason, though "Ground-presencing" usually denotes these transcendent visions only manifest for a visionary or in post-death experience, KGYT3 202,5 makes the differentiation between the "Ground-presencing of primordial gnosis" present within our heart's luminous channel (see TDD's fifth chapter), and the "Ground-presencing of the sixfold living beings", which is the heart's gnostic radiation mixed with the lungs' wind-breaths to form our ordinary psychic energy, which then concentrates in one of six main networks of channels in our body (each of which corresponds to one of the six types of living beings, and consequently determines our overall experience as structured in accordance with that type of living being - i.e. humans perceive objects in a certain way, and so on). In this passage, Longchenpa explicitly terms this concentration of that psychic energy as "appearances/experience through the impure gateway of cyclic existence", which "gives rise to the distorted experiences of the six types of living beings" in cyclic existence. Thus the pure "Ground-presencing" is actually the ongoing source of our entire psycho-physical being (see Chapter Four and Five for a detailed account of how the heart's inner gnosis operates as the initial source, and ongoing support, of our entire body and mind via its network of luminous channels), with its derivative distorted radiation in that form either referred to as "the Ground-presencing of the six types of living beings", or, to differentiate it from the pure Ground-presencing within our hearts that remains unsullied and at full intensity no matter what comes to pass, as "distorted experience/appearances" (*Khrul sNang*). In straying we have deadened ourselves (the Universe) to our vitality (the Ground-presencing), dealing with secondary abstractions and concretizations rather than living directly from within the wellspring of vision which is the matrix within which we first came into being. Then in the practice of Direct Transcendence, we awaken this Ground-presencing internal radiance within, and return to this immense vibrancy and force of the Universe's initial movement into exteriority, such that it is now allowed to again manifest directly from within its pure potential into external radiance (without being filtered and diluted through "the impure gateway of cyclic existence"), rather than pulsating quietly in the background as we obsessively chase after our own faded past, spinning spectacular fantasies around the dead corpse of our own life. This re-experience of the Ground-presencing in its purest vibrancy then culminates in full recognition of its seamless identity with our own consciousness, such that the entire display now reverses in its track, dissolution instead of manifestation, spiraling into the expanse where it formerly shone forth, enfolding rather than unfolding. At this moment of enlightenment itself, then, everything has redissolved within original purity's internal radiance, as the Ground-presencing even in its purest form now returns to the Ground which is its ultimate source, although this time with full self-consciousness of itself as such.



Thus we see here that even in this simplistic analysis we have the Ground in self-contained internal radiance, from which the Ground-presencing breaks away into external radiance, whereupon almost immediately the Ground-presencing's essence begins to retreat into a state of internal radiance (leaving its desiccated "corpse" as the only dimension of "external radiance"), until eventually the attuned individual brings that essence into ascendancy back into a state of external radiance (incinerating away the external "husk" or "shell"), climaxing in the enlightenment-moment when it contracts back within the Ground in a state of pure internal radiance. The interplay between "internal" and "external" radiance is complex, depending on precisely what factor is being described, and at what dimension - for example, awareness within the heart is internal radiance, but the actively manifest processes of conceptualizing and emoting that characterize our conscious life are no other than its own derivatives. Thus Longchenpa here in TDD points out that although it is true pure awareness resides within our hearts (and thus could be thought of related to the Ground's pure potential, which indeed the first line of the quote below clearly suggests), in fact impure cyclic existence remains in a fully activated state all around it, nor has it arrived at the freedom-site where it dissolves all aspects of the Ground-presencing in its self-recognizing them as its own natural radiation. Thus this state of affairs is still held to be the Ground-presencing.

*With a view towards this, awareness is in an unripened state within the space of natural radiation's five lights (resembling a peacock's embryonic offspring and corresponding egg respectively):* "unripened" indicates that awareness has broken away from the Ground's self-containment, yet has at this point failed to come to full self-consciousness of itself, and thus has not reached the state of fully matured optimization. In particular, awareness is said to "ripen" into the Spiritual Bodies within the Direct Transcendence visions (see the sixth and eighth chapters): just as a peacock's egg is said to glow with the vibrant colors of the child within, awareness glows with its five-colored vibrancy unmanifest but present within our hearts, and is ultimately given full birth to as the Spiritual Bodies in the enlightenment experience (see Chapter Eight for an extended discussion of the four phases of the practice of Direct Transcendence, which along with the Breakthrough forms the two main contemplative practices of the Great Perfection - awareness ripening into the Spiritual Bodies is a technical facet of those visions explained at length subsequently). Thus awareness is the embryo, the Spiritual Bodies the newly born offspring, and spiritual contemplation the intervening process of gestation. Obviously this peacock egg imagery could also serve as an image for the primordial Ground itself rather than awareness within human beings during the Ground-presencing, just as above I have discussed how the Ground-presencing breaking free from the Ground and the process of enlightened energy breaking free from our encrusted corporeality are both discussed in terms of an "encasing" being rent open (and in fact KGYT2 81,4-7 utilizes the image in precisely this way). However, in the present context, the main emphasis is on awareness continuing to be present as an inner nucleus of enlightened light-energy within all living beings.

114. *Seng Ge rTsal rDzogs* (NGB1 673,1; Ati2 372,4; also cited by TCD2 319,1). TCD's preface says that while the essence of awareness abides within the foundation-heart it is present within the rainbow-colored expanse, like the egg of a peacock; while it shines forth in the expanse on the path, it is like rainbow light in the sky; and when it is ultimately optimized it is like the peacock offspring becoming free from the egg's encasing seal. It then follows the quotation by saying that while primordial gnosis is not ripened it opens up the space for everything to happen (i.e. its being present as the pure potential and source of our

consciousness), while it presences on the path it appears as light, and with meditative experience it appears in the form of the Spiritual Bodies.

115. As discussed above, in this context Longchenpa uses the imagery of a "luminous house" to indicate external radiance as opposed to internal radiance, which forms a dome of light "around" the Ground (and awareness), hence laying the objective conditions for the possibility of straying - there is now exteriority, whereas with depth-radiance and its pure latency the light is within devoid of any projective aspect, and hence affords no possibility of straying (or freedom). Thus the "Ground-in-its-expanse" is correlated with the absence of such a dome of light, "expanse" connoting the emptiness and infinite virtual potency of the state of total internal radiance where the exteriority of concretized Spiritual Bodies and lights is absent. The "Ground-as-contextualized" then should be correlated with the direct presence of this light, which marks the onset of the Ground-Presencing as the Ground gains a projective aura of light, and awareness breaks away from its depths and begins emitting its natural radiation. This then sets the "stage" or "playing board" for the ensuing drama/game, wherein awareness may self-recognize its own light and gain freedom in self-consciousness, or mistake that self-same light as an Other, and thus stray into the self-imposed prison and exile of cyclic existence. In this way the Ground-in-its-expanse refers to the primordial dimension beyond all divisions into sentient beings and Awakened Ones, while the Ground-as-contextualized refers to the internal fissuring that results in a wild diversity of individual states and conditions, i.e. all the sentient beings with their misplaced senses of isolated self-existence.

While the expansive awakening of enlightenment entails a return to the Ground-in-its-expanse and its condition of pure internal radiance, it is significantly different than the state pertaining there in the Ground's primordiality. This expansive awakening isn't a total absorption within the Ground, but rather inhabits a liminal site (yet one beyond any question of transition) between the primordial Ground and its evolutionary movements (Ground-presencing), participating in the latter's transcendental displays and splendor (external radiance) while itself continually dwelling within the Ground's primordial purity (internal radiance). Thus while the preceding passage implies that somehow the Ground-presencing and "house of light" imagery no longer pertains once the ultimate site of freedom has been reached (indeed the Buddha-epoch is explicitly and frequently stated to be separate from the Ground-presencing epoch), elsewhere the imagery of a luminous house and awareness' limitless display of light is indeed used for the state of Buddhahood. However, while in the context of sentient beings the emphasis is on the luminous house as a confining and limited (time and space bound) exteriorized display of awareness' luminosity, rather than it being completely unimpeded in its inherent emptiness, in the state of Buddhahood the luminous house becomes an image of the unfettered purity his/her sparkling awareness, which is now totally free of the material corporealization of experience and existence that arose in the wake of non-recognition. While there is only pure energy from the Awakened One's own perspective, out of its deep compassion/resonance with the state of suffering sentient beings, there are manifestations welling up from this pure energy in order to guide the tormented, abandoned ones to a place of relief and final refuge from the storm. Thus the Buddha participates in the Ground-presencing not helplessly with a misplaced sense of otherness, but in full consciousness (a consciousness nevertheless completely natural) out of deep compassion/resonance for our plight. In this way it is quite different than the internally radiant pure potential of the Ground, which can't reach out in such a direct way to aid us, though in a sense the state of Buddhahood could be said to be the culmination of the Ground/Being's "seeking" to help itself, i.e. us, proceeding out of the primal undifferentiated

harmony through the long alienation to a return to harmony, which now however is a state of higher organization abiding in full self-recognition of its own state. This is also clearly illustrated in the above treatment of the image of a peacock's egg, where the image for the attainment of Buddhahood is one of external manifestation, the young bird bursting forth from the egg, while awareness abiding within the Ground is imaged as the egg itself, glowing with the colors inside.

Thus, as mentioned above, four distinct moments or dimensions can be distinguished in this complex shifting relationship of external radiance and internal radiance, potential and actuality: the primordial Ground, the Ground-presencing prior to "straying" or "freedom", sentient beings in their straying, and Buddhas in their freedom (i.e. the Ground, the Ground's self-expression, the Ground's non-self-recognition post-expression, and the Ground's self-recognition post-expression). Thus in the movement from the Ground to the Ground-presencing there is a transition from internal radiance to external radiance, which, though in itself a rupture, is still completely harmonious and integrated, yet creates the conditions for either self-recognition or non-recognition, the latter which then adulterates the purity of this external radiance in its mistaken introduction of dichotomy and consequent concretization. The attainment of Buddhahood then is another type of rupture, as the pure transcendental dimensions of the Ground-presencing now re-emerge in a specific site from the concretized shell of our straying, this time in self-recognition and hence a rupture which re-instates primal harmony (described as a return from external radiance to internal radiance, though also involving the "coming to the fore" of the gnostic dynamics, both in the Direct Transcendence experiences leading to it, and the enlightened activity issuing out from it. Thus these two "ruptures" (the breaking open of an "egg" is used to image both) are intimately related to each other, revolving around the intricate fluctuations and relationships between internal radiance and external radiance, as well as self-recognition - since the imagery evoking these is quite fluid as it shifts in significance with different perspectives, interpretative maneuvering can be quite tricky. The important thing to recall is that though it is characterized as "internal radiance" in fact both dimensions of internal and external radiance must be operational in the state of Buddhahood, yet in a more complex and intricate way than simply the initial emergence of the Ground-presencing (where external radiance is in the ascendancy) or the primal state of the Ground (where internal radiance is dominant). While in some sense it can be said that Buddhahood involves a return to the pure dimension of the Ground-presencing (the lighting-up of which is said to be essentially the "transcendent" dimension), and yet it is said to be a return to internal radiance in that it also entails a dissolution of that Ground-presencing back into the Ground (and the Ground-presencing's own initial emergence is said to be a rupture out of internal radiance). Even though the above quotation emphasizes the external emergence of the lights from the peacock's egg as an image for the attainment of Buddhahood, the preceding page's image of the crystal clearly states that in the freedom-site of Buddhahood the five lights do not shine forth externally, and there is no direct presence of the lights. With sentient beings, although their existence within the Ground-presencing entails that the gnostic energies are externally radiant rather than in a state of internal radiance, that presence is clouded over by the concretizations of straying, and thus its inner essence not manifestly evident - thus "external radiance" as a term must also connote that this dimension has at some point shone outwards in exteriorization, even if at the current time it is clouded over and hence inaccessible to direct perception apart from its secondary "radiation". Thus by returning directly to the internally radiant source in Buddhahood, it is possible to directly re-perceive the externally radiant forms in their very re-manifestation from the internal radiance.

These seemingly contradictory dimensions of the state of Buddhahood will reemerge throughout this text, and will be discussed therein. Indeed, as often pointed out, the Tibetan translation of Buddha (*Sangs rGyas*) embodies this tension/harmony, as *Sangs* refers to dissipation, the return to the primal purity of the Ground/Being (*gZhi*), while *rGyas* refers to expansion, a participation in the pure luminosity of the evolutionary display (*sNang*) of nirvanic lighting-ups, thus duplicating the tension present in the very term "Ground-presencing" (*gZhi sNang*; "the Ground-which-is-still now involved in presencing-which-is-dynamic").

116. TCD devotes an entire chapter exclusively to the subject of the Ground-presencing, including the topics of the freedom of the Totally Positive One and the straying of sentient beings (TCD1 295,1-323,2; Chapter Nine), while TDD treats the Ground and Ground-presencing together in the first chapter, and then deals with "straying" separately in the second chapter. It must be kept in mind that the Ground-presencing in its essence should be correlated with the purity of transcendent reality rather than the impurity of cyclic existence, though it isn't in itself determined as either (which happens only via a given consciousness' interaction with its indeterminate presence). This is just as cyclic existence and transcendence (samsara and nirvana) are often described as a dualistic opposition, while at other times the latter is said to be the ongoing essence of the former, but is obscured from view as such.

117. *As its self-presencing thus dawns in the eight gateways of spontaneous presence:* "the eight gateways to spontaneous presence" are described in detail in the following pages, and in short are the inner mechanism of the Ground-presencing as it breaks free from the Ground's pure potency. The eight gateways can be further analyzed into a sextet of manifestation-modes and dyad of gateways through which those modes may pass: awareness manifests in the manner of compassionate resonance, light, Spiritual Bodies, primordial gnosis, non-duality, and freedom from extremes, while the two gateways are that of cyclic existence's impurity, and transcendent reality's purity. This sextet describes awareness' self-presencing as it first emerges in pristine purity from within the Ground, while these two "gateways" or "doors" resemble interpretative possibilities which hinge upon awareness' recognition or non-recognition of its own self-presencing. Should awareness recognize this efflorescence as its own self-originated display, then it "interprets" them as "self", and thus they (and it) pass through the gateway to purity, whereby the sixfold spontaneous presence stands revealed as transcendental reality; should awareness fail to recognize the display as self-originated, it instead interprets them as "other", and hence they (and it) pass through the gateway to impurity, whereby the sixfold spontaneous presence becomes systematically misinterpreted and concretized into the dull, violent worlds of cyclic existence. In the former eventuality, awareness' self-recognition causes the emerging spontaneous presence to stop dead in its track, self-reversing into a corresponding eightfold dissolution as the entire process returns to internal radiance in the full consciousness of enlightenment: in short, it is referred to as "the freedom-process of the Totally Positive One". In the latter eventuality, this spontaneous presence becomes solidified and distorted, such that the rainbow-colored high intensity lights are transformed into the corresponding materialized five elements, and so on until it now appears as the universe-as-we-know-it, worlds pervaded by resistance, disharmony, and suffering: in short, it is referred to as "the straying-process of sentient beings".

As the inner mechanism of the Ground-presencing's emergence from the Ground, these eight phases also play a crucial role in the post-death process and the contemplative visions,

both crucial liminal periods when this primordial process of the Universe's creation is repeated in miniature all over again, continually re-manifesting and re-dissolving as we undergo the transition from life (the Ground-presencing) to death (the Ground). Given their crucial significance, it shouldn't be surprising that they are discussed repeatedly in varying manners throughout Longchenpa's corpus (see TCD1 295,7-296,3 for a typical example).

*The originally pure Reality Body's manifestation like a cloudless sky becomes present above:* this talk of directionality ("above", "below") indicates that the Ground's seamless pure energy is now entering spatio-temporal networks, such that restrictions and partialization are introduced where formerly there were none. This entire passage presents the unfolding Ground-presencing as a vast panorama laid out before a single observer on a cliff top (awareness' emergent cognitive energy that directly encounters, and reflects on, the Ground-presencing), with the totally empty (the Reality Body) analogized to the vast open stretches of space above (anyone who has contemplated the nighttime sky knows that rather than mere emptiness it is a powerful positive presence, a luminous vastness which is everything through its being nothing), the pure fields with their vibrant presences imaged as transparent rainbows arcing through the luminous horizon straight ahead, and the teeming worlds of impure cyclic existence as the vast cities and villages stretching out in the valleys below, "hot" with suffering and sordid with the pollution of emotional distortions and materialization. Additionally, this vertical imagery connotes decreased ontological intensity, with each step downwards connoting an ontological sense of stepped down intensity, a lessened potency and potential of energy, a greater dissipation of energy, increased plurality and actualization (as opposed to potential-virtual reality). While the Ground-presencing itself is imaged as an "elevation" since it goes "up" into the light of day, "up" out of non-manifest depths into manifestation (just as we normally conceive of "below" as being unmanifest, buried things and so forth), once emergent our own experience naturally impels us to image the "empty" and "pure" as upwards (the celestial heavens) and the solid and impure as below (the solid ground beneath our feet). Finally, by using directional terms such as "above", "in front", and "below" rather than temporal terms such as "first", "after that" and so on, Longchenpa indicates these processes don't take place in conventional temporal structures but rather are simultaneous, process forming the very conditions of all temporalization without themselves being reducible into any simple temporal progressive scheme. Thus LYT2 12,1 says that all these manifestations (all being awareness' self-projection or radiation) are a holistic simultaneity devoid of any temporal sequencing, analogizing it to how when a face reflects in a mirror the entire face manifests simultaneously without any temporal sequence (i.e. first the mouth appears, next the nose manifests, and so on):

"...A face's projection ("radiation") arising in a mirror involves the face appearing that way without any temporal sequencing, and thus we speak of "sequencing" or "phases" here in this sense. "Phases" are spoken with an eye to its shining-forth and its pure source-potential ("the foundation for its shining-forth", i.e. there is the mirror, and then the reflection), and isn't a temporal sequencing. When these appearances arise in this manner, the self-presencing manifestations of the primeval Totally Positive One dawn from the expanse - by his recognizing them as like a face and its reflection in a mirror, or a body and its shadow, in the instant of making this critical differentiation the grounds of this self-presencing dissolve into internal radiance (as enlightenment takes place)..."

KGYT3 201,3 gives Longchenpa's personal description of how he himself saw it in contemplative vision, showing how it is based on an actual vision experienced in sensual immediacy:

"...At this time, above is the vision of original purity, like a cloudless sky; straight ahead is the vision of radiant light, like the colors of a rainbow in the atmosphere; and below is the vision of the six types of life forms, like the illusory reflection of the moon in water, all three simultaneously appearing in vivid clarity. These are the Ground-presencing of the Reality Body, Enjoyment Body, and Emanational Body, arrayed just as I myself clearly witnessed it in the Self-Emergent Lotus' power place (i.e. of the Indian Master Padmasambhava)..."

Through its dynamism the great Ground-presencing is present below: "through its dynamism" indicates each dimension unfolds from the dimension "above" it (where its energy is enfolded in potential), with the Enjoyment Body's luminosity being an inherent dynamic of the Reality Body's vibrant emptiness, with the former then naturally expressing itself in terms of the "great Ground-Presencing", which itself then gives rise to the Emanational Bodies' pure lands via its own dynamics. TCD1 296,3-7 describes this process of the Ground-presencing's initial appearance thus:

"...Via the dynamism of spontaneous presence's presencing, the immeasurable manifestations of the Enjoyment Body naturally shine directly in front within the pure lands of the five primordial gnoses. Via the dynamism of its dynamic qualities, the natural Emanational Bodies' immeasurable pure land manifestations naturally arise within their interstices boundaries. Via the dynamism of compassionate resonance, the immeasurable appearances in terms of sentient beings below manifest in a natural arising..."

This passage goes on to say that the Ground-presencing is like reflections in the mirror, and involves no "otherness" at all. However, should they not be recognized as self-manifestations, then they only endure for an instant, and as in a dream you stray into the tragic world of the "self" and "other" (ultimately illusory, yet from your own perspective all too real). It also says that below original purity is the presencing of spontaneous presence, and below that in turn is the great Ground-presencing, which Longchenpa describes as "manifestation in terms of the seminal nuclei of five radiant lights and radiating radiation". Below that then is the Enjoyment Body's manifestations, and so on.

As these appearances arise in external radiance from within internal radiance, essence's lighting-up is an inherently radiant unobstructed clearing-space: "the unobstructed clearing-space" (*Go Ma 'Gags Par*) is the emptiness of the essence from within which anything can manifest, a luminous vibrant space that is naturally "clear" and "radiant" (i.e. both empty and brimming with energy), thereby allowing for the manifestation of the nature and compassionate resonance, as well as the ontologically "subsequent" impure concrete manifestations of cyclic existence. The nature then manifests in terms of the rainbow light-energy that pervades this space, while compassionate resonances' manifestation is imaged as a "cloudless sky" in its "opening-up space" (*Go Phye Ba*). This latter image connotes the pervasiveness and all-encompassingness of compassionate resonance, as well as indicating that is here that anything can happen as the intrinsic intelligence and self-organizing thrust of compassionate resonance creates the space for any structure to arise (the verbal sense of "opening-up" serves to indicate it isn't merely a passive space). In addition, an open sky is a luminous vast presence as yet devoid of concrete entities - in the same way, compassionate resonance is a positive presence, but as yet devoid of fissuring and fragmentation into particular, solidified and discrete entities.

Thus out of this triune dimension comes self-presencing, manifestations which are inherent to the Ground/Being and still completely fluid - these distinctions are only for descriptive purposes, and in fact since the "analysis" is thoroughly based on the indivisible immediacy of experience this terminology is quite difficult both to articulate in the first place, and to interpret/translated subsequently.

118. *bShad Pa'i rGyud Rig Pa Rang Shar* (NGB2 435,2; Ati1 529,6; also cited by TCD1 295,2; partially quoted on TDD 174,2; partial translation in Guenther's "The Dynamics of Being" 7).

*Below that is "the sheath of precious spontaneous presence", where the sixfold shining-forth process and two types of gateways exist:* as mentioned above, "the sixfold shining-forth process" and "two types of gateways" is merely an internal classification of the "eight gateways of spontaneous presence" into two groups. While the six processes of shining-forth constitute the very dynamic or "substance" of the Ground-presencing's display, the two gateways then symbolize the two possibilities of "reacting" to this display - the pure reaction of recognition as the Totally Positive One becomes awakened through the gateway of primordial gnosis, and the impure reaction of non-recognition as sentient beings stray through the gateway of cyclic existence. Thus this symbolizes the Universe's crucial liminal period when two paths open before it/us, and entirely unprecedented worlds of freedom and bondage coming into being. This is made clear by KGYT3, 201,4:

"...When the Ground-presencing thus dawns, should you, via compassionate resonance's dynamism, recognize the Ground-presencing's three Spiritual Bodies as self-presencing, you become free in the manner of the Totally Positive One through the gateway of pure primordial gnosis. Should you fail to recognize it as such, then by this triune dimmed awareness and four contributing conditions you stray into the twelve links of interdependent origination via the gateway of impure cyclic existence..."

Thus in a sense the first six processes of shining forth are virtual patterns - something on the verge of coming into existence but as yet only a potential, rather than an actualization, and as such indicated by the metaphoric nature of the language used to describe how awareness' dynamism manifests here ("in the manner of", "as if", "seems to be" (*ITar*)). These six virtual processes then are actualized in accordance with which of the two gateways they proceed through - if they pass through the gateway of primordial gnosis, they proceed to their ultimate reaches in transcendence, remaining their pure, diaphanous character; if they pass through the gateway of cyclic existence, they become somehow tainted by materialization and distortion, with the end result that they become "weighed down" by what seems to be their own seeming solidity and gravitation. Yet the initial movement is only semi-real, i.e. a seamless energy-flow with characteristic "inclinations" that are as yet possibilities rather than actualities ("gateways" as applied to all eight indicating they are possibilities or liminal thresholds through which actuality may come into being). Their metaphorical description ("as if") clearly indicates this language is only utilized to evoke resonances in our human experience, without being reducible to such descriptions as such.

TCD1 299,4-300,1 explains that the "sheath of spontaneous presence" (here specified as the site of this eightfold process) is itself threefold: the site of the externally manifest eightfold shining-forth process is termed the "sheath of the Ground-presencing's precious spontaneous presence"; the primordial Ground's own natural "bed", i.e. as it is in itself independent of

evolution, is the "sheath of the Ground's precious spontaneous presence"; and ultimate actualization of an Awakened One's enlightenment is "the sheath of the fruit's precious esoteric spontaneous presence". Thus we have spontaneous presence as it exists in pure virtual potential before time (the second), in external but as yet un-self-conscious manifestation as evolution begins (the first), and in the self-consciousness dissolution/unfoldment that marks the Universe's self-enlightenment as a "Buddha" (the third). The Ground-presencing's "sheath" is also-called that of the "path", since in meditative practice all the gnostic visions emerging in Direct Transcendence practice shine forth from it.

*This is termed "the spontaneous presence of the Ground", "the indeterminacy of the Ground", and "the variegated shining-forth of the Ground. From there on down are the sites of return and reversal": "the sites of return and reversal" (IDog Pa'i Sa) indicates that from here on down we are dealing with an inversion of the Ground, wherein the Ground starts to gradually lose its intensity and dissipate as it is inverted via exteriorization and non-recognition into fantasized individual "selves" and materialization. It is the "reversal of Being" as it dissipates into beings, forgetting itself and thus becoming "inverted" into that which it never was. In addition, IDog Pa can mean "return", since even with all these "reversals" and "inversions" it is still possible that they can "revert" back to that undivided reality - even within the disruption they can return, link backwards to the source from which they have been broken away, from which they have been defined and conceptually/perceptually inverted in these various forms. Masks we have, yet these masks can always be torn off as we get out of the Ground-presencing and return to the Ground itself retracing our footsteps over our long journey (though in a sense the Ground and Ground-presencing themselves always come together, despite this talk of the Ground-presencing's onset). I don't think Guenther's reading of "up to this phase" is tenable, since De Man Chad is a quite common phrase meaning "below that", i.e. "from there on down". The passage first describes the Ground's original purity, below which is its spontaneous presence as the source of the Ground-presencing (which contains the two gateways in potential, but not in actualized form), and finally below this are its actual movement into actualization indicated by the term "the great Ground-presencing", where "reverse" and "return" can take place.*

119. "The precious amulet" here mentioned would appear to be identical to the "sheath of precious spontaneous presence" mentioned above, which in our current discussion appears to connote a phase that contains the Ground-presencing's eightfold dynamics in germ and gives rise to the Ground-presencing's full blown manifestation, i.e. it seems to denote the Ground's spontaneous presence as the immediate and ongoing source/site of the Ground-presencing's manifestation. Thus it is imaged as an "amulet" since it contains within the Ground-presencing's "precious" transcendent, shimmering light with its rich indeterminacy (everything can, and does, emerge from it), just as an amulet can be fashioned of precious materials and holds precious materials of diverse nature (statues, and so forth) within it. However, interpreting the term as connoting the Ground's spontaneous presence as immediate source of the Ground-presencing (as semi-actualized spontaneous presence) rather than simply the Ground-presencing itself as such is a very subtle distinction, and subject to varying interpretations in Longchenpa's own corpus - not only did he continually revise his own understandings of these subtle nuances, but his interpretations of key terms vary in their nuances in dependence upon the particular context and interpretative tradition of a given text and/or passage.



120. *bKra Shis mDzes lDan* (NGB1 177,4; Ati1 213,6; also cited by TCD1 296,7). The speaker in this passage is said to be "Victoriously Transcendent Self-Presencing Awareness", a name repeated with slight variations throughout the Tantra.

To expand on this, its endowment with an eightfold shining-forth process is termed "the abiding reality of the precious amulet", which unceasingly opens-up a clearing space for sensual reality; it is present as the great establishment which is no establishment at all: "it is present as the great establishment which is no establishment at all" indicates that this eightfold dynamic of the Ground-presencing remains, in part, a virtual process as the manifestations here described can't be reduced to the concrete things we are ordinarily accustomed to. "Establishment" (*Grub Pa*) could also be rendered as "valid", "to be present", "exists", "created" or "to come to pass", and the term "great" or "super" (*Chen Po*) tells us right away that this term is not at all what we normally understand by the "establishment". While usually we think that logically something must be either "valid" or "not valid", "established" or "not established, and yet here we are linguistically and conceptually pushed to enter a third dimension which is neither, and hence are forced to consider that this cannot be reduced to the ordinary way of things - this absolute validity is a validity, but not a validated validity. The Universe doesn't come into existence, but rather just is, and in that this "existence" is the condition for everything else rather being this something or other, it is a "super existence" beyond being simply "existent" or "non-existent", a terminological opposition useful for conventional descriptions of particular things, but totally useless when dealing with that which is seamless, and a no-thing. Usually when we "establish" we use logic to establish things in relation to other things, and yet this spontaneous presence (*Lhun Grub*), while undeniably present, is not a thing we can determine or capture exhaustively in such intellectualized language-dependent schemes. Spontaneous presence means to be present, but not as a thing, and thus we are again face to face with the ontological difference.

121. *Rin Po Che sPungs Pa* (NGB2 769,4; Ati3 90,1; also cited by TCD1 298,5; KGYT1 492,3). KGYT's preface of this passage describes the eightfold process in the context of its activation within the typical post-death visions experienced by us after a given death and prior to the next incarnation:

"...At this time the eight shining-forth processes emerge. To expand on it, by this awareness manifesting in the manner of compassion, cyclic existence and transcendent reality aren't fragmented off from each other; by manifesting in the manner of light, all appearances are radiantly luminous; by its manifesting in the manner of the Spiritual Bodies, your cognitive energy doesn't slip outwards and become oriented towards exteriority; by its manifesting in the manner of primordial gnosis, all appearances are unimpeded; by its manifesting in the manner of non-duality, your own cognitive energy remains one-pointed; by its manifesting in the manner of freedom from limitations, that cognitive energy doesn't remain in any limitations or extremes at all; by its manifesting in the manner of the gateway to impure fictive existence, the origin-source of fictive existence is unceasing; and by its manifesting in the manner of the gateway to pure primordial gnosis, the "mother" and "son" reality are linked up..."

TCD1 307,4-308,4 explicitly locates these processes in three times - when doing meditative practices, in the post-death intermediate states, and the primeval period when there first occurs straying into the state of "sentient beings" - and gives one-to-one correlations for these

eight processes in the context of the four visionary phases resulting from Direct Transcendence contemplation, and the post-death visions. The former is described thus:

"...When a committed and diligent individual engages in sustained contemplative practice, the Ground-presencing's dimension (the internal radiation of the Ground-abiding-within-your-heart) manifests in your luminous channels and the external sky. In the period of the first vision of reality's immediacy, it is the gateway of impure cyclic existence which predominantly manifests, as luminous presences (literally "light-experiences" or "light-appearances"), external "earth and rocks", your internal constellation of thoughts, and so on appear to your faculties of experience. The gateway of primordial gnosis then is the contemplative experiences relating to external appearances and internal consciousness as you engage in further meditative cultivation of the spiritual path. Its manifestation in the manner of light is the second vision of contemplative experience's intensification; its manifestation in the manner of Spiritual Bodies is the third vision of awareness' optimization; and then finally during the fourth vision of reality's exhaustion it manifests in the manner of non-duality and freedom from limitations. Its manifestation in the manner of compassion is the manifestations of internal insight and sympathetic compassion during all those visions. Once those visions are perfected and completed, the external Ground-presencing dissolves within the essence, and thus you are free directly within the mother-Ground..."

The correlations to the post-death visions then described thus (see Chapter Ten for details on these phases in the dying, and post-death intermediate states):

"...The manifestation of the Ground's original purity having initially dawned (in death) followed by the manifestation of Ground-presencing's dimension as radiant light, there is the presencing of spontaneous presence. Its manifestation in the manner of Spiritual Bodies is the mandalic "clusters" phase; its manifestation in the manner of primordial gnosis and lights is the four unified primordial gnoses phase; and in the vision of spontaneous presence the gateways of both pure primordial gnosis and impure cyclic existence can be found. Should you recognize these appearances as your own nature, it manifests in the manner of compassion, non-duality, and freedom from limitations, whereupon all its dynamism dissolves within the Ground and you are free..."

(i) *Its process of lighting-up being unobstructed, the locus of refuge for all sentient beings is present via its shining-forth process as what seems to be compassion:* compassionate resonance" (*Thugs rJe*) is a quite frequent term in Tibetan Buddhist literature in the sense of an Awakened One's "compassion", etymologized as "the King/Lord (*rJe*) of the Enlightened Mind (*Thugs*)". *Thugs* is the honorific form of "mind" (*Sems*), and as such is the standard way of referring to the Awakened One's optimized mental capacities or "Spirit". Compassion is when someone's plight resonates for us, "touching" us so to say; you wander through life somehow desensitized to the suffering around you, and then at moments, suddenly, you tune in and are touched as a resonance stirs at the heart of your being, and you feel. On the other end (i.e. the suffering person for whom compassion is felt), genuine compassion is experienced as a medicinal balm to our tortured minds, helping to alleviate our sense of being alone and heal our alienated suffering and frustration by enabling us to move beyond our own purely self-ish concerns. Thus the essence of compassion is this type of resonance with another living being experienced by the recipient as a refuge from a threatening, estranged world, and since this spontaneous presence of the Ground has just such a resonating quality to it which is perfectly attuned to our innermost being, it is said to manifest "in the manner of compassion". Not only is compassion the language of Being, but this resonance also reaches

into our own worlds such that the language of beings as well is compassion (relating to what the Existentialists consider as "care" or "concern") - we have the capacity to be compassionate, which in its optimized form in the Awakened One is a deep, abiding concern for all sentient beings that is intrinsic to his/her state. Rather than the Universe being a cold heartless void or insensitive material substratum, it is "alive", intelligent, and "cares", such that its spontaneous presence is the locus of refuge for sentient beings from the suffering and misery, this care at the heart of existence. This depth-dimension of the Universe is experienced by all sentient beings in the manner of a refuge in that it allows us to escape all enemies as it impels us beyond our isolated ego which has created the illusory sense of "self" and threatening "others" (upon which all neurotic emotions, including the pervasive fear of death, are based), this responsiveness at the heart of the Ground which cares and "resonates" with your inner spirit, rather than a Kafkaesque Universe kicking you in the butt, or the simply indifferent cosmos of traditional scientific reductionism. In this way those who are in tune with, and acting out of, the heart of the Ground/Universe/Being, i.e. the Buddhas, not only are free of all fear towards death or the other, but also are naturally and inherently compassionate to all living beings, since they embody and express the fabric of the Universe which is itself woven of a resonating energy that naturally expresses itself as compassion.

(iii) By force of its unceasing presencing of intelligence ("the knowing dimension"), appearances unceasingly arise in the manner of the spiritual path within the very gateway of pure, primordial gnosis: I have followed KGYT and TCD's reading of an instrumental in the first line, i.e. "by force of its..." Because intrinsic intelligence is unceasing in the Ground-presencing, within this pure gnostic energy we follow the path of freedom rather the detour into cyclic existence - everything that manifests or we experience becomes the "spiritual path", just as all the visions experienced along the soteriological path in our present lifetime derive from these processes proceeding through the gateway of primordial gnosis.

(iv) Since in its self-presencing the limitations of all physical bodies are completely exhausted, all phenomena appear in the manner of Spiritual Bodies: limitations are exhausted" (*mTha' rDzogs*) could also be interpreted as "are perfectly complete(d) in their ultimate nature", playing off the same ambiguity present in the term "Great Perfection", which means not only that all the pure qualities are primordially totally complete, but also that all impurities are "exhausted" or "completed" in its purview. In our current context, this line signifies that ordinary corporeal physical existence is completely absent, though its pure counterpart and source - the Spiritual Bodies - are present in virtual reality, and thus our typical existence summarized in the five psycho-physical aggregates is here present in corresponding mandalas of the five Buddha families (see Chapter Three for a detailed correspondence). In general, "Spiritual Bodies" connotes that everything has this "gestalt" quality to it, i.e. appearing in integrated, holistic processes rather than the itemized, atomized, and granulated things appearing to representational modes of thought, and ordinary manipulative perception. It could be literally translated as "(spontaneous presence) manifests with a Spiritual Body-like quality to all phenomena", with the connotation not only that it is these mandalas of Buddhas that fill the sky (TCD1 236,1), but also everything present here has this mandalic, integrated quality to it totally devoid of the gross materialization usually prevalent in external appearances and "physical" existence.

(vi) Because it is itself non-abiding in its own place, it comes into presence within the indeterminate spontaneously present Ground as manifestations of a great freedom from limitations: all of the Ground-presencing's panoramic display is awareness' own radiation or projection as in a dream-world, and thus remains a seamless continuum with awareness'

dynamism expressing itself as localized capacities for cognition, or self-reflection. Since both elements of the Ground-presencing - the proto-objective dimension of the lights, and the proto-subjective dimension of the perceiving consciousness - derive from the one and only awareness, they are characterized as "non-dual" in opposition to the pervasiveness fragmentation and self-other split which occurs in cyclic existence. Since this initial "great" or "super" manifestation is "non-abiding" as any particular thing, or as restricted to be interpreted as either cyclic existence or transcendent reality, it is a rich indeterminacy beyond all limitations and extremes. In addition, since it is virtual reality that hasn't descended into actualized discrete "things", the normal conceptual oppositions and limiting frames that we utilize to capture and describe phenomenal things don't apply, and hence we have a manifestation or presence that is as yet no-thing, nothing that could be reduced to our intellectually limited way of describing things (exists or doesn't exist, and so forth).

(vii) *Because unimpeded awareness is perfectly complete in its singularity, it is linked with the essence itself through primordial gnosis' gateway to purity:* if the display is recognized, liberation ensues; if not recognized, the state of straying inexorably moves on. TCD1 296,2 says that through the pure gateway you see the manifestation of original purity above you like a cloudless sky, while through the impure gateway you see the appearances of the six types of living beings below you. In the case of the former, you tap into your own awareness' essence which is devoid of limitations or the duality of "self" and "other", while within its singularity all the dynamic qualities of the essence's enlightened light-energy are perfectly and completely present. Thus with recognition you now have a direct connection with the very fabric or "stuff" of the Universe itself, your own naked awareness which is totally penetrating and unimpeded - not only is its knowledge all-embracing, but the elements themselves present no obstacle or impediment as they are revealed as its own radiation in five-hued light-energy.

122. As the quoted passage below makes clear, this triune dynamism refers to spontaneous presence itself, the manifestation of which Longchenpa has here imaged as a "pure land" (a term usually denoting special realms located in the celestial expanse and consisting exclusively of Buddhas and spiritually advanced individuals). Spontaneous presence's gnostic essence gives rise to the Enjoyment Body, its dynamic qualities or capacities then gives rise to the Emanational Body pure lands, and finally its compassionate resonance (i.e. the capacity for self-reflection) gives rise to the dream-like self-created illusion of cyclic existence.

123. *bKra Shis mDzes lDan* (NGB1 178,5; Ati1 215,1).

*At precisely that point, my manifestations are rent open into exteriority, and flow forth in transparency, shimmering, intangible, undulating, quivering, throbbing, and variegated:* these four terms - in transparency (*Sang Ma Seng Ma*), shimmering (*Shag Ma Shig Ma*), intangible (*Khral Ma Khrol Ma*), undulating (*Yang Ma Yeng Ma*) - are all four syllable neologisms, which are typically formed by the repetition of the consonant in the first and third syllable with alteration of the vowel, and a short syllable that is repeated as the second and third syllable. These types of neologisms are quite common in the vernacular as well as poetry, and are especially prevalent in Longchenpa's corpus and the Great Perfection Tantras. The meanings of these terms (which quite often are coined by the author) are usually quite difficult to pinpoint as they are quite intuitive and "slangy". In this case, the four syllable terms appear to reflect a pattern where the seed syllable's vowel sound is the third syllable, that same syllable but with the "a" vowel is the first syllable, and the second and fourth

syllables are simply "Ma". The repetition of "Ma" (rather than the somewhat more common repetition of the preceding syllable's suffixed letter) may indicate an overall connotation of ineffability and insubstantiality ("Ma" as a negative particle, as well as meaning "mother" which indicates the creativity of this process which is leading to the "offspring" of all the variegated phenomena of cyclic existence and transcendence - in the insubstantiality lies the creativity of it all). Thus looking at the third syllable's normal significance is often the best way to determining the overall special connotation of each term, all of which basically denote a certain etherealness, insubstantiality and instability to this process, which is evoked in the hypnotic sound interplay of the terms themselves. Khanpo Jikphun suggested correlating the first three terms to the Ground's essence, nature and compassionate resonance respectively.

124. In one sense, this refers to the initial moment of the Ground-presencing, which is termed "great" in its rich potential that is open to either of the two great paths into further actualization; it is a moment when actual manifestation is present yet, although it is about to enter further phase transitions, is still devoid of either distortion or non-distortion, enlightenment or neurosis. However, even after that moment passes and the paths leading into purity and impurity respectively manifest and are seemingly solidly in place, the Ground-presencing's own essence is not definable in such terms - both "distortion" and "non-distortion" are interpretative filters that reify our experience of the Ground-presencing in terms that have more to do with our conceptual perspectives than the Ground-presencing itself. Thus if we attempt to search out some ultimate ontological anchor with which to validate these terms, and the concepts/feelings they evoke, any possible reference eludes our grasp as the Ground and its presencing is something we can only experience in contemplation, and not things which our perceptual, linguistic and conceptual frames can capture and exhaustively analyze.

125. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 335,2; Ati2 460,6). In the first three lines, the glosses indicate that dimmed awareness is no different from awareness (like the two sides of a single hand), while awareness itself is primordially devoid of anything to do with straying or distortion.

*Because there is no rampant imputation of the so-called "intellect", it is devoid of even the name "stained straying":* I have corrected *De Ma* to *Dri Ma* on the basis of DD, NGB and Ati. The glosses say that it can't even be verbally designated with simple words such as "pure of stains", and "the obscurations of emotional distortions, cognition, and misconceptions".

*Because the host of letters and names has no foothold, it isn't the case that even imputed straying is present:* "host of letters and names" is glossed by "since there is no determinacy in terms of names, it can't be articulated as "it is this" or "it isn't this"..."

*Because there is nothing renowned in terms of the name "doctrine", it is devoid of even the intellectually imputed name of straying:* the translation "doctrine" (*Chos*) is indicated by the gloss of "textual volumes", evidently in the sense that even these sophisticated philosophical analyses which produce the concept and terminology of "straying" lack any validity in capturing, and delineating, the super-reality of the Ground-presencing.

*Because it can't be established in terms of the ordinary mind and psyche, it is naturally devoid of the straying involved in the winds' flickering movements:* the gloss says "naturally

empty of breath's flickering movements", indicating breath as the wind-horses which impel mental activity.

Because both subtle and coarse stains are absent, it is naturally devoid of any straying into/via the material elements' conditioning: the glosses indicate that "subtle" refers to material atoms, while "coarse" connotes the coarse physical forms which those atoms give rise to. "The material elements' conditioning" can have a dual meaning here: first, the five elements act as a condition for our straying by their contributing to our gross physical corporeality, and continuing belief in the real solidity and entitateness of external things; second, by straying we distort and concretize the five lights into the five material elements (which means straying acts as the "condition" for the elements' manifestation), which then participates in sustaining the illusion of otherness and real, independent substance.

Because both acted upon and agent are absent, where could there be the straying involved in subjective apprehension of objects?: the glosses appear to indicate "the acted upon" is the intellect, and the "agent" is the body, although it would seem more appropriate to read it as the intellect ("agent") manipulating the body's energies and senses ("the acted upon") to construct these reified entities, or even the intellect ("agent") manipulating the external presences ("the acted upon") into this frozen, fragmented world of things we experience. Alternatively, it could be translated "both activity and agent", perhaps meaning that this reification's activity is essentially mental, though it takes place via the agency of the body's sensory activity. The glosses also describe "subjective apprehension" as apprehending the objects perceived by our five senses as concrete identities.

126. The *site* of freedom, and the *ground* of freedom have distinct meanings, with the former relating to the Ground as primordially and forever unsullied in its essence of pure potentiality such that it is always free in and of itself rather than simply acting as the condition of freedom, and the latter signifying the Ground-presencing which if recognized as self-presencing acts as the potential Ground of becoming *consciously* free, while in itself not necessarily manifestly free. Thus we approach freedom based on the exteriorization of the Ground-presencing yet the actual freedom takes place within the Ground's original purity - in short, we come from the Ground-presencing as our path, but return to our original purity as home. TDD 177,3 also makes a further subtle distinction between the Ground's original purity and the ultimate site of freedom's original purity, with the latter denoting the pure internal radiance as yet uninvolved with the Ground-presencing evolutionary movement (pre-rapture and pre-Fall), while the latter is of much more complex dynamics, involving an intricate relationship between internal radiance and external radiance, and inhabiting a twilight dimension between the Ground's pure energy and the Ground-presencing's dynamic actualizations, participating in the evolutionary whirlpool while remaining within the still point at the center.

TCD1 312,1ff. gives a particularly subtle analysis of the "site of freedom" in the context of describing how the Totally Positive One is free. Here he criticizes such standard descriptions as "by recognizing that as self-presencing, you are free directly within the Ground (*gZhi Thog Tu*)", which are extremely frequent in Great Perfection literature including his own corpus (KGYT3 127,2, KGNT1 375,2ff, etc.), and provides a subtle analysis that refines this interpretation of "freedom":

"...At this point the indwelling enlightened qualities come to the fore, and thus you are expansively awakened within the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses. To say "you are

freed from directly on the Ground" is a crude way of describing it - since you are freed during the Ground-presencing's manifestation from within the Ground, this freedom takes place in the instant that it is raised-up from within the Ground (and thus not directly on the Ground itself). As for "where" you are freed, to say "you are freed directly within the Ground" is also a crude way of describing it, as in fact you are freed within the ultimate site of spontaneous presence. If it were instead the case that you are freed directly on the Ground, then that freedom would be reversible since the Ground itself would be describable as amenable to the emergence of straying and distortion, and furthermore it would be the ground of both cyclic existence and transcendence. Should you inquire as to whether such statements as "the site of freedom is itself the original beginning" refer to the original Ground's beginnings, my response is that this should be interpreted as referring to the original "beginning" (i.e. the enduring primeval dimension) within abiding reality and not to the "initial Ground" itself (i.e. the primeval dimension prior to everything, and in particular prior to the Ground-presencing's exteriorization).

In short, when you recognize your own essence, the expanse's dynamic qualities are actualized to their ultimate states, and by virtue of your divesting yourself of obscurations it is called "becoming free as/within the fruit/climax". Thus the entire presence in terms of the dynamic qualities' (the Spiritual Bodies, primordial gnoses, and so on) pure source-potential is termed the "expanse's dynamic qualities" - as for their existence in awareness, it is true they exist but they are unmanifest. When they are ultimately actualized, they are termed "a Buddha's enlightened qualities" (literally, "the dynamic qualities of enlightened cleansing/expansion (*Sangs rGyas*)") - dimmed awareness is cleansed away (*Sangs*), and via this cleansing's force these dynamic qualities within you manifest, and thus expand.

Alternatively, we can describe these two dimensions as "the Buddha's dynamic qualities spontaneously present within the Ground" (or "...in their spontaneous foundation") and "the Buddha's dynamic qualities as they come to the fore in the fruit (or "...in their climaxing manifestation", "...as the fruit comes to the fore"..."

The essence of this passage is that "temporally" (indicated by "from" (*Thog Nas*), i.e. "from within what (state)" or "when" does freedom take place) you are freed not within the primordial pre-rupture Ground but rather in the transition phase where the Ground-presencing's external radiance is in ascendancy, while "spatially" (indicated by "in" (*Thog Tu*), i.e. "in where" does freedom take place) you are freed not directly within the Ground itself (which is totally indeterminate) but rather the ultimate site of spontaneous presence (which marks a new dimension in the Universe's self-evolution, and is no longer susceptible to relapse into distorted states). If you say the freedom occurs "from" the Ground (with the sense that you are within the Ground the instant immediately preceding the Ground), then you impute distortion and impurity within the Ground. Though it is thus acceptable to say that you are freed "directly from on" (*Thog Nas*) the Ground-presencing (since we are amidst the Ground-presencing's exteriorization in the moment preceding recognition, and freedom), it would be erroneous to say we are freed "directly on" (*Thog Tu*) the Ground-presencing, since in the enlightenment experience the Ground-presencing is dissolved back into the Ground and hence is no longer directly present as such. However, if you say freedom occurs "in" the Ground, i.e. that is where freedom is or occurs, this vitiates the key difference between the state of Buddhahood (indicated by freedom being "in the site of the ultimate spontaneous presence") and the formless Ground, without which enlightenment would involve a simple dissolution within the Ground, a vanishing act devoid of any of the efficacious activities of a Buddha. Instead, "ultimate" indicates that here energy has been

"optimized" with full self-consciousness, while "spontaneous presence" indicates that rather than formlessness we have total dynamism in full self-consciousness of itself - an Awakened One's enlightened qualities are different from the Ground's dynamic qualities because with his/her full self-recognition these qualities are optimized and self-organized into precise responsive gestalts (or "Spiritual Bodies"), which can respond efficaciously to living beings' needs with external displays and actions that are not open to the possibility of straying and non-recognition. The movement between internal radiance and external radiance thus is unmediated and unimpeded, with full self-consciousness permeating both dimensions and in between.

This discussion is related to TDD's distinction between the two types of original purity (177,3), although there both are lumped together in opposition to the Ground-presencing as Longchenpa attempts to explicate the relationship of internal radiance's potentiality to external radiance's actualization, just as here on 182,2-3 he is more concerned to differentiate the Ground-presencing as foundation of freedom (in its offering the potential for freedom) from the site of freedom (in its being freedom in actuality) to correct those who think somehow that we are already free in and amidst the Ground-presencing, and hence need not do anything at all in the way of the spiritual path; in contradistinction to these, in this TCD passage Longchenpa is concerned with the problem of those who confuse "the site of freedom" with the "initial primordial Ground", thinking somehow that freedom is an utter dissolution within the formless Ground (which would be a return to the original expanse that negates evolution and the entire search for self-recognition). In contradistinction to these two reductionistic extremes which are alike in their neglect of the complex dynamics of the expansive awakening of Buddhahood, Longchenpa makes it clear that Buddhahood is reducible to neither the Ground (pure formless energy), nor the Ground-presencing (evolution), but rather is a uniquely complex state that has a foot in both worlds, so to speak, immersed in both dimensions in an utterly fluid manner yet marking a phase that is beyond either.

127. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 344,4; Ati2 473,1; also cited by TCD1 316,3; TDD 189,6). TCD1 prefaces this passage by indicating this refers to the segmentation of the Ground-presencing from which there is straying into the condition of sentient beings.

"...The explanation of how we stray via dimmed awareness into the state of sentient beings is as follows. Though the original Ground is devoid of straying, during the Ground-presencing's manifestation an indeterminate cognitive energy that is un-aware of its own essence acts as the foundation of dimmed awareness, which segments and fragments the Ground-presencing such that it strays into existence as a "sentient being"..."

"The great differentiation" is glossed by "within the essence itself", while "existence" is glossed by "the phenomenal things dimension" and "non-existence" is glossed by "the emptiness dimension". This "great differentiation" primarily refers to the Ground-presencing's exteriorization whereby the Ground's no-thing becomes differentiated into a vast panorama of directly manifest presences, as well as foreshadowing the "differentiation" between cyclic existence and transcendence that quickly ensues, and the "fragmentation" that dimmed awareness inflicts in the former eventuality. I have read "common site" (*sPyi Sa*) for TDD's *sPyi Pa* in accordance with NGB, Ati and TCD, referring to Ground's spontaneous presence expressing itself in the Ground-presencing, and as such an indeterminate dimension that is amenable to being interpreted either as cyclic existence or transcendent reality - "the common site" of every possibility, and every world whether pure or impure (see TDD 170's



discussion). Thus we have here an interesting contrast between the "great differentiation" which is the particularized event, and the "common site" which is the general indeterminate state open to all possibilities - the Ground-presencing itself is a "differentiation" from the Ground's formlessness which opens up this "generality", while then its non-recognition of itself in this opening up creates a "great" differentiation within that generality that impels the process from its initial indeterminacy into further actualization, "great" because it is this moment of recognition/non-recognition that brings about the actual full-blown manifestation of the two cosmic possibilities - cyclic existence and transcendent reality.

In our present context, the Ground-presencing is being explained in its aspect of being the foundation for straying in the event of its non-recognition, though in fact it also functions as the ground of liberation under other conditions. By the cognitive energy present at that time failing to recognize the Ground-presencing's light-displays as its own self-display, it interprets it as "other" and hence the entire event becomes infected with a triune dimmed, and dimming, awareness (see Chapter Two). This dimmed awareness (the knower) thus comes to perceive and interpret the knowable, i.e. the Ground-presencing's light display, as stained, though in fact it remains stainless throughout - this can be understood easily on the basis of the analogy of how someone with diseased eyes will perceive a sparkling white conch shell as yellow, though in fact it remains white throughout.

128. *Dung Yig Can* (VNT2 85,6; also cited by LYT2 17,2). The "cognitive energy" or "consciousness" (*Shes Pa*) refers to the emergent capacity for self-reflection or "thought" in the Universe that we find in the initial stirrings of the Ground-presencing. TDD 187,5 describes it as the initial cognitive capacity that emerges in the Ground-presencing, and either recognizes or doesn't recognize the exteriorized light-display its own self-presencing, while TCD1 316,2 mentions it in saying "when the Ground-presencing dawns, the cognitive energy which is non-aware of its own-condition..." Should this cognitive capacity for self-reflection of the Ground, in its breaking free from pure potential into actual operation, fail to recognize the light display as intrinsic to its own being, it makes a split between "self" and "other", and in the fissuring gap between the Ground's true reality and this cognitive energy's misperception of the Ground, a vortex of illusion swirls into cyclic existence. This process is summed up through describing four factors which function as the "conditions" making this consciousness' straying possible, while the phases in its straying are analyzed into three types of increasingly dimmed awareness - see Chapter Two for an extensive discussion of these "four conditions", and "threefold dimmed awareness". LYT2 17,3 in its follow-up remarks interprets this passage thus:

"...The three types of dimmed awareness are labeled individually out of our being un-aware of our self-dimension taking place in the manner of a "single identity dimmed awareness" which is primordially with us ("primordial" indicating its being the transcendental condition of this entire process of straying, not that it is present within the primordial Ground), a "coemergent dimmed awareness" which is synchronous, and a dimmed awareness of rampant reification which is subsequently emergent.

The four conditions of cyclic existence's emergence are the causal condition (the triune dimmed awareness), the controlling condition (awareness), the objective condition (appearances), and the immediately antecedent condition (those previous three's temporal conjunction). "Strays through being polluted with this cognitive energy" then refers to the individual appearances and experiences of the six types of life forms (in cyclic existence)..."

129. This image of the expanse being somehow "greater" with the Ground-presence's emergence, as well as the term "inclusivity", is based on the expanse being imaged as like a "container", sheath or location for all worlds, consciousness and things that ensue in and from this evolutionary process. As cyclic existence and transcendence emerge in the Ground-presencing with all their varied phenomena, the expanse/emptiness in a sense becomes even greater, since as the phenomena within its purview proliferate its own "boundaries" seem to expand. In fact emptiness/expanse involves no boundaries, so the image must not be pushed too far - it simply refers to these appearances becoming actualized as the adornment of the expanse, which thus becomes even "greater" in its infinite inclusivity of all that lights up, while in fact remaining the pure source-potentiality constant throughout.

130. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 342,4; Ati2 470,2; also cited by TCD1 297,7). This passage is basically a hymn of praise to the Ground-presencing, marveling at its astonishing attributes of beauty, intelligence, exquisiteness, and radiance as it encompasses the entirety of existence. The "lighting-up" thus refers to the radiant visions of the Ground-presencing from within the Ground's expanse of pure potential (the Ground's self-evolution, or dreaming), which subsequently forms the fabric of the Direct Transcendence, post-death, and transcendent visions of enlightenment as well. TCD1 297,6 prefaces this quotation thus:

"...The presencing thus described is an immeasurable and inconceivable super-phenomena, while all its shining as lights and Spiritual Bodies is intense in its incandescence and exquisitely arrayed. Since it is the vast gateway for the emergence of cyclic existence and transcendence and thus includes everything, its sheath is "greater"..."

In addition TCD1 314,3 quotes a quite similar passage from *The Tantra of the Self Arisen*, though it concerns the manner in which the Totally Positive One resides in the expanse upon being freed, and the passage given here deals with the initial emergence of the Ground's presencing. However the prefatory remarks there shed light on the present text, and thus I have quoted them in part below.

*The lighting-up of radiance manifestly, how great in its splendor! The presencing itself, how intense in its incandescence! The Body of Reality, how it flows forth in its self-introduction!*

In the first line of this triad, the glosses indicate that this "lighting-up of radiance manifestly" refers to the Ground-presencing's luminous manifestations in five-colored rainbow light, which from the beginning emerges from its own natural being. While the Ground is primordially radiant, that radiance is an internal potential, which here in the Ground-presencing breaks free from its formless latency to come to manifest presence in brilliant rainbow hues. These light-forms then create the objective sphere wherein the Ground (via its dimension of compassionate resonance) can now experience itself, forming the backdrop against which it can become a player in its own game, and from which everything can begin.

In the second line, glosses indicates this presencing is "self-awareness' masses of light" in that the Ground-presencing can be understood as self-awareness breaking free from the Ground and emitting its natural radiation, which TCD's preface cited above describes as "shining as the lights and Spiritual Bodies".

The third line is glossed "by force of seeing its indwelling natural presence with your faculties of experience". In the context of the Ground-presencing, the Ground now goes beyond its own pure interiority, and thus is able to experience its own reality for itself as a psychic agent that possesses the manifest faculties for doing so (as opposed to the "previous" lack of self-cognizance or self-recognition in its state of formless pure potential). Thus in a sense it "introduces" itself to itself, delivering up its empty luminosity to the field of vision of its awareness, from which the entire cosmos diffuses forth. In addition, if at the moment it recognizes the panorama as its own innate self-display, and "introduces" itself and the appearances to their own innate emptiness beyond fragmentation into self and other (the Body of Reality), that realization consumes any potential for straying, spreading throughout the entire cosmos of experience like a ranging forest fire. Thus the entire display is permeated by this self-recognition of emptiness, and becomes a shimmering field of consciously recognized luminous forms.

The possibility of this recognition (the freedom of the Totally Positive One) as spiritual awakening is also present within our lives, as this presencing of these appearances surrounding us is the self-offering of light which you can only experience for yourself. The encounter with this empty luminosity is the introduction to the Body of Reality, and if the "introduction" is pursued towards an intimate acquaintance as we sensually experience its light-forms across the sky in the Direct Transcendence practice, these various forms are fused with each other into a seamless continuity beyond any division into subject and object. The brilliance without (that which you experience) is now linked to the light within (your own experiencing), and you come to what you have always been: a luminous being. Thus the introduction to this empty luminosity comes forth to encounter you, dispelling distortion and ushering in a new eon of awakening, where you come to recognize that which has always already been.

*The unimpeded essence, how vast in its sheath! The all pervasive nature, how great in its encompassing! The universal matrix of compassionate resonance, how great in its generativity!*

These three lines treat the standard triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance. In the first line, its originally pure essence or expanse is the extremely rich matrix of emptiness which offers no restrictions or impediment to the emergence of anything, and thus is imaged as a "vast sheath" wherein anything can happen. Thus the Ground-presencing being a "vast sheath" is the same as the previously discussed image of the "expanse being greater", as in its unimpeded openness, simultaneously a pure flow of light-energy, all forms can take shape in intricate interrelationships while never departing from its infinite expanse. Because its essence is this total emptiness devoid of material substance, its capacity for containing the unfolding cosmos is infinite. The second line then signifies that inherent to this essential emptiness is the spontaneous presence of dynamic manifestation, pervading "both the Awakened Ones and sentient beings". In the third line, "universal matrix" (literally "the emergence of all") is glossed by "by natural force", i.e. automatically proceeding directly from the Ground's heart as its own dynamics. Compassionate resonance is the self-organizing aspect of the nature's spontaneous radiance, how with evolving awareness that radiance naturally structures itself into a vast diversity of forms and life-worlds.

In brief, the essence-sheath as it opens up in a widen-ing process, unlike we self-enframed beings limited to our own self-ish story, is all-encompassing and lets everything come into

presence. It is then its compassionate resonance that provides the impulse to self-reflection against the pervasive backdrop of the Nature's play of light forms, and the consequent unfolding/organizing of the entire range of worlds of experience, enlightened and alienated.

*The primordial pervading radiation, how radiant in its luster! That which abides without impediment, how swift in pace! The natural radiation of awareness, how radiant in its luminosity!*

These three lines concern awareness in its dynamism both as the element-forming radiation and psychic processes of insight. The first line is glossed by "the luminous glow of grounding awareness", and "the contemplation of the intimate union of day and night": in awareness' luminous radiation, there is only a seamless unity of light with days and nights indivisibly fused (one as bright as the other), devoid of the alternations of daytime clarity and nighttime darkness that we experience. This lustrous radiance is opposed to both the cosmic "darkness" of the formless Ground as the mother-womb of pure potential (the long night of unbecoming), and the personal darkness of dimmed awareness (the long night of ignorance).

In the second line, "that which abides" (*gNas Pa*) is glossed as "Ground" (*gNas*) and "insight" (*Pa*), which indicates interpreting it as "that which (*Pa*) abides (*gNas*) within the Ground, i.e. insight". This insight is the optimal psychic activity whereby the Totally Positive One recognizes the Ground-presencing as his self-display - it's devoid of the swelter of distortions and impediments confronting "normal" mental activity, and thus is lightning-swift, "racing" among the display of light images without unobstructedly. "Swift in pace" images how its recognition is instantaneous, and in general how insight's movements among the Ground-presencing are marvelously rapid, remaining fully within the Ground yet creating intricate patterns of psychic activity. This interpretation is confirmed by TCD1 313,5 in describing the Totally Positive One, and unpacking the following page's quotation of "the precious, handsome horse is swift in pace": "...Because the vitality wind operating as insight's horse establishes the cognizance all that is knowable, it is swift in pace..."

The third line is glossed by "the gnostic dynamism which is emergent from self (i.e. awareness itself)". TCD1 314,7 in explicating "the precious lamps' blazing is radiantly luminous", says, "It shines in lamps of limitless light rays", indicating the natural radiation here is referring to the gnostic lamps which ceaselessly issue forth in light-visions.

*The universal matrix of emptiness, how marvelous in its essence! By leaving it be without searching, how long in its continuity! Unimpeded and self-emergent, how encompassing in its origination!*

These three lines marvel at the uninterrupted fertility and natural unrestricted generativity of the Ground-presencing. The first line is glossed by "awareness to which manifest objects appear, yet without being established as apprehended objects", indicating that although there is presence and exteriority, awareness doesn't cling to, fixate on, reify and/or materialize those presences into fixed objects of attachment and obsession, but instead lets-be so there is only a fluid presencing manifest directly from within emptiness, in which it remains, and finally returns. It is emptiness itself from which all proceeds, guaranteeing the openness and fluidity that makes movement possible - in the absence of this vibrant openness, there would only be an impossible dense concentration not liable to movement, or frozen fixed forms incapable of change. Thus emptiness, far from being an inert nothingness, is a dynamic openness that is the ultimate fertility of the Universe.

The second line signifies that without having to search for the Ground-presencing as something extraneous (by looking for some-thing, it will disappear), by just resting in your natural state it comes to the fore, revealing that it was always there. Thus its continuity is astonishing, persisting as the abiding reality throughout all the cosmos' evolution, enlightened or alienated, immediately accessible simply by the cessation of the fabrication that obscures it from one's field of vision.

In the third line, NGB and Ati read "not arrayed or organized" (*Ma bKod*) for "unimpeded" (*Ma bKag*), but TCD agrees with TDD. Ati glosses it with "the conduct of attaining dominion over appearances". Following NGB and Ati's reading, its pervasive dynamics are not something planned or deliberated by an outside agency, but rather it is self-emergent and self-organizing in its process - the intelligence is inherent to the Universe, which establishes itself and is self-empowering. Thus this refers to the Universe's design, the way it structures itself without being initiated or channeled by anything else. In Longchenpa's reading, this structuration isn't conditional, but rather self-emergent, and hence can't be blocked or impeded. Because its dynamics proceed directly from itself (its own offspring without any extrinsic factors) in such a manner that its energy is never bankrupt or obstructed, all that originates continues to be encompassed by its reality and remain a holistic, seamless unity.

*The erection of appearances and fictive-life worlds within the Ground, how lofty in height! Naturally free without effort, how great in its extent! The great primordial beginning, how wise in its revolving!*

These three lines marvel at the wisdom and freedom inherent in the Ground-presencing, especially in its "climax" (the fruit of enlightenment) which is brought about by mere recognition. In the first line, I have corrected "four" to "Ground" on the basis of the other texts, which is glossed by "the view of disrupting the stronghold (of birth in cyclic existence)". This term "erection/elevation of appearances and fictive life-worlds within the Ground", also interpretable as "its elevation into the ground of appearances and the fictive life-worlds therein" (which would interpret "ground" as referring to the Ground-presencing as the "foundation" of all this diversity), is also used on TDD 316,3 and elsewhere in discussing contemplative practice (see there for details). Its basic significance is that from the formless depths of the Ground's primordial expanse, infinite worlds of experience are elevated into manifest existence "atop" the Ground's presencing. In particular the entire vision of the Ground's presencing is imaged as a display of light viewed by a nameless viewer standing on a cliff (the "ground"), with original purity the cloudless sky above him/her, the Bodies of Enjoyment in the sky in front on the horizon and so on down to the six impure worlds stretching across the plains below. From this lofty perspective where the entire panorama is visible as one (compared to the limited views of those enmeshed in cyclic existence), it inspires a sense of wonder - look how high, deep and vast it all is! In addition, from the previous formless night of cosmic darkness devoid of directionality, in the Ground's presencing an entire radiant Universe has instantaneously come into manifest being, "high" above those depths, and a sense of giddiness permeates our new-born being as it comes to terms with the new found directionality and sense of height/depth. Of course in fact it is the Ground's own original purity which is the loftiest of all, as indicated by its imaging as the cloudless sky stretching above the viewer's head.

The second line is glossed by NGB with "the great primordial gnosis of the irreversible fruit", while Ati's gloss has "attainment of the level" instead of "primordial gnosis". With

recognition, even as it appears it is dissolving in itself, and in this self-dissipation an immense sense of freedom dawns as it enters into its own climaxing state (the "fruit" or "climax" being the Universe's self-recognition such that all of its evolving exteriorization dissolves back into itself). Since it is innately free (i.e. totally pure beyond any materialization or fragmentation), that freedom is total and pervasive, and the speaker marvels at this vast spectacle being so vast and intricate yet inherently free in every aspect.

The third line is glossed with "free directly within itself", and the other three texts all read "primordial realization" (*Ye rTogs*) instead of "primordial beginnings" (*Ye Thogs*). In the former reading ("the great primordial realization, how wise in its revolving"), this indicates the basic intelligence of the Universe, that right from the beginning its very fabric is vibrant with optimally realized self-organizing impulses, and in all its revolving it is supremely skilled, or "wise" (*mKhas*), drawing flawless luminous landscapes across the expanse without the slightest distortion or hesitation. The Ground-presencing, after all, is essentially identical to the transcendent appearances of enlightened experience - mandalas of spiritual images pulsating with empty luminosity. In addition right in this initial manifestation of the Ground's presencing there is the superb view of its unfolding, as if an observer (the Ground/Being witnessing its own evolution) were watching its display on the horizon; for the one who is to become free, there is no enticement but rather like the Khyung bird from far up, everything is spread out in front of you, yet your view is not captured by one thing or the other.

As for the second reading, in its revolving (moving hither and thither into various evolutionary transmutations), it never leaves itself (its own primordiality), even as it becomes increasingly intricate and complex in its organization. Thus at the still point of its core, just as gyre whirls and whirls without ever departing from its central axis, it always and already remains within this primordial beginning. Literally translated with glosses, it could be read as "the great (evolutionary dynamics of the Ground's presencing) right amidst the primordial (Ground), how wise and skillful in its swirling movements!" The Universe is intelligent and never wavers from this resonating intelligence despite its variegated mutations; on the very beginning, on (*Thog*) this tremendous (*Chen*) primordiality (*Ye*) - there it knows how to circle, moving about while remaining right within its still point, the original purity of the Ground. The speaker thus marvels at the incredible intelligence evidenced in these intricate patterns of display evidenced right at the beginning, in the very moment when the Ground unfolds itself, and the freedom of how even in all the dynamic movement nothing becomes frozen or ruptured from the whole, while ultimately that revolving circles in upon its own primordiality in the climaxing realization of enlightenment.

*Endowed with the five colors, how exquisite in their drawings! The thorough purity of appearances and life-worlds therein, how uniform in appearance! The self-emergent radiant light, how exquisite in its array!*

These three lines marvel at the appearance of the Ground-presencing, with its beauty, uniformity, and intricate designs. The first line describes how all these presences are in five-colored rainbow light without any blurring or mixtures, and are in exquisite mandalic designs self-formed without any external agent. TCD1, 313.7 in explicating the line "the mandala of precious emptiness is exquisitely drawn", points out that this rainbow-colored luminosity is inseparable from emptiness: "... while empty by virtue of substantial things and their qualities being unestablished, it is doesn't become an inert, sterile absence, and thus is exquisitely drawn..."

The second line is glossed by "since whatever may appear manifests as the presencing of primordial gnosis", indicating that everything is thoroughly pure in every minute aspect, such that a "single flavor" of empty luminosity runs as an unbroken thread through the entirety of the Ground-presencing no matter how it is interpreted and distorted. Since in the final analysis, the entire cosmic field is merely the drawn images of the five lights (light being at the nucleus of material and psychic reality), everything in their pure dimension is no more, and no less, than this gnostic light-energy.

The third line is glossed by "along with the fence of the linked chains" (NGB) and "along with the fence of the encircling hoops" (Ati), thus referring to technical aspects of the Direct Transcendence visions discussed in Chapters Six and Eight, in particular how the empty seminal nuclei appear like concentric rings of light which "imprison" awareness' radiation (that visually resembles linked chains of light). In our present context, the main emphasis would appear to simply be that from the core radiant light there are rainbow-colored circles of light radiating outwards in mandalically perfect arrays - it is not mere empty radiant light, but also includes this mandalic display. TCD1 313, 4 in explicating the line "the inconceivably splendid precious mansion is exquisitely arrayed", says "the five lights of the spontaneously present depth-radiance are within the divine mansion's array".

*The great Ground-presencing, how great in its inclusivity! The dyad of cyclic existence and transcendence, how wise in linking them! The primordial gnoses of the five Spiritual Bodies, how exquisitely they're stacked!*

These final three lines marvel at the holistic and perfectly integrated nature of all dimensions within the Ground-presencing. The first line is glossed by "all appearances and the fictive life-worlds therein are subsumed within light and awareness" (Ati reads "expanse" for NGB's "light"). This is similar to the above discussion of the "sheath", emphasizing that the Ground-presencing's expanse (emptiness) and awareness (manifestation) are the final reality and source of everything that may ensue.

The second line is glossed by Ati has "this is thus termed "the non-dual integration of cyclic existence and transcendence"..." Again the reference to being "wise" or "skillful" (*mKhas*) indicates an intelligent Universe: the Universe knows how to combine or harmonize cyclic existence and transcendence, and even in its evolutionary movements never creates an ontological rupture, only a lack of recognition that prevents us from recognizing the divinity of our own worlds/bodies. The organizing principle and dynamics of the Universe are intelligent through and through, whether inanimate or animate, material or spiritual, neurotic or enlightened. It is an intelligence or wisdom that we then return to along the path, as we begin to re-understand how cyclic existence and transcendence are always already in primordial harmony with each other, something the Universe has itself never departed from. For the one who can truly see the continuity between them, it is a matter of astonishment at how seamless this unity truly is.

As for the third line, see the mini-encyclopedia for my discussion of the "five Spiritual Bodies" and "vertically stacked triad". "Stacked" is glossed by "since cyclic existence is not established there", indicating their organization is so seamlessly pure that no distortion can find foothold therein. This use of "stacked" tends to indicate the "five Spiritual Bodies" refer to the "Reality Body..." rather than the "the Illuminator...", since the latter quintet is usually imaged as a horizontally arrayed mandalic four with a centering one, while the former is

commonly imaged in terms of vertical organization. "Stacked" signifies stratification, i.e. one on top of the other in an interconnected hierarchical relationship leading upwards and downwards like the top part of a stupa, with the gnosés imaged as the steps below a stupa: TCD1 314,2 in explicating "the stupa of the precious Spiritual Bodies' blazing relics is exquisitely stacked", says, "the stupa of the five Bodies includes the steps of the five primordial gnosés". Thus the Ground-presencing is like a stupa (vertically organized and reaching into the sky's empty expanse, as well as being utterly sacred), with the Spiritual Bodies as its very fabric, and the gnosés like their adorning attributes; the entire passage has a powerful structural movement reflecting this, beginning with the mere radiance shining outwards, and concluding with the wonderful beauty of the integrated display of cyclic existence and transcendence, along with the intricately arrayed stupa of Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosés.

131. Not grasping at it as being "other", with an impartial mind you will recognize it as the natural self-radiation it is, and thus this flickering movement will immediately cut out in and of itself: this "flickering movement" refers to the stirrings of emergent awareness as a type of proto-individuality that might assert its illusory selfhood fragmented-off from its seamless environment. However, in the case of the freedom-mode of the Totally Positive One, awareness self-recognizes itself, such that these flickering movements subside right in their initial stirring, without that proto-movement into self-other fragmentation becoming actualized in the slightest bit. In addition the proto-stirrings of full blown manifestation of spontaneous presence are reversed in their tracks, shifting from eightfold manifestation to a corresponding eightfold dissolution by force of awareness' self-recognition. See Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 195-6 for an alternate translation of this passage.

In the first instant, by recognizing this self-presencing manifestation as your own nature, realization is engendered and the differentiation takes place: see TDD 184,2's further reference to "the differentiation is effected" (*Bye Brag Phyed*) and my commentary therein: in essence, this term refers to the critical juncture at which enlightenment takes place. This mention of a "first instant" and "second instant" (often in a triad of instants) is a standard stylistic/analytic device in the Great Perfection tradition to indicate subtle phases in an unitary process. "Differentiation" signifies recognition has taken place, the proper differentiation of realizing the light-display is "self", rather than the erroneous fragmentation into a wholly distinct "self" and "other", quickly evolving into a dualistically conceived world of subject and objects; it also indicates that right in this first instant of the Ground-presencing there is this split between the path of recognition and non-recognition, which results in the freedom-mode of the Totally Positive One and the straying-mode of sentient beings.

In the second instant, straying "dissipates" (Sangs) and primordial gnosis expands (rGyas), thereby ripening the Ground into its "fruit" or climax: here, as well as below, there is the standard playing on the etymology of the Tibetan translation of Buddha, *Sangs rGyas* - *Sangs* means "cleansed", "awakened" or "dissipated", while *rGyas* means "expanded". In this process of being cleansed of impurity such that its inherent enlightened energy unfolds from within, the Ground/Universe finally reaches its full maturity. In this moment of enlightenment's full self-recognition, the Universe comes to its destiny as the initial probing self-exploration that began with its encasing seal being rent open now comes to its full fruition as the self-conscious Universe-as-Awakened-One, now knowing itself as what it is. What was a formless, indeterminate, un-conscious ground or foundation becomes at this point the articulated, knowing, and precisely self-directed dynamic result or fruit, i.e. a



Buddha. Through realizing how the essence itself is primordially enlightened ("expansive awakening" being the etymological translation of "Buddhahood"), you are "re-enlightened" as this primordial enlightenment is now brought into manifest ascendancy via your full conscious recognition of it - this undifferentiated dimension of intrinsic purity, this inner core of enlightened light-energy that remains at our heart, permeates our entire being with our full awareness of its empty, radiant and intelligent identity devoid of any manipulative and constructive framings of it. This points out the reconciliation of "primordial enlightenment" or "primordial Buddha-nature" applying to all life forms with the assertion of subsequent, temporal enlightenment via consciousness' spiritual realization - if we are already enlightened, why must we become enlightened again through contemplative means? If we are always already luminous beings, why must we en-lighten ourselves? In short, the necessity for re-enlightenment is that we fail to recognize our primordial enlightenment, pathetic princes wandering the cosmic byways as beggars because of our adventitious amnesia of our own true condition, a player who has forgotten it is only a game. The term, "attaining the enlightenment of primordial awakening re-awakening" (or "further awakening", "undergoing a renewed awakening") is common throughout this literature - see ZMYT1 225,1, etc.). STCP2 14b 5 explains "primordial expansive awakening" as being since all sentient beings are totally pervaded by the radiant light of mind-as-such.

With this recognition, the Ground-presencing's light-display (which is no other than awareness' own "self-presencing") dissolves back into its empty source, i.e. original purity. Thus the Awakened One and his/her experienced life-world return to their true home in the Ground, the timeless moment where everything exists in pure potential, and nothing exists in actuality. However, this return is quite different from the formless Ground preceding the Ground-preceding, as the Awakened One possesses, and maintains, a resolute and unprecedented sense of self-consciousness that was completely absent within the Ground previously, and as such his/her subsequent dynamic activity issuing out from this pure potential is markedly different than that of the indeterminate Ground-presencing. The state of enlightenment is neither an inert dissolution into nothingness, nor a repetition of the indeterminate Ground-presencing - optimal vision and activity proceeds directly at all times right from within the energetic heart of original purity in precisely directed pure energy-form, in marked distinction from our own impure Ground-presencing-enmeshed vision and activity, which is somehow materialized and concretized due to our dualistic distortion and consequently perceived distance from original purity, which we all nevertheless remain within.

Finally, in our present context discussing this self-enlightenment occurring right at the transition from Ground to Ground-presencing without the intermediary straying through cyclic existence, the Awakened One (called "Teacher" because he points the way out, the way to self-realization as well as the Universe's destiny) is enlightened "prior to all" as the madly spinning worlds of cyclic existence have no chance to form, and thus he is called "the Totally Positive One". "Totally Positive" not only connotes the utter purity of this state devoid of any self-ish distortion or deficiency, but also that unlike historical Awakened Ones who first stray into cyclic existence and then only gradually, and with great difficulty, return to their enlightened identity, he is awakened right from the start, and thus never experiences even the illusion of impurity and stain. Analogously he is like a prince raised to be King in the royal court from the very beginning, and whom the trappings of royalty fit perfectly, as opposed to the amnesiac princes mentioned above, or even commoners born into suffering and turmoil, yet gradually raised themselves up into the position of a universal monarch through painstaking exertion.

132. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 89,4; Ati1 107,5).

***The insight faculty raised-up from the Ground:*** I have translated "faculty" as "insight faculty" in accordance with the sources cited below. In general, "faculty" (*dBang Po*) can refer to intellectual capacities as well as its standard meaning of "sensory faculty", while in this particular context it simply refers to the capacity for self-reflection, consciousness and perception that exists in the awareness which has broken away from the Ground into the Ground-presencing. Whereas previously the Ground could not know itself, awareness now gains this facility of being able to experience and cognitively process the self-presencing display of the Ground's nature - in this first disruption or elevation, there is the possibility for the Ground/Being to have this dual relationship with itself - as cognizer and cognized. At this moment the Ground-presencing's luminous appearances manifest to this cognitive energy's "faculties of perception" (which also have been elevated up out of the Ground - see TCD2 88,2), and in its most acute form as "insight" those faculties for perception recognize these appearances as its own self-display devoid of any independent substance, whereby freedom ensues - in the case of straying the display is grasped at as concrete and other, while in the case of freedom it is realized to be non-dual and totally empty of any entitative, separate reality. Later, in the context of the Ground-presencing's pure forms re-emerging from a visionary's heart during the Direct Transcendence practice, these luminous forms do manifest to the "sensory" faculties (in particular our visual senses), though in our current context it would seem inappropriate to speak of "sensory" faculties with their connotation of materiality in the absence of any fully formed sentient life at this point. However, in that we normally understand the experience of appearances in terms of the sensory faculties, the emerging facility of the Ground to experience itself as awareness moves into external manifestation is here termed the "faculty", the bare capacity for reception and experience rather than the full blown material senses we normally think of. TCD2 340,3 makes explicit that this can refer to the "faculty" or "power" of insight, which once raised up from the ground in an instant makes the critical distinction of recognition, and thus in an instant is perfectly expansively awakened into Buddhahood as the Totally Positive One: "...the insight faculty elevated up from the Ground makes the critical differentiation in an instant, and in an instant is perfectly expansively awakened into Buddhahood..." Thus again we have a wide variety of meanings simultaneously present in the Tibetan, which cannot be simultaneously rendered by any one English translation. Here one must remember that the etymological basis of sensory "faculty" (*dBang Po*) is that it has "power" or "sovereignty" over its domain (literally "that which has power"), i.e. visual appearances for the visual faculty and so forth. Thus here we have the meanings of "via the faculty which brings about the elevation from the Ground", "via the force of the elevation from the Ground", "via the force/faculty which is elevated from the Ground", and so forth. This power, or faculty not only is brought into manifestation only at this point of "raising-up", but it also brings about this raising-up, an ambiguity preserved by the genitive in Tibetan here. VLDC 205,4 also has the term "faculty of insight" in a separate context, while the following passage from VLDC 28,4 also suggests that this line refers to the "faculty of insight" that is raised-up from the Ground as its evolving capacity/quest for self-reflection and recognition:

"...The Teacher of self awareness elevated from the Ground as keen insight sees all phenomena with the visionary eye that doesn't differentiate them at all, and thus the insight of realization self-emerges..."

Moreover, from within this great abiding reality, "straying" is originally pure, and there is no fabrication in terms of "non-straying": "great" indicates that its abiding reality is being signified in its ultimate, "super" intense form, while "pure" in this context means that it is "pure of" or "cleansed of" straying, i.e. it is devoid of straying. Rather than this meaning simply that it is "undistorted" rather than "distorted", the speaker here is making a radical denial that such concepts even have any validity here, implicitly indicating that this abiding reality is not a thing with substantial qualities such that we can capture its reality with conceptual oppositions such as "good" and "evil", or "distorted" and "undistorted". It is a sense that such divisions, while eminently sensible from our own perspectives and interpreted worlds, have little ultimate reference ontologically speaking - for example, if search for the Universe's ultimate "goodness" or "evil", we may come to feel the absurdity of such applying such concept-constellations to it. Thus since it can't be spoken of at all in terms of straying or distortion, then its opposite - non-straying or non-distortion - no longer makes any sense, as such terms derive their meaning via their being defined in terms of a polarized pair of opposites. How could we speak of light if we had no experience of dark, or good without bad?

Seeing the appearance of what is non-existent is what is meant by non-existence, or absence, and the conceptions which come as something constructed cease in and of themselves: here the Tantra explores the inner meaning of "absence" or "non-existence" (*Med Pa*) by referring to the frequent expression "the appearance of what is non-existent" (*Med sNang*), also translatable as "non-existent, yet present". In this visionary seeing where we experience the Ground-presencing's luminous display without granulizing or materializing it, it is revealed as seamless light energy that is simultaneously thoroughly empty of being any-thing, and thus this is what we mean when we talk about its "absence", not that it is a sterile nothingness or vacuum. To see in this visionary mode where appearances are holistically experienced and not fragmented into self and other, or a variety of discrete, solid, independently existing things, that is what is known as "absence" or "non-existence" in one of the four great Commitments of the Great Perfection (see glossary). This line could also be translated as "The appearance of what is non-existent is the meaning of seeing's absence". "Seeing's absence" (*mThong Med*) occurs in this sense on TDD 344,3 in a *Great Khyung* quotation, where it is given as an attribute of primordial gnosis (also see TDD 354,4). This would read "seeing" then as granular ordinary vision with its manipulative framing, and thus its rejection here would indicate there is no subjective vision of concrete, discrete entities, but rather an encompassing presence within a field of completely fluid forms of pure energy.

At any rate, the point is an exploration of what it means to truly see the sky (a classic image of openness, nothingness, emptiness), since this can't be seeing as we normally understand it with its perceptual and conceptual divisions. In this visionary seeing, there is nothing and yet there is presence - we may suggest this vision by saying we are encountering "the presence of absence", or "the absence of presence". "Absence" is a positive force, a pregnant presence devoid of fragmented boundaries yet vibrant as reality's expanse, in addition to its more mundane sense of the absence therein of all our constructed identities, and fantasies. All these conceptions and illusions which we have painstakingly constructed as a species, and as an individual, and to which we adhere to obsessively as our selves and our worlds, in the ultimate analysis simply are not there, primordially absent in the Universe's true condition. All these conceptual frames "come as something constructed" or fabricated, experiences and lived worlds which are a product of our inner neurosis' endless activity, and as such simply

drop off in this visionary encounter with the nothingness that is uncreate, and eludes all frames; all that we were must die so that we may truly live, the destruction of all our interpreted worlds so that we may encounter the source of worlds. KGYT1 432,2ff. describes the mind-as-such like a pure sky, while all the various assertions and rejections it formulates about its "non-existent phenomena" or "phenomena of absence" (i.e. that it extracts, and fabricates out of "absence") are like a knot which we imagine to exist in the sky, and the subsequent arguments between us about the characteristics of that imagined knot (is it loose? is it tight?).

By virtue of the nature's primordial radiation being non-objectified: NGB and Ati read "non-wavering" for "non-objectified".

133. *Rang Byung bDe Ba 'Khor Lo'i rGyud* (text not identified yet; also cited by TCD1 311,5; LYT2 12,5; KGYT2 109,2). LYT reads "self-emergent" for "awareness emerges", and *bSal* for *gSal* (TCD and KGYT agree with TDD on both readings). LYT's spelling of *bSal* ("clear away") is deliberate, since Longchenpa there interprets it as "clearing away all the obscurations of dimmed awareness". However, KGYT clearly interprets *gSal* as meaning the pure gnostic presences are "radiantly clear" like the sun in the Ground-presencing's initial emergence, and thus I have translated TDD accordingly. In addition, in KGYT Longchenpa interprets "slight projection" as referring to awareness itself, while LYT appears to read it as referring to the self-presencing display which awareness experiences in the Ground-presencing (although Longchenpa isn't entirely explicit here), though in essence the difference is trivial (in the Ground-presencing, the projection of the Ground's nature as luminous forms and its compassionate resonance as awareness is simultaneous). I should also note that *Nyug Tsam* is an alternative spelling for *Myug Tsam*, which can mean "shaking" or "stirring" (like a flower in the wind), but primarily means "poking one's head out" or "bending one's head". In the current context it indicates the "mere projection" or "slight stirring" outwards of the initial self-presencing of the Ground-presencing as it breaks away from the Ground, in which awareness first "emerges" in external radiance. "Awareness emerging" also connotes that in the case of the Totally Positive One, in this first instant of external projection awareness instantaneously makes the crucial differentiation and recognizes the display as its own self-display, whereby awareness' radiance burns through all potential veils or obscurations ("dimmed awareness") and is definitively beyond the illusory reifications it entails. With just this slight projection into external radiance in the Ground-presencing's first beginnings, there is a brief manifestation and wavering (like the "flickering" or stirring discussed previously) from the primeval expanse as we contact this new world (LYT2 14,2ff.) and everything hangs in the balance (while this flickering grow or subside?), yet immediately (right in its very stirring) awareness flashes forth with self-recognition at its slightest touch, and there is liberation such that the dualistic intellect's manifestation is blocked, and external appearances acknowledged as irrevocably "self" - how can one measure the distance between the touch and liberation? From the seamless reality of the originally pure Ground there develops a slight gap or fissure, an initial protuberance in the cosmic egg which then becomes a full-blown crack, a stirring sparked by obscure movements of the gnostic winds. From the state of pure potentiality, awareness thus "pokes its head" through this gap/window or possibility and thereby "contacts" the emerging worlds of exteriority which open up before it (imaged as a display of light unfolding against a vast, open sky), the evolving dimensions of the Ground-presencing inexorably in operation already. If we recognize it, then in that very instant our awareness nakedly contacts its inner being, and suddenly the Universe's/our destiny becomes vividly clear as we enter full self-consciousness in total enlightenment of feather lightness and solar brilliance, and the

projection self-dissolves into its pure energy source as all potential condensation ("matter") and darkness ("ignorance") dissipates its light-flash. If such awareness fails to emerge, that "mere projection" evolves into full-blown cyclic existence and we descend into the gloomy depths of ignorance as this world of light becomes a long forgotten memory pulsating only in our hidden hearts.

LYT2 12,2-15,2 provides a very illuminating commentary on this quote, which also includes an account of the "six qualities" (*Chos Drug*) of the Totally Positive One (the explanation of these six here is only one among several):

"...When the (Ground-)presencing appears, the primeval Totally Positive One's self-presencing manifests from the expanse, and he recognizes it (and himself) as like a face and its reflection in a mirror, or a body and its shadow. In the instant this differentiation thus takes place, the grounds of those self-presencing visions dissolve into internal radiance. From this state devoid of transmutation or change within the primeval expanse, for the welfare of others (the Totally Positive One's) compassion, enlightened activities and miraculous displays inspired by his potent blessings spontaneously emerge in the personal experiences of those beings requiring spiritual training who are inclined towards him (These activities) are self-emergent without the slightest exertion or striving (on the part of the Totally Positive One).

*The Wheel of Self-Emergent Bliss Tantra* (describes this enlightenment thus):

*Self-emergent via its mere slight projection (into exteriority),  
(Awareness) clears (obscuration) away in a brilliant flash, and thus is divested of both  
reification and nihilistic negation.*

Thus when in the first instant, primordial gnosis manifests from the expanse such that its presencing slightly projects (outwards), he is alertly aware of it as self-presencing, and thus the critical differentiation takes place. In the second instant, all the obscurations of dimmed awareness are cleared away in a brilliant flash, and thus he is enlightened within the expanse. From *The Litany of the Eloquent One's Names*:

*In one instant the differentiation takes place;  
In one instant the perfect expansive awakening of Buddhahood...."*

The Totally Positive One becomes free having attained these six qualities: he comprehends (i) the instructions which don't emerge from precepts; (ii) the expansive awakening of Buddhahood which doesn't emerge from an ordinary mind; (iii) the fruit or effect which doesn't emerge from a cause; (iv) the self-presencing; (v) self-manifestation; and (vi) self-freedom. (i) "Not emergent from precepts" means expansively awakening as a glorious self-emergent Buddha without needing a Master to teach or show the way. (ii) "Not emergent from a mind" means primordial gnosis itself expansively awakens within its own natural radiance. (iii) "Not emergent from a cause" means that which is aware is expansively awakened within its own self-freedom. (iv) "Self-presencing" means the expanse's luminously radiant mind-as-such manifesting as its own self-essence; (v) "Self-manifestation" means that awareness presences thus itself. (v) "Self-freedom" means that when aware, awareness recognizes it is itself a great primordially devoid of straying. In this context, "mind-as-such" refers to the pure source-potential of awareness itself which is the

site of the mind's exhaustion, and doesn't refer to the mind. The ignorant fools who speak of the mind and mind-as-such as identical without differentiating between them are laughable.

(i) At that time he is aware (of the display) as self-presencing, and thus the phenomena of awareness' engendering vanquishes "the coemergent dimmed awareness"; (ii) via his manifesting as awareness, the absence of dimmed awareness vanquishes "the dimmed awareness of single identity"; (iii) and via his being self-aware of the self-presencing display, the absence of any dualistic apprehensions of "otherness" vanquishes "the dimmed awareness of rampant reification". Thus by virtue of its mere projection into external radiance from the expanse, though there is a slight appearance and stirring for a brief instant from the primeval range, through immediate self-awareness that which is aware becomes free. When he thus empties out the dualistic intellect via his lack of subjective grasping, he recognizes the externally appearing luminous presences which appear like inert matter as the radiation of awareness' primordial gnosis. In the instant the differentiation is made between awareness and awareness' radiation, dimmed awareness is cleansed away, and he is divested of (any tendency towards making) eternalist reifications and/or nihilistic negations, such that is free within the primeval expanse, like the sky. The presences which manifest from the expanse at that time are indeterminate in that they act as foundation of both freedom and straying, while by recognizing the self-presencing display as awareness' radiation, they dissolve within the primeval, and that indeterminacy is naturally destroyed (\*i.e. with enlightenment, the possibility for cyclic existence no longer exists). This is just like the sun rising above Mount Potala, and thus naturally dispelling all areas of darkness (\*i.e. when the sun rises over the eastern mountains, it naturally illuminates all the valleys lying below them).

*The dGongs Pa bKa' bGros Tantra* (\*text not identified yet) puts it like this (\*the preceding two paragraphs are Longchenpa's commentary on this quote):

*At that time, the six qualities of the Totally Positive One  
Vanquish the threefold dimmed awareness in cognizing the Ground,  
And thus via the slightest projection (outwards), in a brief instant it is emptied out.*

*Via mere awareness emerging, what obscures awareness is destroyed;  
Via its radiantly clearing away, darkness is dispelled;  
Via its emerging in a brilliant flash, it is devoid of gloom;  
Via its being divested of reification and negation, dimmed awareness is purified away;  
Via its being unchanging, it is like the sky.*

*Listen up, oh Adamantine Hero!  
By its vanquishing the inversion of dimmed awareness and its straying,  
Indeterminacy becomes naturally destroyed and emptied out;  
Via awareness differentiating out the enlightened element, it meets the Ground,  
And thus the darkness of dimmed awareness is dispelled,  
Like the sun rising above Mount Potala..."*

KGYT2 109,3-110,2's interpretation of these two lines:

"...*The Wheel of Self-Emergent Bliss Tantra* describes it thus:

*Awareness having emerged via its mere slight projection (into exteriority),*

*It is radiant in a brilliant flash, and thus is divested of both reification and nihilistic negation.*

From the primeval Ground existing in internal radiance in terms of the triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance, awareness' primordial gnosis stirs, and with the fourfold vitality wind acting as its horse-mount (\*the five principal winds are the vitality wind and its four branches), compassionate resonance's awareness manifests in a slight projection externally, together with which the pure lands of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses shine radiantly from within the (Ground's) nature, like the sun rising. By that compassionate resonance being aware in a brilliant flash of that self-presencing as the external manifestation of its own natural glow, in (the first) instant realization is born, and thus the "reifications" - the Spiritual Bodies and appearances of radiant light which are the externally radiant presences of transcendent reality - and the "nihilistic negations" - the gateway of cyclic existence which contains the impure seeds that are the source of the six types of life forms ("A", "Nri", "Pre", "Du", "Su", "Tri" (\*the seed syllables which are the sonic essence of the six life forms in cyclic existence) and so on) - are both naturally purified away and naturally reversed (in their tracks). Having thus becoming divested of them, in the second instant all the external radiance dissolves inside, and just as before yet without subsequent change, (awareness) resides within the great internal radiance. Thus the Ground ripens into the "fruit" (i.e. the climax) as it takes hold of the "citadel" (\*i.e. the totally secure site immune to the troops of cyclic existence), and resides there without any possibility of it being again reversed into the "cause", just like the fruit of the Se tree..."

134. *Jam dPal Gyi mTshan brJod Pa*; the Sanskrit title is *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (see Davidson's *The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī* 59 (verse 141) for the Sanskrit text, and p. 35 for his English translation). The Sanskrit reads "every" or "all" instants rather than "one instant" in the first line, though I have been unable as yet to check any editions of the Tibetan translation (I have of course translated in accordance with Longchenpa's interpretation of this quote). These two lines are cited repeatedly throughout Longchenpa's corpus - see TCD1 311, TCD2 340, LYT1 296,1ff., LYT2 27,1-3 and elsewhere for interpretations, as well as the preceding page in TDD. "The differentiation is effected" (*Bye Brag Phyed*) refers to awareness' recognition of the display as its own self-presencing (LYT2 12,6; TCD1 311), its "precise" insight into the true nature of what is occurring that "differentiates" itself from dimmed awareness, as well as "discerning" that the display is awareness' own natural radiation rather than a simple blank non-recognition which fails to pick up on this, and thus inexorably goes astray. LYT2 14,4 interprets it as referring to "differentiating between awareness and awareness' radiation", i.e. perceiving the inner unity between awareness and the external rainbow-colored presences as awareness' self-presencing "radiation": "...In the instant of differentiating between awareness and awareness' radiation, dimmed awareness is cleaned away, and as you are divested of any eternalist exaggerations or nihilistic denials you are freed within the primeval condition, like the sky..." Thus this "differentiation" connotes properly seeing the differentiation between awareness and its radiation without losing sight of its unity, as well as this being the initial differentiation within the original unity as this particular consciousness-energy wakes up to itself, and unfolds the inherent enlightened qualities from within. Yet by force of this differentiation, interestingly enough, there is automatically a reverse movement towards dissolution, back into the sky-like unity of primordially - the external luminous presences that appear to be inanimate are recognized as awareness' gnostic radiation, and you thus precisely understand the way in which they are related to awareness itself, whereby there is a reverse movement back in dissolution, "like the sky". So in this very first probing or stirring of proto-differentiation or disruption of the

original unity, the Universe self-recognizes itself in a flash with precise differentiating insight, such that the manifestation is released, the footstep retraced before the first foot falls. This striking blend of "differentiation" resulting in dissolution into unity captures the unique evolutionary nature of enlightenment, which involves both precise differentiation and seamless unity rather than a simple release into utter formlessness and dissipation. Energy continues in enlightenment in a very complex manner that can neither be reduced to its neurotic fragmented distortion characteristic of cyclic existence, nor its formless pure virtuality within the Ground.

LYT1 296,1 gives a somewhat different reading indicating the "differentiation" being between freedom and straying, the two paths that are possible in the indeterminate Ground-presencing (LYT2 26,4 describes it as "the Ground of cyclic existence and transcendent reality's fissuring):

*That is the Ground of both freedom and straying,  
The indeterminate spontaneous presence.*

*By being aware of the self-presencing visions as self at that time,  
There is the freedom-mode of the Totally Positive One:  
In one instant the differentiation is effected,  
In one instant the perfect expansive awakening of Buddhahood.*

As I discuss in detail in my annotations to Chapter Two, this refers to how the Ground-presencing is in its very first instant self-interpreted as either self or non-self (corresponding to the freedom-mode of the Totally Positive One and the straying-mode of sentient beings), without there being even the slightest intervening instant of amorphous awareness devoid of recognition and non-recognition. Thus in "one instant" the differentiation between these two modes takes place, referring to the very first primordial instant of the Ground-presencing breaking free from the Ground, and in the former case (i.e. enlightenment), in one instant full awakening in self-recognition takes place (whereas in the case of non-recognition, there is the movement into discursiveness as the implications of their lack of recognition unfold). Thus "differentiation" refers both to this differentiation between sentient beings and Awakened Ones that takes place in this first instant, and to the "differentiation" or precise recognition of the luminous presences as self by the Totally Positive One, as well as connoting the Ground-presencing as "differentiation" in the Ground original seamless, unbroken virtual unity, and the freedom of enlightenment as entailing a new evolutionary epoch or "differentiation" in the Universe. The mention of "one instant" also applies to our own present states, where in every instant of our existence there is the possibility of "making the differentiation" between straying and freedom, such that despite the rigors of the meditative path outlined by Longchenpa, there is the possibility of "instantaneous enlightenment" via our primordial purity and inherent "Buddha-nature" - we must simply self-recognize, and awakening unfolds, while every instant we fail to do so, the illusion of cyclic existence is perpetuated. Freemantle (*The Tibetan Book of the Dead* 78) renders it as the "separation" of sentient beings and Buddhas, which that text's context clearly indicates (Tibetan edition 164):

"...As soon as you recognize, you will attain complete enlightenment...This is the dividing-line where Buddhas and sentient beings are separated (*Sangs rGyas Dang Sems Can Gyi Sa mTshams 'Di Nas Phye Ba Yin*). It is said of this moment:

*In an instant, they are separated,*



*In an instant, complete enlightenment..."*

Finally, see Guenther's *Royal Song of Saraha* (40-41) and *From Reductionism to Creativity* (195-6) for some perceptive comments (he somewhat mistranslates these two lines in the former, but corrects himself in the latter).

135. *sGron Ma 'Bar Ba* (passage not located in NGB; also cited by TCD1 312,7; TCD2 88,3; TCD2 341,2; and KGYT2 110,5 as being from *The Blazing Lamp Tantra*, though LYT1 468,2 and LYT2 32,1 cite it as being from *The Tantra of the Pointing Out Instructions*, which I couldn't locate in the Ati version).

TCD2 88,2 prefaces it by saying that in the manifestation of the Ground-presencing to our faculties of experience, provisionally it is the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses that appear, while ultimately it ripens into the fruit joined with the originally pure expanse, which is accomplished by the "lamp of insight". TCD1 312,6 prefaces it in the former quotation with "...as for the primeval Ground and the Ground-presencing being freed within the fruit (i.e. their "destiny" or "climax"), it is brought about by realizing insight...", thus emphasizing how this climaxing event of the Universe's self-exploration is brought about by its basic capacity for insight being intensified into realization, which means that the experiencer's own cognitive capacities' growth (as well as regress) are critical to the Universe's evolutionary "liberation" or "materialization" at every level including that of "matter"/light. (see Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 196).

LYT1 468,3 renders this quotation quite clear. The Reality Body of the Essence itself (*Ngo Bo Nyid Kyi Chos sKu*) is identical with the Grounding Reality Body (*gZhi'i Chos sKu*) or primordial expansive awakening of the enlightened dimension (*Khams Ye Sangs rGyas*), and as such signifies the original purity of the Ground's essence. While this essential core of utter purity is primordial, it is not identical with the Spiritual Body of manifest Buddhahood (here signified as the Reality Body of primordial gnosis), the moment of enlightenment which is fully within evolution and yet perfectly attuned to the still point of indestructible empty luminosity at the core of the Universe. Thus the reflexive "itself" of the Essence emphasizes that this Body of Reality is the essence itself (focusing on the empty yet unconscious purity), and hence always present though having receded away from the ascendancy, whereas at this critical moment of enlightenment that core purity undergoes a further evolution and ripening. In this ripening impelled by our psyche's optimization, the dynamic factor of emptiness (gnosis) and its capacity for conscious recognition (insight) institute a new constellation in the Universe where utter purity and total recognition coincide - the dynamic qualities of Being and of Buddhahood pass from spontaneous inherence (*Lhun Grub*) to manifest presence (*mNgon Gyur*) as a new evolutionary eon is ushered in, the emptiness of the Body of Reality now permeated by the shining light of gnosis' self-recognition:

"...As for the culminating fruit of primordial gnosis, having cleared away the stains obscuring the enlightened dimension along with the factors based upon the universal ground of variegated karmic imprints, it is like the sun becoming divested of clouds. Since the gnostic awareness of insight is devoid of stains, having taken self-awareness to its ultimate limits within enlightenment, you abide at all times within the wisdom energy of the Spiritual Bodies and gnoses. Furthermore, *The Tantra of the Pointing Out Instructions* says...

Though the enlightened dimension is primordially expansively awakened, if you don't act on adoption and rejections with awareness' insight on the spiritual path there is no chance of

becoming free from stains. Thus you must prioritize taking the profound instructions into your own experience, as it is necessary that the Ground's Body of Reality be matured within the enlightenment of the gnostic Body as the fruit comes to the fore..."

LYT2 30,4-32,1 in its preface says that by means of insight on the spiritual path you must contemplatively take the Essence's Reality Body existent within the Ground into your own inner experience - insight thus ripening the Spiritual Bodies, freedom is accomplished. Since the Ground's essence is not fragmented into "straying" or "freedom" at all, yet can conditionally act as the foundation for either, it is essential that you give rise to insight and thus engage in sustained contemplative practice - having recognized the radiant light manifest from the Ground with insight, it ripens into the primeval Reality Body.

KGYT2 110, 2-5 also explains this quotation:

"...As for what the ripening of the Ground into the fruit emerges from, it's like this. Insight is present like fire sparks within the internally radiant awareness of compassionate resonance, and by emanating outwards on the horse-mount of the fourfold vitality wind (\*this refers to principal five winds being the vitality wind and its four branches), it recognizes the self-presencing radiant light as its own self-glowing which is identical in essence to itself. That insight having thus ripened the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosés, it resides as before (\*i.e. as in the internally radiant primordial Ground prior to this Ground-presencing) in the essence's site as the great non-conceptual Reality Body. By force of omniscient primordial gnosis being aware of the relative defects and advantages of cyclic existence and transcendent reality respectively, subsequently without entering into cyclic existence or transcendent reality at all, and while not wavering from the Reality Body's range, compassion along with enlightened activity emerge to accomplish the spiritual welfare of living beings in accordance with their aspirations however they may be..."

*That which ripens the Ground itself into the fruit is insight; by virtue of insight bringing the Spiritual Body to maturity, the Reality Body of the Essence itself ripens into the Reality Body of Primordial Gnosis:* in the first line as cited by TDD, I have added "the Ground itself" on the basis of all the other four citations, which emphasizes that here the Ground/Universe is brought to its own self-climax, its evolutionary destiny as it returns to itself with full consciousness of itself as itself. In the second line, I have added "by virtue of" for clarity on the basis of TCD, though this instrumental is missing in TDD, LYT and KGYT. "Insight bringing the Spiritual Body/Bodies to maturity" can also be interpreted as "insight maturing into the Spiritual Bodies", since in the third vision of Direct Transcendence the crucial feature is awareness' radiation in the form of linked chains of light ripening, or maturing, into the mandalas of Buddhas, or Spiritual Bodies. This is often expressed with the phrase "awareness ripening into the Spiritual Bodies", while elsewhere these "linked chains" are defined as "insight's radiation" (TCD2 2,4), and TCD2 83,3 explicitly identifies "awareness ripening into the Spiritual Bodies" with "insight ripening into the Spiritual Bodies".

In general, "insight" is on a lower level than primordial gnosis, yet in this decisive moment insight is the crucial agent in this existential experience as via its conventional "acceptances and rejections" along the meditative path (LYT1 468,3) we tap back into the primordial gnosis such that its primordial intensity is reintensified or reawakened into an active, optimal dynamic permeating your existence (from potential ("essence") to activation ("primordial gnosis")). The only point of any way must be that you go yourself (a question that may pertain to the Ground as well) - gradually you move up as you proceed along the way, and in

the spiritual path it is insight which "conveys" us along that way to this glimpsed destination (expressed as the "Essence Reality Body ripening into the Primordial Gnosis Reality Body). Whereas formerly we live within dimmed awareness that deals with these entities we can quantify and analyze, in this overwhelming experience we re-turn to a pure intensity of awareness which experiences a holistic form that is no longer a universe of summed up entities ("the totality") but rather the "whole", a whole that cannot be summed up or reduced to its constituent entities ("the ontological difference"). This need to return to the whole (which we never departed) in full awareness of ourselves-as-the-whole, and thus bring out again this pure gnostic light-energy of our core-being, is described as primordial gnosis going from being "spontaneously present" (*Lhun Grub*) to "manifestly in the fore" (*mNgon 'Gyur*), as its derivative dynamics in terms of ordinary distorting mental activity recede and its own pure expression moves to the foreground. KGYT2 211,4 describes this gnostic energy as spontaneously present within the hearts of all sentient beings and Buddhas without differentiation:

"...Within the heart-center of all Awakened Ones and all sentient beings, the unconditioned empty radiant awareness of the essence, nature and compassionate resonance is spontaneously present as the great omniscient primordial gnosis, and that is the great primordial gnosis that is the luminously radiant nature of the ordinary mind. This is spoken of in the *Spiritual Discourses (The Transcendental Consummation of Insight in Eight Thousand Lines)*:

*The mind is not the mind;  
The mind's nature is radiant light.*

The Master Dharmakirti also spoke of this: "The mind's nature is radiant light, and the stains are adventitious". The statement "the mind is not the mind" indicates the sublime primevally pure reality Body which is the primordial gnosis of its originally pure essence. "The mind's nature is radiant light" indicates the sublime Form Bodies which are the primordial gnosis of its nature's spontaneous presence..."

*Its primordial gnosis is uninterrupted, and the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses shine in spontaneous presence:* TCD2 88,3 and TCD1 312,7 read "by this" for "its", though KGYT agrees with TDD (the other texts don't quote these final two lines) . The latter reading in accordance with KGYT's preface would indicate reading this as referring to the Awakened One, whose gnostic energy continues to ceaselessly manifest for the sake of sentient beings' spiritual welfare in the form of emanations, and so on (KGYT2 110,4-5), such that enlightened energy continues to be effortlessly, spontaneously present in a perfectly efficacious way rather than retreating into some type of static state of dissolution cut off from evolution and dynamism.

Alternatively, following TCD's reading and TCD1's prefatory comments where "spontaneous presence" is contrasted to "coming to the fore" (the former referring to these gnostic energies virtual potentiality in the Ground, and the latter to those same energies as actualized in a Buddha's enlightenment), these final two lines could refer to how primordial gnosis is uninterruptedly present and active from the Ground's pre-evolutionary pure potential state up to and including the dynamic enlightenment of a Buddha (without any discontinuity even in the darkest reaches of ignorance). In this way "spontaneous presence" would indicate the way in which the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses glow as pure

potential at all points in the process, whether in latency within the formless ground or as the depth-source-energy of all psychic and physical processes in cyclic existence.

136. *sGron Ma sNang Byed* (also referred to as *The Conch Shell Lettered*; VNT2 45,3; also cited by KGYT2 138,3; see Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 196 for a translation of Longchenpa's preface). By realizing the Ground-presencing's light displays as "self", i.e. the spontaneous radiation of your own fundamental awareness, then instead of the Ground's eightfold presencing being misinterpreted through dualistic filters and thereby materialized into isolated "selves" and impenetrable matter, its emerging manifestation is reversed in its tracks such that you experience a corresponding eightfold dissolution as the Ground-presencing returns back to the Ground's pure potential termed "internal radiance" (this dissolution process is detailed at length at this chapter's end). That this return is quite different from the previous self-contained potential of the Ground prior to Ground-presencing I have discussed at length above.

KGYT2 138,1 gives an excellent commentary on this passage in its prefatory remarks:

"...The primeval Ground is the internally radiant identity devoid of straying, present solely in terms of freedom. As for the spontaneous presence that manifests from it in external radiance, if you are aware of its (true nature) it will act as the ground of the Totally Positive One's freedom, while if you are unaware (of its true nature) it becomes the ground of sentient being's straying - thus it is termed "indeterminate spontaneous presence", as well as the "great Ground's presencing". Since it manifests externally in terms of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses, it is termed the "Enjoyment Body's presencing", and since it involves the Emanational Body's appearances it is termed "the presencing of the Emanational Body"...

"Impartial outlook" is the recognition (of these appearances) as of your own essence. "The unimpeded vision (revealing) internal radiance" refers to the external light being seen unimpededly, such that you are aware of it as self-radiation. Thus in one instant the differentiation is made, and you are enlightened within the primeval internally radiant Ground. "Taking hold of it as the (ultimate) certainty" (or "taking hold of the definitive dimension") refers to taking hold of the citadel within original purity..."

In terms of our own awareness, "precisely that" refers to the moment of encounter with an unknown presence or dimension where for an instant our mental machinery fails to kick into gear, and sudden awakening is possible just before your familiar, comforting and vaguely threatening world reasserts itself - in this moment just prior to the deadening of vision, for an astute person there is a way of seeing in which you don't fix or enframe the vision/presence, and that is "internal radiance" or "inner clarity". You see in a non-determinate way, remaining in this inner light which is self-presencing so that instead of mentally running after things, judging them and classifying, you live and remain with that inner lucency without constantly and obsessively giving yourself over to that which is dead in incessant semi-conscious symbolic efforts to resolve the fundamental tension between life and death that pertains for an alienated individual believing in his own inherent separateness. It is this inner lucency which you must take hold of as the sole certainty amidst this vast indeterminacy, forsaking our normal grasping at biased limited perspectives as certainties (ranging from patriotism, sexuality and so on up to the ultimate illusion of an individual ego divorced off from all else. Everything else is uncertain, but it is in this very uncertainty of all conditioned perspectives that we find the certainty upon which we can truly build upon, the definitive dimension which is the Totally Positive One's freedom, the unity of the absolute and the

relative. Thus "certainty" in the final line connotes the "definitive" irreversible nature of enlightenment (the "citadel", literally "secure place"), as well as the unshakable purity of original purity - it is only here in internal radiance that we will find the ultimate abiding reality that alone is "certain", not within the wildly varying superficial appearances that are in constant indeterminate flux ("certainty" or "determinate" dimension also indicates that with this "differentiation" you are enlightened and the Universe-as-you enters a new phase in its evolution, as opposed to the Ground-presencing phase which was indeterminate in the sense of being amenable to self-interpretation as cyclic existence or transcendent reality).

Finally, I must explain my translation of "with an impartial outlook" (*gZu Bo'i bLo*) here and on the preceding page, which Guenther has rendered as "an astute person" (*From Reductionism to Creativity*) and Thondup as "a pure mind" (*Buddha Mind*). In general, *gZu Bo* indicates someone who is impartial, unbiased, honest, upright, a "mediator" or "go between" (*gZu Pa*), or a "witness who tells the truth" (*gZu dPang*). On the previous page, Longchenpa glossed it as "not grasping at (the self-presencing appearances) as other", while here KGYT explains it as meaning "self-recognizing" and VNT glosses it as "non-discursive cognition". While this would tend to suggest rendering it as "astute", TCD2 475,1 explains it in another context as synonymous with "ignorance" or "confusion", which in that context describes someone who is so indifferent, detached or simply unaware that they fail to recognize or cognitively engage the post-death visions at all (and hence can't be liberated via their recognition of those visions). The term also occurs on TDD 361,1, though I have yet to definitely resolve its use there (that use's resolution will definitely show the meaning here). I have thus rendered it as "impartial" in the sense that this person simply "sees the truth" without egotistic projections getting in his/her way, whose "impartial outlook" allows him/her to clearly see without any obstruction or bias, such that s/he recognizes the presences as the self-radiation that they are. This is quite the obvious to our own normal ways of thinking and behaving, where we continually chop up the world into discursively processed entities that we project onto the seamless continuity of reality (the root of which is the partialization of "self" vs. "other", and base everything on our own biased perspectives and needs ("good or bad", "friend or enemy", etc.). Thus remaining impartial is the only path to "recognizing" the reality of the situation we find ourselves in (in this cosmic drama, the lonely "knower" confronted by the swirling display of lights), the thread of continuity in all situations and positions that those who are biased in their outraged anger or selfish desires are blind to: if we remain impartial and open in this critical moment, we are free as beings fluidly and self-consciously immersed within Being, which Guenther expresses as "our finitude remaining open to the whole" (*From Reductionism to Creativity* 197); if we begin to partialize and set up "self" against "other", forsaking the inner unity, we stray into the deluded realms of cyclic existence with its pervasive limitations, alienation, and frustration.

*From within this indeterminate spontaneous presence, there is a manifestation-process of varied plurality, and its unceasing play accomplishes everything and anything, as it shines forth everywhere in any way; in its indeterminacy, there is a plurality of appearances:* VNT reads "from within this spontaneous presence deriving from its indeterminacy" in the first line, and glosses it with "by force of the cognitive energy's orientation slipping out towards exteriority". "Manifestation-process" is glossed by "the eight gateways of its shining forth", and "unceasing play" is glossed as "in the manner of Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosés, and in the manner cyclic existence". "Accomplishes everything and anything" is glossed by "via compassionate resonance's dynamism", and "plurality of appearances" is glossed by "the elemental energies".

One with an impartial outlook will see precisely that without any impediment or blockage, and take hold of internal radiance as the ultimate certainty: in VNT, "unimpeded" is glossed by "since it is primordially radiant, the cognitive dimension flickers outwards slightly", and "one with an impartial state of mind" is glossed by "non-analytical or non-discursive cognition".

137. *Rin Po Che sPungs Pa* (NGB2 772,7; Ati3 94,2; also cited by TCD1 308,6). As mentioned above, should the emergent consciousness recognize the light-displays which "confront" it as being its own self-organizing self-radiation, the spontaneously present light-displays' eightfold manifestation process automatically self-reverses itself, and dissolves into its pure grounding source like ripples of water naturally fading away after a stone is thrown into a pond. The image is obviously that of a spiral with the Ground-presencing's eightfold manifestation being the centrifugal spinning out of the spiral from its pure possibilizing center, and liberation's corresponding eightfold dissolution being a centripetal return back to the spiral's ever-present center.

TCD1 308, 4-6 gives the following introduction to this quote: "...I will now teach the process of dissolving back into the initial Ground. It is possible that these great presences which manifest from the Ground thus (i.e. the Ground-presencing) will be self-recognized or not recognized, as the case may be. (In the former eventuality), they pass like a crystal's light dissolving within, or the previous dream vanishing when the next dream takes its place. As there thus comes to be a total absence of presencing or manifestation, this primordial radiation does not depart elsewhere other than simply returning within, just as a dream vanishes within the state of sleep without departing to somewhere else. It resembles how our dream experiences subside within our psychic energy when we become wide awake (i.e. the expansive awakening of Buddhahood), apart from which it can't be said that they depart to anywhere else at all. As for how this process of dissolution exactly takes place..."

(i) *The dissolution of compassion*

Since compassion itself self-dissolves into its own essence within compassion, by means of this obtaining without being established as such, it passes on within the space of optimal activity's absence: the significance of these last two lines is that this process is not something that is a result of strenuous activity or contrivance, but rather a return to a primordial dimension which in a way you "gain" but in fact is not a newly created state that you can pinpoint as such. Rather you move into this openness of **Being** where there is no preconceived activity, since in fact there is no longer our ordinary dichotomizing perception which would construe this seamless light-energy in terms of "agents", "acted upon" and "activity". While it is in fact true that an Awakened One continues to compassionately operate in our worlds via a variety of optimally efficient activities and emanations, the particularized forms of this "activity" is described and performed in accordance with our own sedimented interpretative frames, while from the viewpoint of the Awakened One's own perception such granulated modes are utterly absent. "Optimal activity" renders *mDzad*, the honorific form of "activity" which is used to indicate respect, and as such is invariably used in discussing the Buddha's activities. In our present context, the subject is the Totally Positive One's freedom, and hence the honorific forms are used as a sign of respect, as well as to indicate that any activity he might engage in would be in its "optimal" form totally divorced from the egotistical concerns that are a pervasive characteristic of our own neurotic forms of ordinary activity. Thus in this openness even such pure activity is absent, though to

then spoke of "non-activity" would be equally incorrect since the entire framework with which we understand activity (an independent thing-agent operating on an external thing-object) is being undercut. Alternatively, that line could be interpreted as meaning "this non-activity itself is not something", meaning it would be incorrect to reify this absence of activity into a new thing we could latch onto when the entire point is that we have entered the zone of no-thing, the **Being**-source which is not a being. The connection with the "compassion mode" and "activity" is that an Awakened One's compassion is traditionally thought of in terms of activity, since it is by virtue of his/her compassionate feeling for sentient beings that s/he acts in cyclic existence with a wide variety of emanations and vision-manifestations.

Since there isn't any non-activity either, all actions and practices pass beyond sorrow, while by this non-action manifesting as action, conditioned events are a pure space: TCD and Ati read "Not created/forced, there is no manifestation in terms of activity" for "while by this non-action manifesting as action", while NGB reads "this non-action manifesting as action is ascertained". Thus although such dualistically conceived "action" is no longer present, it would be equally erroneous to think of it as some sterile state devoid of dynamism - it is dynamic, but that dynamism is totally beyond "sorrow", i.e. transcendent of any materialization or entitativization. There is only pure and unimpeded energy that is unrestricted and unneuroticized (not harnessed and impelled by various neurotic desires and projects), and hence is beyond the straying and distortion that inexorably brings on pervasive suffering. Just as Longchenpa speaks elsewhere of the presence of absence, we here talk about "non-activity" itself manifesting as activity, or "action is brought about without being forced or created". It is as with the Taoist advocacy of "non-action", where the visionary doesn't indulge in futile activities, yet by no means retreats into a quietistic slumber. Surrendering your constant ego-driven manipulations of physical and verbal conduct, you let such conduct spontaneously issue forth from your deep realization of the **Universe/Being** in a way that perfectly resonates with the surrounding environment. Thus all conditioned events that formerly characterized your lived world, all these constructions of fixed patterns in a universe of flux drop away into this openness' utter purity where the only action is non-action.

By virtue of this compassionate resonance itself self-dissolving within itself, it isn't the case that it has gone elsewhere, just as the sun's own rays self-dissolve within the sun's nucleus - as that which involves its own natural radiation, all Visual Experiences transcend misery: Ati and TCD read "by force of it involving its own natural radiation" instead of "as that which involves its own natural radiation". I have capitalized "Visual Experiences" (or "seen forms") to reflect that it is the honorific form of "to see" (*gZigs*), which is used again in deference to the Totally Positive One whose freedom-process is being discussed here, and whose vision is at an optimal functioning level. In general this term is used to refer to an Awakened One's experience of the world or how things appear to him/her, and could be translated as "all that appears to His/Her eyes". Thus his/her vision is not ordinary seeing but rather visionary experience, and to this seeing with fresh eyes it is apparent that everything external is no other than its own awareness' light-radiation, just as sunrays are no other than the sun's natural self-expression. As we recognize this self-presencing as self all that we experience is no longer forced into the frames of self and other, as well as the infinitely varied minor frames created by our desires, cultural conditioning, and intellectual limitations, and thus they are beyond "misery", i.e. no longer capable of conditioning and frustrating us as in this neurotic world where we lunge after that which we desire and shirk from that which we fear. In the triad of the Ground's essence, nature and compassionate resonance, it is

compassionate resonance which is the awareness of empty radiance here imaged as the sun's fiery nucleus, while the appearances without are this inner light's own radiation outwards (the sun's "own rays"). It must be remembered that this term "compassion" or "compassionate resonance" is not only the Ground's resonating intelligent and self-organizing energy that is active, but also refers to the Awakened One's compassionate activities for sentient beings as s/he resonates with the mental and physical environment s/he finds himself in. As the Totally Positive One recognizes his awareness' solar rays as self, this compassionate resonance (and the light-worlds it enabled the experience of) thus fade back into their source, totally transcendent of any descension into ego-driven perceptual modes and material entities.

All of this is a precious dynamic quality, not abiding within conditionality, but rather within its own-site: Ati and TCD read "defect" for "conditionality", which would play off the term "dynamic quality" since usually "defect" (*sKyon*) and "dynamic quality" (*Yon Tan*) are a pair of opposites (*Yon Tan* meaning something like "positive feature" or "talent").

**(ii) The dissolution of light**

The dissolution of its own light within itself: "its own" simultaneously refers to awareness, the Ground, and spontaneous presence.

While from within this intrinsically pure great emptiness, the apprehension of colors as having real identities passes beyond sorrow: our natural inclination to become fixated on colors as externally existent as such now fades away, with "passes beyond sorrow" indicating that this fixation is transcended.

**(iii) The dissolution of primordial gnosis**

The further shining-forth process of dynamic qualities is like this; here, as below, we have interesting juxtaposition between the "process of shining-forth" and the "process of dissolution", which indicates the typical mystical experience that when everything dissolves in itself and fades away, it is only this which allows what is really there to come forth. The process of enlightenment is a simultaneity of dissipation and unfolding (*Sangs rGyas*), such that your inherent capacities, qualities, or talents (*Yon Tan*) come out but only when everything you think they are drops away.

Your psychic energy's apprehension, conception, memory and thought abide within themselves - within the space of Sameness, they are all non-dual, and beyond misery: our psychic energy no longer is in constant projection outwards in its life/death resolution project (via love affairs, nationalism, and so forth), but rather now remains within its own pure intensity - just as waves return to the ocean from which they arose, these complex networks of psychic energy are resolved within the pure oceanic energy they crested from within. Within this space of Sameness, the Ground's pure potentiality that always remains identical to itself, there is no longer any of the fragmented duality that once pertained between the subjective perceiver and that which s/he perceived.

The presencing dimensions of the individual primordial gnoses: the "individual primordial gnoses" refer to the five primordial gnoses, which correspond directly to the five lights' manifest displays, also are dissolved within this space of absence, though their energy remains an active potential capable of ongoing manifestation without in any way undergoing some type of complete dissipation into nothingness.



By virtue of that self-dissolving within itself, all the varied play of primordial gnosis dissolves within its own mother-essence, and in analogical terms, is just like a boy climbing into his mother's lap: this is a traditional analogy for the Ground's final reality or radiant light ("the mother") and our own being which is a reflection of that light, as well as our cultivated image/experience of that light ("the son"). When a child sees its mother after a separation, there is an instant, natural recognition of his mother such that he rushes to her open arms with total trust, while simultaneously the mother welcomes him with warmth and caring, and they merge indivisibly. In exactly the same manner, you must believe in all this fundamental gnostic light energy at your awareness' core as your own mother-source, whereby all its offspring spontaneously "leaps" into that mother's lap. Its offspring is not only our own psychic and physical energy, but also the rainbow-colored light displays from which material elements derive, and by force of our uncontrived recognition of our "mother" the entire "family" dissolves back into the mother from which they first sprang. In this way our own nature or inner being returns to the source (which is not cold, uncaring, or inaccessible) beyond the reach of the misery and frustration characterizing the world of an alienated self living in a world of potentially hostile others. Just as the child who runs to its mother is now temporarily beyond all fears and dangers, the visionary is beyond all fear within the embrace of this mothering-source.

#### **(iv) The dissolution of Spiritual Bodies**

The material elements which are summed up by coarseness, dimmed awareness which is taken up with the subtle, and so forth, are undifferentiated, and pass beyond sorrow: here we have neurotic existence encapsulated in its coarse aspects as the material elements with their granulized appearance that can be "summed up" or enumerated, and in its subtle aspects as dimmed awareness, i.e. the psychological, mental, spiritual which is "taken up". "Summed up" indicates that the material can be collected and itemized, whereas "taken up" connotes the psychological isn't something that can be similarly counted or measured quantitatively - rather the psychic is experientially a gestalt, worlds which we appropriate as wholes and experience as such. In this dissolution experience, these two normally rigidly demarcated poles of experience ("the material and spiritual", "body and mind") are no longer dualistically differentiated by our innate sense of "self" opposed to "other".

By force of the Spiritual Bodies dissolving within their own essence, cognitive energy doesn't slip outwards into emergent dimensions, analogically resembling the form of a Body within a vase - the outer flickerings of its internal radiance are purified away into their source without any independent existence of their own: in this process our inner light stays within without any externalization of itself in psychic operations enmeshed in, and given over to, external things and constructions. In this subsiding within itself, it is just like a bottle with a light inside, or a vase containing some type of "body" or form within it, such that the light energy within is concealed from exterior perception - the light presence is within, yet doesn't go outside of itself. Rather than this self-dissolution of the Spiritual Bodies being absolutely nothing, its energy remains present as the "Youthful Body within a Vase", and under suitable conditions is able to re-manifest, just as by smashing the pot the light is still there, the "body" stands revealed. In this way the individual remains within his/her own light energy's internal lucency, such that any tendency for that internal radiance to stir or flicker into psychic activity that projects outwards dissipates before it begins, while all psychic energy that was once invested in the external world overlaid with our symbolic landscape of desires now returns to its original source. Whereas once we were fettered by

our attachments to the other and self, we are now free of such constraints; whereas once we were ignorant of the lightness of matter and inherence of the other, un-aware of our self-luminosity, we are now fully conscious of the undifferentiated aesthetic dimension of light that winds its way through all, and the Being-of-all-beings; and whereas once we experienced pervasive suffering and frustration in our search for impossible resolutions to our self-conceived existence's internal contradictions via symbolically charged manipulations of the world without, we now relax at ease in waves of bliss devoid of any "other" that might threaten, or be threatened.

(v) *The dissolution of non-duality*

(vi) *The dissolution of freedom from limitations*

*Its ceaseless dynamic qualities are like this:* "ceaseless" again emphasizes that this dissolution process isn't an annihilation, but rather a return to the source that is simultaneously a renewal, whereby energy enters its pure source potential from which it will yet again shine forth purely in constant transformation. In this dissolution the luminosity itself doesn't cease to be, but rather its sedimented forms and strictures drop away, and it no longer is oriented towards ceaseless, restless outward projections.

*The whole of our individuality which fixates on the triad of Spiritual Bodies passes beyond sorrow in this exhaustion of objects:* "the whole of our individuality" (*'Dzin Pa'i Rang rGyud Kun*) could also be translated as "all the seemingly autonomous "things" stemming from our fixation on the triad of Spiritual Bodies" (*Rang rGyud Du 'Dzin Pa* - see VLDC 382,7). In the former interpretation, it refers to our own minds as we grasp at the three Spiritual Bodies as object of our limited schemata and fantasies, hopes and fears, and thus deny their essential process fluidity in our efforts to fix on them as manipulatable discrete objects. As these perceptually and conceptually enframed "things" seen as "objects" dissolve into their background openness, all these egoic notions fabricating the Spiritual Bodies into various things fade away, and our ego-centric individuality's objectifications which attempt to reify the Spiritual Bodies into particular object referents, no longer hold sway.

TCD and NGB read "bodies" or "all physical dimensions" instead of TDD and Ati's reading of "objects", which could lead to interpreting it as "our consciousness-stream (*Rang rGyud*) which supports (*'Dzin*) the three Spiritual Bodies" in that they are no other than the essence, nature, and compassionate resonance of our mind's ultimate nature. Then in the exhaustion of the ordinal neuroticized physical existence, the true significance of "embodiment" in these three Spiritual Bodies is able to shine forth.

*Limitation itself self-dissolves within its inherent purity, and can't be identified any further, analogically just like space dissolves within space:* as all limitations and restrictions drop away to the immediacy of a luminous openness, the previous rigid boundaries marking off self vs. other and the myriad of discrete "things" that once were your final reality, now fade away into this undifferentiated continuum, just as the inner space within a vase dissolves into the environment's outer space when the vase is broken such that one can no longer distinguish between the two spaces.

*Via the natural cessation of compulsive conceptuality fixated on the four limiting alternatives, they pass beyond sorrow within this great non-abiding:* see the mini-encyclopedia for "four limiting alternatives". "Non-abiding" as an adjective of "passing

beyond misery" (i.e. "nirvana") has a long history, but in the present context primarily simply indicates that you no longer remain within the limiting extremes of interpretation that you once clung to so obsessively, as cyclic existence with its bewildering array of fantasies, desires, and reifying "frames" fade out.

**(vii) The dissolution of the impure gateway to cyclic existence**

The dynamic qualities of presencing are like this: impure cyclic existence's own entry gate dissolves within the gateway of the essence's purity: the dynamic qualities of "presencing" as here associated with the impure gateway should be understood in opposition to the dynamic qualities being "perfectly exhausted and complete" as associated with the pure gateway. The manifest, i.e. presencing, is linked to the impure as appearances are the transcendental condition for the misperception and non-recognition which leads to cyclic existence, while the empty or open dimension is linked to the pure, as the primordial emptiness of everything ensures no impurity or entity has any ultimate status or validity. Thus here we have the gateway of the impure dissolving within empty essence, while below the gateway to the pure involves the "completion" or "exhaustion" of the dynamic qualities, an exhaustion of impure dimensions which allows their perfect completeness to come to pass. This completeness of the whole in its holism is the pure dimension, from which the impure is a deviation, and to which it thus returns - as they dissolve into the purity of the "essence" dimension (the real "stuff" of the Universe which is no-thing), the phenomenon of neurosis and materialization don't evaporate into thin air nor are they transported to some other dimension, as they go nowhere other than their own fundamental nature-source.

Analogically it resembles how a yak-hair tent naturally draws into its center when its stake-ropes are gathered together, as the sensory faculties' experienced objects pass beyond sorrow: NGB and Ati read *bsDus Pas* for TDD and TCD's *brTul Bas*. As the stake-ropes holding a nomadic tent up are pulled up and gathered together as you "take them in hand", the tent naturally falls into its own center as it collapses in the absence of its sustaining ropes anchored to the ground with stakes. This is depicted in the Lukhang murals by a man holding a tent's stake-ropes in his hands, with the tent in the process of collapsing and the annotation "...sBra Yi Chu Thag Pa bsDus Pa bZhin Chos Nyid Rig Par Hub Kyis sDus Pa...".

By breaking free of the fetters of corporeality and impure appearances which bind you to cyclic existence, you become free of the entire structure as it self-collapses into itself. Thus the analogy can be interpreted as "tent" referring to cyclic existence, and "stake-ropes" as the "objects" or "things" which sustain its illusion. In relationship to the previous lines, the taut stake-ropes are our perceptual and conceptual constrictions of seamless luminous openness into discrete "selves" and "objects", which support the state of straying in the impurity of cyclic existence, while when cut or pulled up they dissolve into the purity of the essence, their original centering source (the pure gateway of the Essence) from which, after all this time, it turns out they have never departed from. Thus the center of the tent on the ground is metaphorically that originally pure essence of the Ground itself. The beauty of the image lies in the artificiality of a tent which separates one from the wide open spaces and luminous sky of the Tibetan wilderness, maintained only by a tenuous network of ropes and stakes, a network that is, after all, man made. Being man made, it only takes our own action for it to collapse in an instant, revealing, suddenly, the wide open purity that was always there. This vision of dissolution is a free fall into open space, perhaps dizzy, but liberating, as the light floods in and you take your first steps into a new, free world that seems strangely familiar.

(viii) *The dissolution of the pure gateway to primordial gnosis*

*Analogically it resembles a snow lion taking command of a glacier as you attain irreversible, fearless assurance:* the visionary is now totally assured and resolute like a lion, who fearlessly takes control wherever he resides, dominating the glacier beyond the harm of other animals. In addition a "snow lion" is a white presence on a white glacier, thereby invisible to the ordinary eye, and yet undeniably present (and with what power!) though you can no longer see it. There is only white on white, suggesting the crystalline purity of original purity's white, immaculate expanse, yet to conclude that nothing is there may be the last mistake you ever make. The lion is present with his tremendous power, a force before which everyone trembles, and doesn't remain sitting passively afraid to move in the manner of the other animals who silently wait for the hunter to depart. In the same way enlightenment is this white on white with incredible dynamism, beyond fear or reversal from this completeness back to cyclic existence's fragmentation, yet dynamically active in the unceasing manifestation of enlightened energy and activity. White on white is the enduring mystery of **Being** itself, a **Universe** which is unceasingly dynamic yet never becomes other than itself.

*By this overall process of the dynamic qualities' emergence, the primordial gnosis which abides in solitariness finds itself in and of itself without searching, its own actuality from the very beginning:* thus we have a final mention of the "process of emergence", indicating again that dissolution is not a blank dissipation, but rather is dynamic through and through. In this multi-faceted spiraling of manifestation and dissolution, the intelligent **Universe** ("primordial gnosis" literally reading "primordial knowing") finds itself in self-consciousness of itself as itself, a moment of self-recognition that involves no new external realities or transformations that must be sought, but rather a simple awareness of itself as itself.

138. Ati and TCD read "within its thoroughly pure essence" rather than "by virtue of its own essence being thoroughly pure".

## ANNOTATION-COMMENTARY TO CHAPTER TWO

139. Since in the context of the Great Perfection tradition the nature of the **Universe** is assumed to be a dynamic play of pure, divine light forms which remains our enduring and abiding reality, it is precisely our habitually distorted perceptions of dualistic materiality that must be explained. In other words, if we ourselves are primordially luminous beings in seamless unity with a **Grounding Universe** of empty light energy, and contain the nucleus of spiritual realization within (the so-called Buddha-nature), why don't we experience ourselves as such? Why is our experience marked by alienation obsessed with violent cycles alternately attempting to annihilate or unite with an **Other** (war and sex), against the background of seemingly ineluctable corporeal and material limitations? Thus this second chapter explains the process of "straying", i.e. alienation or ignorance, in some detail, delineating step by step how, despite the **Universe's** ultimate and enduring purity, this initial simple "thought" of the **Universe** strays into the complex worlds of frozen patterns, static matter, and fragmented alienation which we now inhabit, while never departing from its luminous and empty reality. However, even in analyzing this process of alienation's mechanisms and phases, Longchenpa is at pains to point out each "impure" aspect's fundamental purity, i.e. the sacral dimension of the ongoing ordinary world of experience. This reversal whereby it is impurity that need be explained rather than purity, is similar to the David Bohm's comments in Renée Weber's *Dialogues with Scientists and Sages* (94):

"...You see, usually we believe that in life the rule is uncreativity, and occasionally a little burst of creativity comes in that requires explanation. But the implicate order turns all that around and says creativity is the basis, and it is repetition that has to be explained..."

140. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 119,7; Ati1 143,4).

The "psyche" or "cognitive energy" that emerges as the first "player" in this cosmic game of the Ground-presencing is really no more than the Ground or Universe's "thought" which has the capacity (post-rupture) to experience the Ground's lighting-up as a field of experience (i.e. the Ground-presencing). As the Universe embarks on its self-exploration or play, moving out of its formless pure potential into an ever widening galaxy of light forms in self-exteriorization, it gains with this self-cognizing of itself both a capacity for self-knowledge, and a corresponding pitfall of self-delusion. If it recognizes its own presencing as inherent to it, the freedom of the Totally Positive One ensues as the potential gap between its capacities for self-display (the lights) and self-reflection (the cognitive energy or consciousness) is bridged; but if it fails to recognize its own display, and becomes deluded into considering the visions of light as some external "other" divorced from it, then its game enters a new dimension as this "psyche" (a localized capacity of the Universe for self-reflection) now strays into fictive worlds where the fluid flows of energy become hardened and reified into corporeal and material entities. Thus it can be said that in a sense the Ground, or the Ground's presencing itself goes astray in a game of cosmic hide and seek with a participant of One, such that straying stems from a dimension of Being forgetting its own identity within that game. The game was ventured because of the Ground's sense of play, or perhaps a subtle impulse to learn of itself, and once ventured is no longer completely in control as the "players" (the result of the Ground's fissuring self-identity) seek their separately imagined goals. Thus as the Ground's presencing evolves out of and within the Ground, the process of forgetting and remembering (recognition and non-recognition) is the source of all the worlds that spin out, worlds of distorted suffering and materiality, and of shimmering luminous purity.

Thus though it is often said that straying isn't present within the Ground, while the Ground is present within straying (just as clouds don't affect the sky's essence though the sky pervades the cloud's very being), it must be said that if the Ground is the mother of all that be, then it is also the source of straying. And while its own abiding reality remains stainless throughout, ultimately evolution is its own game and its own players, who initiate and perpetuate the drama of straying and enlightenment. In this way perhaps we can say that the Ground itself, in one of its many self-created masks or guises, strays amidst its own forgetting.

*Due to a lack of cognizance of the One, original purity isn't self-recognized as its own intrinsic reality:* In the first line, Ati has the somewhat different reading of *gCig Ma Shes Dang Ka Dag Las* for *gCig Ma Shes Pas Ka Dag La*. "The One" or the "singularity" refers to the original undifferentiated unity of the Universe/Being/Ground, a unity that continues even in this lighting-up as one of the four super-commitments or "rules" ("solitariness"), since it is all presencing inherent to the Ground itself (the term "self-presencing" indicating that the Universe/Ground is itself intelligent and self-organizing without any dualistic connotations). All beings remain within Being, even in their losing consciousness of it, as they (or it?) dream a fantasy of themselves (or itself?). If this fundamental singularity is lost sight of in the potential confusion of the Ground-presencing, such that we now speculate on the relation

between the thinking proto-subject here, and the luminous proto-object over there, this fissure inexorably widens and proliferates into a full blown alienation. This notion of the "One" is similar to this thought of Heidegger's quoted in Halliburton's *Poetic Thinking* 224:

"...The destiny of Being is a child playing, playing a board game...The "because" is swallowed up in play. The play is without a "why". It plays as long as it plays. It remains just play. But this "just" is everything, the one, the only..."

In our failure to maintain awareness of this fundamental unity of all life, we thus don't recognize our own nature or reality within original purity, the enlightened nucleus of bliss energy which is the triune gnostic energy of empty essence, radiant nature, and all pervading compassionate resonance. Under the conditions of this non-recognition, this triune gnostic energy's intensity begins to dissipate as its surface dynamics become the triune dimmed awareness discussed below. Dr. Guenther offered an interesting interpretation reading "reality" (*Chos Nyid*) as referring to the "reality" or "dynamic" character of original purity, i.e. that this emptiness itself is an utterly dynamic process with this triune self-organizing that is in no way to be opposed to appearances. Thus we fail to recognize our own nature as this self-organizing dynamic reality of emptiness itself, not only failing to see the light display as self-presencing, but also that we ourselves are the self-presencing or self-organizing of original purity, i.e. emptiness. This reading nicely goes with the standard description of "we fail to recognize the self-presencing" (KGYT2 175,4). Thus the line can be interpreted in a number of ways: "within original purity there is a non-recognition of its own nature, reality itself", "original purity is not self-recognized as our own reality and enduring nature", or "original purity isn't recognized as our own intrinsic dynamic reality (as well as the final reality of the panoramic light-display)". We fail to see that the intrinsic dynamic of both our own knowing, and the phenomenal appearances of light that form the "knowable", is this dynamic emptiness that is no-thing yet every-thing; failing to connect this utter primordial purity with the depth-being ("reality" connoting both ultimate emptiness and continuing dynamism) of the Ground-presencing's panoramic display as it lights-up in the first stirrings of evolutionary movement, we begin to lose sight of emptiness as the ultimate dynamic (that which opens-up the very possibility of the lighting-up) and pervading reality (throughout the Ground-phase, path-phase, and climax-phase) of all that happens. Thus there develops a split between emptiness and appearance, which leads into a concretization of appearances as their essential fluidity and utter diaphaneity is forgotten, the original purity of it all receding far into the background as the individual actors now assume increasing prominence. In this way the dynamics of original purity as a triune gnostic energy evolves under the conditions of non-recognition into the triune dimmed awareness.

Finally, this initial non-recognition can be interpreted as referring to the first dimmed awareness of the triad discussed below, while the following line indicates the second, and the final three lines describe the third. Based on KGYT2 175,4, I would suggest correlating the first aspect with the initial spark or transcendental condition of the entire twelvefold process of cyclic existence's interdependent origination (like a "blinding"), the second aspect with its first phase of "ignorance" or "dimmed awareness" (imaged as the old woman who is thus blind), and the third aspect with its second phase of "karmic conditioning" (imaged as a potter who forms cyclic existence in all its details). While in the Great Perfection tradition dimmed awareness or ignorance is thus said to have a definite beginning in this initial moment of non-recognition in the Ground-presencing's breaking free (as well as a definite end in the enlightenment experience), the normative exoteric Sutric tradition of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist thought usually terms ignorance as beginningless (*Thog Ma Med Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*).

However, these two explanations are not entirely irreconcilable - the latter's concept of ignorance could be interpreted as referring to the first aspect of dimmed awareness discussed here, which has no particular onset within cyclic existence itself, since its very existence is that which forms the general transcendental conditions which make cyclic existence not only possible, but inevitable. Thus within the context of the fabric of illusion, it is "beginningless" and without end, such that only a radical revolution bringing about the total destruction of cyclic existence itself will effect its status. Yet within the illusion, and without the revolution, this dimmed awareness is all-pervasive without beginning or end, though the Great Perfection tradition emphasizes its wider cosmic and evolutionary status wherein it can be seen to have a specific onset for localized instances of consciousness (the non-recognition within the Ground-presencing) and cessation (the realization of Buddhahood).

And thus appropriation takes place in the manner of a catalyst: this ambiguous line (*rGyu Dang mTshungs Par Nyer Len No*) can be interpreted in a variety of ways. As translated above, it indicates that with this non-recognition we "appropriate" objects (and karmic conditioning) to ourselves as we descend into patterns of emotional distortions towards the objects we have split off from ourselves, and thus this appropriation acts as the "catalyst" or causal impetus impelling us firmly into the suffering of cyclic existence. We appropriate this display such that the entire event becomes a cause for straying, whereas previously it was merely a potential "foundation for straying" (as well as a potential "foundation for freedom"). In the same way, it could be interpreted as the light-display is "appropriated in conjunction with this catalyst" of straying (the non-recognition of it as self-presencing), and hence is polluted into cyclic existence (which is thus "taken up", "appropriated", or "impelled forward" - "in conjunction with this catalyst (*Brel Ba* as "related with", "conjoined with"), (distorted appearances and cyclic existence) are appropriated". Thus we appropriate, take up, or become involved with the duality of cyclic existence and transcendence with its self-other presupposition and wild diversity of sufferings and pleasures. This would harmonize with the use of *mTshungs lDan* just below, to indicate that this cognitive energy now manifests "in conjunction with" a triune dimmed awareness. In fact, *mTshungs Par lDan* is a common term used to refer to how psychic factors operate in intimate interrelation, association and conjunction with each other - see ZMYT1 445-6 for a typical example.

Alternately, "appropriation" (*Nyer Len*) could be interpreted as referring to this non-recognition being the "substantial impelling cause" of cyclic existence (like a seed is a seedling's "substantial cause"), acting in the manner of its "catalyst" since this dimmed awareness is the essence of cyclic existence. This seed of dimmed awareness (this non-recognition) is the direct cause of the flowering forth of the seedling of cyclic existence's three domains of existence. Also *mTshungs Par* can have the sense of "concomitant" or "similar", connoting that the cause and fruit here of the same substance or continuum.

In either case, the mention of "catalyst" here is similar to its usage below in the name of the first aspect of dimmed awareness. As discussed below, the term generally refers to dimmed awareness acting as the "causal impetus" of cyclic existence, yet can also denote awareness as the "causal impetus" of both cyclic existence and transcendence since as awareness is raised-up from the Ground in the evolving display of the Ground-presencing, it can give rise to a reduced intensity-mode (non-recognition and distortion) or a fully ripened high intensity-mode (enlightenment).

Basing himself on the standard meaning of *mTshungs Par* as "similar to", or "in the manner of", Dr. Guenther suggesting reading this line as "and thus there is appropriation in the

manner of a cause", or "it is taken up in the manner of cause". Rather than being in the sense of this appropriation or taking up of the display acting as the causal impetus for straying, it implies somehow that this cognitive energy perceives the original purity or reality as itself like a cause in a mechanistic sense. This original purity is seen as in some way the causal impetus of itself, which is then like an effect, whereby the division of the original disruption is brought about. This cognitive awareness takes up and relates to the Universe's original purity in a reductionist manner as it were a mechanical cause of this display of the five lights, just as we take objects as the "cause" of our perception, and thus we have the beginnings of the self/other split. With the objective reference of these five colors, a subtle dualism develops between the display and the perceiver of the display - the causal momentum of this process is original purity, the conditional modifier is the display which is perceived, and the functioning is the karmic processes of objectification (whereas in my own reading "causal impetus" or catalyst would be the perceiver's dimmed awareness, with the conditional influence or basis of the five lights providing the backdrop for its non-recognition, whereby the active functioning karmic processes of cyclic existence ensue). With this subtle form of duality and ignorance of the unity of life, in dealing with the Ground-presencing we take this original purity as the virtual, and the reality as already the actual, making a division into the virtual and the actual, the cause and its modification. "Appropriation" then means that we identify with these forces, ascribing or appropriating them to ourselves as our own organization in a personal sense, whereas in fact these processes are the Universe in its self-organizing (leading to an obvious interpretation of the first dimmed awareness' name as "the dimmed awareness of sensing yourself to be of a single identity with the causal impetus"). Failing to see the unity of original purity and reality, the primordial emptiness and its dynamic evolution of energetic patterns, we take one as the cause ("the ontological") and the other as the modification ("the epistemological"), out of which we construct what we call "cyclic existence", and the psyche evolves out against the wider realm within which it is interacting. The "causal impetus" is taking reality as the cause, while the conditions are the colors; the duality is twofold - between emptiness ("original purity") and appearance ("Ground-presencing"), and between the perceiver ("clear and aware cognitive energy") and the perceived ("five lights") - with the two dyads intimately related to each other, as discussed below.

While in part I feel Dr. Guenther's interpretation is overly ingenious, it is certainly valid as a very interesting sub-current of meaning here. Unfortunately, due to a deficient understanding of hermeneutics, many modern day Tibetan Lama/scholars, as well as many "Buddhologists" in the West, have utilized concepts of the "oral tradition", institutionalized authority, and often valid complaints of others' inadequate textual/linguistic competency to perpetuate very restrictive and reductionist practices of interpretation, which are themselves based on usually unstated and quite confused theories of language and interpretation. This has led to a number of unfortunate splits and false oppositions, particularly clear in those interested in the *rNying Ma* tradition, such as between those who desire to "practice" Buddhism and those who desire to "intellectually" engage it as well. In part the modern day Tibetan religious hierarchy itself must share the blame in its authoritarian tendency to squash dissent, often desensitized and reductionist practices of interpretation, emphasis on secrecy, and too quick tendency to classify individuals into sterile categories ("practitioner", "scholar", etc.). At the same time, as individuals they are often dedicated, caring and intelligent individuals once one gains their friendship, and on the whole still maintain a powerful tradition of "contemplative thinking" that we are so prone to misinterpret in the West. Perhaps part of the problem is too much experience with Westerners, since we often imperialistically (though often with an overtly submissive attitude) attempt to make over



these traditions into self-gratifying neurotic reflections of our own cultural heritage (though many of us paradoxically appear to know little of such heritage, and on the surface reject what we have understood, making its symbolic projection all the more powerful). As such, traditional figures have understandably reacted with a good deal of conservatism, and confusion, which at times gives the appearance of authoritarianism, and makes for rationalizing "cover-ups" for all too numerous political and sexual abuses of position. Personally, I have found this to make for a very difficult situation, feeling comfortable neither with those scholars who have chosen to denigrate the living tradition as simplistic and poorly educated (often with very good reasons following genuine attempts to interact with the tradition), nor with those who have chosen to submit to the hierarchy's "edicts" and/or lack any real intellectual (or spiritual) sophistication in their own rich Western heritage (resulting in "half-breed" translations and studies that sap the life blood from one of the world's greatest intellectual/spiritual traditions with their garbled English, and naive theories of language and interpretation - the so-called "blank slate" view of life). There is a very unfortunate tendency across the spectrum for Westerners to pre-judge from a wide variety of sedimented perspectives (whether as the self-appointed "yogi", "insider", "rationalist", "naive realist", "philosopher" and so on), which up until this point has restricted Buddhism's influence on our practical understanding of social and political issues, as well as general intellectual life, and made for a typically Western negativistic fragmentation into a nicely divided sets of "compartments" or cliques.

*The objective support is the colored lights (of the Ground's lighting-up), and thus by virtue of the causes and conditions of this subtle factor of duality, there comes to be the objectifications involved in the karmic processes of cyclic existence:* the objective support, or referential basis, for this misapprehension is the exteriorized play of rainbow-colored light in the Ground-presencing (*dMigs Pa'i rTen* could also be translated as the "basis for objectification or perception"). This is the answer to the following intuitive question: given that we are talking about some type of agent of cognition here, what is the noematic pole or objective dimension which serves as the condition enabling perception with its resultant recognition or non-recognition? Instead of TDD's *gNyis Cha Phra Ba'i rGyu rKyen Gyis* ("and thus by virtue of the causes and conditions of this subtle factor of duality"), NGB reads *gNyis Cha Phra Ba'i 'Gyu brTen Gyis* ("through being based on a flickering towards a subtle duality (via the colors)", and Ati reads *gNyis Cha Phra Ba'i brTen Gyis* ("through its being the support for the coming about of a subtle duality"). In TDD's reading, "duality" (*gNyis Cha*) could also be interpreted as referring to "the subtle factors of these two", i.e. the non-recognition ("the cause") and the colors ("the condition") - "the objective basis is the colors (or "light hues" involved in the Ground-presencing), and thus the causal conditions of both these subtle factors brings about the objectifications involved in..." Longchenpa's follow-up discussion clearly indicates that he is reading "causes and conditions" as referring to the standard triune cause and four part conditional determinant discussed below, which can be summed up by this subtle duality found in the disruption occurring within the One via the emergence of a subtle proto-subjectivity and proto-objectivity (the cognitive energy and five lights).

141. Not only is the Universe empty and radiant (its "essence" and "nature"), it is also intrinsically intelligent and actively dynamic in a self-organizing fashion. This latter aspect is summed up as the Ground's "compassionate resonance" (*Thugs rJe*), also interpretable as its "self-resonance" or "resonating care", its dynamic internal vibrations whereby it gains the capacity for self-reflection or consciousness, a cognitive energy which can be either intensely brilliant and incisive, or dulled to the point of a mere glow. There is this huge cosmic drama

of the Ground's unfolding, and all of a sudden there is one lonely actor (the radiant and aware cognition) appearing amidst the changing panorama of the lights' display, not quite sure of its role in it all. If it mistakenly perceives itself as a separate identity from these appearances, which are then considered to be some unknown "other", the drama-dream of the Universe continues in earnest, as this lonely actor embarks on a search through time and memory to regain the mother s/he has just forsaken.

As ZMYT1 444,6ff makes clear, in the Ground's evolution this cognitive energy (which is a derivative of awareness) becomes either the "universal psychic ground" (*Kun gZhi*) or the "Body of Reality". While the former (evolving under the conditions of non-recognition) becomes the basis or foundation for the unfolding of one's psychic, verbal and physical being in neurotic existence, the latter is the basis for all the enlightened qualities of an awakened existence, the ultimately empty and luminous support of the spiritual life.

142. Once this psychic energy fails to recognize the external luminous display confronting it as its own self-presencing, it can then be termed "non-awareness" (*Ma Rig Pa*) since it's unaware of this unity, and consequently its overall intensity of awareness rapidly dims. Thus this "non-awareness" is not a total absence of awareness as such, but rather is simply a lack of conscious recognition of this fundamental identity, whereby our awareness is reduced, stepped down, or dimmed to a low level of intensity. This drop in awareness-intensity is then analyzed into three distinct phases or aspects, which however, are merely different facets/masks of this single process of non-optimal psychic energy that are abstracted out for the purpose of conceptual articulation ("conceptual isolates"). While here presented in terms of a cosmogonic scenario, this analysis also pertains to our current existence, where in each instant of awareness we can encounter that which presences without reifying and fragmenting it, though we fail to do so in each instance so that instantaneously the machinery of enframing and fantasy asserts itself, and constructs our experienced worlds from the seamless primordially of the light.

Thus when Longchenpa says "it fails to self-recognize", this indicates both the psychic energy of clarity and awareness and the entire display of lights, since the two are at all points in seamless unity with each other: in the eventuality of non-recognition, both become interwoven inextricably with this triune dimmed awareness, and hence further devolves into the alienation of cyclic existence (as "minds" and "matter" respectively). In view of the Universe not recognizing itself, awareness becomes dimmed, and this drop in intensity acts as a shock to the entire system (since the displays are no more than awareness' self-presencing, as a crystal in sunlight), pervasively affecting the entire process such that shimmering transcendent displays fade, to be displaced by dull, coarse matter, and corporeal limitations. Thus the ramifications of this movement from awareness into dimmed awareness are immense, even though in reality the dimmed awareness is no other than awareness itself in a self-deluded guise - it is often said that in all the turbulence, nothing other than awareness ever comes to be. Yet even so, it here undergoes a type of displacement, moving out of the Ground and the Ground's presencing into the impure distorted appearances of fictive existence.

The initial phase of this drop in intensity is said to be the catalyst dimmed awareness "of the same identity", consciousness' failure to pick up on its identity with the external display, yet in fact remaining a single identity with awareness (though functionally quite distinct) since it is no other than awareness' dynamism or potency in a self-confused mode. This simple confusion or non-recognition then instantly becomes pervasive of the psychic energy

in question and its perceived world (the "coemergent" aspect), as opposed to being simply an incidental factor, and finally the break fissures further as a general fragmentation and proliferation of "frames" generates a complex web of intellectual and emotion fabrications that we call our "world" (the "reifying" aspect of dimmed awareness). Thus in this single process of dimming awareness, three distinctions are made, corresponding directly to the triad of the essence, nature, and compassionate resonance - though the Universe has become a bit lost from its original formless unity, obscured and confused amidst all this fissuring fragmentation, its triadic nature continues to express itself, though on the surface it is not quite what it should be. The three phases are of increasing coarseness, with the initial dimmed awareness being very subtle, but inexorably and quickly proceeding into every coarser states.

(i) **"The catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity" (*rGyu bDag Nyid gCig Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*)**: this is an ambiguous term that is often poorly understood, or interpreted in a very restrictive sense (literally, it reads "cause-self identity-same-non-awareness"). For example, Dorje and Kapstein translate it as "ignorance of belief in individual selfhood" (reading *gCig Pu'i* for *gCig Pa'i*) in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Guenther as "the "absolute self" low-level cognitive state" (*From Reductionism to Creativity* 201), and Tulku Thondup as "the unenlightenment of single self, the cause" (*Buddha Mind* 208). The most obvious interpretation, however, would seem to be simply that this involves the initial non-recognition of the "single identity" that pertains between itself and the light-display, a dimming awareness of this original undifferentiated unity which acts as the transcendental condition or initial "catalyst" for cyclic existence (see annotations to TDD 190,1's discussion of "the agent of straying" (*Khrul mKhan*) for further comments). Another likely, and quite similar, interpretation is that awareness and dimmed-awareness "remain a single identity" here without any real separateness being introduced here, "non-recognition" and "recognition" being all that is entailed without any real ontological difference. Also see my annotations to TDD 190,4 for TCD's own extremely refined interpretation of this term (interpretable as referring to an initial aware-ing phase of the Ground-presencing which can proceed either into the freedom of enlightenment or the straying of cyclic existence, or this initial aware-ing phase which fails to recognize itself, as opposed to instantaneously self-recognizing itself - see there for my discussion), which is quite interesting even though such an interpretation cannot be applied throughout (as other interpretations are quite clearly given elsewhere in Longchenpa's corpus). In the current context of TDD's explanation, it literally defines it as "manifesting as psychic energy, not recognizing that itself", which Tulku Thondup in *Buddha Mind* (208) interprets as referring to the "arisen psychic energy" not recognizing itself as original purity, possibly with the thought that Longchenpa is interpreting the above citation from *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* as being analyzable into these three phases of dimmed awareness, with the first two lines referring to this first aspect of dimmed awareness. His interpretation seems to point to a possible distinction between the first phase of dimmed awareness as involving the psychic energy (as first exteriorized from within the Ground's formless depths) failing to recognize its own true nature in that first instant of its emergence, while the second phase connotes more of a turning outwards as this non-recognition becomes co-emergent with its perception of the external presences.

It could also be interpreted as the dimmed awareness which remains of a "single identity" with awareness, like the back and front sides of a single hand (VNT3-"Pa" 5,5) - there is only a functional difference between the two in terms of their respective non-recognition and recognition, and despite the immense implications of this difference, the two remain essentially identical. KGYT1 467,3 says "from cyclic existence and transcendence being

"one" (the same) within primordial gnosis as their causal impetus or catalyst, they manifest distinctly by virtue of the conditioning of awareness of non-awareness, merely like the front and back of a hand". This also points out a certain ambiguity to the term "catalyst", which certainly denotes this dimmed awareness acting as the main causal impetus driving us into cyclic existence, yet could also connote "awareness" ("the dimmed awareness which is of a single identity with the catalyst"), which is often termed the single "causal impetus" or driving force of both cyclic existence and transcendence (both being its "play" or "efflorescence"). TCD1 322,7 defines "dimmed awareness" as "awareness not recognizing its own nature", showing clearly the identity of awareness and dimmed awareness, the latter merely the former under the conditions of non-recognition. The term "same cause" (*rGyu gCig Pa*) is also a frequent term used in describing all of cyclic existence and transcendence as having a single self-same cause, awareness, and thus in this context can signify "awareness" which "dimmed awareness" remains a mere facet of: this cognitive energy is unaware of the true causal impetus of itself and the light-display, and thus is unaware of the "same identity" pertaining at that level.

At any rate this interpretation emphasizes that the key dynamic of straying is based on recognition and non-recognition, not on some type of ontological difference, since ultimately even in straying, dimmed awareness remains a potency of awareness, while the entire phenomenal world has never wavered for an instant from the three Spiritual Bodies - non-recognition fails to effect in true differentiation or impurity within the Ground's abiding reality. Saying "of a single identity" (*bDag Nyid gCig Pa*) rather than merely "identical" (*gCig Pa*) indicates dimmed awareness is a derivative of awareness (and hence of "a single identity), without obliterating the distinction between pure awareness and its non-optimal form of dimmed awareness (the former being stainless, and the latter rapidly leading down into alienation and materialization). TCD2 42,1-4 clearly indicates that although awareness pervades dimmed awareness, the opposite does not pertain: awareness can be present divested of the slightest vestige of dimmed awareness, such as in the Buddha's primordial gnosis. Dimmed awareness pervades the mind, and thus when the mind ceases in the attainment of Buddhahood, it ceases as well, though it does not follow that awareness is interrupted - rather as the cloud-like dimmed awareness is dispersed, the sun-like primordial gnosis is enabled to shine forth in all its radiant potency. Thus dimmed awareness is merely a derivative or "subset" of awareness.

Along these lines, in TCD1 318,6 Longchenpa says this: "...By recognizing the primordial gnosis which is beyond rejection and acceptance since the causal impetus (i.e. awareness) is identical in Awakened Ones and sentient beings, the causal condition (i.e. dimmed awareness) is freed in its own-site..." TCD1 307,7 (incorrect page reference, not yet relocated) mentions awareness as the identical causal impetus of both cyclic existence and transcendence, which are like the front and back of a single hand, with the key difference being recognition or non-recognition. TCD2 100,7 images it in terms of sleep: "...Though both straying and freedom are identical within the range of the Ground-awareness, (their distinction) is just like a single individual can be asleep or awake..." Finally TCD1 295,5 clearly states dimmed awareness depends on awareness in that it is no other than its awareness' radiation:

"...Awareness' radiation stemming from the Ground's compassionate resonance manifests as cognitive energy able to reflect upon observable aspects (of the appearing lights), and by virtue of a simple non-recognition (of those lights) as its own nature it is present as the so-called "dimmed awareness dependent upon awareness"..."

In KGNT1 416,5ff, Padmasambhava describes awareness and dimmed awareness as "the back and front sides of a single hand", saying that both have the "same causal impetus", i.e. the non-dual unimpeded triune identity of the Ground - essence, nature, and compassionate resonance - beyond which nothing ever comes to be. By not recognizing it as primordial gnosis' self-presencing, awareness strays into dimmed awareness, and from non-distortion, distortions comes to pass (though original purity continues to be its final undifferentiated reality). Despite this ambiguity as to "catalyst", it must be said that many texts use this term to refer to the causal impetus of cyclic existence, such as VLDC 22,4ff describes the first dimmed awareness as the causal impetus of the tree-like cyclic existence:

"...The Teacher of the Tantra, the Totally Positive One, is expansively awakened without creating a single iota of the root of virtue: as the ground of straying into cyclic existence is originally pure, and thus absolutely no causal impetus (towards straying) emerges for the Teacher, "the dimmed awareness of the single identity" (which acts as) causal impetus is vanquished...since the causal impetus is inherently radiant and inherently purified, just as the cause of branches and leaves' development is cut off by virtue of the trunk's interior being rotten, (all dimmed awareness) is vanquished. In that no cognitions of dualistic appearances remain in his Enlightened Mind, his Mind is unobstructed and devoid of duality..."

NSTB's reading of *gCig Pu'i* ("sole") for *gCig Pa'i* ("same"; a reading not borne out, on the whole, by Longchenpa's corpus) evidently led to Dorje and Kapstein's translation as "belief in individual selfhood". This "ignorance" involves the thought or feeling that it (the cognitive energy) is "alone", all by itself cut off with a distinct identity quite separate from the light presences that surround it (soon to become the threatening "Other"). Thus a kind of solipsism develops ("same identity"), as this initial aspect of dimmed awareness has the sensation that everything can be *reduced* to it in a type of mistaken identification (rather than true self-recognition). Following the normative reading of *gCig Pa'i*, this could also thus be interpreted as referring to a kind of "solipsism", whereby everything else is reduced to the cognitive energy's own proto-ego or sense of self ("of the same identity with me") rather than tuning into original purity as the true unity of Being, life, and the Universe. Thus "absolute self" would indicate a type of primitive emergent narcissism, a sense that you alone exist ("you" in the sense of your limited self-awareness), and the sensation that everything depends on you as such - the dimmed awareness itself thus is a type of solipsistic evolving conception of itself as a transcendental self based on this mistaken identification deriving from a sensation that everything is it, the non-recognition becoming the proto-egological dimension of an absolute self, which underlies all the ways you are going to deal with the world. Dr. Guenther pointed out to me in conversation that there is a hidden critique of the traditional Indian "atman" theory here, the feeling that "I" as a discrete individual can overcome boundaries through annihilation or merge with the Other. Once unity is forgotten and the dream of the Other begins, solipsism as well begins - while the original purity of the Essence is no cause at all, we misconstrue as if it were in some type of mechanistic relationship with this display, this cosmic drama unfolding before us (there is the producer, over there is the show). We do this, of course, so we may then proceed to identify ourselves with this omnipotent overseer, beginning already, at the beginning, the project of identification to overcome the incipient stirrings of the uncomfortable reality of differentiation. We drive the self-other split into an ever hardening abyss, so that we may overcome what is initially only a subtle confusion, an actor whose script has somehow vanished, by manipulating the clearly defined figures that result. The Actor who believes himself to be the producer (in an egological manner), while remaining in fact (though forgotten) the same identity with the

producer (awareness) as a mask, a mask on emptiness, laced with the dynamism of emptiness (recall the power of white on white imaged at the end of the first chapter). Once the initial fragmentation takes place, the delusions are endless, as the individual attempts to take itself to be the direct cause of all of this, a dream of omnipotence evolves, analyzable right in childhood with the basic perception of "self" and "not-self", a memory of undifferentiation, and the first attempts at violent negation and oceanic identification

This interpretation plays off the above interpretations nicely, since the contrast perfectly incarnates the tensions between the One and solitary reality and our childish fantasies of omnipotent identification, two quite different dimensions yet forever confused in our unconsciousness (see Brown's *Life Against Death* 40-54). At any rate, in all interpretations this term must refer to the "thought" or "psyche" which initially springs up in the Ground's presencing, and which fails to realize itself as originally pure, and as in seamless unity with the light visions encountered in its purview. Thus this clear and aware cognitive energy begins the long road down into cyclic existence, which begins with this instant of non-recognition, yet immediately leads to a contraction of its luminosity as the self-delusion becomes pervasive, and starts to proliferate into a wide variety of dualistic fantasies and obsessions.

**(ii) "The coemergent dimmed awareness" (*Lhan Cig sKyes Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*):** in the first instant, this psychic energy in contemplating the light displays of spontaneous presence failed to recognize them as its own self-presencing nature, while in the second instant this non-recognition becomes indivisible and innate to it, and thus is termed "coemergent dimmed awareness". Thus from this point until the attainment of spiritual awakening (Buddhahood), all perceptions and experiences of this psyche are inextricably permeated by this non-recognition, and the far reaching ramifications of its impetus towards straying. Initially there is the Ground-presencing (which in itself is stainless) the base of a hand, and then cyclic existence and transcendence emerge like the two fingers of a single hand, or its back and front side. The initial aspect of dimmed awareness is the causal impetus leading into cyclic existence, but as yet still just a potential or inclination, without entailing the actual fragmentation and distinct appearance of "cyclic existence" and "transcendence". However with this second aspect of dimmed awareness, the ramifications of non-recognition set in as the coarse dualistic "thought" of cyclic existence as distinct from transcendence develops, followed by the third aspect of dimmed awareness wherein the six life forms and all the other fissuring elaborations internal to cyclic existence become full blown. We can thus interpret "non-recognition" (*Ma Shes*) as mentioned above in defining the "dimmed awareness" of the single identity" as referring to the mere passive absence of the Total Positive One's recognition (*Ngo Shes*), while the "non-recognition" mentioned in defining the "coemergent dimmed awareness" indicates an active, manipulative, enframing non-recognition, which now becomes co-emergent with the cognitive energy as its chief defining characteristic.

**(iii) "The dimmed awareness of rampant reification" (*Kun brTags Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*):** following the initial non-recognition and subsequent dualistic mind-set which becomes sedimented, in the third phase this "fantasizing" or "fabricating" psychic energy now begins to pervasively institute its systematic distortions in the perceived world, based on the strict differentiation between "self" and "other". Thus this initial non-recognition quickly moves into a complex fabric of self-spun illusions from which the whole of cyclic existence derives, as it now actively "enframes" the self-presencing display, beginning with notions of "I" and "other", and proliferating into a bewildering variety of schemes and frameworks. What was initially a seamless flow of pure light energy resonant with intelligence, is thus now distorted

and fragmented into separate entities, crisscrossed with boundaries and limitations. As it begins to believe its mistaken identification of the Other, it also begins to sense its own perilous plight as a single, isolated self in the middle of a vast sea of that which is other, and thus immerses itself in the obsessive search for security, and the lost unity which it continues to vaguely sense - alternatively asserting the self in attempts to deny or subjugate the Other (war), and surrendering the self in attempts to unite with the Other (love), as it searches to overcome its self-imposed boundaries.

143. Failing to recognize these processes' true nature (*Rang bZhin*) involves a failure to perceive their continued inherence in and as our own being (*Rang bZhin*), such that we are ignorant of the unitary nature of our own subjectivity and these luminous presences' objectivity, and instead reify them into an entitatively understood "Other". Thus grasping at the Ground (the utterly pure depth-potency of our being) and the Ground-presencing (the transcendently pure gestalts which evolve from within that potency) as that which they are not, we think of the display as consisting of real, concrete external objects that are fundamentally different than our own psychic energy, and thus frame both in terms of impure boundaries and limitations ("mine", "other" and so forth). Thus all these differentiations are introduced in what remains fundamentally the well-spring of our own energy, as well as that of the worlds you encounter.

144. By virtue of this causal impetus (the triune dimmed awareness) and accompanying four conditions (the impure objectifications), the initial cognitive awareness of the presences (in the Ground's lighting-up or self-evolution) strays into dualistic experience in terms of apprehending subjects and apprehended objects: this discourse of "four conditions" is derived from normative Buddhist epistemology, where they are explained as the four conditions necessary for a cognition or perception to take place: (i) the causal condition (traditionally this is identified as five of the six aspects which causality is analyzed into, but for our present purposes it is perhaps simpler to consider it to be the appropriate perceptual consciousness capacity existing, which acts as the transcendental conditions for the act of perception even being able to take place); (ii) the referential or "epistemological" condition (an object as perceived, i.e. a visual form such as a tree coming into our perceptual field acts as the "objective condition" for a visual perception of it); (iii) the controlling condition (that which is a principal factor producing a result, but doesn't actually substantially transform into that result, which in the case of perception is the particular sensory faculty corresponding to the sensory consciousness in question (i.e. the eye organ for an act of visual perception)); (iv) and the directly antecedent condition (the perception immediately preceding our manifest cognition of the object, and leading into it).

Since "straying" is basically an act of misperception whereby we see the pure as impure, and the Ground-presencing as what it is not, the Great Perfection tradition appropriated this analysis to its own end in its descriptions of this initial moment of how what is fundamentally non-distorted begins to stray into cyclic existence. That movement is impelled, at the most general level, by this triune causal impetus and fourfold conditional forces, while its inner mechanism is then analyzed with the traditional description of the twelfold process of interdependent origination. LYT2 17,4 gives a succinct definition of this fourfold conditional determinant acting to influence the psyche in the evolution of its straying:

"...the causal condition is the three aspects of dimmed awareness; the controlling condition is awareness; the object-condition is appearances (the lighting-up), also-called the referential condition; and the directly antecedent condition is the temporal conjunction of these three..."

The controlling condition is that which is the main factor enabling the event, though it does not itself transform into that result, just as awareness (the capacity of reflection deriving from the Ground's compassionate resonance) is the driving force behind all psychic energy, though itself remaining unstained in essence by straying (elsewhere, this condition is instead typically identified as the clinging to a "self" or concrete identities, which drives the dimmed awareness on). The immediate impetus for straying (the causal condition) then derives from the non-recognition (i.e. dimmed awareness), which in contemplating the light displays as its object (the referential condition) begins to stray, as it wonders if those lights are self, or other. In this way, these four conditional determinants of straying center around distorted "objectification" or "perception" (*dMigs Pa*), the interactions and relationships between the perceiving psyche and the perceived appearances as the mind begins to "objectify" the appearances, abstracting out, constructing, reifying, and then distorting with countless intellectual and emotional "frames" the objects which it "creates" from the shimmering and seamless light visions, and which then constitute its world. While the "causal impetus" of straying concentrates on the subjective psychic side as it fissures (the three aspects of dimmed awareness), the four "conditional determinants" of straying are primarily concerned with the objective appearances in conjunction with their perception, as both evolve, or devolve, in tandem. This is clear on TDD 190,1, which specifies the conditions of straying as "the appearance of objects to cognition", while its causal impetus is said to be "dimmed awareness".

ZMYT1 297,6-299,6 also gives a very good discussion of these four conditions of straying. In particular, Longchenpa here identifies the "controlling condition" as awareness itself, which is the foundation for straying into ordinary mental activity (*Sems*). It resembles camphor (which is a single substance capable of acting as medicine or poison depending on the situation) - if awareness is realized, it acts as the condition for freedom; if awareness is not realized, it manifests as the condition for straying. He then identifies the "referential condition" as "the Ground-presencing itself", i.e. the natural radiation of awareness in its luminous presencing, which deceptively appear to us as "other", which we thus misinterpret as such (with the examples of misperceiving a rope as a snake, or a cairn as a person). It is quite clear that the presences are only a potential condition for straying, whereas by our grasping at them as other they become the actual condition for straying as such. Finally, Longchenpa identifies the "directly antecedent condition" "awareness polluted with dimmed awareness" and the "Ground-presencing" temporally intersecting, which correlate to a proto-subjectivity and proto-objectivity respectively. Analogically, this resembles how the pain of being wounded (i.e. straying) ensues from a weapon and your body coming into contact with each other.

*At that time the six aspects of the egoic psyche begin to unceasingly apprehend and fixate, and thus the six emotional distortions rise in latent form, whereby awareness is fettered, and strays into the appearances of the sixfold objects:* see directly below for explanations of the six aspects of the egoic psychic and the six emotional distortions.

KGYT2 174,2ff indicates clearly that this initial cognitive energy (*Shes Pa*) that strays from the Essence's dimension is what is termed the "universal psychic ground" (*Kun gZhi*, literally "all-ground"), which, while in itself morally neutral, acts as the foundation or ground for the manifestation of the eightfold "perceptive consciousness" (*rNam Shes*), in all their constellations (involving virtue, non-virtue, and moral neutrality) that exhaustively constitute our inner psychic life (conscious and unconscious). From within that "universal psychic



ground", there manifests the "universal grounding consciousness" (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes*), which acts as the basis or support for the other seven modes of consciousness. The other seven modes of perceptive consciousness are the emotionally distorted psyche (*Nyon Yid*), the psychic consciousness (*Yid Kyi rNam Shes*), and the five sensory modes (*sGo lNga'i rNam Shes*). The five sensory modes of consciousness are merely visual consciousness and so forth; the psychic consciousness then indicates the mind in its organizing and synthesizing of sensory data, introspection, conceptual activities, fantasizing and so forth, while the "distorted psyche" or "ego" specifically indicates the mind distorted with all the various emotions, and thus driven to obsessive patterns of rejection and attachment.

The "universal psychic ground" itself refers to our essential awareness or luminosity, from which all other psychic energy and consciousness derives, though in sentient beings it is ridden with karmic imprints (*Bag Chags*), the latent traces, propensities or sedimentations deposited on it by one's emotion driven actions. These imprints are like blockages or distortions in your psychic energy, and lead you to compulsively repeat the same age old habits and obsessions over and over. The pure counterpart to the "universal psychic ground" (their relationship is that of obscuring clouds to the sun they hide) as found in an awakened being (a Buddha) is the "Body of Reality", the empty, luminous and stainless awareness at the heart of his/her being, which, unlike the "universal psychic ground" is undistorted by karmic imprints and neuroses, and thus free to fluidly express the spontaneous dynamics and purity of the Ground. In the context of the Great Perfection, "the universal grounding consciousness" is merely identified as the "unceasing brightness and clarity" of the universal psychic ground's radiation (KGYT3 120,1ff), and thus basically refers to the latter's functioning as its luminous energy diffuses outwards to operate as the other seven aspects of our typical consciousness-activity. While the term "universal grounding consciousness" is a standard term in Indian Buddhist thought, the further elaboration of a "universal psychic ground" (*Kun gZhi; Alaya*) appears to be an innovation of Great Perfection thinkers.

KGYT3 120,1ff also specifies that both the universal psychic ground and the universal grounding consciousness are located within the "vitality channel" (*Srog rTsa*), a term usually specifying the aorta or blood channel trunk as the channel for our life-essence, and is often associated with the "spinal cord" (*rGyungs Pa*) in these texts (indeed, in medical texts the aorta is termed the "black vitality channel" and the spinal cord the "white vitality channel"). In addition, the "luminous channel" (see Chapter Five) is located within this vitality channel (though not reducible to either it or the spinal cord - see CTNT 134,1ff), and its connections with the body's nervous energy/electrical impulses and vital energy (oxygen and nutrients in the blood) make it a very appropriate place to locate the source of psychic energy. In addition it emphasizes how the universal psychic ground is the fundamental core of our continuing psychic existence (which passes beyond the limitations of our current physical existence), just as the aorta is the vital core of our physical existence. The light channels signify our stainless core of enlightened luminosity ("the Reality Body") as permeating our existence's structure, which in essence remains present latently without our hearts ("heart" as a subtle center rather than physical organ, though its connections to the physical organ are here obvious) with a network of "light channels" extending throughout the body. While this stainless luminosity is pure through and through, its radiation forms the "universal psychic ground", and thus this stainless core of luminosity, though latent in the sense of our lack of recognition of it and obscured by our corporeality, actually is the ongoing source of all our consciousness. This is the significance of locating the universal ground within the vitality channel, and it is for this reason that Longchenpa often takes pains to deny the "Body of Reality" is merely a transformation or purification of the "universal psychic ground", since in

reality the latter is always already a derivative of the former, while its distortions shroud and obscure its source. To call the Body of Reality a transformation of the universal psychic ground would be like terming the sun a transformation of the clouds (which ultimately manifest by virtue of the sun's heat), simply because by clearing away the clouds the sun is perceivable in its full glory from a certain vantage point - both are absurd positions, and untenable as such. The solar Body of Reality, radiant and dynamic, is always present throughout, and freedom is always merely a question of recognition, not of transformation or creation.

145. *sGron Ma sNang Byed* (also referred to as *The Conch Shell Lettered*; VNT2 45,6; also cited by KGYT2 132,3). I have translated these verses in accordance VNT's glosses, and KGYT's follow-up comments (133,2ff).

*The causal impetus, the seed of straying, is an intensely radiant and aware cognitive capacity emerging via the clarity-factor slipping outwards:* "clarity-factor" is glossed by "effected by awareness' own flickering movements", and simply refers to the breaking free of awareness from the formless latency into manifestation as the Ground's presencing evolves post-rupture of the Vase Body's seal. "Flickers slightly outwards" then indicates that this cognition or psychic energy begins to become ever so slightly exteriorized as it starts to form libidinal cathexis to the external presences, investing its own energy into exterior forms in patterns of attachment and aversion. Thus its own inner light begins to dim, and this initial slight fissure and exteriorization rapidly proliferates into a full blown alienation. In addition, the term "slightly" (here *Yid Tsam* rather than KGYT's *Yud Tsam*) has a nice play of meanings, since it could literally be translated as the "mere psyche". It is glossed by "in this straying, the intellect dawns with its conceptualizations of concrete identities".

*And thus strays within the dimension of the Ground and the Ground-presencing due to the crucial difference between the Ground and cognition of the Ground:* this terse line is explicated above in Longchenpa's preface to this quotation, with "cognition of the Ground" (*gZhi Shes*; KGYT instead reads *gZhi Zhes*, or "that which is termed the Ground") glossed as "not understanding the nature of the Ground and Ground-presencing", and "distinction" explained as "grasping at the (self-presencing visions) as being other". The distinction between the Ground and the "cognition of the Ground" (see TDD 190,1 as well) is that in the former case there is only a seamless pure source-potential of light energy, while in the latter case (which is post-rupture) the capacity for reflection (who am I?) begins to fragment off from itself as it, in the throes of its mistaken non-recognition of the lights as its own display, begins to elaborate on its perception of itself. This "difference" connotes both the difference between the Ground in itself and the Ground as intellectually grasped/enframed, as well as the difference between this externally manifest psychic energy raised up from the Ground (*gZhi Las Yod Pa'i Shes*) in the evolutionary movement (Ground-presencing) and the originally pure Ground, which is an internally radiant utterly pure source-potential. It also connotes all the other differentiations that are introduced within the purity of the Ground at this time, due to the psychic energy not recognizing the display of lights as its own lighting-up - whereas before there was no "I" nor "other" nor discrete entities at all within the formless One, by virtue of this grasping at the lights as "other", all of the panorama of cyclic existence unfolds. While the Ground itself does not stray and remains primordially and forever pure, the key distinction lies in this psychic energy raised-up from the Ground, which has the capacity and potential for recognition and non-recognition, and thus for self-freedom and self-delusion. This is supported by the glosses of the previous line, which gloss

"Ground" as "the original purity of the essence", and "presencing dimension" as "spontaneous presence".

*Due to this causal impetus of straying you come into contact with conditioning objects, and by virtue of the four conditions' impure objectifications, the radiant clarity-factor involved in this varied presencing is blocked:* see TDD 190,7, where "conditioning" is used in the sense of objects "conditioning" a mirror's surface via appearing therein, just as our awareness acts a mirror for these objects. While awareness (and the mirror) are in fact stainless and remain so, it appears that there is conditioning by virtue of the play of light reflections across their respective surfaces. Initially this dimmed awareness encounters the objective sphere which functions as a necessary condition for its straying (providing the focus for its misapprehension), while subsequently those objects as misperceived and invested with our own neurotic projections serve to condition us further in a mutually reinforcing loop. Finally, it could also be interpreted "you come into contact with the conditions for objects", i.e. in straying the fluid display of lights is contracted into particular objects.

KGYT reads "adulterated" for "blocked". Thus this psychic energy, originally intensely clear and aware, becomes dimmed and obscured in concordance with the dimming of the five lights, in themselves radiantly luminous, into the reduced intensity and dulled materiality of the five elements. The free flow of radiant energy that characterized the Ground's presencing is now gradually constricted and limited into frozen forms construed as independently existing entities. Thus the "blockage" of the radiant clarity-factor (KGYT reads "adulterated" instead) involves our mental clarity becoming obscured, our perception becoming "fuzzy", and the presences themselves dimming into the tangible, impenetrable material elements that we take as "normal".

146. These six types of objects correspond to our fivefold sensory consciousness (visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible materials) and the sixth psychic or mental consciousness (the synthesized mental objects resulting from the discursive processing of the sensory input, as well as memories, fantasies, dreams and so on which lack any external non-mental correlate). In relating to these, our consciousness becomes "poisoned" by five emotional distortions, which sap the spiritual vitality necessary for the possibility of liberation, and in general distort and blunt our physical, verbal and mental faculties so that they are far from their optimal ease of operation, and consequently permeated by suffering and frustration. While in this sextet of emotional distortions both "dimmed awareness" (*Ma Rig Pa*) and "ignorance" (*gTi Mug*) could be roughly translated as "ignorance", Longchenpa points out that while the former is an ontological factor underlying the very possibility of any other emotional distortion since it marks the onset of delusion, the latter is merely one of the many psychological and subsequent factors stemming from the former. Dimmed awareness' non-recognition forms the transcendental conditions for emotional distortions' manifestation, which are merely a transmutation, dimming and twisting of the energy imaged as the five primordial gnoses.

147. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 544,4; Ati1 676,3; also cited by TCD1 321,1; TCD2 47,5). TCD1 gives the quote in its full context as it explains in detail each of the lines quoted here (321-322); TCD2 gives Longchenpa own succinct definition of each following the quote (I refer to these two accounts as TCD1 and TCD2 as given directly below).

(i) *Its root is the ordinary mind's dimmed awareness*: "the delusion of mistaking what is "self" as being "other", which stems from original awareness not recognizing its own self-essence" (TCD2). TCD1 explains it thus:

"...The root dimmed awareness of the mind is what is actually co-emergent (with cognitive activity at this point). Having failed to recognize awareness' primordial gnosis, it strays such that psychic activity sets in which thinks to itself "Do these appearances of primordial gnosis emerge from me (correct *La* to *Las*)? Are these not appearances of me?" In this way, the root dimmed awareness is coemergent with the occurrence of these thoughts, and (this cognitive capacity) strays by force of the intellect beginning to conceptualize "self-identities" (everywhere). The presencing of awareness' primordial gnosis is thus obscured; this is the root dimmed awareness of the ordinary mind..."

(ii) *Its straying or distortion is the dimmed awareness of objects*: "the delusion of not recognizing that the objects which appear to us (or "the presencing sphere") are devoid of any independent existence" (TCD2). My interpretation of TCD1 here is provisional, but it would appear the "wish-fulfilling tree" refers to the Ground-presencing's exteriorization of luminous displays, while the "Body within a Vase" signifies the Ground itself. While the reference below to "tree" would suggest it instead refers to the proto-subject here (and indeed the term would be more evocative along these lines), these lines are supposed to be explaining "objects", and I have based my interpretation on that. Assuming the "tree" does refer to the lights, that which is born from the egg evidently signifies the simultaneous "knowing" or "capacity for consciousness" which emerges with the Ground-presencing, with "warmth" and "moisture" being common attributes of psychic energy (indicating the heat of its high-energy-processes and the fluidity, life-sustaining nature of its operations), as well applying to a physical egg of course. The "Indomitable" (*Mi brJed*) refers to the name of our own particular world system, and connotes cyclic existence forming when the psyche causes "disruption" in the original unity as this "knowing" perceives the "light display", and fails to recognize it:

"...I will now teach the "straying dimmed awareness of objects". As for "straying", it indicates (dimmed awareness) as that which goes astray. As for "objects", before our current world originated, there was the so-called "thriving wish-fulfilling tree". There was this tree manifest from the inspiring blessings of the Buddha's Youthful Body within a Vase, and a birth in warmth and moisture manifest from an egg. Via that, the psyche shook up the so-called "self-emergent primordial gnosis, and our "Indomitable" world originated. That is termed "the straying dimmed awareness of objects"....

(iii) *Its straying-foundation is the dimmed awareness of the Ground*: "the delusion of straying via conditions, such as when we mistake a cairn (i.e. a pyramid shaped heap of rocks) for a person" (TCD2). TCD1 explains this line thus:

"...The foundation of straying emerges via itself through its own impurity. First is the "causal condition", which is the emergence of actual dimmed awareness, i.e. the dimmed awareness which fails to recognize the Ground. From that we have the "referential condition", which is like the straying of the dimmed awareness' of objects (see ii). From that we have the "controlling condition", which is the emergence of an ego-fixation on the "tree" (literally "grasping at the tree as "I"). From that we have the "immediately antecedent condition" - the cognitive capacity having become coarsened, it apprehends with subjective

fixation and clinging, whereby it eventually lapses into coarse emotional distortions. That is termed "the dimmed awareness (of the Ground) which is the foundation of straying".

(iv) *Its grasping and fixation is conceptualizing dimmed awareness*: this is the delusion (like saying "My house") of ignorantly clinging to "selves" or "identities" in various facets (of our experience) even while there continues to be no such concrete "identities" within awareness' essence (TCD2). TCD1 describes this as being the source of immeasurably many constellations of emotional distortions, and identifies it with the six facets of the psyche, which it then discusses at length (see below).

(v) *Its fabrication is the dimmed awareness of the path*: "...fabrication in the manner of a spiritual path is the delusion which transforms the "antidote" into a poison, such that it can no longer grant us freedom" (TCD2). TCD1 explains this line thus:

"...These six facets of the egoic psyche having come together, primordial gnosis' path is obscured. Furthermore, the egoic psyche can't see primordial gnosis nor bestow its clarity, since primordial gnosis is devoid of neurotic reifying, while such flickerings are present within the ordinary psyche. Thus it obscures the path to a Buddha's expansive awakening..."

Thus "fabrication" (*bCos Pa*) refers to way that ordinary psyche reifies and distorts experience, whereby the pathway of primordial gnosis is obscured from our view. "Fabrication" also can imply the whole trend towards feeling one must "correct" something along the meditative path, making things different through strenuous exertion in theory and praxis, rather than just realizing what one has always been in a natural, free flowing state of relaxation. The ultimate is not within the scope of experience of the conventional intellect, and thus this aspect of dimmed awareness clouds our attempt to enter spiritual practice, and obscures our view of our own inner core of luminosity, a nucleus of enlightened bliss.

(vi) *Its non-recognition is the dimmed awareness of delusion*: "...this is the delusion of our perpetually circling through cyclic existence by force of not recognizing the presence of natural radiant light". TCD1 explains this line thus:

"...By not recognizing (the display) as our own self-presencing light, we circle through this again and again, whereby we revolve in cyclic existence. That is the non-recognition that is the dimmed awareness of delusion..."

*Thus a sixfold dimmed awareness emerges, and presences are not seen as your own self-presencing*: TCD1 322,7 explains these final two lines as "by force of this sixfold dimmed awareness manifesting, we don't recognize primordial gnosis' presencing". Longchenpa then says dimmed awareness is the stains that pertain from the initial non-recognition of awareness in the beginning as the light display and awareness self-manifest from the Ground's spontaneous presence, up the end when straying is brought to a state of cessation and such stains are completely eliminated. Thus dimmed awareness as such marks the beginning and end of cyclic existence, though neither its emergence nor eradication in any way marks the end or discontinuity of Buddhahood. While the dynamic spontaneously present movement from within the originally pure emptiness (the Ground-presencing) accounts for the possibility of distortion and freedom, it itself is free of any distortion and continues to pervade all life forms as their inherent core of enlightened energy, while the final eradication of dimmed awareness' stains in the blinding recognition of enlightenment

marks the end of cyclic existence's long epoch, and the simultaneous emergence in full ascendancy of fully self-aware Awakening.

148. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 546,1; Ati1 678,1). TCD1 321,7-322,5 explains these six facets of the psyche in detail as part of its extended quotation from *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness*, and VLDC 333,3-4 has a related explanation of five aspects of the psyche, omitting the first (see details from both accounts in my commentary below).

While this citation merely lists out the names of these six facets of the egoic psyche, in his follow-up comments Longchenpa indicates the manner in which each facet is delusory, though there is a slight problem in corresponding the six names with his descriptions (see below). In my commentary immediately below, I give the text of Longchenpa's definitions along with an explanation of how they relate to names of the six facets of the egoic psyche as provided here in the Tantra.

(i) That which involves the psyche's flickering movements: TCD1 322,2 explicates "the psyche in conjunction with dimmed awareness" as "...The root (of straying) is basically dimmed awareness, which involves the flickering or stirring of the psyche..." In this initial non-recognition, or dimmed awareness, the capacity for reflection deriving from the Ground's compassionate resonance immediately begins to evolve from a mere "cognitive capacity" (*Shes Pa*) into a full blown individual "psyche" (*Yid*) with a developing life-history and an elaborated, particularized world view of its own. Thus this first phase refers to the initial stirrings of the individual proto-psyche as the implications of non-recognition unfold, and which thus is the substratum for all subsequent non-optimal physical and psychic activity. Alternatively, the "psyche" here could be taken to refer to the "cognitive capacity", which while initially indeterminate as to transcendence or cyclic existence, now comes to involve dimmed awareness and hence is transformed as it becomes enmeshed in its dualistic confusions. However, it is significant that the term "psyche" is not usually used in describing the initial capacity for self-reflection that develops in the Ground's presencing (which is typically referred to as a "cognition" (*Shes Pa*) or clear and aware cognitive energy), but rather only is referred to subsequent to non-recognition, as if it denotes the transformation that cognitive energy undergoes under the general conditions of dimming awareness (an exception is TDD 193,1 where it is referred to as "the psyche's cognitive energy" (*Yid Kyi Shes Pa*)). In fact two classic topics of discussion in the Great Perfection Tradition are the differentiation of "mind" (*Sems*) from "primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*), and the distorting "psyche" (*Yid*) from holistic "insight" (*Shes Rab*), with the two members of each dyad being the respectively non-optimal derivative (mind, psyche) and optimal source (primordial gnosis, insight) forms of the same energy. In particular the "psyche" and "insight" both revolve around the awareness of "objects", but the latter is devoid of the distorting conceptuality (*rTog Pa*) that characterizes the former (see ZMYT1 456,3ff).

In general there is said to be two types of dimmed awareness, obscured and unobscured: the obscured aspect is that which pervades all mental states in ordinary non-optimal psychic life, while the unobscured aspect is itself an emotional distortion while as yet unadulterated with the other emotional distortions. It is the second aspect that pertains here, as there is only this basic lack of recognition and consequence dimming of optimal light-energy by itself, without the other emotional attachments of attachment (desire) and aversion (hatred). Here there is just this basic confusion as to "self" and "other" (dimmed awareness) marked by the initial stirrings of the psyche's reflection on the dilemma this presents itself with, which, while acting as the root of all other aspects of the psyche and the proliferation of emotional

distortions, is at this basic level only this bare orientation towards dualism, without involving all the ensuing distortions as such.

(ii) *Cognitive self-awareness*: "Psychic consciousness" (*Yid Kyi rNam Par Shes Pa*) generally denotes the mental functioning which processes the fivefold sensorial input, synthesizing their non-conceptual sensory input, categorizing and "enframing" them, as well as being involved in the experience of purely mental images, such as dreams, fantasies, and the like. In addition it can refer to introspection, the capacity of consciousness to reflect upon itself and thus become self-consciousness, aware of itself as a distinct agent in the world, which Longchenpa indicates by describing it as "self-aware via one's knowing (of oneself)". VLDC, 333,3 says "The psychic consciousness is classified as that which experiences its own individual awareness" - not only is one aware of objects through cognitive activity or "knowing", but in these experiences of the objective sphere there is also an accompanying awareness of yourself as a self in the act of seeing. Thus out of the initial drop in awareness in the view of the lack of recognition of the luminous presences, the cognitive energy (now becoming a "psyche") becomes aware of its own presence, as its capacity for reflection is turned back on to itself.

As TCD1 322,2 points out "...As for the psychic consciousness, by virtue of objects being apprehended with the cognition which thinks "(this) pertains to me", there is apprehension and fixation in terms of I and self, and thus (the psyche) comes under the sway of emotional distortions - for these reasons it is called the "psychic consciousness"..." Because this self-reflection or awareness of itself as a distinct self leads directly into the relating of all else to itself as a self ("I" want this, "I" don't like this, etc.), it is the base of all other emotional distortions. Also here is the identification of the body or mind (an object of one's knowing) as one's self-identity, thinking, "this is me", and thus clinging to this identification despite the undeniable evidence to the contrary (constant flux, and death whereby one is separated from one's physical body and coarse mind). Thus while all sensory consciousness involves psychic energy oriented towards the external world, the "psychic consciousness" is psychic energy turned inwards, roving over the interior landscape of images, manipulated by the dream of an isolated self-identity.

(iii) *The apprehension of objects*: "the constantly searching psyche" (literally "the psyche in its searching all over") should correspond to this third description, but in fact TCD describes the "constantly searching psyche" after the "systematizing psyche", thus reversing the initial sequence (which would suggest correlating the "apprehension of objects" and the "apprehension of objects in a determinate fashion" with the systematizing psyche, and correlating "distraction" to the searching psyche). However I have chosen to interpret the sequence as first given, though the sequence in TCD also yields a slightly different though no less valid interpretation (TCD's comments suggest that phenomenologically "systematizing psyche" precedes "searching psyche", but VLDC clearly indicates the reverse). TCD1 322,3 explains the former thus: "...As for the "searching psyche", having fallen under the sway of objects, all the subtle emotional distortions are gathered-in as (the psyche's) companion...", while VLDC 333,3 explicates it as "via the searching psyche, a variety of objects emerge". Thus it is this aspect of the psyche which, now aware of itself as a "self" against the backdrop of dimming awareness, orients itself out towards the variegated external presences, "seeking" to find its way through the world as an agent and thereby investing its energy in an intricate web of relationships with external objects and beings. As it thus turns towards the external world and forms libidinal cathexis granting its autonomy over to the entities it believes to exist there, the other emotional distortions (desire, anger, envy, and so on) now begin to

permeate the psyche as its constant companions, while the original "dimmed awareness" continues to preside as the general field or basis within which all the other distortions sprout. These emotional distortions emerge in relationship to objects in patterns of attachment and aversion, as while initially the external display was simply experienced as present, now particular aspects of it are focused on in relationship to the psyche itself - those seen as good are desired, those seen as undesirable are disliked, while those it is indifferent to, it remains ignorant or barely aware of. In this way this appropriation or seeking out of objects leads ineluctably to the generation of emotional distortions (once fallen under the spell of the Other as other, the self must relate), and one works his/her way through the contradiction of one's alienation (feeling alone but desiring unity) by the manipulation of the other, and projection of an essentially psychic dilemma out onto the lines of the world.

*(iv) The apprehension of objects in determinate fashion and distracted involvement with objects:* since Longchenpa gives seven definitions here, it is not perfectly clear how to correlate them with the six aspects of the psyche, yet it seems reasonable to assume that these two can be assimilated together to the "systematizing psyche". TCD1 322,3 defines it as "...The systematizing psyche apprehends and clings (to objects) with the thought "This object is my object", and thus attachment develops - thus is termed the "systematizing psyche"..." VLDC 333,3 says "via the systematizing psyche, objects are systematized". Not only has the psyche fallen under the control or spell of the external objects with the concomitant emergence of emotional distortions in relating to them, it now actively enframes and lays claim to the objects it perceives, and thus the emotional distortions of attachment, aversion and so on now go into full swing as the psyche is whole heartedly distracted and given over to the external world which becomes its obsession.

Thus "the apprehension of objects in determinate fashion" indicates that now once they have been initially subjectively appropriated, objects are taken hold of in determinate ways both conceptually (it's like this; it's white, it's an animal etc.) and emotionally (it's hateful, it's my house) as a sense of "ownership" develops, linking the sense of "I" in the "psychic consciousness" with the emergence of a variegated objective world in the "searching psyche" phase, against the general backdrop of the dimmed awareness' confused identity. Distraction towards the objects then is that, as a consequence of this "ownership" and "enframing" of the object with valuations, one becomes increasingly oriented towards the objective realm, frantically trying to acquire new objects and guard ones already possessed as the images of love and hate assume overwhelming importance.

*(v) The coarseness of emotional distortions:* now that the psyche is immersed within the beings and objects around it, its swelter of emotional distortions drive it to commit coarse actions of violence and selfishness as the personal need to survive comes to dominate all else. Thus one is immersed in physical, verbal, and mental negative actions that further mire one in cyclic existence, forming an endless and self-sustaining karmic loop of ignorance. TCD1, 322,4 explains as "...The psyche of coarse dimensions performs many actions of murder, damaging religious commitments, (and so forth) via its coarse emotional distortions..." Thus from the emergence of ownership, a sense of the concrete self and the objects that belong to it, all types of coarse, emotionally distorted actions are taken up, as one emerges as a distinct actor, dreaming oneself into a variety of roles on the stage of life, and creating the "sound and fury" of the long nightmare of history. VLDC 333,4 says "the emotionally distorted ego clings with the base of karma and its imprints, whereby you are led down into the three realms (of cyclic existence)".



*Subjectively and obsessively holding (to your judgments)*: literally, "internally and one pointedly apprehend and fixate", this signifies the psyche beginning to fixate on things one dimensionally, and thought patterns becoming habitual and rigid, such that all fluidity dissipates as ingrained prejudices, and biased judgments and classifications become frozen and fixed in place. TCD1 322,4 says "...As for the classifying psyche, the reflection on those appearances as "they are mine" and the reflection "they are others" is the classifying psyche'..." , while VLDC explains "via the classifying psyche, the dimensions of the individual appearances are apprehended, and clung to". Thus the boundaries of self and other are now firmly set in place, and our normally concrete and substantial appearing world takes solid form, while the fantasies we dream now seem as real as the solid ground and rock of the material world. You become fixated on all your various schemes and biases to the exclusion of all else, shutting down the play of light and meaning in a false sense of closure designed to hide you from the truth.

Tulku Thondup in *Buddha Mind* 209 translates this sixth aspect as "the thought of contemplation", evidently mistaking "one pointedly apprehending internally" as referring to meditative concentration (which it often does signify). However TCD clearly shows this is an inappropriate identification, as it instead "*Nges Par 'Jog*" should be understood as "judging", "labeling", or "classifying" the various phenomena as the various world views become fixed in place to the last details, and caught up or fixated within these perceptions you become insensitive to even the conventional reality and presence of things and other people. Thus rather than referring to "internal concentration" in meditation, it primarily (and somewhat idiosyncratically in such a context) signifies this obsessive fixation on one's own subjective opinions and judgments to the exclusion of all other possibilities, and the concomitant narcissistic and egotistic tendencies - wrapped up in one's own internal "framing" and "packaging" of experience, one become dulled and insensitive to that which actually presents itself, and thus the capacity for flexible and aware responsiveness slips away.

149. "Common" refers to the Ground-presencing (see the first chapter's discussion of the "common site"), which is the basis from which two gateways open leading to both cyclic existence and transcendence, while the Ground-presencing's spontaneous presence itself is indeterminate as to which path will be taken. In the present context, its aspect as the "ground of straying" rather than its role as the "ground of freedom" is the subject of discussion. Thus it can be understood as the "common site" (i.e. Ground-presencing) manifesting as the foundation of straying, i.e. under the conditions of non-recognition it begins to move into cyclic existence (while in the eventuality of recognition, it can also actively manifest as the foundation of freedom). With this dimmed awareness, the factor of desiring objects begins to stir so that the "knowable" (the seamless light-presences that envelop our awareness primordially) itself know appears (to us) as stained with our own projections.

150. Thus while originally the Ground's presencing was "sealed up" within the Ground's pure potential, following the Youthful Vase Body's encasing seal being rent open it flows forth freely in a resplendent display of light, only to again (in the wake of straying) be obscured and enveloped by the mind's "seal" or "snare" (*rGya*) such that once again its subsides into latency (accompanied by our luminous body becoming obscured by the appropriation of coarse material atoms, such that its luminosity ebbs into a latent state within the heart). Thus the Ground's presencing is dormant both within the primordial Ground and the state of cyclic existence, though in the former it is the formless pure potential of the One

that shrouds it from the full light of day, while in the latter it is coarse physicality and mentality that obscures its luminous purity. The task of the visionary is to coax it forth from latency in the depths of one's own heart, and thus unfold the transcendent visions into direct immediate manifestation, whereupon the Ground-presencing spirals back into the formless source-potential of the Ground in full consciousness of its movement. Because this return is marked by a full self-knowledge and self-recognition (unlike the primordial Ground in itself), the state of Buddhahood is marked by a continuing interplay between the pure potential of the source and the dynamic manifestation of the Ground's presencing, divested of any possibility of forgetting in self-delusion.

151. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 344,5; Ati2 473,2; previously cited by TDD 182,5).

Since the six facets of the psyche unceasingly grasp and fixate, the Reality Body itself is fettered as well by its dualistic grasping at objects: "Reality Body" is glossed by "its penetrating freedom devoid of obstruction (*Zang Thal*) doesn't arise in the psyche's continuum", while I have translated "grasping" as "dualistic grasping at objects" in accordance with NGB's gloss "apprehended objects arise".

Since it becomes involved with partless atomic particles, radiant light itself comes to be dormant: "partless atomic particles" is glossed by "the stains of the elemental energies", indicating this refers to coarse materiality which devolves from the pure free flow of light, while "radiant light" is glossed such as to indicate it refers to the rainbow-colored light. "Comes to be dormant" (*Bag La Chags*) is the same term elsewhere translated as "karmic imprints", which normally refers to the variety of traces left by previous physical, verbal and mental actions upon the depths of our psyche, and which propel us into the same propensities and habits over and over. Here it is used in its literal sense of "settling into latency" ("*Bag*" could also be rendered as "constraint", or "containment"), as radiant light withdraws into the background and the frozen forms of elemental materiality comes to the fore.

152. Thus awareness (in the flickering and spreading outwards of this agent of straying) is fettered within the duality of subjectivity and objectivity: this could also be translated as "the awareness of this stirring and spreading outwards", with "stirring" referring mainly to the uncertain flickerings of this cognitive energy. TDD 193,1 clearly indicates that, strictly speaking, awareness shouldn't be equated to this cognitive energy, since in fact it is awareness' "dynamism" or derivative. Thus the "cognition of the Ground", as distinct from awareness in itself, should be identified as the "agent of straying" proper.

153. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 119,2; Ati1 142,6). The straying takes place, of course, within the Ground-presencing, though the Ground remains present in, and as, the background. While remaining it itself utterly pure, the Ground is "polluted" in that the emergent cognitive capacity begins to discursively reflect upon it, and apply its distorting frames despite their inevitable failure to "capture" the subject in question (which is not subject at all). This inexorably leads to grasping at static objects and things, and emotionally distorted relationships to entitativized sensory perception. Thus the process of straying is here being imaged after an act of perception, which classical Buddhist epistemology analyzes into the triad of consciousness, sensory faculty and object, while "revolving process" indicates this enters a self-sustaining perpetual loop termed "cyclic existence". In fact straying is itself a question of "perception", with the Ground's capacity for self-reflection perceiving its own capacity for self-exteriorization and yet failing to recognize it as such, whereby its perception at every level begins to systematically and actively distort that which it perceives.

Straying's conditional basis is the objective sphere, and with the apprehension factor, there is an individualizing differentiation of their respective boundaries, and thus there is the referential basis for the non-recognition of the One: "the factor of apprehension" (*gZung Cha*); "apprehended factors", i.e. discrete epistemological objects) refers to "apprehended objects" (*gZung Yul*), and as such contrasts with the "objective sphere" (*Yul*). While the "objective sphere" is merely the undifferentiated presence of light exterior to us, "apprehension" indicates our active perceptual and conceptual manipulation/contraction of this presence into discrete objects enframed in diverse ways. Thus "apprehended objects" connotes the dualistic framework of subject and object, a fragmented complex of noema and noesis. In other words, in this context *Yul* merely implies the possibility of this realm or sphere of light displays being an object for cognitive processes (while in itself still seamless light energy holistically related to the proto-observer, devoid of the delimitation of rigidified boundaries), whereas "apprehension" indicates that this possibility has been actualized, and against the backdrop of a dichotomous fragmentation into subjective and objective poles set against each other, a variety of individual "things" and "selves" are being abstracted out, materialized, and reified. While *Yul* in other texts normally means simply "objects", it also is often used as "sphere" or "region", and in our present text it oscillates between an proto-objective pole or radiant sphere of a fluid reality (its "key point" is no other than "space"), and narrowly delimited and concretized "objects" extracted out from that fluidity. TCD1 318,2 in a similar context has *Yul* as "light-presencing" (*'Od sNang*), which are then made into dualistic appearances (*gNyis sNang*) by the intellect; *The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction* (Ati 78,3) has "the luminous objective sphere" (*'Od Kyi Yul*) glosses as "expanse". Thus "individualizing differentiation of their respective boundaries" refers to the fragmentation into "objects" and "subjects", as various discrete objects are extracted out and imputed from within the fluidity of the luminous expanse, delimiting and reducing that display to an particular objects of our ordinary perception. "The One" then refers to "the Ground's singularity", indicating the undivided, undifferentiated nature of the Ground-Universe which is no-thing yet, devoid of the fragmentations and opposition of "self" vs. "other", the "one" juxtaposed against dualistic perceptions of "subject" and object.

The Ground cannot be differentiated anywhere at all, and involves no determinability, yet this straying emerges through its suppression: NGB and Ati read "yet this straying emerges from within its "mere" (*Tsam*) indeterminacy" rather than TDD's "involves no determinability, yet this straying emerges through its suppression (*bCom*). Thus whereas the latter indicates that straying emerges via the Ground's total lack of differentiation and determinability being "suppressed" as consciousness begins to create all sorts of differentiation and determinacy, the former reading would indicate that it is precisely this indeterminacy in the Ground that allows for the emergence of straying, as it is not pre-determined as any one thing or track (this reading can also be interpreted as meaning that the "Ground" is nothing "other than total undifferentiation and indeterminacy"). At any rate, with Longchenpa's reading "indeterminacy" means that there is no differentiating, judging cognitive activity, and thus neither of its dualistic interpretative scheme (as cyclic existence and transcendent reality respectively). When this dimension of indeterminacy is adventitiously suppressed, dimmed awareness enters from the suppression of the undivided with its mistake of reducing its experience into some-thing that it can analyze and specify. With this flow of differentiation, there comes total disruption and plurality as the panorama of cyclic existence and transcendent reality now comes into full view.

The psychic energy in question is the subjective apprehension in their flickering, subsiding, and spreading outwards: "psychic energy" refers to the emergent cognitive capacity which discursively processes the Ground, which is highly unstable in its subjectivity which introduces an egological dimension to the entire process. In its alternately flickering, subsiding, and spreading outwards, the original unity is disturbed, and this is felt as a pollution that this proto-consciousness projects outwards (believing the Ground itself to be stained). This line can also connote that in this consciousness' experience of the light-display, it believes that the Ground itself is stirring, dissolving, and spreading with the light - the pollution is both that our own apprehension or experience is stained, and that its distortions result in our perceiving what presences to us ("the knowable") as stained. Thus we fetter ourselves with our artificial limitations, judgments and assumptions that we believe or perceive about the fluid ever-changing display, becoming enframed beings fettered by our own chains - believing the knowable to be stained, we fragmentize and materialize it further, and thus in turn these self-distorted appearances return to haunt us, conditioning us and fettering us in a self-reinforcing loop. We could also render this line as "our own inner being is fettered by "objects of knowledge", with "objects of knowledge" indicating all these enframed particulars that we reify, and become obsessed with, while the Ground itself is precisely that which is not "an object of knowledge" in this sense, though this is not to say that we cannot have an experience of it beyond such "epistemological" ways of knowing.

Though in fact it is not that which can be apprehended, you become tightly bound to cyclic existence by clinging to the veracity of it all: literally "you are tightly bound by the truth", this refers to believing your own representations and artificially contrived constructions as somehow being independently, ontologically verifiable "facts" with some type of real truth status independent of context. Though we introduce all these differentiations in an evolving perception of a world of discrete "things", in fact the Ground and Ground-presencing are not "things" which can be apprehended as such, nothing that can be taken hold of as something. Being is not a being which can be enframed, or taken hold of as a thing, but now we take it as a correlate to the egoic subjective form we take ourselves to embody; clinging to our little perspectives and reified objects as the final truth, and thus becoming ever more tightly bound to the neurotic worlds of cyclic existence, we become full immersed in our obsessive self-asserting and self-negating attempts to destroy, or unify with, that which is other, anything to avoid the threatening isolation our fantasies have brought us to. In summation, there is the Ground which is nothing and about which we can say nothing, and then in its holistic presencing there comes to be this apprehension in an emergent cognitive capacity, which introduces displacement with its belief that the Ground is something that is stirring, identifying it with its own stirring, fading, and spreading forth. This misplaced concreteness then develops into full blown obscuration, such that the seamless event is turned into "objects of knowledge" which thus catch or trap our own being, like a silk worm caught in its own excrement.

154. The corresponding discussion is found on TCD1 318,1-320,7

155. The "non-existent" refers to the dichotomy between self and other, and the concretely existing individual self-identities ascribed to one's own psyche and external "things", which in actuality have been erroneously abstracted out (literally "materialized") from a seamless flow of empty light-energy devoid of such fragmentations, whereby we render "absence into presence", and see the non-existent as existent. However, in non-recognition we grant autonomy to these figments of our imagination, and thus the psychic energy encapsulated in

that belief eventually "materializes" into a corresponding corporeal world of alienation, fissured by the distances between self and other.

156. I have interpreted "fundamentally non-distorted" or "non-straying" as referring to the Ground's original purity which continues to be the final reality of both the proto-consciousness and light display. By the proto-consciousness' lack of awareness of this dimension within itself and the lights (the nucleus of indestructible empty luminosity at its core linking it to the Universe's own fundamental empty luminosity), it begins to reify everything, and thus descends into straying. This empty luminosity or radiant light of awareness is unstained by all the turbulence of straying and materialization, and thus is primordially present (and accessible as such within our own hearts) as the undistorted dimension devoid of any of the implications of straying, like the radiant sun obscured, but essentially in itself unaffected, by a lingering bank of clouds.

However, TCD1 318,1-2 describes this first type of dimmed awareness in such a way that would seem to indicate interpreting "fundamentally non-distorted" as referring to the first phase of proto-dimmed awareness, the term's significance deriving from this phase not involving any active coarse distortion:

"...While termed "basically non-straying" since dualistic perceptions don't develop apart from a simple non-awareness of its own self-nature, it then goes astray, and just like the nameless becomes named it is termed the "catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity..."

Here Longchenpa indicates that the initial phase in this process is merely the proto-consciousness' failure to actively recognize the light display as its own self-presencing, while in fact still "non-straying" or "non-distorted" in that it is as yet devoid of any active distortion or dualistic beliefs (as well as being primordially pure, despite its non-recognition of that). One possible line of interpretation is that in the initial instant of the Ground-presencing, there is an indeterminate aware-ing (the initial clear and aware cognitive energy) that is a "single identity" from which both the optimal awareness of the Totally Positive One or the stepped down "dimmed awareness" of sentient beings may ensue (the former with self-recognition, and the latter with self-non-recognition). It is possible that Longchenpa's intention here is that this initial flash of aware-ing is, in retrospect, labeled as the first phase of "dimmed awareness" should it fail to self-recognize itself, though in fact this phase also could have (and does) move directly into fully enlightened optimal awareness ("the freedom of the Totally Positive One") without passing through any intermediary of dimmed awareness. Since this instant of aware-ing had the indeterminate potential to move in either direction, in the eventuality it moved towards straying it is retroactively termed "the dimmed awareness of the single identity" to emphasize how at this phase both possibilities ("mature awareness" and "dimmed awareness") are enfolded in a "single identity", i.e. this indeterminate cognitive energy, the flash of aware-ing which is the Universe's emergent capacity to know itself. While in the alternative route of freedom, it can be retrospectively seen that this flash of aware-ing recognized itself, in the mode of straying it is retrospectively seen that this flash of aware-ing failed to recognize itself, though aside from this mere non-recognition no actively dualistic and manipulative perceptions were operative. In this way, this initial phase of "aware-ing" (which in the eventuality of non-recognition is termed "the dimmed awareness of the single identity") is itself "fundamentally non-distorted" as such, despite its capacity for "recognition" or "non-recognition" that leads directly into either liberation or straying as its next phase. Thus this "nameless" phase (neither "liberated" nor "distorted") in its next

instantaneous phase "determines" itself via its recognition or non-recognition, and thus becomes the "named" as it is retrospectively seen as the source of "straying". This also would reveal the significance of "catalyst", since this phase of indeterminate awareness (or more accurately, awareness' dynamism as a clear and aware cognitive energy) unfragmented into either cyclic existence or transcendence would be the causal impetus of both cyclic existence and transcendence (depending on which pathway it follows in the second instant). Since in the case of proceeding down the path of non-recognition, we can see that this moment was not fully optimized awareness, we retroactively call it "not awareness" (*Ma Rig Pa*), despite its not being the fully characterized dimmed awareness immersed in dualism (and in fact it never becomes at any point other than a facet of awareness. This interpretation could be further supported by interpreting TCD's first line above as "within this mere factor of non-self-awareness (we can distinguish the following phases): that which is basically non-straying (i.e. the indeterminate phase of mere awareness) goes astray, and thus is (retroactively) labeled "the catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity", just as the "nameless" become named..."

The use of "nameless" becoming named is found in the Abhidharma Kośa (see Poussin's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*), where the first of our five psycho-physical components is termed "form", though in fact it includes sound, scents, and so forth as well as visible form. Thus in this usage "form" is a general term, while each of its internal divisions then has their own specific name ("sound", "scent", etc.). However "form" (as an internal division meaning "visible form") doesn't have its own name aside from the general name of this classification, and thus in this context the general name "form" becomes a specific name "form" signifying one of its internal divisions. In a similar context to our present passage, KGNT1 430,2 also uses this phrase to indicate that all factors of our existence are the dynamism of primordial gnosis in actuality, and as such without any separate reality or name ("nameless"), but in our erroneous perception we grasp at them as pluralized, discrete factors, and thus given them separate status (and names) from primordial gnosis (such that the formerly (or actually) nameless becomes named). In a similar fashion, here the first phase (as well as all subsequent phases) of dimmed awareness is in fact the same as awareness, but we grasp at plurality and differentiation, and hence what is actually not other than awareness (the "nameless") we now term "dimmed awareness" (the named), and say it is strictly other (like tearing apart two sides of a single hand). While in this context we take awareness' dynamism (as such subsumed within awareness) and call it "not-awareness", and thus proceed into the alienation of proliferating names in our ignorance of our true home (reality) and identity (awareness' natural dynamism), should, on the other hand, we recognize it, we return home in full awareness of our status, and are free with the riches of that home available to us in their entirety.

Thus this initial subtle "non-awareness" failure to actively recognize the self-presencing as self inexorably leads into the coarser dimensions of straying and its conceptual and linguistic proliferation (it has passed "the point of no return"), and hence we term it "straying", and give this moment a name in accordance with its failure to gain full awareness - "the dimmed awareness of the single identity". While in fact there is only non-distorted awareness (which itself was not named as such prior to this rupture), with this non-recognition, and our analytical description of it, we introduce names to make sense of the universe perceived under the conditions of non-recognition of its singularity - "awareness" must be accompanied by its opposite, "non-awareness", just as "non-distorted" only makes sense in conjunction with its opposite, "distortion" or "straying", while in fact the latter terms in each opposition are totally derivative of, and reliant upon, the former terms (our body/mind is in fact purely

gnostic light-energy, but in our failure to recognize it as such, that nameless singularity is split up into a wild diversity of names - "the material elements", "emotional distortions", and so forth). While often this term "the nameless becomes the named" indicates that saying something is "nameless" itself becomes a name (i.e. that thing is now named "nameless"), in our present context it appears to instead to indicate how the holistic process devoid of fragmentizing names and oppositions ("the nameless") now is differentiated into a network of oppositions with corresponding labels ("the named") - see VNT3-"Pa" 5,3-63 and KGNT1 430,2-4. Since this cognitive energy in the wake of its non-recognition becomes a discernible self-interpreted and self-labeled "system" in itself with markedly different characteristics than its alternate possibility (of recognition), it is given a distinct name ("straying"), a name which is rapidly appropriated in fact. In this way, the seamless reality that was formerly devoid of names and their differentiations, now becomes "named" and this initial separation into "awareness" vs. "dimmed awareness" quickly fissures into a vast network of oppositions as this cognitive energy begins to reflect on the implications of its non-recognition with a wide range of speculations and imputations. However, "single identity" points back to the singular sameness which primordially characterizes the Universe, and as such always already underlies, and undercuts, all linguistic and conceptual differentiation.

In line with this interpretation, Khanpo Jikphun would often verbally define "dimmed awareness of the single identity" as "the factor of the Ground-presencing raised up from the Ground" (*gZhi Las gZhi sNang 'Phags Pa'i Cha*), and "coemergent dimmed awareness" as "the factor of non-self-recognition" (*Rang Ngo Ma Shes Pa'i Cha*), implying that the former should be identified with the "clear and aware cognitive energy" (deriving from awareness' dynamism) that arises together with the Ground-presencing in its first instant. As such, it is as yet indeterminate as to a definite non-recognition of the self-presencing lights - it is simply present there, without any definite fragmentation between cyclic existence and transcendental reality, subject and object. This leads to a natural question as to how the Totally Positive One (the Buddha who is self-awakened right in this first instant of the Ground-presencing) fits into this: does this cognitive energy first arise, following which there is either immediate self-recognition and hence freedom, or the absence of such self-recognition and hence followed by the development of an active non-recognition (with these two phases of "passive" and "active" non-recognition corresponding to the dimmed awareness of self-identity and coemergent dimmed awareness respectively)? In this interpretation, there would be an instant of purely indeterminate awareness, followed by a splitting off of two paths - the path of the Totally Positive One's recognition, and the path into cyclic existence. The two initial phases of that second path then would be the initial failure to follow the Totally Positive One's path (i.e. "not recognizing the self-presencing" as purely the absence of the positive factor of recognition), while the second phase would be its becoming an active non-recognition, i.e. the presence of the actual negative factor thinking "it is not self". In that the first phase marks us off from the Totally Positive One and propels us inexorably towards full blown cyclic existence, it is labeled the "catalyst".

However, Khanpo Jikphun's description in ZLZN (13b 1ff) indicates that in the first instant the totally Positive One attains realization, which in the second instant that realization results in a process of "internal dissolution" (see end of TDD's first chapter for a description), so that he never experiences dimmed awareness for even an instant (18ff). In contrast to this, sentient beings fail to recognize in the first instant, and then in the second instant the implications of that non-recognition unfold. He clearly denies the presence of an initial "mere awareness" (*Rig Pa Tsam*) where there is the mere possibility of dimmed awareness in

the first instant, yet in itself totally indeterminate as to recognition or non-recognition (and as such applying to both the proto-Totally Positive One and proto-sentient beings), which in the second instant is eliminated as a possibility (Totally Positive One) or becomes actualized (sentient beings - see 21a 5, etc.). Correspondingly, he denies the presence of any phase of the Ground-presencing which is "uninterpreted" as either cyclic existence or transcendence, which is a natural consequence of there being no indeterminate proto-subject who might experience such an indeterminate Ground-presencing. Thus in his interpretation, right at the very start there is a differentiation between these two paths, and thus in saying that "the dimmed awareness of the single identity" is "the factor of the Ground-presencing raised up from the Ground", it must be understood that implicitly this is only "in the case of straying", since in the case of enlightenment "the factor of the Ground-presencing raised up from the Ground" would be awareness which instantaneously self-recognizes itself (and hence would not be suitable to correlate to "dimmed awareness" of any type", nor would it be possible for it to move into any phase of dimmed awareness).

Thus, with the initial emergence of the Ground-presencing from within the formless Ground, there isn't the slightest pause between its emergence and its self-interpretation (i.e. self-recognition and self-non-recognition) of itself. The significance of this would appear to be to emphasize how intrinsic "intelligence" is to the Universe, since in this transition phase its inherent intelligence ("awareness") instantaneously activates without the slightest delay, such that there is not even the slightest moment when a mere intelligence is present without any activity as such (i.e. "mere awareness without recognition or non-recognition"). In this very first instant of the Universe "post Big Bang", there is either a flash of instantaneous self-recognition (and thus self-enlightenment such that the Universe becomes a self-conscious "transcendent reality"), or a moment of stupor and non-recognition (thus leading into the Universe as a self-forgotten, fragmented whirlpool of cyclic existences) - there is nothing in between, and not even the merest of instants for a discursive decision to be made. Thus this interpretation also emphasizes that "recognition" is not a matter of discursive, logical intellection, since in the absence of any time gap where such intellection could take place, it can only be direct, non-conceptual intuition or insight that can result in the Totally Positive One's self-recognition. Finally, it appears that Khanpo Jikphun is primarily concerned with the Ground-presencing itself, such that the status of awareness is a natural consequence of his position on the Ground-presencing. In other words, he wants to say that though the Ground-presencing is itself indeterminate as to cyclic existence or transcendence (i.e. it can be either, and as such is not a priori restricted to either exclusively), this does not entail that it is some third "monistic" phenomenon beyond both of these, which exists for a moment as such prior to being "interpreted" as either cyclic existence or transcendence (14b 4). Though it is liable or "amenable" to either possibility of freedom or straying, in fact we always find awareness as one or the other, i.e. "self-recognized" or "self-non-recognized", and consequently the Ground-presencing (together with which it forms an indivisible "system") is always already "interpreted" as either cyclic existence (non-self-recognized) or transcendent reality (self-recognized). A plain example to bring this home is that we can easily imagine an individual whom we may not be able to evaluate as "possessing vows" or "not possessing vows" (s/he could be either), yet it would be self-evident absurdity to then speak of that individual as "neither possessing vows nor not possessing vows". This reasoning is based on simple logic, in that it makes no sense to speak of it as being "neither" of two opposites, following which we ascribe one of the two to it - if the opposition has any sense at all, one of the two terms must apply at the beginning (i.e. how can we say awareness is "recognized" or "non-recognized" - if it doesn't have recognition, then it follows that it is non-recognized!). Khanpo's intention here seems to be to block any attempt to treat the Ground-presencing as a



"thing" separate from awareness, which would be outside of our interpretative structures (as cyclic existence or transcendent reality) as some type of unknowable thing-in-itself, and thus reduce it to the status of a "thing" that perhaps we can know by extending our conceptual analysis one step further to this phase that precedes the split into cyclic existence or transcendent reality. Instead of this, Khanpo appears to be saying that in this "event" of the Ground-presencing, there is only "our" interpretations, and so to linguistically speak of some indeterminate "thing" outside those interpretations with an absolute ontological status (as a thing with discrete characteristics) isn't viable. The Ground is totally impervious to such interpretations, but is also no-thing totally beyond any referential framework; the Ground-presencing, on the other hand, is right from the start a self-organizing, and self-interpreting system that has no existence outside of its own self-interpretation of itself. Finally (14b,6), Khanpo explains many of these passages (which seem to suggest the Ground-presencing is such an indeterminate thing) as referring to how the Ground-presencing is a "self-presencing" like a dream, and thus totally devoid of any "other-presencing" cyclic existence or transcendent reality. Just as in a dream we may think a dreamed home is a "many roomed palace", while in terms of extraneous considerations (i.e. from other people's perspectives outside of our own personal dream-world, or some type of "real" status) it makes no sense to say it is such a palace or isn't such a palace, since it has no status as such in that "extrinsic" world, our interpretations have no independent, ontological status outside of our own frame of dream-reference - "we" dream it as so, and thus it is so to our experience ("self-presencing"), as the Ground-presencing's self-interpretation takes form in many ways without ever being some one way in itself independent of its self-perception of itself. Thus again we return to the intrinsic intelligence of the Universe, as Khanpo firmly rejects any feeling that somehow there is a state of affairs, i.e. a circumscribable way things really are, which is independent of a cognitive interpretation of it as being so - the Universe is itself always already intelligent down to its very core as it is unceasingly interpreting itself at every level and dimension, such that it *is* something or some way only because *it thinks itself* to be so. A more resolute rejection of the materialist interpretation of the Universe would be hard to imagine.

As for the meaning of "single identity", Khanpo Jikphun suggested it signifies that at this point dimmed awareness is the only factor present, without any of the differentiation into a variety of mental states, emotional distortions and so forth - there is only this single cognitive energy or capacity for self-reflection, only this "single identity". In the "real" dimmed awareness, then, all the "mental factors" in their full plurality accompany the mind, such that there is an active, manipulative dualistic perception with a wide array of styles of "enframing" objects. One of his students suggested "single identity" connotes that at this point there has been no split between subject and object (this cognitive energy is not fragmented off from the objective sphere), and thus there is still a "single identity" or holism that pertains at this point without dualistic fragmentation. Thus it can also connote a "solipsistic" presence at this point, just this unfragmented capacity for reflection which has neither made the "differentiation" and recognized the true nature of the universe, nor made the conceptual false differentiations of subject and object - it is only aware of itself without any concrete identification of the external lights as self-presencing or other-presencing (though by virtue of the absence of the former, it will move inexorably into the latter, as the former only derives from non-conceptual insight, not discursive speculation).

This line of interpretation doesn't necessarily contradict explaining "the dimmed awareness of the single identity" as referring to dimmed awareness being of a single "identity" or "essence" (Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche said the term "dimmed awareness of the single

essence" (*Ngo Bo gCig Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*) was synonymous), which is the basis for the second and third phases/aspects of dimmed awareness. Rather than interpreting this as referring to a phase in the Ground-presencing, it can be taken as referring to prior to the Ground-presencing, where neither "awareness" nor "dimmed awareness" is present as such - both emerge at the Ground-presencing's inception, as if recognized it manifests as the Totally Positive One, and if not recognized manifests as sentient beings. Thus ultimately awareness and dimmed awareness are of the same nature, with the difference being simply in terms of being understood, and not understood.

Obviously the key question here is whether the Totally Positive One can be said to experience this phase of "dimmed awareness of a single identity", even though in his case it wouldn't be experienced (i.e. the above mentioned interpretation of this "single identity" as referring to the first moment of an indeterminate awareness being elevated from the Ground, from which the two paths of recognition and non-recognition fork out). One may criticize Khanpo Jikphun's position by pointing to such passages as TCD1 311,7, which describes the Totally Positive One's freedom as entailing "clearing away" (*Sangs*) dimmed awareness and emotional distortions, and "conquering" (*bCom*) obscurations, and might be taken as suggesting just such an "indeterminate awareness" preceding the Totally Positive One's enlightenment. However, this can be easily interpreted as referring to "dispersing" the looming possibility of dimmed awareness if the critical "differentiation" (*Bye Brag Phyed*) of recognition hadn't been made, while the "dimmed awareness of single identity" can then be taken as referring to this first instant of aware-ing manifesting in the absence such "differentiation", i.e. awareness as elevated from the Ground and not instantaneously freed as the Totally Positive One (see ZLZN 20b-21a for its analysis of the two "instants" of the Totally Positive One's freedom in relation to the scholastic jargon of "the uninterrupted path" (*Bar Chad Med Lam*) and "the path of freedom" (*rNam Grol Lam*), where he makes clear this talk of "dispersing" dimmed awareness shouldn't be taken as indicating that dimmed awareness existed). Again, in this first instant of the Ground-presencing, there is a series of localized aware-ing, each of which either instantaneously self-recognizes (and reveals itself as the Reality Body of an Awakened One) or fails to self-recognize (and hence distorts itself into the "primordial universal psychic ground" (*Ye Don Gyi Kun gZhi*)), i.e. the "dimmed awareness of the single identity", followed by the active enframing of "self" and "other" as manifest fragmentation into "cyclic existence" and "transcendent reality" ensues).

TCD1 317,1 appears to clearly correlate "dimmed awareness of the single identity" with "non-self-recognition", and make both simultaneous with the proto-consciousness' very emergence in the Ground-presencing: "...When the cognitive energy experiencing the Ground-presencing emerges, this dimmed awareness of the single identity fails to recognize it as self, via which..." LYT1 455,6 gives a frequent correlation, which involves connecting the triune dimmed awareness with the Ground's own triadic identity of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance, and again clearly connects dimmed awareness of the single identity with non-recognition (though, in that a posited indeterminate awareness (which Khanpo Jikphun rejects) could also be characterized as "non-recognition" in that it lacks both recognition and non-recognition, and hence could be said to be "non-recognition" in that recognition hasn't taken place):

"...This dimmed awareness dependent upon awareness is threefold: the "dimmed awareness of the single identity" derives from our not recognizing the non-conceptual dimension of the essence; the "ccemergent dimmed awareness" derives from our not recognizing the luminously radiant nature as our own self-nature; and the "dimmed

awareness of rampant reification" derives from our not recognizing compassionate resonance's intrinsic awareness (as our own self-awareness)..."

ZMYT1 297,6ff provides an idiosyncratic account giving the coemergent dimmed awareness as initial, and the dimmed awareness of the single identity as subsequent to it, reversing the ordering given elsewhere in Longchenpa's corpus. Also Longchenpa here indicates that "single identity" refers to awareness and dimmed awareness", as he defines the latter as deriving from "awareness polluted by dimmed awareness being coemergent with dimmed awareness:

"...The causal condition (of straying) is the triune dimmed awareness: being coemergent with non-self-recognition is "coemergent dimmed awareness"; by virtue of awareness polluted with dimmed awareness being coemergent with dimmed awareness, there is the "dimmed awareness of the single identity"; the flickering of awareness' dynamism as it discursively processes objects is the "dimmed awareness of rampant reification". These three act as the causal condition..."

The passage goes on to further support this interpretation of "single identity" by describing the controlling condition of straying as awareness itself, which resembles camphor (a single substance that can act as medicine or poison depending on the situation) - if realized, it is the condition for freedom, and if not recognized, it manifests as the condition for straying..."

157. TCD1 318,2 indicates that this term for the second phase of awareness' dimming intensity merely zeroes in on this cognitive energy's non-recognition of itself, implying that it describes this non-recognition now becoming coemergent with the proto-consciousness' perceptions, and unfolding such that the dualistic world-appearances of the "pure" and "impure" (i.e. cyclic existence and transcendent reality) now become manifestly present to it as discrete, opposed presences, whereas the first phase involved a mere a non-recognition of the Ground-presencing that confronted it. This could be brought out by translating the above thus: "As this cognitive energy (*De Nyid*) develops in conjunction with (*Lhan Cig sKyes Pa*) this non-recognition (*Ngo Ma Shes*; such that this non-recognition's consequences further unfold and became a pervasive fact of all psychic life)..."

158. *(i) Its "causal condition" is the emergence of straying via the conjunction of all three aspects of dimmed awareness, which is analogous to an individual possessed of physical form and bodily limbs such that his/her own visible appearance consequently naturally manifests:* this use of a mirror to serve as an analogy for the four conditions enabling straying is repeated throughout Longchenpa's corpus, such as VNT3-"Pa" 6,1-3. In this first analogy, Longchenpa simply points out that "straying" is the natural consequence of these three aspects of dimmed awareness coming into conjunction with each other, just as a given person's visual features are a natural consequence or manifestation of his/her having a body with arms and legs. In other words, the substance of straying lies in this triadic dimmed awareness, without which "straying" would be non-existent, just as a person's visible features would not exist without that person's physical body (which they are merely the "appearance" or overall effect of). The "agent of straying" would then analogically correspond to the person whose body has these visible features, being "the proto-consciousness of the Ground" (*gZhi Shes*), the cognitive energy or capacity for self-reflection (itself derivative of awareness' dynamism) which undergoes these experiences and becomes tainted with dimmed awareness.

(ii) its "referential condition" then is (awareness') manifestation in an external objective sphere in what resembles a mirroring process - by virtue of a face being present in front of a mirror, its corresponding conditioning (reflection) manifests within that mirror: in this second analogy, the Ground-presencing's rainbow-colored light displays are the "reflection" of awareness' own face in the mirror-like reality, which is then "re-reflected" in awareness' own capacity for experience of that objective sphere (the light displays then serving as the "face", though ultimately themselves merely the reflection of awareness' own face as exteriorized in the Ground-presencing's rupture), and can thus be recognized by consciousness as merely the reflection of its own innate luminosity, or mistaken for some discrete, wholly separate "other" that it must make sense of. TDD 511,1 has a mirror analogy, where the "mirror" is identified as "stainless awareness", and the "conditioning element" as "whatever displays itself" in that mirror. This indicates that here the "conditioning elements" refers to the presences and their reflections, or self-presencing displays, which appear in the mirror and thus "condition" its bright surface with their presence. The mirror is simultaneously awareness' capacity for reflection and perception post-rupture, and the Ground's capacity to reflect itself which evidences in the Ground-presencing, as from the primordial formless Ground devoid of internal and external boundaries there emerges a display of luminous forms in conjunction with a cognitive energy capable of experiencing those forms as if external to it. The Ground-presencing itself can thus be understood as a cosmic mirror which the Ground holds up to itself, and then observes in a localized re-mirroring process for its own self-recognition. See *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* (Ati 536,3), which says the light of the gnostic lamps vividly lights-up within awareness's empty space, just like whatever is held up before a mirror will seem to come there (i.e. reflect).

Thus while the latter is the primordial significance of the mirror, the secondary significance then is that awareness and its derivative potencies (the distorted mind and psyche) subsequently reflect these luminous forms within themselves. This entire process of the mirroring then is the "referential" condition of straying in that it sets up the possibility of non-recognition, as the capacity for cognitive reflection now confronts the luminous "objective" reflections in such a manner that it is possible the former will not recognize the latter as merely its own exteriorized luminosity, and thus mistake its own face for that of another. In this reflection of the Ground within the Ground, the Ground is liable to misunderstanding by the Ground, which forgets itself and goes astray, which was not a possibility within the parameters of its pure potentiality devoid of any objective manifestation, or any type of referentiality. Just as a given individual ("awareness") will be unable to see his/her own face (though it is undeniably present in itself) in the absence of a mirror, the nature's rainbow-colored light displays acts as the crucial referential condition without which no straying could take place.

Once we have embarked on straying then, the "face" can also be interpreted as the external presences while their "reflections" are the various images (cognitive and emotional) that form in our own awareness (the mirror) deriving from them, correspondingly clear/unclear in dependence upon the relative lucidity of our awareness. In straying then we don't reflect those presences clearly, but rather contaminate them with our own ideas and images, and fictive fantasies of externally appearing and ontologically substantial entities. Thus what initially was just an "exteriorization" or "external objective sphere" (*Phyi Yul*) of the Ground's five-hued luminosity rather than specifically delimited and separately existing objects (*Yul*), is either recognized or not recognized in its initial mirroring by this proto-

consciousness, and in case of the latter is reflected and karmically shaped into particular "manifest objects" shaping our environment, and internally enframed into the "dualistically conceived apprehended objects", which becomes objects of our desire and conceptualization, the ordinary objects around which we obsessively trace our lives.

Via (awareness') natural luminosity thus manifesting externally as a perceived objective sphere, straying's "controlling condition" is analogous to how someone might falsely reify their face's reflection in that mirror through clinging to the mirror and face as real identities - by force of the lights, awareness, and reality becoming thus stained with reifying conceptuality (that obsessively abstracts-out independent selves and identities therein), the "controlling condition" of straying is operative: in this third analogy, "natural luminosity thus manifesting externally as a perceived objective sphere" refers to the Ground-presencing's movement into external radiance via the eight gateways of spontaneous presence, which of course is the "mirror" forming the referential condition of straying. Against this backdrop, the cognitive energy then makes contact with this luminous objective sphere, and it is in its mistaken apprehension of it that the "controlling condition" of straying takes form. In terms of the analogy itself, the spontaneously present lights are the mirror's bright surface, while awareness is the face that peers into its play of reflections (though ultimately the mirror is no other than awareness, and the lights it reflects thus its own display). For the mirroring process to take place the site for reflection (mirror, lights) as well as that which is reflected (the face, awareness) must be present, while if "real identities" (*bDag dNgos*) is interpreted as "self" instead, it would refer to the entire complete body (corresponding to "reality" in the following triad) without which there would be no face to reflect. By not realizing that the mirror's reflections are its own self and thus seamlessly interrelated in a single "reality" (holistic experience), it takes the lights (the mirror) and itself (the face) to be utterly distinct substantial identities (the other and one's self). In this way the original seamless purity of the Ground-presencing, the "reality" of rainbow-colored "lights" and penetrating "awareness" becomes infected with conceptuality and its clear cut notions of "I", "other", and so forth.

Thus the analogy becomes a bit stretched at this point, since the play of reflections (the lights) across the mirror's surface are actually awareness' own dynamics as it itself is the mirror, and yet in the context of the Ground-presencing it is as if it has stepped out and now peers into that self-same mirror as an interested observer marveling at the beautiful display of colors (temporarily forgetting it is itself the mirror, and thus the play of light across the surface as well). Evidently the analogy Longchenpa has in mind is that of someone who looks into a mirror, and in his/her astonishment at seeing his/her own face, without recognizing it as his own, begins to develop all sorts of emotional reactions to it (fear, aggression, and so forth) as he believes the mirror and face to truly exist as such (not realizing his own face and its reflection are indivisible from each other, and the reflection itself is indivisible from the mirror it appears on), which would completely dissipate if he should recognize the true nature of the mirroring process. Just so, in the Ground-presencing we (who is this we?) look in a mirror (the depths of Being, peering into itself) and a reflection of our face arises in the mirror (the display of lights), which is actually nothing but a mere phantom deriving from our face's reflection. Yet we are astonished at its sudden flashing forth, we are intrigued, and thus begin to dream, to fantasize, that this phantom, this mere wisp of a reflection, possesses some separate identity divorced from oneself ("it is the Other!"), forgetting the circumstances in which it initially arose.

To briefly summarize these four conditions analogically, first the subject arises (dimmed awareness), then objects (the five-colored lights) are mirrored, then the subject takes the mirrored objects and itself as real and disparate, and thus all three coincide as an ongoing event. This is more clearly stated by LYT1 456,1, which, however, identifies "awareness" as the controlling condition rather than dualistic fixation:

"...The four conditions: the three dimmed awareness arising as subjects possessing objects is the causal condition; the apparent objects which are grasped as other than the self are the referential condition, like a person's countenance manifesting in a mirror; the cognitive activity of dualistic fixations is the controlling condition; and the temporal conjunction of those is the "immediately antecedent conjunction condition"..."

As mentioned above, the only interpretation of the third analogy I can think of here is that of a hypothetical "savage" (or infant) unfamiliar with mirrors as such, who peers at his own face's reflection in the mirror, and thinks it is the face of another person who is concretely present. "Concrete identity" or "self" (*bDag dNgos*) can refer both to clinging to the reflection as a true identity (i.e. attachment to the notion of a true, discrete self), as well as to the "individual" whose face is being reflected - in this latter reading, the mirror would correspond to the lights of the Ground-presencing, the face to awareness, and "self" to reality itself. Thus the lights are the ground of straying into objects, awareness is the ground of straying into ordinary mind, and reality provides the space or clearing for this straying to take place. Just as the savage thinks his own face's reflection is a separate external self other than him, the forlorn proto-psyche in the Ground-presencing thinks its own inherent awareness' efflorescence as the rainbow-colored displays is an external separate reality other than it. Thus just as if there were no individual peering into the mirror there would be no reflection, without awareness the entire display of evolution would never take place, and thus it can be interpreted as the controlling condition of the entire process of straying (see LYT below). In fact the lights, awareness and reality are indivisible in this seamless self-mirroring process, but we now discriminate them out as separate components separated by the abyss of alienation. Thus awareness (the face) peers into the spontaneously present visions' mirror, and in the Ground's own mirroring or reflection of itself in a play of light it becomes confused, and in its attempts to resolve this confusion lapses into the fatal error of dualistic thought. The mirror is thus the site of manifestation (the Ground-presencing), the face is awareness itself, while the reflections are the variegated phenomena of cyclic existence and transcendence which manifest in the mirror as reflexes of awareness itself. Without any face the entire process will cease, while with recognition the reflections continue ceaselessly but they are naturally freed in their very manifestation.

Thus the lights are the referential condition as they appear externally, and awareness is the controlling condition in its being the source of the subjective proto-psyche, while straying is the conceptualization that the former is separate from the latter, and the subsequent permeation of the lights, awareness and reality with conceptuality thus forms the controlling condition of the process of straying. First there is the presence of confusion of the subject in the face of the external light presences, which immediately leads to the pervasive infection of everything with distorting reifications, and thus the temporal conjunction of this triad leads to actual manifest straying. The first moment of confusion and non-recognition is the first dimmed awareness, where there is just this potential without cyclic existence and transcendence appearing separately; the second moment of dimmed awareness involves the coarse fragmentation of cyclic existence and transcendence as the Ground's presencing

experiences a rupture; and the third moment then involves the detailed unfolding of this rupture in terms of the six types of living beings, a wild variety of reifications, and so on.

ZMYT2 239,3-4 explains the significance of this triad (lights, awareness, and reality) in its analysis of the foundation of straying as threefold: reality as the "ground of straying into objects", awareness as the "ground of straying into ordinary minds", and the five lights as the "ground of straying into ordinary bodies", thus accounting for the ordinary dimensions of physical and mental existence, as well as the external world experienced as objects. In the extensive discussion that ensues, "reality" is defined as "empty awareness", "awareness" as "unceasing flickering", and the "five lights" as "radiant within the space of awareness". Thus this triad of factors, which also can be correlated to the three enduring dimensions of the Universe (reality as essence, lights as nature, and awareness as compassionate resonance), form the controlling condition of straying and distortion in that as infected with dualistic conceptuality they form the foundation and enduring energy of the three main components of distorted existence - the ordinary mind, body, and experience of external objects. Without them straying could never take place, and thus they are the "controlling condition" of the movement into cyclic existence.

159. *rDo rJe Sems dPa' sNying Gi Me Long Gi rGyud* (NGB1 205,6; Ati1 332,4; also cited by TCD1 316,4; LYT1 456,3; translation in Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 200).

*Grasping cognitive activity emerges there via dimmed awareness, and by its flickering for a mere instant, this darkened cognition reflects "Have I emerged from that over there, or has that over there emerged from me?":* I have interpreted *Breng Tsam Zhig* as "for a mere instant" or "slightly" in accordance with LYT 456,3, which reads *sKad Cig Ma 'Gyus Pa* for TDD's reading of *Byung Ba Breng Tsam Zhig 'Gyus Pa*. With the non-recognition of its own true nature, the intensity level of this cognitive energy begins to drop rapidly (expressed as its clarity and radiance "darkening"), and it begins to grasp after false securities, and illusory self-identities. Thus with the dimming clarity of awareness against the background of its overall intensity level drop, this cognitive capacity for self-reflection is now noticeably dull in its acumen and perception. It begins to divide up the Ground-presencing's rainbow luminosity into separate entities such that this shimmering continuum now fades into dull material entities, which it speculates on as to how they are related to its own self. In this way the proto-identities of its own separate, subjective individual self, and external things begins to evolve, with an emergent split between "inner" self and "outer" objects, and in the consequent bonds of attachment and aversion that the former has to the latter you become inextricably tangled up in cyclic existence's infinite distortions.

*In this way, the proto-consciousness goes astray merely by force of such thought, such that though its dimmed awareness is absent within the Ground itself, it becomes present within its subjective experience or the observable aspects:* TDD's reading of "within its subjective experience or the visible aspects" (*Nyams Sam rNam Pa*) is supported by NGB and TCD, though LYT reads "within (the Ground's) presencing" (*sNang Ba*) and Ati "within (and as) subjective experience or dreams" (*Nyams Sam rMi Lam*; Guenther in *From Reductionism to Creativity* renders "subjective experience" as "a vibration"). Just a few lines below in the Tantra, both NGB and Ati have "the observable features of the Ground" (*gZhi'i rNam Pa*), indicating we should understand this as meaning that while such dimmed awareness or distortion is absent within the Ground itself, it becomes present in the "subjective experience" of the Ground, i.e. how its own emergent cognitive capacity experiences itself, or in the

"observable aspect of the Ground", i.e. "how it looks" to that emergent cognitive capacity. *Nyams* usually means "experience" or "feeling", and here implies the eventual subjectification of awareness' potency in terms of ordinary partialized mental activity, which "experiences" the world in terms of dimmed awareness' perspective. Thus, even though dimmed awareness has no ontological validity within the ultimate Ground itself, it undeniably has a phenomenological validity in that we experience it without our own perception and lived world. "Observable aspects" the indicates the corresponding noematic pole, the objectification of energy into particular objects with discernible "features" which result from our distorted perception "materializing" the pure light into dulled, impenetrable matter. In that we experience these distorted appearances as a concomitant to our distorted perception, dimmed awareness again has a phenomenological validity in that we do experience external phenomena in this fashion (regardless of whether this distortion, materiality, and/or stains can be said to have any independent ontological validity). Thus dimmed awareness entails the rupture of "subjectivity" and "objectivity" under the general conditions of non-recognition, and an overall drop in the level of energy intensity in both subjective interior experience and objective exterior appearances, which are now confined within the illusory duality of subjectivity and objectivity that is cyclic existence's framework. Ati's reading of "dreams" merely indicates that the appearance of distortion is intangible and without any ultimate validity, though, as with a dream, the perception is real enough and capable of provoking all too real emotional responses. LYT's reading of "presencing" merely indicates that while the self-contained Ground is devoid of any distortions or dimmed awareness, in its presencing and self-exteriorization the possibility for such distortion exists (TDD then unpacks this "presencing" into the polarization into subjectivity and objectivity that emerges in the eventuality of non-self-recognition).

In the following line, "Via these "observable aspects", the following four types of conditions apply" relates to the fourfold conditional basis of straying primarily relating to how consciousness relates to external presences (their "facets" or "aspects" as perceived), whereas the "causal impetus" of straying primarily relates to the subjective side of the perceiver itself, summed up as the triune dimmed awareness. LYT simply says "within that presencing the fourfold conditional basis (for straying) emerges" (Ati reads "via the presencing"), emphasizing that the Ground-presencing's exteriorization into self-organizing light displays is a necessary precondition for straying to take place.

*The "causal condition" for straying derives from the Ground's being present in the manner of a luminous home, and is no other than dimmed awareness itself.* I follow Ati, NGB and TCD's reading of *Las* in preference to TDD and LYT's reading of *La*. As discussed in Chapter One (see annotations to 177-78 for details), this imagery of the Ground as surrounded by a "luminous house" or "dome of light" refers to its exteriorization in the Ground-presencing, wherein awareness rises up out of pure potential into actualization, and thus is surrounded by its own natural spontaneous radiation (imaged as a "dome of light"). This is as opposed to the Ground's self-contained state of pure potential, where there is only a subtle internal radiance totally devoid of any exteriorization or manifest light-energy, like a butter lamp concealed within a heavy earthen vase. With this exteriorization recognition and non-recognition become possible (whereas that question was irrelevant in the Ground-state of pure virtual reality), and thus it makes dimmed awareness possible (which corresponds to the cognitive capacity's lack of recognition of the light dome as its own natural radiation). If the Ground were devoid of this capacity for self-organizing light energy, i.e. if it were only originally pure (empty) and not spontaneously present (dynamic with light energy) as well, then the entirety of evolution, and in particular dimmed awareness, could never come about.



KGNT1 348,6 describes it thus (KGYT2 112,6 has a similar account, and labels this the "beginning of cyclic existence"):

"...The "causal condition" (of straying) is like this: the empty essence's radiant dimension is present as primordial gnosis' natural glowing in the form of a "luminous home", which (the cognitive capacity) thinks of as a concrete thing without recognizing it as empty radiance. That thought is the dimmed awareness referred to as "the causal condition" (of straying)..."

The "controlling condition" then emerges by force of its turning into discursive ideation: there are slight variations in this line in the different versions, though the basic sense is the same: for TDD's reading of 'Dzin rTog, NGB reads rTog, and Ati as well as TCD reads rTog dPyod, while LYT reads dNgos Po De La bDag Tu bZung Bas bDag Po'i rKyen Zhes Bya for De La 'Dzin rTog Tu Song Bas.

The "referential condition" stems from its fixation on itself as a subject experiencing and possessing objects: while the other texts only read Yul Can, Ati reads Yul Yul Can (correcting Lul to Yul), making explicit that both "subject" (Yul Can; literally "object-possessor") and "object" (Yul) is intended here. The controlling condition is that this proto-subjectivity now sees itself as an independent "subject" that "owns" or experiences extrinsic objects, and thus its experience comes to be dominated by a rigid dichotomy between its internal mental experience and imagined external material appearances. From this proceeds the urge to "dominate" and "control" that which is other (or alternatively to submit and/or unite with it), whether another living being, or "nature" at large.

The following reference to a "mirror" is, of course, what Longchenpa was unpacking in his preface, where in the Ground's looking at itself within itself three aspects are discriminated - the "reflection" (objects), "self" or "face" (the subject), and the mirror itself (pure awareness).

Not recognizing for itself that the Ground is its own (origin and abiding reality), this darkened cognition strays: whereas the other texts all agree with TDD's reading, LYT instead reads "not recognizing this as self via it being its "own face's" manifestation..." ("De Nyid Rang Gi bZhin sNang Ba Las Rang Du Ma Shes Pas"), thereby connecting this back to the mirror analogy ("own face" can also be interpreted as an expansion of the term for "nature" (Rang bZhin)).

In TDD's reading, Guenther in *From Reductionism to Creativity* renders it as "thus by not recognizing themselves as being their own source" (indicating tuning into their own awareness, and the light presences, as being the common expression of a unitary, self-organizing Universe), while literally the line reads "not recognizing for itself that this is its own Ground" (*De Rang Gi gZhi Yin Pa La Rang Gis Ngo Ma Shes*). It could also be interpreted as "this" referring to original purity, which the emergent cognitive energy fails to recognize as its own enduring foundation; alternatively, it could be taken as referring to the Ground (Being) itself, which in this cosmic hide and go seek forgets itself as its own "ground-ness", i.e. that it is a unitary self-organizing Universe, and hence enters the "mask" or facade of an individual, isolated ego interacting with other similarly isolated selves and egos.

Thus there is straying from within the Ground due to this above described impurity: literally this line is most easily interpreted as "The Ground thus described stays due to this

impurity" (or "due to its impurity", or "due to the impurity of it all"). However, I have added "from within" for the reasons discussed below (in fact TCD and Ati omit "impurity", though NGB and LYT agree with TDD here), and in fact "Ground" may even simply refer to the "foundation of straying" (*Khrul gZhi*), i.e. with these above described conditions acting as its "ground" or "basis", the darkened proto-consciousness goes astray.

The reasons the most obvious translation would be quite provocative is that it would imply that the Ground itself goes astray, or becomes distorted, whereas generally it is said that distortion is utterly absent within the primordially pure Ground and its presencing (though, as discussed in the third chapter, the Ground itself continues to be pervadingly present as a core of pure virtual energy throughout the entire process of straying's involution and evolution). This is usually described in the following manner: although the Ground and its presencing themselves are devoid of any straying or impurity, under the conditions of non-recognition distortion arises adventitiously (as a phenomenological fact), like clouds in the sky or tarnish on gold. However, though most traditional scholars would deny it, there seems to be an ambiguity as to who strays, whether in some sense the Ground itself has not forgotten itself, and thus could be said to stray itself. Thus the process could be described as a cosmic game of hide and seek whereby the Ground becomes caught up in the game, only to subsequently experience the shock of self-recognition at the game's rupture, often described as the entire movement of evolution and return being simply the play of the one and only awareness' gnostic energy. However it should be pointed out that the very term "straying" is an interpretation of events, and the denial that the Ground "strays" (even though we may say it "plays") is to emphasize that its dimension of utter purity and fluidity remains every and always already present, awaiting only a blinding moment of recognition in which, finally, you see. Thus in a sense this straying can be seen as intrinsic to the Ground, in that its self-estrangement enables its conscious self-recognition in the complex and perfectly simple evolutionary phase of Buddhahood (a possibility, and actuality, absent within the formless primordial Ground), while in another sense it is utterly superfluous to the Ground, a complex and self-sustained illusion that requires self-deception for its continuance, and which leaves the oceanic purity of the cosmos utterly unstained, like ripples on the surface of the water.

160. *bKra Shis mDzes lDan* (NGB1 179,7; Ati1 216,4; also cited by TCD1 317,5). See my annotations to 179,3 for a discussion of the "amulet of precious spontaneous presence", which in general connotes the Ground's spontaneous presence as the immediate source of the Ground-presencing's eightfold dynamic manifestation.

*Though the Adamantine Hero is not under the sway of straying, he adopts its facade in sentient beings:* the "Adamantine Hero" refers to the lucent nature of our own mind, or pure awareness (see TCD1 323,6), which remains the pure core of enlightened energy present latently within us, only requiring our recognition of it to go into its activated state as its enlightened qualities manifestly unfold. The paradox is that though awareness itself remains primordially devoid of distortion, it appears to stray from our perspectives (literally "displays the process of straying to sentient beings") - the straying is itself illusory, a game that seems so real but in fact never takes any real root as the principal actor - awareness or "the adamant hero" - remains unstained by distortion throughout, only "acting as if", perhaps out of cosmic boredom, or an obscure impulse in the Universe to know itself as, and beyond the other. Thus awareness, though in itself stainless, brings about this playful panorama of cyclic existence and transcendence through its creative dynamism, play and adornment, and straying remains no less, nor no more, than the play of the one and only. However, even though in essence awareness remains stainless throughout, one must ask if it has not

forgotten itself in its own play, caught up in the rules of the game it has created, such that it believes its own illusion of straying, obsessed with its own images in the mirroring evolution of the Universe.

Along these lines, KGYT2 122,5 says that although primordial gnosis is devoid of straying and distortion, distortion comes to pass via the triune causal impetus and fourfold conditioning factors. Analogically this resembles how the sun is devoid of darkness and obscuration, yet by and by becomes unclear in our own perspective by virtue of clouds obscuring its presence from us - primordial gnosis' solar radiance in the Ground-presencing's initial emergence having subsided, we wander through the darkness of cyclic existence.

Ultimately, in the end awareness' own self-manifestations are returned to the Ground which remain their own natural condition: Tha Ma Rang Gi sNang Ba Rang rKyen Gyi gZhi La bZlog Pa'o. Ati reads *Gyi* for *Gyi* and *Las* for *La*, but TCD and NGB agree with TDD in both instance. "The end" often signifies the "end" of cyclic existence, which begins with non-recognition and ends with the recognition marking the spiritual awakening of Buddhahood (TCD1 322,7; KGNT1 494,4). At the end of this illusion spun by the long dream of non-recognition, all the phenomena woven by your own projections and incessant thought activity (which have never become other than awareness' self-displays) return in a centripetal spiral into their source, like a crystal's rays dissolving back within the crystal. Thus after the long journey through the dangerous abyss of straying, you return home to your "mother" and true home, the Ground which remains our enduring, permanent and unstained reality throughout everything, despite the apparent fragmentation. There is also a possible play on words or ambiguity here, as "return" (*bZlog Pa*) also often signifies "reversal" in the sense of the fragmentation of straying which seemingly "reverses" or departs from the Ground's seamless luminosity as it descends into frozen material forms, and an ever dimming inner light. In that reading, "in the end" could signify the end result of this straying, whereby these "natural self-manifestations" are "inverted" against the backdrop of the Ground into exactly what they are not - split off, other-appearances which threaten and invite you. In that they are first "inverted" and distorted within the Ground, ultimately we must lead them back to their source, thereby dissolving them in the return.

Not recognizing that the fruit of self-awareness is self-arisen, we dualistically cling in dependence upon that causal impetus, and thus the causal condition takes form: Rang Rig Pa'i 'Bras Bu Rang Shar Bar Ma Shes Te rGyu Nyid lTos Can Du bZung Bas rGyu'i rKyen No. In the absence of any direct commentary, this terse line is amenable to several different interpretations. "Self-awareness" simultaneously denotes awareness as found within our own being ("our own awareness") and awareness as a dimension "inherent" to the Universe itself ("self-emergent primordial gnosis"), and as such displays the entire panorama of cyclic existence and transcendent reality as its play or radiation (here imaged as its "fruit"), impelling it forth into external manifestation from within the latent pure potential of the internally radiant Ground. As such all these light displays in the Ground-presencing are naturally self-arisen and self-organizing from awareness (their "catalyst" or "causal impetus"), without involving any external conditions, factors or agents - "self-arisen" connotes both that it arises from within it, and that this "effect" doesn't depart from awareness' space (it is often said that "nothing other than awareness ever comes into being"). Thus the display is awareness' own dynamics, which acts as both the cause and effect. Not understanding this, we exteriorize and reify the spontaneously present visions (awareness' own-presencing as the Spiritual Bodies, lights, and so on) into separate subjects and objects, and on the basis of this "causal impetus" (i.e. non-recognition) we stray. Keeping in mind

that the "causal condition" is generally interpreted as referring to the triune dimmed awareness, and that dimmed awareness emerges in dependence upon awareness itself, through not recognizing the Ground-presencing we cling to the veracity of dualistic appearances and in dependence upon this cause are impelled to stray into cyclic existence. As indicated above, the term "causal impetus" can also have an undercurrent of meaning as referring to awareness itself, which all experience (including that of dimmed awareness) is "based upon" or is "in dependence upon" (VNT3-"Pa" uses the similar wording in saying *Rig Pa La lTos Pa'i Ma Rig Pa, Ma 'Khrul Pa La lTos Pa'i 'Khrul Pa*, clearly suggesting that "cause" here refers to awareness itself). Thus though "cause" often refers to this non-recognition being the "causal impetus" of straying (which is the end result of your grasping dualistically in dependence upon this non-recognition), we can simultaneously maintain the interpretation that this non-recognition is "clinging" in dependence upon awareness and its self-presencing visions in the Ground's presencing, via which straying occurs.

"We (dualistically) cling in dependence upon that causal impetus" could also be interpreted as "the cause itself is apprehended as being dependent (on other conditions)", indicating that ultimately the cause itself (i.e. awareness) is taken to be a consequence, dependent on objects which are grasped at as the concrete, "real" reality. In this way we view the external lights as primary, and our own awareness as a type of secondary epiphenomenon of them, a view reflected in modern materialistic theory which sees awareness as an accidental byproduct of external material evolution (which reverses the true relationship operative here). In addition, we introduce the whole notion of distinct "causes" and "effects" into what is in actuality a self-organizing Universe, and thus "by grasping at (that display/fruit) as dependent upon causes" (another possible translation) we create an entire illusory network of discrete "things" involved in linear relationships with each as "causes" and "effects". Interpreting it thus as "you cling to (the phenomenal appearances) as being dependent upon causes", this describes how we split everything up into an interdependent causal network of causes and fruits, subjects and objects (thinking "have those lights over there come from me? or have I come from them?"), and so on whereas in actuality they are a seamless naturally arising display of awareness. Thus the appearances are split off as the "effect" and awareness as the cause or agent (as in solipsism) in a relationship of linear causality which fragments the original unity of awareness and its natural display, which suggests translating it as "clinging to the (appearances) as dependent upon the cause (i.e. awareness)". In this loss of awareness, we no longer recognize the lights as our own natural presencing, and thus in the dualistic clinging in dependence upon the causal impetus (awareness) dimmed awareness operates as the root of the twelvefold interdependent network of causation, whereby all conditioned phenomenal appearances manifest.

Alternatively, a less likely current of meaning lies in identifying the "fruit of self-awareness" as the primordial fruit of the Great Perfection, which must only be recognized to attain liberation (and thus "naturally manifest" or "self-arisen"; TCD2 97,5 identifies "indwelling natural awareness" as such). In our ignorance, we conceive of this "fruit" or "climax" of evolution as being dependent on "causes" which produce it ("we cling to the cause itself as if it were dependent (on extrinsic factors)"), thus reducing its primordial reality to an adventitiously, newly produced phenomena.

*Not recognizing sensory objects and our own cognitive activity as empty, you cling to reified objects within your referential perceptions, and thus "the condition of referentiality's own state" is present:* I have added "referentiality" (*dMigs Pa*) here on the basis of NGB, Ati and TCD, as it obvious that it is the "referential condition" that is being discussed here.

*dMigs Pa* can refer to both the act of perception or observation, as well as that which is perceived or observed. Despite this oscillation between the objective and subjective poles of perception, it always connotes perception as such, i.e. never indicating some independently existing "object" but rather always the noematic content or focus of an actual perception. As one of the four conditions necessary for straying to take place, it essentially refers to the presence of an objective sphere of colors, which is perceived by consciousness, and hence I have translated it as "referential" (perception). It also has a connotation of "objectification", i.e. in this proto-consciousness' observation of these lights (which are actually awareness' own self-presencing), it mistakenly extracts out and zeroes in on concrete, distinct objects from this seamless expanse, which eventually it relates to in emotionally distorted patterns. Thus rather than a holistic perception of luminosity perceived to be inherent to one's own condition, a fragmented experience of isolated entities potentially hostile (or desirable) to oneself ensues.

*In dependence upon temporality, awareness' light is not recognized as naturally self-emergent, and this cognitive energy begins to fixate on the light as that which it is not, whereby "the condition of the immediately antecedent conjunction of events" takes form:* within the Youthful Body of the Vase, the formless pure source-potential of the primordial Ground termed "the Youthful-Body/gestalt-within-a-Vase", there is only pure virtual energy, utterly devoid of temporality or any-thing at all. "Then" its seal is rent open, and the panorama of the Ground's luminous presencing floods forth, along with the clear awareness of the Ground's compassionate resonance. In this exteriorization of itself and its consequent analytical reflection on its own display, the fragmentation into temporality ensues as events are segmented and related to the center of cognitive activity ("that was past", "this is now", "that could be the future"), along with the corresponding articulation of causation. Thus in these temporal and causal fragmentations (i.e. "by force of temporality being erroneously fixated on"), the light is no longer recognized by the psyche as being its own innate luminosity (simultaneously and holistically emergent), but rather is compartmentalized as an other, and enframed with a self-existing temporal and causal track. Objective and subjective "sequentiality" thus results in a self enduring through a personal history, and the vast and intricate mechanisms of private and public karma. In addition this could be simply translated "as for temporal considerations", indicating that the following events are that which temporally immediately precedes the final emergence of true straying - the manifestation of light, its non-recognition, and our clinging to it as something it is not are in "conjunction" with each other as they come together in single temporal instant (earlier explained on 191,1 as the "temporal conjunction" of the triune dimmed awareness and fourpart conditional basis). "Fixate on the light as that which it is not" indicates that this proto-consciousness clings to the pure vibrational energy of the five lights as precisely what they are not, separate concrete objects enmeshed in a web of causes and conditions, which thus become materialized into the elemental energies and dualistically conceived objects we now know so well. Likewise we thus fabricate and cling to an "I" in that which is devoid of an "I", and a "self" in that which is no-self at all.

161. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 118,3; Ati1 141,5). The first three lines give the outline of topics for the ensuing discussion, in which each of these terms is individually defined and contextualized. NGB and Ati also give "karma" after "branches", which quite appropriately indicates reading the second two lines here given under the "branches" heading as a separate section headed "karma". I have, however, left Longchenpa's text unchanged.

Dimmed awareness has three forms: that which is of "the single identity" forms the root of straying; that of "coemergence" brings about the two reifications; and the dimmed awareness of "rampant reification" results in dualistically enframed objects: first the "dimmed awareness of the single identity" forms the root of straying via its failure to recognize the Ground-presencing as its own self-presencing, followed by which the "coemergent dimmed awareness" which makes the initial actual reification of the duality, and fissure between, cyclic existence and transcendent reality (see TDD 190,5). The mention of "two reifications" or "dualistic reification" in the latter can also refer to the duality between subject and object, but the implications of that duality are usually described in terms of the third phase of dimmed awareness (which I have indicated by adding "dualistically enframed", whereas the text only says "objects").

As for the factors involved in straying, with "karmic conditioning" and so forth, twelve factors can be differentiated out from within straying's dimension, and by these factors ripening, calendrical time and karmic actions manifest accordingly: dimmed awareness is the first, and "karmic conditioning" the second, of the twelve links of interdependent origination discussed in detail below. These twelve links provide an encapsulated description of the mechanism by which we are trapped in an endless cycle of deluded lives and deaths as we continue to stray, with each link feeding into and sustaining the other links. The twelve thus describe not only the initial formation of cyclic existence from within the Ground-presencing (i.e. "straying"), but also analyze the perpetuation of that cyclic existence for each individual from conception to death, and from death to rebirth. Given the fundamental importance of this twelvefold process to our existence, it is seen as natural that twelvefold correspondences should up elsewhere in our distorted experience, such as in the temporal progressions we experience and the karmic processes involving our actions as influenced by the emotional distortions (see Longchenpa's follow-up comments for details on its connections to our twelvefold classification of "external" calendrical time and "internal" emotional distortions).

The branches of the straying process: via the different discursive elaborations, there are the specifications involved in the naming of everything, and the objects thus distorted come to have two aspects: it would seem that "the two aspects" of objects could refer to the objects' sensual presence (a bare shimmering immediacy), and our linguistically influenced and conceptually enframed images of the objects. Because of the extensive discursiveness or "naming" which comes to dominate our experience, a fissure develops between the immediate presence of that which presents itself to us, and their images which we create in fantasy and history, private and public. Thus it plays off the duality of "name and form", the two aforementioned divisions of the five psycho-physical components which constitute an individual. In addition, "two" can connote the fragmentation into the duality of subjectivity and objectivity, while one scholar suggested to me that it referred to "karma" and "emotional distortions", basing his interpretation on the classical classification of the twelve links of interdependent origination into three separate categories (karma, emotional distortions and the "fruit") with the former two being that which issues forth in the latter as they impel the entire process around again and again.

The mechanism of karmic actions creates the three types of realms in cyclic existence: the sensual, form, and formless: as KGYT2 183,1-184,3 clearly discusses, via virtuous positive actions that remain within the realm of ego-logical conditioned activity ("karma" (*Las*) literally meaning "action", but connoting the actions of a living being as influenced by its

past mental, physical, and verbal actions, and having an inevitable effect on its future psychological and physical states) you create the momentum for being reborn in one of the three positive types of rebirth within the desire realm, while via non-virtuous negative actions you impel yourself towards rebirth in one of the three negative types of rebirth within. "Unwavering karma" (*Mi gYo Ba'i Las*) is that which brings you to rebirth in the higher form and formless realms, referring to your meditative achievements in contemplation that impel you to these rarefied states without "wavering" or "switching over" to other states of existence. Such a "non-wavering" state is relatively lengthy in duration, though ultimately of course you remain in cyclic existence, such that when the force of this karma finally does deteriorate and become exhausted, you fall back into lower states of being without any enduring benefit having been derived from your meditative accomplishment. Thus even conventionally virtuous, justifiably admirable activities only serve to enhance your situation in cyclic existence, while it requires a radically different type of activity (a type of "non-activity" based on insight into empty luminosity) to escape all together from the framework of cyclic existence into enlightenment.

*By virtue of awareness being unripened (into expansive awakening)...:* "unripened" (*Ma sMin Pa*) awareness was previously mentioned on TDD 184,2. The basic sense lies in awareness being described as an indeterminate "seed" in its initial emergence in the Ground-presencing, which one may think means it is "unripened" into either cyclic existence ("a sentient being") or transcendent reality ("a Buddha" or "Awakened One"). However, in actual usage awareness being "unripened" or "not mature" exclusively indicates that it has not been unfolded into the "fruit" of enlightenment by force of its self-recognition of its empty luminous self-identity. Thus it is not that the seed can "mature" into either straying or freedom, but rather that it can develop into either: the former represents its stunted development and dilution of its full potency (dimmed awareness being like a sickly shoot), while the latter indicates it properly ripening into its full maturity, awareness coming-into-its-own as it enters its optimal, climaxing intensity (like the ripe fruit of a mature fruit tree).

*Names and activities of the six types of living beings come into existence:* Ati reads "specifics of" (*Bye Brag*) for "activities of".

*In conjunction with the discrimination of "cyclic existence", the accumulated karma comes together, spreads out, and climaxes (into effects), with the ensuing variety of specifics:* karma, i.e. each being's physical, verbal and mental actions, is that which fuels cyclic existence. Each action leaves traces or karmic propensities on the individual's psyche, and as these traces accumulate they "join together" in certain constellations (similar karma reinforcing each other), begin "to spread into" the individual's conscious life as they reassert manifest influence, and finally come to "a full blown effect" or impact on that person's internal or external world, thus leading into new karmic actions, so as an ongoing feed-back cycle is created. In this way "the specifics" of each generic type of being (usually enumerated as six, and including the general characteristics of their physical forms, conceptuality, behavior, and so forth) as well as each individual's own "specific" physical, verbal and mental character within that generic type take form.

162. "Raising-up" denotes the Ground's presencing, as awareness "breaks free" or "flashes out" from the Ground's formless pure potential into exteriority, the transition from "internal radiance" into "external radiance", from the no-thing to everything ("raises-up" (*Phags Pa*) can be literally interpreted as signifying "elevated" out of the Ground's infinite "depths" into the light of day, as its most frequent meaning has a sense of vertical ascendancy). As

mentioned above, awareness in cyclic existence is termed "unripened" since its full potential and dynamic qualities remain latent, i.e. unripened into the expansive awakening of Buddhahood - its flowering or optimal functioning only takes place in the liberation of spiritual awakening. In this unripened state, it remains in neurotic existence dominated by the karmic processes of cause and effect, and processed through its twelvefold cycle of interdependent origination.

163. The twelve emotional distortions evidently don't have a specific reference, other than corresponding to the twelve links which can be understood as twelve phases in the process of the emotional distortions unfolding internally in human existence, which is the internally sensed passage of time taking place against the backdrop of "external" calendrical time. The twelve months are of the lunar year, while the twelve year cycles are part of the larger sixty year cycle which constitutes the Tibetan calendar, the latter being obtained by combining the names of twelve animals with those of the five elements successively. The twelve animals are the mouse, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog, and pig, while the five elements are fire, earth, iron, water, and wood (i.e. the "fire mouse" year, and so forth). Thus the twelvefold nature of interdependent origination as it manifests results in other sets of twelve both in our experience of the external world (time and so on) as well as our interior mental life, which leads into fictive existence taking concrete form as summed up in our "twelve fold sensory field", i.e. our five senses with their corresponding objects (visual faculty with colors, etc.) plus our mental faculty with its corresponding type of objects.

164. "Sequential" here indicates this is the "forward progression" of the cycle as its twelve phases lead into, and sustain, cyclic existence, as opposed its "reverse cessation" wherein the twelve links unravel in the experience of enlightenment.

The corresponding discussion of these twelve is on TCD1 319,3ff. These twelve links of interdependent origination are a structural analysis of the dynamics of cyclic existence, just as in the first chapter the primordial ground's dynamics is analytically encapsulated in an octad (see TDD 169,6ff) and the dynamics of the Ground-presencing is summarized in the eight processes of spontaneous presence shining forth. The basic import of this doctrine of "interdependent origination" is to show how existence (material and psychic) is relative, dependent upon an intricate process of causation with a wide plurality of causes and conditions, rather than consisting of absolute self-sufficient entities divorced from their surroundings. Thus through contemplation of these cycles of causation, we become aware of impermanence (everything being dependent upon causes, everything will eventually cease when their sustaining causes cease), the interdependence of all that exists, and in particular of the mechanism by which our suffering is self-created, and thus amenable to our self-control. STCP1 722,3ff also describes the "interdependent origination" or "supporting circumstances" for the passage beyond misery (i.e. the attainment of Enlightenment, or Nirvana), which involves the sequential reversal of the twelve links with gnostic awareness as you refine your psyche on the spiritual path of meditation. First the root or dimmed awareness is reversed or undone by means of the insight in study, critical reflection and meditation, and then the other links based on dimmed awareness are reversed in stages. In this way the karmic causes impelling one into cyclic existence are exhausted, and one is freed from the vicious circle into the exhilarating world of transcendent reality (*Nirvana*).

STCP 713ff divides interdependent origination into its external and internal dimensions, the former accounting for how all external inanimate phenomena are formed via the constellation of their specific causes and conditions (as transformations of external fire, wind, earth, water



and space), while the latter (the twelve links here discussed) accounts for the physical and mental development and deterioration of animate life as it undergoes cycles of birth and death in accordance with its karma (no other than its own actions) and the transformations of internal elements (fire, earth and so on). In short, "external" and "internal" correspond to the elemental energies as present in inanimate, lower order structures (mountains, cloth, etc.) and in animate, higher order structures (humans, animals, etc.) respectively.

The twelve links are dimmed awareness, karmic formative or conditioning forces, perceptive consciousness, names and forms, the six aspects of the sensory fields, sensory contact, sensations or feelings, craving, appropriation, becoming or rebirth, birth, and aging and death. Thus dimmed awareness impels this entire movement initially, motivating varied actions (virtuous, non-virtuous, and neutral) whose karmic force "forms" the world of samsaric experiences (creating an intricate network of imprints or traces in the depths of the psyche, which continually give rise to new actions), and so on. These twelve are described in a variety of manners throughout Longchenpa's corpus, as well as being classified into separate groups. For example (STCP1 721,1ff), the twelve can be used to describe the karmic process involved in a single action, from beginning to end, or it can be used to describe the overall ontogeny, decline, and death of a single individual through a number of lives. An instance of the latter is the "Merely Mind" (*Sems Tsam*) tradition's classification of the sextet of dimmed awareness, karmic formation, consciousness, craving, appropriation, and becoming as the six causal impetuses completed in the former life, and the other six links as the six fruits or results deriving from their impetus (and which constitute the next life) - thus the twelve links are considered to be a completed cycle over the course of two lifetimes. There are numerous other interpretative schemes deriving from the twelve links involving such considerations, but for the time being it will be left at that.

A particularly good discussion of the twelvefold interdependent origination is found in KGYT2 175,2-183,1, organized around the tripartite division into (i) the initial twelve links of the process in which cyclic existence is first formed, (ii) the intermediate twelve links in the process of karmic accumulation (which predominates between initial straying and final enlightenment), and (iii) the final twelve links in the process of straying's reversal (as Buddhahood is attained). The first section, which details the initial dynamics of straying within the Ground's presencing, gives analogies for each link: dimmed awareness is like a blind old woman, karmic formation is like a potter, consciousness is like a monkey (looking all around), name and form is like entering a boat (i.e. entering fictive existence), the sensory fields are like a castle, sensory contact is like kissing, sensation is like an arrow piercing one's eye, craving is like an alcoholic drinking beer, appropriation (i.e. taking on a particular body) is like picking fruit, "becoming" is like embryogeny, birth is like being born from the womb, and the progressive deterioration of aging resulting in death is like carrying a corpse (to cremation, or sky burial). Then when in the post-death visions the light displays are not recognized as self-presencing, the entire cycle continues from the first link just as before.

The second section of KGYT's discussion then details the cycle of causation principally in terms of the various actions we commit (virtuous, nonvirtuous and neutral), which karmically influence our future condition and sustain the ongoing delusion of cyclic existence. As an example, Longchenpa explains the twelve links in the context of taking life by virtue of craving for that creature's flesh. By force of initially embarking on this course by not understanding the nature of this non-virtuous act as non-virtuous, there is dimmed awareness; then actually engaging in the act of slaying is karmic formation or conditioning; then ascertaining the specifics of that which is to be slain (the goat or sheep) is perceptive

consciousness; then the "name and form" of yourself and of that which is to be slain is name and form, or, alternatively, by force of that action becoming established as non-virtuous, there is name and form; because then in experiencing the six objective features of the slain creature as well as of yourself, the non-virtuous cognition "arises" (*sKye*) and the subsequent cognition "spreads" (*mChed*), there are the six or twelve aspects of the sensory field (*sKye mChed*) - alternatively, via the external sensory field of the six objective aspects of that creature to be slain, your own six types of cognition spread forth (internally), and thus by enumerating each pair of the dyadic sensory field, there are six (pairs); then by virtue of cognition contacting the "object" to be slain, there is contact; then via the sensation of the slain creature's suffering and your own happiness, there is sensation; then by desire growing, there is craving; then by force of appropriating or taking on a body in a subsequent negative rebirth, there is appropriation; then when you enter the womb for some type of negative rebirth, there is "becoming"; then by force of birth therein, there is birth; and finally by force of dying after that life's basis deteriorates, there is aging and death. This analysis similarly applies to other non-virtuous acts, and in fact all karmic actions performed in (and creating) the heights and depths of cyclic existence. Thus the twelvefold causation cycle is like an individual confined in a maximum security jail - trapped in cyclic existence you experience uninterrupted suffering without any chance for liberation from the "house" of twelvefold interdependent origination.

The third section of KGYT's discussion deals with the reversal of each of the twelve phases or links, as you become free from cyclic existence. For example in the post-death intermediate state, by recognizing the self-presencing visions as your own nature, dimmed awareness is reversed; via that, karmic formation is reversed; by force of that, consciousness is reversed; by reversing that, the grasping and fixation on name and form is reversed; by reversing that, the apprehension of the six sensory fields is reversed; by reversing that, the sensory contact which dualistically experiences objects is reversed; by reversing that, all sensation is reversed; by force of that, craving for objects is reversed; by thus reversing attachment to objects, the karma of appropriating a subsequent birth is reversed; by reversing that, the taking up of a subsequent existence in the womb is reversed; by reversing entering the womb, birth is reversed; since by not being born you won't die, aging and death is reversed - thus the cyclic flow of twelvefold interdependent origination is cut off, and you are expansively awakened within the sheath of precious internally radiant primordial gnosis, within the primeval Ground.

Comments on some aspects of TDD's description of these twelve links is provided in the following.

(i) *Dimmed awareness*: TCD1 319,3-4 identifies this first link ("dimmed awareness") with the triune dimmed awareness stemming from "compassionate resonance's dynamism not recognizing itself", while specifying the second link as "the four conditions which karmically form and condition cyclic existence". One scholar verbally suggested associating TDD's mention of "non-recognition" with the first aspect of this triune dimmed awareness, while its actual specification of "dimmed awareness" be correlated to the second aspect (implicitly including the third aspect, though in fact KGYT specifically links this third aspect with the second link (i.e. "karmic conditioning")).

(iv) *Names and forms*: TCD1 319,4 instead describes "name and form" as the emergence of our body and "name" deriving from our different karmic actions, with "name" indicating our existence's cognitive-linguistic, i.e. mental, dimension.

(v) The six aspects of our sensory field: these six are the "internal" aspects of our sensory field (*sKye mChed*), the six sensory faculties (ears, nose, eyes, tongue, body, and mind) which operate as gateways for the emergence (*sKye*) and spread (*mChed*) of the corresponding type of consciousness (auditory, olfactory, visual, gustatory, tactile, and mental), and thus enable perception of the external world. The six "external" aspects of the sensory field are the corresponding six aspects of objects this psychic energy spreads out towards - sound, scent, visual form, taste, tactile quality, and their overall image entertained by the mind.

(vi) Sensory contact: at this point, the object, sensory organ, and consciousness come together (in sight, it would be visible form, the eye organ, and visual consciousness), producing sensory contact between the external presence and the internal psyche, such that an internal image corresponding to the external presence is generated.

(vii) Sensations: now that sensory contact has been established, sensations of pleasure, pain, and indifference emerge in dependence upon whether the objects experienced are desirable, undesirable, or somewhere in-between. These sensations then lead naturally to the experience of craving (the next link) for the feelings and sensations inspired by these objects, which is thus correspondingly threefold: craving for repetition of pleasurable sensations, craving for the avoidance of unpleasurable sensations, and the craving or attachment to remaining in a type of lazy equilibrium, where neither pleasure or pain is particularly acute. This is also linked to the three main emotional distortions - desire, hatred, and ignorance - and thus craving for the incorporation of desired objects and elimination of hated objects ensues.

(ix) Appropriation: on the heels of the varied cravings you experience amidst the swelter of sensations, you act on those desires by "taking up" or "grasping at" the objects you associate with feelings of pleasure and so forth, thereby "getting involved in" karma as these actions shape your present and future psychic energy, orienting it towards the patterns of attachment and aversion that you are becoming increasingly fixated on. "Subsequent" or "consequent" individual indicates that this subject who grasps at and appropriates objects with the experience of "I" and "mine" has now emerged as full blown ego "consequently to", and as a consequence of, the previous links.

(x) Rebirth: once craving and grasping come to dominate your psyche, the karmic process and its emotional distortions expand in a variety of ways (correlated to the specific situation), and thus the karmic impetus towards a new "existence" (*Srid Pa*, literally "existence" or "possibility" and connoting rebirth in the next life) takes form as the illusions of straying are perpetuated (TCD1 319,5). Elsewhere translated as "fictive existence", and usually synonymous with "cyclic existence", the term literally means "possibility", "existence" or "becoming", and thus can connote one's "rebirth" into a new way of non-optimal existence. STCP1 717,6 indicates "existence" refers to the five psycho-physical components, since they are the karmically conditioned "existence" or "being" that the individual passing through a cycle of lives is trapped into over and over. In essence it refers to the karmic momentum towards continued distorted existence in the grips of the passions which bridges death and impels the deceased toward another incarnation/incarceration, and thus naturally leads into the next link, that of actual "birth" into one of the three realms of fictive existence. "Birth" itself naturally leads into aging, illness and finally death ("we are racing to our own deaths"), as the seemingly endless cycle of samsaric existence revolves on.

Here "actions" refers to the functioning of karma, wherein your own actions over many lifetimes bear fruit in your present experience via the twelve links of interdependent origination, as others' actions towards you, your environment and so on are the fruition of your own karma, i.e. actions. By virtue of your grasping, there are numerous distorted experiences and appearances, as well as the ongoing experiences of the karmic influences of your actions, which all arise in an undetermined and unpredictable fashion corresponding to your own specific situation. This creates the karmic momentum leading to rebirth, as well as the variegated appearances of the three realms of cyclic existence. For example if you have killed in your previous life, it is quite possible that you will be killed in this present life as a direct fruition of your previous actions, and thus you should understand the latter as no other than the result of your own grasping and conditioned actions - all the pleasures and pains you experience now are a direct effect of your own karmic history. These are "uncertain" as to how they will emerge in the future since a variety of types of situations are possible in dependence on your own actions' particulars, as well as those previous actions' specific effects on your future being also co-determined by a whole host of secondary factors, including your present actions. In addition "uncertain" or "indefinite" is an etymology of "becoming" in its sense of "what is possible", these different states of existence issuing forth in a wide variety of manners in dependence upon your own karma.

165. In other words, the twelve links are initially sparked off during the Ground-presencing, as the cognitive energy present there (awareness' dynamism stemming from the Ground's compassionate resonance) fails to recognize the display as self-presencing, and hence undergoes the transition into dimmed awareness. From dimmed awareness, the other eleven links inexorably unfold as that psyche is dragged deeper and deeper into the illusions of cyclic existence and the fetters of corporeality. That initial twelfold cycle thus operates as the condition for cyclic existence's very presence, the steps or phases in progressing down from that first moment of confused non-recognition into a full scale immersion in delusion and materiality. As such it is precisely those steps which must be reversed so as to turn back the process, and break free from its fetters into liberation. Following that initial cycle and up until definitive liberation, as you pass through death after death, and life after life, numerous chains of these twelfold causation cycles take place in an interlocking manner, though they are in fact all a consequence, after effect or ancillary to the major event - the initial non-recognition, and the ensuing twelfold descent into the web of illusion, which has such tremendous impact on the psyche that it is cast into a millennia of alienation in its wake, proceeding repetitively and obsessively through its twelve fold cycle in the darkness of ignorance.

166. As TCD1 319,6ff clearly indicates in its analogous discussion, after dying you experience the radiant light of reality in a series of visions during the post-death period termed "the intermediate state of reality". First, in dying you experience the radiant light of your own inner luminosity in a series of increasingly subtle experiences partially imaged along the lines of a sun's appearances as normal conscious activity dissolves, and following its revelation your consciousness gradually revives to an immaterial mode of existence wherein experiences the post-death visions of radiant light in the particular forms of the peaceful and wrathful deities, and so forth. While the initial experience of radiant light in dying corresponds to the original Ground of pure potential, the subsequent visions of reality correspond to the phase of the Ground-presencing, which if unrecognized, after a while subside by virtue of that non-recognition (expressed here as "the sun setting"), and the deceased undergoes transition into "the intermediate state of rebirth, or becoming" where

another series of visions gradually leads him/her into a new life (corresponding to the "process of straying" within the Ground-presencing). If in the first instant of that intermediate state of rebirth you recognize your own true nature, then freedom is possible, but if you fail to recognize it and continue to dualistically experience the visions, momentum towards the next life in cyclic existence gathers steam.

According to TCD, when describing the twelve links in terms of a single lifetime, the first link (dimmed awareness) is the non-recognition of your own nature in the first instant of the intermediate state of rebirth (right after the radiant light subsides), the last link (death) is the subsequent cessation of your breath (the conclusion of this next life), while the other links are successively present in between those two. Then in the process of your coarse and subtle elements dissolving as you transfer out of the "sheath" of your present body at death, you experience the reversed sequence of these twelve phases as all coarse distortion temporarily recedes into latency, and your psychic quintessence (though retaining the full constellation of karmic imprints) is thus freed from immersion in cyclic existence and its distortions for a moment. Thus in the intermediate state of death you have symbolically returned to that cosmic moment when the Ground-presencing initially raises up from the Ground, as you are again a mere subtle psychic energy confronted with the transcendent visions of rainbow-colored images (*Nirvana*, or the lighting-up of the post-death "intermediate state of reality"). Again, just as when the illusion first began, you are confronted with two possibilities, or gateways - recognition (and freedom in transcendent reality) or non-recognition (and continued bondage in cyclic existence). Thus for those who squandered the precious opportunity for spiritual refinement (that was offered to them by their previous existence), the visions are seen as other, and disturbing, and hence as they pass again through the impure gateway to cyclic existence, they reenter the twelve fold causal cycle at the first link and progressively pass through the succeeding links as they become materialized and coarsified back into corporeal alienation. Although the Ground and Ground-presencing both remain devoid of dimmed awareness or stains, the illusions of the three realms and six types of beings again rise by force of passing through this impure gateway, just as clouds adventitiously and temporarily obscure the stainless expanse of the sky, without in any way affecting the sky's own essence.

167. The successive stages of the embryo's development are named based on the embryo's visual appearance (see their description of this process later in this chapter - 199,5ff), and "quivering" denotes the first of those stages. Via this embryonic development, "names and concrete forms" come into existence, with "names" signifying the "four name components" and the "concrete forms" signifying the "form components". Human existence is traditionally said to be encapsulated in five psycho-physical components - our physical form, discernment (or perception), sensation (or feeling), karmic conditioning forces (a kind of grab bag including all the various emotional distortions), and perceptive consciousness. Since the latter four are all basically psychic factors, and as such non-physical, they are termed the "four "name" components" in opposition to the physical component, that of "form" ("name and form" thus being in part another version of the psychic/physical split). Thus as our embryo evolves after entering our future mother's womb as impelled by the karmic forces forming its future life, its "name and form", or physical and psychic dimensions, become articulated (see STCP1 715,5ff).

168. The necessary conditions for sensory contact are the presence of the sensory object, the corresponding intact and undamaged sensory organ, and the corresponding consciousness, or cognitive energy directed to it, temporally intersecting with each other.

169. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 421,7; Ati1 511,3). This quote is from a passage explicating the vehicle of the Self Awakened, a classification of teachings stemming from an early period of Indian Buddhism (part of the so-called "lesser vehicle" (*Hīnayāna*), as advocating meditation upon the twelvefold interdependent origination as the entryway to the spiritual path. The disciple is taken to a cemetery, told to look at a corpse, and asked, "From what did this corpse come from in the first, and what is its reality now?" Thus it is the corpse which is being referred to here by "that".

170. In this context, "self-awareness" (or "dimmed awareness of and within yourself") connotes not only an awareness of your own true nature, but also the recognition of external appearances as the self-presencing of your own luminosity (thus pointing out that this very ordinary term "self-awareness" (of course, we are aware of ourselves!) has profounder dimensions than we may first think - "aware as self", the mystery of the Universe). In this confusion then, you cling to "selves" or isolated and self-sufficient entities (including your own self-identity as a "soul" or body) which you have fabricated and abstracted out from the seamless flow of light-energy that is itself innately "devoid" of any such distinctions into self and other, internal and external, subjects and objects. There is only the playful self-mirroring of the One and Only in its self-exploration, which never departs from its own enduring reality. But by grasping in self-confusion to this notion of separate things and people which you are alienated from (and the feeling that your own physical and mental attributes constitute an enduring "self", or "I"), as you then relate in patterns of acceptance and avoidance to these "selves", your own psyche is deformed as these patterns become deeply imprinted upon it. These psychic imprints then further manifest in your ongoing habitually distorted experience of reality and phenomenon, thereby creating new karmic imprints or traces which will themselves subsequently have their own effects, in a self-sustaining and mutually supporting cycle of delusion.

171. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 347,7; Ati2 417,1; also cited by TCD1 320,4).

*Our five limbs and five essential organs*: the "five limbs" refer to the two legs, two arms and single head, while the "five essential organs" are usually given as the heart, lungs, liver, spleen and kidney, though here the gloss substitutes the "vitality channel" (referring to both the spinal cord and the central arterial and venial trunks, with a probably emphasis on the latter) for spleen.

*Fivefold egoic psyche*: while six aspects of the psyche were discussed earlier in the chapter, VLDC 333,3 gives a similar list of five aspects by omitting the first.

*Continuously revolving, we remain in cyclic existence for a long time to come*: the gloss refers to a water mill, and says from one life to the next you will forever revolve in cyclic existence without being freed.

172. Again the significance of "self-presencing", or "self-manifest" must be carefully interpreted to understand how the five types of sensory objects can result from the fivefold pure light simply via our non-recognition of the latter as "self-presencing". This term indicates that the very fabric of the Universe is self-organizing intelligent light, or luminous intelligence, such that the beginning of evolution lies in its capacity to thus experience intelligently its own exteriorized luminosity. By virtue of it going astray in this experience, and failing to recognize its own display as such, not only does the "intelligent" dimension

suffer the shock of dimmed awareness and thus become reduced to a distorted and darkness-shrouded psyche, but the luminous dimension itself (the display of rainbow-colored light) is reduced, disfigured and materialized into opaque, frozen forms of matter. Thus "self" here doesn't denote that the universe is reducible to "me" as an individual ego (idealism or solipsism), but rather simultaneously indicates that primordially the external world is a display deriving from the Universe's vibrant intelligence (which also issues forth as our self-awareness), while subsequently the many perceptual and cognitive interpretations we overlay on the presences that confront us are merely our "own experience", or projections, without being ontologically existent as such. While certainly in the context of the Direct Transcendence and post-death visions the luminous presences experienced therein issue forth directly from the nuclear radiance within our own hearts (the Ground-presencing as present in latent form within us as individuals), Longchenpa is very adamant throughout in refuting idealistic assertions that would deny external presences themselves any reality-status outside of our own individual minds (though the ways in which they are experienced or interpreted have no truth-status beyond the species specific, culture specific, and even "language game" specific context in which they occur). It is only in the movement beyond the specific ego or personality (on the spiritual path) that the boundaries and limitations of self and other begin to dissolve as the twilight zone between the individual and the Universe is entered, and the ambiguity of the ontological difference between beings and the Ground enters a new stage of complexity (Buddhahood). In spiritual awakening, as we ourselves spiral back into the heart or still point of the Universe, we re-contact that dimension of original purity and spontaneous dynamics that is the well-spring of our own existence but which has been buried beneath the accretions of lifetimes of delusion, and in doing so the meaning of "self" assumes an entirely new resonance beyond the tight limitations of our physical body and personal ego which had hitherto been the only "self" we knew.

Ultimately, it is only in this sense that the entire material environment can be said to be "self-presencing" light, though its current appearance as material things constituted of the five elements does itself directly derive from our own karmic imprints, as it is the objective transformation corresponding in general to the shock suffered by dimmed awareness, and in detail to the specific karmic traces of each individual or groups of individuals. After all a single bowl of "water" is traditionally thought to simultaneously appears as pus, water, and ambrosia to three different classes of beings (a starving spirit, human and god respectively), without any one perception having any validity outside of its species-specific context, which clearly illustrates that a perception's final content is self-determined in accordance with the perceiver's physical and mental apparatus (think, for example, of the vast difference between the perception of a human being and of a minute microorganism of the identical thing, or the difference between the perception of a human being and some other imagined extraterrestrial form of intelligent life). Thus the particular forms of "appearances" in our karmic conditioned worlds is itself a "self-projection" (*Rang sNang*) in that it is a direct result of our own karmic history, while the appearances' essential five-colored luminosity is itself not a self-projection in this sense, but rather is the "self-presencing" (*Rang sNang*) of awareness as the Universe's self-organizing intelligent luminosity, from which our own psychic energy derives and which, as such, continues to be present latently within us, as the stainless empty luminosity residing within our heart's core.

173. I have interpreted "retains and gives coherence to varied" in accordance with TDD 243,5, which describes the mind in its function of "comprising" or holding together the varied karmic imprints that are latent propensities impressed on our psychic energy, and continually influencing our experience. In addition "variety" refers to the varied appearances of the

world we live in, as the mind operates as the organizing center which synthesizes the disparate sensory data into a variegated whole from a particular perspective. TCD2 48,1-6 has a discussion of eleven aspects of the mind, including "that which retains and gives coherence to a variety", which Longchenpa explains as referring to the variety of "objects and karmic propensities".

The only mention I can find of a list of five aspects of the mind is on VLDC 327, 6ff, which specifies "the mind apprehending or sustaining a variety", "the pervasive and encompassing mind", "the mind apprehending the dimension of awareness", "the mind synthesizing objects", and "the mind synthesizing other appearances". Since in that passage the five aspects are described in the context of liberation, the ordinary functions they signify are not totally clear. However from the context they seem to refer to, respectively, the mind's plurality of mental operations (memories, reflections, and so on), the mind as being pervasive of all appearances that enter our perceived world, the mind in its capacity for introspection or self-awareness, the mind as sustaining the organs of sensory perception, and the mind as the central agent in the appearances and images synthesized from our sixfold perceptual consciousness' input.

As discussed in the fourth chapter, the mind (*Sems* being a term that exclusively picks out the neurotic mind, with "neurotic" being in the sense of the universal neurosis of non-recognition) is the impure result of awareness' radiation from our heart mixing with the breath-winds from our lungs, with the former being like a "rider" and the latter its "horse". This is indicated here by saying the five aspects of our ordinary mind derive from "reality's radiation" becoming impure, or opaque, while the five aspects of the psyche derive from the winds (the horses) becoming impure. Perhaps relating "radiation" to the mind and the "winds" to the psyche also indicates a distinction between the "mind" as a more general term for our psychic energy, while the "psyche" signifies the mind's particular modes of operation (just as "insight", the pure counterpart of the psyche, is a facet or operation of "primordial gnosis", the pure counterpart of the mind).

174. These five tendencies towards reification are not at all self-evident, and I have as yet not located any discussion of them elsewhere. At present I interpret them in the following manner:

(i) *Our reification of discrete self-identities in how we cling and fixate with our own thoughts and memories*: this involves ascribing a concrete self or substantial status to our own internal thoughts and memories (such as "the time of my life was so happy", "he is so horrible", "I'm very attractive", and so on; it could also refer to our reifying a "soul" or substantial "self" on the basis of our self-consciousness, our subjective sense of ourselves stemming from our being self-aware of our thought as we think).

(ii) *Our reification of self-identities within the plurality of sensory objects*: this involves thinking the external objects we perceive to be actually existent as such, without seeing that they are mere causally conditioned and adventitious composites of different elements, as well as apparent in accordance with our own physical sensory apparatus (a type of naive realism).

(iii) *Our reification of self-identities within the different flickering movements of our mind*: this involves granting some type of independent ontological validity or emotional reality to the various ideas passing through our heads (whether negative or positive), such as racism or liberalism, as well as identifying with roles such as being a patriot, a warrior, or a scientist,



which both involve reifying mere ideas (the flickering movements of thought) into some type of substantial entity, with "flickering" perhaps in particular connoting our emotions which we cling to as veridical in some sort of absolute sense.

(iv) *Our reification of self-identities within the simple, basic aspects of our cognitive activity*: this signifies philosophical reification which goes beyond naive realism (that claims objects are real as such) to claim that perceptual data (blue, breadth, and so on) are what the real constituents which we perceive as objects, and existent as such (again without realizing the relativity even of our sense data), which is related to the claims that "objects may be illusory, but the atoms that are their building blocks are ultimate indivisible entities"; alternatively, this could be interpreted as a type of meditative fallacy, where some might claim that the simple "clarity and awareness" of their mind that they experience after a little meditation is an enduring "self" or "soul".

(v) *Our reification of self-identities within the selectively formed and analyzed mental images of phenomena*: this signifies the culturally, psychologically, perceptually, and linguistically determined mental images (*Chos*) we have of phenomena we believe to exist independent of ourselves, without realizing that this image has been conditioned by the way in which we have selectively attended to only certain aspects of the object in accordance with our particular backgrounds and "programs".

*This latter quintet emerges due to our not cutting off this stirring right in its tracks*: if the stirring or flickering of conceptuality and reification were cut off right in its emergence by the power of recognition and emptiness, then you would be naturally freed into the liberation of the Totally Positive One. If you fail to do so, then you are immersed within its proliferation, which in particular is marked by this fivefold reification from your seamless light-energy of discrete self-sufficient "selves" or identities existing as such within one's own mind, as well as the external appearances you encounter. Thus our world becomes marked by our own successive identifications of our own "self" as well as with roles such as a patriot, a lover, a criminal, and so forth, and our belief in the existence of enduring "things" that are irreducible, non-empty, or non-relative to anything else. Through shedding these reifications as you become spiritually awake, all the vast internal and external panorama of cyclic existence is revealed to be devoid of the concrete identities and "selves" you imagined therein, and as primordially a pure display of empty images within an ocean of seamless light-energy. It is to the explanation of how the seemingly impure remains primordially, and mandalically, utterly pure at all points to which we know turn, both in general and in detailed correspondences.

175. "Clearly manifest while non-existent" (*Med Pa gSal sNang*) could also be rendered as "the radiant lighting-up of absence", or "the vivid appearance of no-thing", and refers to these appearances being experientially luminously present without being existent as any type of corresponding material, discrete thing fragmented-off from other objects as well as the perceiving psyche. They are ultimately no other than the Ground's own self-mirroring, the holistic play of reflections across its brightness like a magical show, or the play of colored light in the projection of a movie against a white screen.

176. In "the self-presencing of primordial emptiness" or "primordially empty and self-presencing", self-presencing connotes that the entire manifestation remains innate to emptiness without involving coarse materiality even in its very appearance, as well as specifying that these appearances are a holistic lighting-up never departing from the clearing-

space of the Ground's original purity - all appearances are no other than its own spontaneous self-organizing dynamics devoid of extrinsic agency, self-dissolving within its original purity as lines of light across the empty range of its expanse. Thus all that we perceive, despite their seeming materiality and solidity, remain essentially "empty forms", or "forms of emptiness" (*sTong gZugs*), pure vibrant energy which clearly appears but is "no-thing" or separate entity abstracted out from the whole. This reveals the significance of the famous lines by Nagarjuna that there is not the slightest bit of difference between cyclic existence and transcendence, and that the limits of one are the limits of the other - the conventional opposition between them is an epistemological one (i.e. of recognition) and not an ontological distinction of substance (see CBD 4,3 for an analogous passage). Everything we experience is no other than the playfulness deriving from awareness' creative efflorescence, and as such never departs from its reality at any point.

177. *Mu Thig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 348,4; Ati2 477,6; also cited by CBD 59,2). CBD 58,6-59,2 provides a good summary of the quote. Though our perception of the rope as a snake (which gives rise to fear, and so forth) seems to be true in our erroneous perspective, yet in fact is only a delusory "superficial" (i.e. "conventional") perception - if someone shows us that in fact it is a rope, our erroneous perception of it as a snake will be reversed, and we will believe that in fact it is a rope. In reality, though it might then seem that the "rope" is somehow "true", in fact it can be analyzed into its individual strands (showing a "rope" as our linguistic-conceptual image is a convenient fiction), which can be further analyzed into its atomic structures, showing there is no "truth" with ontological status independent of our conditioned and contextualized perception of it as being so. In the same way, the Awakened Ones can show us emptiness (the "rope"), and thereby undercut out hitherto steadfast belief in substantial entities (the "snake"), and then further show that the entire framework of "things" is itself not applicable as they reveal the "great namelessness" of original purity wherein all "phenomena" (*Chos*) are exhausted (the "atomic particles"). Thus the ultimate illusory or deceptive character of ordinary experiences is validated by virtue of it being possible to have an experience of them as illusory, and the existence of "Buddhas" who actually have such "authentic" perceptions. The seemingly realist flavor of this misperception (i.e. the rope after all does exist) is however thoroughly undercut, as the "true" object (the rope) which has itself been misperceived (as a snake) cannot itself survive scrutiny as something other than an illusion, and Longchenpa himself is little concerned to maintain the validity or truth-status of conventional perceptions. He is a thinker devoted to the contradictory project of thinking out the no-thing, and is concerned with "things" to the degree that he must phenomenologically account for how this seeming ascendancy of "things" can be reconciled with the continuing reality of no-thing (the mechanism of illusion), while caring relatively little for the validity of these "things" that can be salvaged in the truth of illusion (whether in support of conventional logical analysis, morality, or other pet projects).

*Like mistakenly seeing a rope as a snake, with these varied appearances we perceive them as what they are not, giving rise to the duality of externality and internality, i.e. the material environments and life forms therein:* Ati's glosses indicate this passage concerns how you reverse the "ground of straying", and the means for freeing yourself from the plurality of distorted appearances. Analogically a rope is seen as a snake because of a simple error in interpretation of the visual data, just as we see the appearances of cyclic existence because of our "misinterpretation" of the presences we experience - in both cases the object of perception does not authentically exist as such beyond our mere perception of it as being so. The fact that it remains possible to validly experience the rope as a rope emphasizes that this

doesn't entail any mysterious "thing in itself" beyond our capacities for knowing, but rather signifies that we must "change gears" into a different way of knowing, such that we think, perceive, and interpret in a manner that accords with the final reality of our situation.

*These environments and life forms are primordially empty, as the ultimate only seems to have such concrete form within the dissimulating process of the conventional:* NGB and Ati gloss "primordially empty" as "within awareness' primordial original purity", while Ati indicates those appearances are not authentically or genuinely established as such. The final line could also be rendered as "ultimately they possess only a conventional, dissimulating form", but I have chosen to translate it slightly idiosyncratically to bring out the non-duality of the "ultimate" and the "conventional" (i.e. emptiness itself is light, the light that is misperceived as concrete, material worlds and living beings), as well as emphasize the phenomenological validity of the conventional (i.e. it is undeniably true that in our present state of mind, we do experience these forms as such).

Buddhist texts often use the analytical classification of "two truths" that correspond to an "ultimate" dimension (*Don Dam*) and "conventional" dimensions (*Kun rDzob*), which etymologically read as "supreme or sacred significance" and "all-obscuring", and are distinguished only perspectively (i.e. this classification is in relation to epistemology, not ontology). Here the "ultimate" is associated with primordial emptiness, while the "conventional" truth corresponds to the perception that there are concrete, substantial forms that exist as such in the "ultimate" analysis. Ati clearly indicates this by saying ultimately "they are not established", while "merely conventionally they manifest" as concrete forms. However the dyad of ultimate/conventional is used on many levels, and thinking purely that form is conventional truth (manifest to ordinary mistaken perception) and utter emptiness is ultimate truth (revealed to in-depth analysis) would be mistaken in the context of the Great Perfection. Emptiness is itself naturally and innately dynamically active (though these appearances are utterly fluid, and devoid of limiting materialization), just as the primordial Ground is equally original purity (emptiness) and spontaneous presence (manifestation), and thus the distorted appearances or manifest form (conventional) can also be opposed to the pure visions or empty form (ultimate). Thus in the context of the fourth of the Direct Transcendence visions the "ultimate" appearances of the Spiritual Bodies are termed "phenomenal" (*Chos Can*) in opposition to the "reality" (*Chos Nyid*) within which they must be dissolved, and thus both the ultimate and conventional forms are in the final analysis primordially and utterly empty.

*The perception of a snake is phenomenologically true in terms of our seeing it as so, but seeing the rope instead is authentically true:* since phenomenologically it is true that under certain conditions a snake is perceived, just as under certain karmic conditions most humans (being of the same species) will experience the same overall dualistic illusions, it is a kind of "truth", albeit only conventionally. While not true in any type of ontological or independent sense, it can be verified in terms of a particular perceiver or group of perceivers' perceptions (like a "language game"). However seeing the snake itself, or the ultimate emptiness of all appearances, is the way things really are, and thus is authentically true, a truth which applies to the very fabric of the Universe (and as such basically inexpressible, only poetically and meditatively evocable) rather than to the individual perceiver or community of perceivers (expressed in concretely formulated laws, maxims, prejudices, and so on). Here rendered as "authentically" (*Yang Dag*), the term etymologically means "ultra-purity", or the "ultimate".

Analogically, it is like the appearance of a bird on a promontory: the nature of these two truths is that this transitory world is merely conventional dissimulation, which the authentic reality has no relationship to - in the expanse of emptiness, everything is free within its essence: The perception of the snake and the appearance of a bird on a promontory are images for conventional truth, the final three lines describe the astonishing freedom inherent in the ultimate truth, and the intervening lines ("the nature of these two truths is that this transitory world is merely conventional dissimulation") describe the relation between these two truths: the very opposition of conventional to ultimate is itself merely conventional, since ultimately there is only one truth totally beyond any relationship to the conventional (a one truth which is also no truth, i.e. it is not some type of truth claim with logical status that we can linguistically and conceptually verify as such). As for this image of the "bird on the promontory", NGB, Ati and CBD's reading of *Bya gNas* (a bird situated on a promontory) for *Byar sNang*, along with their gloss, "when the bird flies, there is no longer any connection between the bird and the promontory", makes the meaning quite clear. When the bird is on the ground, we perceive it to be some rock or vegetation firmly connected to the ground as part of the natural landscape and believe it to be really so, as firmly rooted to the earth as we are. But when suddenly it flies off into the sky's expanse, all relationship with the ground vanishes and we are left with a sense of amazement as it soars through the sky. In this manner conventional truth is like the deceptive perception of the bird as resident on the promontory, while ultimate truth is its flying through the sky, divested of any relationship to the ground below it. Thus it is a stunningly beautiful image - just as the bird flies into the sky and is free of its seemingly inescapable bonds to the earth, in ultimate truth we are all free within emptiness' expanse - our relationships with seemingly concrete realities is a fantasy, an illusion that vanishes when we let ourselves be released into the emptiness that is our true home. NGB and Ati gloss "the authentic reality" with "from the vantage point of the ultimate", and in fact we could also render this line as "ultimately we have no connection to it". "No relationship" indicates not only that enlightened perception is from its own side divested of ordinary experience and belief in the distorted appearances of cyclic existence, but also that ultimately there is only one truth - that of the supremely significant (the empty and luminous Mind-as-such) - and the relationship between "two truths" dissolves in the expansive awakening of Buddhahood. Of course analogically this is the flight of the bird, divesting itself of its seemingly fixed relationship or contact with the earth. Thus Ati glosses the final line as "by realizing freedom within original purity, everything is naturally freed within thoroughly pure awareness".

178. *rGyud bLa Ma*; the Sanskrit title is *Uttaratantra* (the critical edition of the Tibetan translation 153; Sanskrit edition 78; English translations in Holmes' *The Changeless Nature* 70, Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga* 306, and Obermiller's *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* 238). I have translated *sGyu Ma sPrul Pa* as two separate items ("magical illusions and phantoms") in accordance with Longchenpa's lead in comments, though it could be rendered as "illusory phantoms", i.e. phantoms conjured up by illusion or magic (as all three translations interpret it).

179. Thus through the karmic mechanism of our universal psychic ground and its latent imprints, our psycho-physical components and so forth ultimately derive from our own mind's neurotic flow, and as such never depart from the range of mind-as-such (*Sems Nyid*). Literally "mind itself", and often translated as "the nature of the mind", mind-as-such simply refers to the luminous and empty awareness at the heart of our psyche which, in that it is our mind's ultimate and permanent nature, is the ultimate source and ongoing range within which

all the preceding takes place (and from which it ever departs). How could our mind be divorced from its own nature?

180. *rGyud bLa Ma*; the Sanskrit title is *Uttaratantra* (the critical edition of the Tibetan translation 83; Sanskrit edition 42; English translations in Holmes' *The Changeless Nature* 40, Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga* 236, Obermiller's *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* 187; also cited by TCD1 60,6; YZD 90,4). The sequence here clearly indicates correlating earth to our psycho-physical components, sensory elements and sensory faculties; water to our karmic actions and emotional distortions; air to our distorted psychic activity; and space to our mind's pure nature (the Tibetan text also subsequently makes these correlations explicit). This talk of "earth rests on water" and so forth refers to a traditional Buddhist description of the world, with its "earth" being based on, or supported by water, water in turn resting on a disc of wind, and wind in turn resting on space (which is itself without any basis), which it utilizes as a powerful analogy for its description of our ordinary mental processes and their relation to our inner core of empty luminosity - just as space alone survives cosmic destruction unaltered, it is the empty enlightened luminosity at our core that alone survives the ravages of time without variance or destruction. This sequence (earth to water to wind to space) has an obvious "logic" to it as it begins with the most "solid" or "tangible" of the elements, and proceeds down through the other three elements which are progressively less solid, and less tangible. Thus in traditional Indian Buddhist descriptions of the world's origination (as opposed to its dissolution), it is given in the reverse order, with the less tangible (a "circle of wind") originating first in space, upon which a circle of water develops, and then finally earth as the physical environment takes concrete shape (see Poussin's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* 451ff, etc.), such that in descriptions of the world it is said that at its bottom is this vast circle, or disc, of wind, and so on.

TCD1 prefaces this passage thus:

"...Like magical illusions and dreams, in their very appearance as presences they are not established, and are merely distorted appearances which clearly presence forth while empty and devoid of essence. They emerge from our dimmed awareness of mind-as-such's essence (self-emergent primordial gnosis), and arise such that they obscure the Essence. Thus if these distorted appearances are cleansed away, the stainless radiant light comes to the fore.

In the present, these are such that they arise by force of karma and emotional distortions, and are based and rest on the essence of karma and the emotional distortions. They (karma and the emotional distortions) in turn are based upon the distorting and pervasive reifications of our constellation of six (or seven) modes of perceptual consciousness along with the universal psychic ground. That itself then resides on the pure nature of our mind's suchness (self-emergent primordial gnosis), while since that itself (our mind's nature) doesn't rest on anything at all, it is termed "self-emergent primordial gnosis"..."

*On our distorted psychic activity: Tshul bZhin Ma Yin Yid Byed. Tshul bZhin Ma Yin* literally means "improper" or "distorted", while *Yid Byed* literally reads as "mind-act", though it often means attention, or directing the mind to specific objects. Here it basically indicates mental fixations or libidinal cathexis - "distorted psychic activity" revolving around dualistic clinging. This line is omitted in TDD, but I have restored it here as quoted in the TCD: "*Yid La Byed La rTag Tu gNas*".

181. *sGyu 'Phrul gSang sNying*; the corresponding Sanskrit title would be *Māyājāla Guhyagarbha* (see Dorje's thesis 186 for his critical edition of the Tibetan translation, p. 438 for his English translation, and p. 450 for his English translation of Longchenpa's commentary). Longchenpa here gives an abbreviated version of this passage, though capturing its essential significance.

182. *rTsa Ba Shes Rab*; the Sanskrit title is *Prajñānāmūlamadhyamakakārikā* (the Sanskrit text and English translation can be found on Kalupahana's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 178-179; also cited on KGYT2 136,1; CBD 50,6; YZD 429,4). See KGYT for follow-up remarks.

183. *rTsa Ba Shes Rab*; the Sanskrit title is *Prajñānāmūlamadhyamakakārikā* (the Sanskrit text and English translation can be found in Kalupahana's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 101; also cited on STCP1 712,6 and GGC1 160,4). These are the opening dedicatory verses of this famous work (directed towards the historical Buddha), and have been deliberately misquoted by Longchenpa (*Zhir brTen Pa* for *Zhi bsTan Pa*) to emphasize his interpretation. STCP and GGC's citations give the correct reading of "taught as" (*bsTan Pa*) instead of TDD's "based on" (*brTen Pa*) - I have translated such that both readings' sense comes out, since the latter reading ties in with the overall context of this section concerning phenomena resting upon the ultimate nature of the mind. All the phenomena emergent in interdependent origination are primordially serene, with natures that are devoid of all these discursive elaborations, and thus "you must realize (these phenomena) as having natures such all these discursive elaborations are quieted (i.e. don't apply)" (STCP's preface). TDD's reading here emphasizes that the ultimate basis and ground of these phenomena is the serene mind-as-such (the original purity of the Ground unruffled by all the karmic turbulence), to which none of these discursive elaborations apply or have any relevance. Obviously Longchenpa's interpretation is more in line with Candrakīrti's interpretative tact as described by Kalupahana (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 102), with "interdependent origination" itself being an illusory mechanism that is the inner essence of distorted perception, while enlightenment concerns the serene dimension of the Ground to which such a thing-based mechanism has no applicability.

184. I have corrected *Bye Brag rNam rTog* to *Bye Brag rNam Dag* ("As for its purity in detail"), since it is clear that this marks the beginning of the aforementioned second section on the detailed correspondences (*Bye Brag*) which illustrate how every dimension of cyclic existence is a reflection of a pure transcendent counterpart, correspondences with a poetic force evoking a sense of what enlightened perception must entail (this type of poetic tour de force is expanded on at the end of the third chapter as well). Otherwise the former reading is viable, being translated as "differentiating conceptual activity", the conceptual and linguistic process of discrimination and labeling by which the appearances of cyclic existence take form in our perception.

Since all the appearances of cyclic existence's three realms are initially apprehended and abstracted out from the dimension of the expanse, each exists in intimate correlation with that dimension: every dimension and factor of impure cyclic existence can be correlated with a dimension/factor of the pure expanse, since the former are reflections of the latter, relating to them as low intensity energy to high intensity energy. Everything in the confined world of an individual trapped in the illusion of otherness has this dual aspect of the pure and the impure, which in part can be understood as the optimal, high-energy dynamics of the absolute and the constricted, low energy dynamics of the individual. Thus the dimension of

the expanse not only signifies emptiness, but also the "dimensions of the expanse", i.e. the Spiritual Bodies, gnostic light energies, etc., leading to translating this line as "since all the appearances involved in cyclic existence with its three realms are first apprehended as dimensions of the expanse, they exist in intimate correlation with its dimensions." In essence it refers to extracting and reifying appearances out of luminous emptiness (expanse-dimension), as well as to the initial apprehension of Spiritual Bodies, gnostic energies and so forth (factors of the expanse) which are then solidified into impure appearances (our ordinary corporeal body, mind, etc.) - our psycho-physical components are correlated to the Spiritual Bodies, our ordinary mind to primordial gnosis, the five material elements to the five lights, and so forth.

185. Thus in actuality they remain within reality's emptiness like reflections (devoid of any substantial entity beyond their appearance), and as they manifest in the present moment, our psycho-physical components, elemental energies and so forth remain in intimate correlation with the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses: the intention behind Longchenpa's description of every facet of our existence as being in "intimate correlation" with these pure spiritual realities (our ordinary body and the Awakened Ones' Spiritual Bodies, our ordinary mind and primordial gnosis, etc.) is to jar us into perceiving the latter as primary "facts" of the macrocosmic and microcosmic Universe, since it is they that are the source and underlying reality of what we normally misperceive and misinterpret to be the case. This is in stark contrast to the tradition that describes enlightened states of being and "purity" as somehow being manufactured anew out of the thorough impurity of our present existence, or those who believe such purity is totally beyond our capacities. Rather, these dimensions are present within us right now as our primordial core reality, and everything we experience in, and via, ourselves thus bears the indelible imprint of Being, with dynamics and facets that reflect the dynamics of the Ground and Ground-presencing's purity in correspondences which we can poetically trace right here and now - such a feeling can be seen in the ancient heresy that we are ourselves "God", that in fact right amidst our seeming corporeality we are truly beings of light. It is to this end that Longchenpa applies these multi-dimensional symbolic interpretations of every facet of our existence, such as saying our birth is the "Emanational Body" (alternatively we might interpret our "birth" as the shaking forth of awareness from the original expanse in the cosmic drama, and so on), our physical existence is the "Enjoyment Body", and our death is the empty Reality Body (TCD2 111,6-7), interpretations that not only jar us out of our normal sedimented perceptions, but also give us valuable readings of what these elaborate analyses of enlightened existence really refer to by pointing out their "subdued", "dimmed" presence in our existence's fabric. An example of the fluidity of these correlations is TCD2 111,3ff, where first (111,4) Longchenpa correlates our ordinary life phases with an enlightened Buddha's qualities, and then (112,3) correlates those same phases the process of an awakening individual's reversal of straying as s/he moves towards enlightenment. This type of shifting, poetic, multi-dimensional unrestricted hermeneutical tact (including the "creative etymologizing" I have previously discussed) is embodied in the tradition's philosophical/meditative vision of primordial emptiness (there being, in the final analysis, no-thing, how could meaning anchored or restricted to any-thing?), and while celebrating in the unending "play" of meaning possible in all language and thought, nonetheless participates in such play as a highly directed means to trace our way back to our "source". While Western philosophy continues in the latest version of metaphysics' nihilistic death throes, some may be tempted to see this as a version of the traditionalist Western philosopher's refusal to give up his logocentric dream of an "origin" as s/he insists on shutting down or limiting the free play of meanings. It remains true that Longchenpa, despite his brilliant corpus including numerous literary masterpieces, is quite representative of the

Buddhist tradition in his soteriological valuation of lived experience over intellectual discourses (though, of course, to explain "lived experience" itself requires a lengthy essay), and emphasis on the need for "psychological" transformations in our capacity for visionary modes of being as the overriding rationale of philosophical and poetic discourse rather than "purely" theoretical issues ("a scholastic matter"). To truly evaluate these writings is extremely difficult for traditional Eurocentric Western thinkers (a category that it would seem quite reasonable to place Derrida within) with their severe compartmentalization of thought and discourse against the backdrop of an overly intellectualized approach to lived experience as we exist in the world (which is not to place the living Tibetan Buddhist tradition beyond criticism, as it is difficult not to find them (in my own opinion) consistently guilty of reactionary hermeneutics and politics, despite their admirably holistic approach to what we may call neither "philosophy", "religion", or "psychology" without doing it a severe injustice).

186. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 112,7; Ati1 135,4). This passage is part of a section responding to the question, "What is the causal impetus behind emotional distortions' emergence?" Thus the topic of explanation here is to explain the mechanism by which primordially pure dimensions manifest and are perceived in the distorted fashions that are normative in cyclic existence.

*The nature of their straying into distorted appearances is primordial gnosis, yet they haven't seen it as such previously:* this line indicates that all this distortion (which can be understood either as a violent chaos, or dim, dull weighed down solidity) as experienced both subjectively and objectively, is in fact no other than pale, distorted reflections of primordial gnosis' own primordial luminosity, and yet in that we have not recognized them as such up until now, they continue to exert a powerful influence over us. It could also be interpreted as "yet previously they didn't see it as such", which would emphasize the primeval moment when the proto-consciousness' non-recognition marked the inevitable onset of cyclic existence, a moment which repeats itself over and over in the subsequent long journey through the darkness of self-forgetting. In particular, the holistic rainbow-colored lighting-up of the Ground-presencing isn't "interpreted" or recognized as primordial gnosis' own radiation, and this is "forgotten" or "not seen", whereby we consequently consciously and unconsciously systematically construct materialized, granulated things from the seamless light in accordance with our progressively rigidified, and neuroticized psyche. Thus in our failure to recognize and embrace the higher order dimension within our own being, in confusion we give ourselves over to dualistic attachments and fixation as we become immersed in frozen, congealed states/forms of energy rather than their pure vibrant source.

*Their universal psychic ground is realized as the great Body of Reality:* while in the fourth chapter Longchenpa criticizes those who too readily confuse our "universal psychic ground" with the Reality Body, the present statement is based on the Body of Reality being present within our own hearts, while the universal psychic ground is its mere impure efflorescence which has come to adventitiously obscure it, just as the sun may be obscured (and then revealed) by the clouds, without, however, entailing that the sun can be reduced to simply a purified form of those same clouds. Thus it must be understood here that you see through the obscurations back to the source, and thus where once the universal psychic ground was in the ascendancy, its total dissipation now allows the Body of Reality to shine forth in all its transcendent glory.



*These psycho-physical components with the identity of Buddhahood emerge through the development of the letters present within their energy channels:* as discussed in the third chapter, our five psycho-physical components symbolically correspond to the classic quintet of "spiritual families" (iconographically represented as five Buddhas mandalically arranged with their "entourages"), and are literally an "incarnation" of their fivefold energy (though in a diluted, or non-optimal fashion). More generally, TCD2 111,6 says:

"...Having perfectly completed the spiritual path, the correlations of the expansive awakening into the three Spiritual Bodies (with ordinary life and death) is as follows: our birth manifests as the dimension of the Emanational Body, our embodied life enjoying objects as the Enjoyment Body, and death as the empty Reality Body..."

TCD1 344,2 describes the connection between our energy channels and the three Spiritual Bodies thus:

"...Our body's energy channels effect the cessation, engendering, and endurance of both the ultimate and conventional (energies/seminal nuclei), as well as the experiences of all feelings of bliss and suffering. Thus the body of the visionary is present with the identity of the three Spiritual Bodies. To expand on that, by understanding the characteristics of the body's origination, you attain certainty as to the Reality Body; by understanding its endurance, you likewise attain certainty as to the Enjoyment Body; and by understanding its destruction, you attain certainty as to the Emanational Body..."

The key to these correspondences is that every dimension can be present either in vibrant or congealed form, with the latter stemming from the former's dynamics. Thus though the fivefold components of human existence never depart from their ongoing reality of the five Buddha families, within the developing embryo they deceptively emerge ridden with emotional distortions via the dynamics of these "letters" within our internal energy channels. Our seminal nuclei are said to visually (or aurally) appear as "letters" within the internal channels in which they flow, with the letters indicating the "frequency" or energy vibration of the germinal light energy that "seminal nuclei" signifies. These energies then, which directly correspond to the five Buddhas' spiritual gestalts and are a direct reflection of our inner core of pure luminosity, materialize into (and sustain in an ongoing manner) the five psycho-physical components of our human life. Thus our entire psycho-physical existence is originally derivative from this pure gnostic energy of these seminal nuclei, which entails that it is a direct self-organizing expression of our inner core of luminous enlightened intelligence, even though we fail to recognize it as such.

This is clearly shown in KGYT2 151,1, where "(in embryogeny the seminal nuclei) are established within those channels in the form of minute letters" is correlated to "the manifesting enlightenment via seed syllables (in the visual generation of a deity's image)". The context of this passage is the correlation of material embryogeny's various developmental aspects (i.e. the formation of an embryo within the womb) with spiritual embryogeny's various developmental aspects (i.e. the generation of oneself as a deity in meditative visualization, summarized into five phases termed "manifesting enlightenments" - here the phase referred to is when the deity's seed syllable emerges, from which his/her entire body will unfold), the former being the impure correlate to the latter's pure dimension. Thus the "letters" play a key role in the unfolding of our psycho-physical components as we take on a new body within cyclic existence, such that the fivefold spiritual energies (the five

"families") are obscured by their low level derivational energies (our five psycho-physical components), just as from the syllables of Enlightened Speech the deities' visualized Bodies spring forth. The particular roles these "letters in the channels" play is the embryo's development is detailed later in this chapter (see TDD 201), as well as the corresponding chapter in TCD1. These "letters", or seminal nuclei, are also of continuing importance in our physical and psychic life, as they represent the nuclear centers for different dimensions of energy resonating in our body, and as such play key roles in treating sickness, and so forth.

In addition, just as the psycho-physical components are essentially impure derivatives of the five Buddha families, these letters are simply the impure aspects of the spiritual seed syllables, vibrations of sacred tones/frequencies which give rise to the Spiritual Bodies (there are phonemes corresponding to the germinal seed energy of the six types of beings, and similarly each type of Spiritual Body also has a germinal seed energy expressed in sonic form). KGNT (see below) clearly indicates how pure dimensions are transformed into impure derivatives, which entails that the impure remains primordially in contact with this enlightened energy - in this context, the "letters in the channels" are the seminal nuclei whose nuclear energy is primordial gnosis, and thus in their acting as the source of our five components, the ultimate and ongoing source of those components is revealed to be the gnostic energy, summarized as the "five Buddhas" (with the particular energy of each component corresponding to the pure form of that energy represented by its corresponding Buddha. Thus both cyclic existence and transcendence derive from these nuclei, or "letters", with the former primordially never departing from the latter. Another way to look at it is that the five lights are primordial gnosis' dynamism, which in a distorted environment are materialized into the five elements; these five elements in their "vibrant" forms (*Dwangs Ma*) within us are the "seminal nuclei", and these seminal nuclei are sonically present as "letters" within our energy channels. References to these "letters" being our inner winds' natural sound merely reflect the indivisibility of these winds and seminal nuclei (the former being the "carrier wave" for the latter, and both involving the elemental energies).

Given the relative paucity of materials available on this subject in the West, it seems a short mention of some pertinent passages on these "letters within channels" may be helpful. In general, it is important to keep in mind that these "letters" or "syllables" represent dimensions of energy in the intricate symbolic nexus presented in tantric physiology, and generally are closely related to the seminal nuclei (i.e. "letters" are one way to signify or evoke these nuclei). VNT2 50,1-52,5 in explaining *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* deals with "letters" extensively, under the heading of *rTags bKod Yi Ge'i sGra Don: Vimalamitra glosses* (52,2) "the letters present within our body" as "Āli-kāli" (i.e. the "vowels" (*Āli*) and "consonants" (*Kāli*) of the alphabet), saying that within each channel its corresponding letter is present, and that by focusing on these letters our karmic winds are exhausted. TCD1 339,3 (also 357,6) discusses the "letters present within our channels" in the context of embryogeny, and indicates that emotions stem from these letters' agitation and activation (here talking about the syllable "Yam"). TCD1 342,2 says that specifics of living beings' cognition being sharp or dull is brought about by the relative clarity or lack of clarity of the letter Ram within a fire energy channel). KGNT1 426,1 says that within our three main energy channels the triad of syllables *Om Āḥ Hūm* are present, which in impure modes (i.e. ordinary sentient beings) act as the foundation for the ripening of ordinary body, speech, and mind for sentient beings, and in pure modes (i.e. when we engage in authentic contemplation) act as the ground for the Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind, while in the fruit of Buddhahood they operate as the foundation of the three Spiritual Bodies. KGNT1 354,3 and 355,4 describe how our body is formed from primordial gnosis, while KGNT1 428,4 says our body forms via the gnostic

winds' dynamism. KGYT2 171,2-172,4 deals with the seminal nuclei being characterized as "letters", saying that the seminal nuclei are present as grain-sized "nuclei" of vibrant energy within the center of our five subtle wheels. These are (i) "in nature" seminal nuclei, (ii) "in aspect" letters, and (iii) "in essence" are present as the fivefold primordial gnosis and the five Spiritual Bodies. At the crown are the white syllables Ha and Ra, at the throat the yellow syllables Ri and Tsa, at the heart the blue syllables A and Ma, at the navel the red syllables Ni and Hrih, and at the genitals the green syllables Sa and Ya.

KGNT1 427,4 says that within the "channel-knots" located at the middle of all these subtle wheels, are the two catalytic nuclei that we inherit from our father and mother, and their five-colored quintessences (or "vibrant energy") are essentially present as letters (it then gives the same list as right above, except that at the heart it indicates a Hrih is present rather than an "A"). KGNT1 428,1ff explains this passage in some detail. Our body is primordially the five Buddhas, since it is formed from primordial gnosis' fivefold dynamism via its presence as seminal nuclei-letters in our internal channels, indicated by the five-colored quintessence (427,4). Within the conventional seminal nuclei (the five elements' quintessential energy) in the form of letters at the locations described above, the gnostic seminal nuclei are inseparably present as their main energy source(431). 432,2ff indicates these seminal nuclei are from primordial gnosis' dynamism, and as such are the vitality of everything - they are present in our body like opened sesame seeds, with the gnostic seminal nuclei pervading like oil pervades sesame seed. Thus the letters are the seminal nuclei, i.e. our internal five elements' quintessences which ultimately from the rainbow-colored light dynamism of primordial gnosis. KGNT1 435,3ff clearly indicates that both our "inner winds" and "ordinary mind" are primordial gnosis' dynamism or creativity - the former signifying its "movement" and the latter its "radiance" - and as such are arbitrary terms rather than reflecting discrete, separate entities. It also indicates that the five external elements emerge via our grasping at primordial gnosis' dynamism in non-recognition, and thus our body takes form as those elements' vibrant quintessence. With our body's formation, we then label primordial gnosis' dynamism in the form of these quintessential energies as "inner channels, winds, and seminal nuclei", which in fact are just artificial names applied to different facets of primordial gnosis' dynamism under the distorting conditions of cyclic existence. KGNT1 436,5ff says that the five elements are the dynamism of primordial gnosis, and since primordial gnosis is present within them, they are the five primordial gnosés. Those five elements' vibrant quintessences are what are referred to as "the catalytic seminal nuclei", and hence those catalytic conventional nuclei are indivisible from primordial gnosis (which generates them in the first place). These vibrant energies or nuclei in general pervade the entire body, but in particular they concentrate within the five energy wheels as five-colored seed-potencies in the form of letters, which are indivisible from the peaceful and wrathful deities. The basic point is that our entire psycho-physical existence is sustained from the internal radiation or brightness of the heart's gnostic energy shining through our body's "luminous channels", and thus our ordinary body and mind are merely the materialized, distorted and diluted energy of this enlightened nucleus of luminosity that remains ever present at our being's center. The most vibrant aspect of these diluted energy-flows are the conventional nuclei, which are also like "seed-letters" in that they give rise to the body's "language", as well as being high-energy semi-material "vibrations" like a syllable is vibrations of sound emanating through the air. KGNT1 443,3 says that the quintessences of our five internal elements, i.e. the catalytic seminal nuclei, are "externally" the five elements, "internally" the five psycho-physical components, "esoterically" the five quintessences, "ultra-esoterically" the five letters, and "unsurpassedly" the five Sky Dancers.

In this context, Padmasambhava describes the relation between our body and primordial gnosis thus:

"...By our dimmed awareness of the Ground's primordial gnosis from the very beginning, our body is formed. In this body are the vibrant energies of the five elements whose nature is primordial gnosis, and thus in the form of catalytic nuclei they are present as the play of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses. By force of their radiance and lucency luminously manifesting, they are instead labeled "the three primordial gnoses"..."

KGNT1 454,6 says "that primordial gnosis present in our inner channels" which obviously plays off "the letters present in our inner channels". KGNT1 492,1 specifically says that since our material body derives from our misinterpretation and materialization of the five primordial gnoses' natural glowing, it is like a magical illusion: since it forms from primordial gnosis in the first place, in this very moment our physical body (or "psycho-physical components") is none other than the Spiritual Body of the Buddhas. KGNT1 494,4 says this body is "in the first" formed from primordial gnosis, "in the present" has the identity of Buddhahood, and "in the end" is freed within primordial gnosis. KGNT2 52,1ff shows how our body is the Victors' pure land, and says that in the middle of our five main energy wheels there are the quintessences of the five elements obtained from our father and mother as letters with the five-colored natural light of primordial gnosis (described as above, i.e. "Ha" and "Ra" in the crown and so on). "Externally" they act as the foundation for the ripening of dimmed awareness' five emotional poisons, and "internally" with purity they act as foundation for the manifestation of the five primordial gnoses. Along with the above mentioned presence of the syllables Oṃ Aḥ Hūm in our three main inner channels (which internally/purely they operate as the foundation for the manifestation of the three Spiritual Bodies), these "letters" entail that our conventional physical body is the mandala of the Buddhas, with the seeds of the Buddhas uninterruptedly present as these letters. KGNT1 500,3ff describes the nuclei "internally" as the Sky Dancer consort pairs within the five inner wheels; "esoterically" as the letters, with a quote saying the essence of awareness is present as letters in the channels of the illusory body; and "ultra-esoterically" it is present as the single seminal energy.

*Primordial gnosis is self-manifest from their water-bubble eyes, yet no one sees it! The distorted appearances consequent upon their straying from it emerge from the key dynamics of the lamps:* "water bubble eyes" refers to the physical eyes (based on their visual appearance), and thus this indicates that primordial gnosis is directly manifest in sensory immediacy before your eyes without involving some type of special "third eye" or other spiritual vision (and yet still we don't see!). The gnostic lamps (see Chapter Six) are the key operators of the inner core of enlightened luminosity continually present within all life forms as that from which all mental and physical vibrancy derives (often these lamps are classified into a quartet which can be roughly identified as our eyes, seminal nuclei, insight, and inner space). Thus these lamps' divisions are merely analytical terms for discussing primordial gnosis' radiation and its pathways/gateways within the structure of our existence, and as such are the key to understanding this empty luminosity's presence or obscuration within our physical and psychic lives - while always present, it can be subdued or veiled from our view, such that it recedes into a mere latent force operating indirectly. Since the "lamps" are just images for the pathways, forms and awareness of our own inner light (which enables us to experience the outer light, or "appearances"/"presencing"), they account for our experience or consciousness whether it is distorted (a reduced intensity) or optimal/enlightened (incandescent). Everything has this double aspect of being positive (optimally functioning)

or negative (dimmed intensity), corresponding to the overall state of the life form they are found within, and thus appearances, even when severely distorted, must ultimately stem from the lamps' dynamics (even though one may be led to misinterpret these "lamps" as a type of transcendent spiritual dimension wholly beyond cyclic existence). In fact the lamps are fully within us throughout, an image for the vibrant quintessential energies of our body/mind which are the ongoing source of our life and awareness, remaining untainted by their derivative physical and psychic sedimented waste products, pollutants or toxins that devitalize us into states far below our capacities.

All their speech, however it may be expressed, is the recitation of the esoteric secret mantras, emerges from the key dynamics of seed syllables' varied transformations: these seed syllables are symbolic of germinal energy (each Buddha or deity has its corresponding "seed syllable" which represents its essential characteristic energy in sonic form, whose varied "vibrational energies" (like a "sound frequency") corresponds to the forms into which they manifest or give rise to. Thus these syllables or resonances are more basic than what we normally take to be "language", since they are patterns of high intensity energy stemming from the heart of the Universe, and which are the underlying basis and source for what we normally take to be speech or language. In addition, it connotes the original and now unthinkable creativity of language, whose mantric sounds brought worlds into being for humanity and opened vistas onto our outer and inner space (the origin of language being poetry, the creative transformation of experience into sound vibrations), an echo or reenactment of how these transformations of seed-syllables brought (and brings) our physical and psychic existence into being. Thus the current passage stresses that all our ordinary utterances or languages are in themselves mantric recitations of sacred nature, as they are merely a low level reflection or transformation of these primordial sound frequencies (the seed syllables which are the building blocks of the universe). As Heidegger advocates in his *On the Way to Language*, we must rethink our way in, through, and as language, thereby going beyond the "correct", obvious view of language (155): "...The same word, however, the word for Saying, is also the word for Being, that is, for the presencing of beings. Saying and Being, word and thing, belong to each other in a veiled way, a way which has hardly been thought and is not to be thought out to the end. All essential Saying hearkens back to this veiled mutual belonging of Saying and Being, word and thing..."

All the constellations of thoughts in living beings' minds are meditative states, yet aren't recognized as such at all! Because you are free through the realization of your own mind, that (non-recognition) emerges from the key dynamics of the elemental energies: in the absence of any commentary here, this passage is difficult to interpret, besides the obvious intent to describe ordinary thought processes as themselves pure, holistic contemplative states. However, it is the final line's indication of the mechanism that governs the relationship between the impure (ordinary mind) and the pure (meditative states) which is unclear, since it isn't perfectly evident what "That" and "elemental energies" (*Byung Ba*) refers to. "That" must refer to either how such impure ordinary thought processes emerge from pure wisdom energy ("that" as "that non-recognition"), how the former continues to be within the latter's embrace ("that" as "that continuing purity"), or how the former is freed into the latter ("that" as "that freedom"). Secondly, "elemental energies" could also simply be the present/future form of the verb "to emerge", though if that were the case, its subject (i.e. what emerges) would be uncertain (and indeed might be specified only in the now lost commentarial literature, and not easily inferable from the root verses themselves). As I have translated it above (in accordance with the preceding lines' emphasis on explaining the dynamics of how enlightened dimensions emerge in distorted, impure guise), the key

question is how does the "non-recognition" of our own mind's reality (and its freedom as primordially "contemplation") ensue from the "elemental energies"? One possibility is that the elements are frozen forms of primordial gnosis' own lights, and thus their corporeality in and as our body obscures the luminous nature of our mind from view, thus resulting in your non-recognition of ordinary thought activity as meditative states. Alternatively, it could relate to these "elements" being the objective correlate of our mind's dualistic fixations and distortion, such that with our distortion of the gnostic lights into material elements, we engage in obsessive cathexis to external objects at the cost of self-awareness of our own inner light. A less likely possibility is that the karmic winds impelling our ordinary mental activity are in essence the "elemental energies" in motion as internal currents of energy within our body. The most likely interpretation would seem a combination of the first two - the falsely materialized elements in our body obscure our core luminosity (our own mind's nature), while the external elements in form of objects distract and devitalize our mind as in all its attachments and cathexis it is drawn away from its own inner light. Thus, in that these elements are no other than the pure gnostic light energy materialized as the objective pole of our distorted non-recognition of self-reality, in their dynamics we can understand how our consciousness is fundamentally pure and free, yet enters into the illusion of bondage and neurosis.

Along these lines, this can be interpreted in connection with the KGNT passages cited above on the "letters present within the channels". Those letters are seminal nuclei, which are none other than the vibrant energy of our internal "elements", from which both our body and mind derive, and which itself derives from our existence's core of gnostic energy. In pointing to these vibrant energies, the Tantra indicates both how our mind is directly derived from gnostic energy (and hence primordially free), as well as how it emerges in non-recognition despite this. KGNT1 430,5 indicates interpreting *'Byung Ba* as "(how the mind) emerges (from primordial gnosis)", which is the key point of being "naturally free" from the ordinary mind - the key point of being free via realizing our own mind, is that it "emerges" from primordial gnosis, and hence is always already free:

"...Recognizing everything (i.e. your entire physical and mental existence) as emergent from primordial gnosis' dynamism, and realizing they are indivisible as such, your defiling contaminants as well are (revealed as) emergent from primordial gnosis. Thus you are naturally freed from the ordinary mind, and are expansively awakened within the space of primordial gnosis as such defiling contaminants become unmanifest..."

One interpretation I obtained verbally from a Tibetan scholar read *'Byung Ba* as "emerges"): "Since our own mind emerges from reality, we attain freedom when we realize our own mind's essence" (*Rang Gi Sems Ni Chos Nyid Las 'Byung Ba'i Phyr Na Rang Gi Sems Gi Ngo Bo rTogs Na Grol Ba Thob*). Another scholar interpreted *'Byung Ba* as referring to the ultimate "elements" of reality itself, or of the five gnostic winds. Finally, Khanpo Chograk interpreted these lines as referring to the "grounding primordial gnosis" (*gZhi gNas Kyi Ye Shes*) as present within the inner being of all sentient beings and here referred to as "meditative states" in the sense that the energy of our conceptual flow is a facet of our own gnostic nucleus of radiant light, and only need be recognized as such. We thus free ourselves merely by realizing the abiding reality of our own mind just as it is (a realization revolving around the key points of the gnostic elements), and with such realize all the adventitious distortions in our perception fade away, and everything is revealed as primordially free. He thus interpreted *'Byung Ba* as meaning "elements", saying that the

conventional elements forming our body are pervaded by the gnostic elements, such that the former's reality is primordial gnosis' dynamism.

Finally, KGYT1 469,2ff. has very similar wording in a short passage correlating the "constellations of thoughts" with the forty two peaceful deities:

*When you become free from dimmed awareness, this body of the elemental energies  
Is reversed into the range of primordial gnosis without remainder;  
The constellations of thoughts of sentient beings' own mental stream  
Are expansively awakened as the forty two (peaceful deities),  
While their psycho-physical components and elements  
Are the five Father-Mother consort pairs..."*

Since everything is thus revealed to be reality itself, there is nothing to be adopted nor is there even the slightest thing to be left behind - reality is where all of this is absent: literally "reality wherein there is only absence" or "reality which is utterly devoid of being anything", this implies that reality is pure potential capable of anything's manifestation, yet remains in itself no-thing at all. Thus reality's absence is a positive absence of pure energy devoid of contrivance and fabrication, non-existent anywhere as something to adopt or reject and in fact not existent as anything at all - it is the luminous emptiness that acts as the ultimate matrix for all, and their enduring condition. Since this reality of empty luminosity is our own ongoing core source/matrix, it isn't the case that we need to "transform" our body and mind, or somehow "discard" them, since by merely recognizing their true source and reality we realize that they themselves are pure divine light. Thus the following two lines indicate that by merely fully comprehending our own ordinary state of being (that is encapsulated in the triune identity of body, speech, and mind), we tune into the undifferentiated continuity of reality, and pass beyond all dualistic oppositions such as that between cyclic existence and transcendent reality.

Furthermore, since they never pass beyond the ordinary body, speech and psyche of all the sentient beings within the three realms, the three Spiritual Bodies need not be sought for elsewhere, and even should you seek them, there is no place they will be found: our physical energy is merely the impure dimension deriving from the Emanational Body, our verbal energy from the Enjoyment Body of Enjoyment, and our mental energy from the Reality Body - by realizing their deeper identity through poetic contemplation that goes beyond "correct", obvious thought, we thus find these spiritual gestalts present right within and as our own being; yet if we fail to recognize them as such and instead insist on all too easy projections of some spiritual reality external and transcendent of our "ordinary" existence, no matter how and where we search externally, it is utterly impossible that we will find these Spiritual presences elsewhere. The point is not that we are mired in these ordinary states which are impossible to "transcend", but rather that we must explore the inner depths of those states in and of themselves, to dismiss sedimented "common sense" and re-experience, and re-interpret our body, speech and mind in such a way that we can re-contact the empty luminosity that is their source (in part analogous to Heidegger's search for what a "thing" might be (PLT 165ff)). These two lines could also be interpreted as "living beings never pass beyond ordinary body, speech and mind (which encapsulates their existence), and hence (since those three are indivisible from triune gnostic energy), the three Spiritual Bodies need not be sought out elsewhere..."

*Not emergent in the past, nor emerging in the present, they are seen by looking - what a marvel:* this triune Spiritual energy is primordially the core of our being, and as such didn't emerge newly at some point in the past (since they are naturally self-emergent as the very fabric of the Universe), nor emerges newly in the present (it is that which is always already there) - it is the marvel itself. By virtue of divesting yourself of the obscuring clothes of conceptuality it is nakedly radiant from within, and thus to it you need only look, without any necessity of creating something unprecedented or searching the universe without - you merely open your eyes and look at your own inner light after clearing away the veils of corporeality and conceptuality which had clouded your view, like the clouds dispersing so that the sun may shine through unimpededly. This "seeing" thus contrasts to the "non-vision" or "non-awareness" of their presence discussed above, when their radiance is obscured by your straying. Also there is a secondary connotation that these distorted phenomena are an illusory manifestation and derivation of their corresponding spiritual dimensions (via the mechanism of the above detailed key points), without actually ever "emerging" in the past or present as concrete independent discrete realities. They remain at all times within the range of originally pure awareness, and are essentially still the play of primordial gnosis.

The marvel's play is its manifestation as the samsaric phenomena of ordinary body, speech and mind as well as purely lighting-up as the transcendent visions of rainbow-colored light. Yet just as the sky is not split up into segments in its own essence though clouds may appear, so reality is not cut up into Buddha's and sentient beings though it playfully manifests as both cyclic existence and transcendence. The sky of reality remains quiet and serene throughout, unaffected in their essence by the wafting clouds of distorted appearances and confused psyches (recall that Longchenpa introduced this quotation by referring to primordial gnosis' play within the expanse of reality - see below for a detailed explication of the imagery of "clouds").

*The play of this great marvel involves no differentiation into Buddhas and sentient beings, just as there are clouds in the sky (and yet the sky remains stainless and unfragmented in itself) - by virtue of this play being self-emergent and perfectly completed in and of itself, it is serenely calm:* CBD 315ff has an extensive treatment of this cloud/sky/sun imagery in the context of becoming enlightened, explaining very clearly that the clouds of cyclic existence derive from the play of self-emergent primordial gnosis (318,1), and while thus obscuring the sun (gnosis) the clouds (distorted appearances) ultimately stem from the sun (gnosis) itself. Then 318,3 explicitly identifies the clouds as simultaneously being primordial gnosis' play and the wild variety of samsaric phenomenon, identifying the latter as both the physical environment encapsulated in the fivefold sensory data we have of it (visible form, etc.), and the life forms that exist there, which above all is the mind and its various operations. Thus although the sun (i.e. our own inner radiant light as a core of indestructible luminosity) remains unobscured in itself though it may be obscured from a certain vantage point's vision, whether shrouded by clouds or blocked by dense foliage. When the obscurations of that vantage point are cleared away, the primordially present radiance is finally seen directly, just as in the dispersal of clouds the sun is able to shine forth freely. "Play" has both pure and impure dimensions (with the latter being that which obscures its source), just as clouds can be viewed as the source of life-giving rain, as well as the conveyer of gloom and darkness upon the earth.

Longchenpa then (319,4ff) goes on to detail the entire process in images: the sun radiates rays (its dynamic potency), which causes warmth in the soil and water, resulting in vapor



which forms the play of clouds that then in turn obscures the sun and its rays from our vision. This is precisely how primordial gnosis' own dynamic potency gives rise to distorted psyches as its play, which then in turn obscures gnostic energy's own essential luminosity from view. In this way the "play" (*Rol Pa*) obscures the Essence as well as its "dynamism" (*rTsal*). So in this beautiful image, the sun's own rays bring about the clouds which then obscure its own display of lights, all against the backdrop of the sky's original purity and vast openness, just as awareness' own potent dynamics comes to obscure itself. Especially relevant to our passage here, Longchenpa points out how the spiritual dimensions are obscured by their low-intensity corresponding states (320,1), saying that since our ordinary body, speech and mind obscure the Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind of a Buddha, the latter are unmanifest, and as we thus stray into the six transmigrations, our mind instead experiences the distorted appearances of cyclic existence.

This helps us understand how these lower order dimensions can be seen as in fact essentially identical with the higher order dimensions, except that their energy is non-optimal faded derivative forms at once remove that cloud our awareness of their ongoing vibrant sources. Though this play of clouds/primordial gnosis results in the obscuration of the sun (reality, or awareness) against the backdrop of the sky (original purity's expanse), in actuality there is no differentiation as the sun is self-emergent and self-complete, and totally unaffected by the clouds, the Same whether they are present or not (in sentient beings or in Buddhas). In addition the clouds are "self-emergent" (from the sun/gnosis), and "self-completed" (i.e. exhausted both in the sense that they dissolve into their own source (gnosis/sun) as well as in that they collapse of their own accord when their true nature is realized). Thus *Rang rDzogs* has a dual meaning as "self-emergent" and "self-completed", referring to the simultaneous exhaustion (*rDzogs*) of the clouds of play, and the complete presence (*rDzogs*) of the infinite glory of the sun which shines forth. CBD 316,4 thus uses *Rang rDzogs* to indicate the spontaneously present primordial gnoses and Spiritual Bodies, which are present within the space of original purity, while 318,5 says the clouds are naturally or self-dissipated (*Rang Dengs*) within the expanse. On 319,2 Longchenpa applies the adjective "self-emergent" to the Reality Body that shines forth at that time. Thus "self"/"naturally" (*Rang*) refers to primordial gnosis both in its high intensity natural manifestation, as well as its emergence in impure guise.

In this way there is a serene quiet or calm in the Ground's pure expanse, wherein all agitating emotional distortions have subsided - all impure "play" (CBD 324,2; 316,1) is quieted within the single flavor of the Reality Body, the inconceivable expanse of reality. All these spiritual dimensions that in other texts are described as solely characterizing the enlightened state - the Adamantine Body, Speech and Mind, the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses, mantric reverberations - did not emerge newly in the present nor do they emerge newly now - they are always already present, as they constitute the fundamental dynamics of reality itself, the Universe as such. It is only a question of our perspective, just as the sun does not come into being and then go out of being as clouds momentarily block our view of it - we see it be merely looking, in the proper way and from the proper perspective, rather than some strenuous act of creation. Thus while in one moment we see the phantasmagoric shadows and shifting patterns of light, i.e. our psycho-physical components, neuroses, and twisted perceptions, when the clouds dissipate we are flooded with light and the phantasmagoria dissipates to reveal what was always already there - what remains, remains. It is only a question of sight, not of transformation - at the right moment it all is there, just as it has always been there, naturally emergent and perfectly complete.

This talk of "vision" also refers to reality, with "look" implying that reality is directly manifest to our sensory faculties, though we fail to see it through the clouds of incessant karmic imprints and conceptual flow. But if we just look, relaxing all the projections and simply nakedly gazing, it is luminously present right before eyes. This is clearly indicated by the passage (115,2) in the Tantra following the present quote:

*The key point of reality's immediacy  
Is that it is cognized by mere seeing;  
Through cognizing that, there is realization,  
And through that simple realization is freedom -  
Freedom does not equal "unraveling".*

*As for the pure sky,  
Since are no objectifications in its own being  
Upon the dissolving (of clouds) within the sky,  
There are no classifications or parts.*

*For one with the fortune of meeting with immediacy,  
The name of cyclic existence with the three realms is absent,  
And thus the three states of fictive existence are annihilated.*

Clouds arise through their own force, adoptions of the sky and sun's secondary material/energy, and disappear on their own accord without any external circumstances causing it. Their dissipation in and of themselves is analogous to the play of light forms within emptiness, naturally dissipating or freed in their very movement, no more substantial than the wind itself, while the sky/emptiness remains perfectly serene and stainless throughout.

*By reason of the immediacy of reality, the relative sharpness or dullness of your spiritual capacities is irrelevant:* since reality is directly present in every moment as and about us, sensory perception itself (which is common to all) reveals it in all its immediacy. Thus this empty and luminous presence doesn't necessitate refined, acute faculties to experience it, as if it were some type of esoteric reality in a transcendent dimension separate from all that we know. Rather it is present right now before us in our own worlds to our own faculties and senses, if only we could open our eyes and look, letting go of our fixations and incessant "clothing"/enframing of experience.

*Because corporeal beings are pervaded by mind, there are no sentient beings who are not expansively awakened - like a fruit developing from its seed, your own nature is the key point of reality's character:* NGB reads "sentient beings" for "by the mind", which would indicate "reality's immediacy" being that which pervades these embodied sentient beings, but Ati and a 445,1 agree with TDD's reading. Since living being with physical existence are pervaded by mind both in the sense that each and every one possesses consciousness, and that consciousness is a pervasive feature of their existence, then obviously that mind's nature ("mind-as-such) must be present as well, the empty core of luminosity wherein all the Buddha's rich enlightened qualities exist. Thus all sentient life has at its core this indestructible nucleus of radiant light which spiritual awakening brings to the fore, and only need recognize it as such without any necessity of transforming its core energy or creating a new state. Primordial gnosis and the Spiritual Bodies are from the start the source and

essence of our existence rather than being a new reality created *from* our present impure psycho-physical existence (KGNT in particular returns to this again and again). In conjunction with the following seed/fruit image, our ordinary mind is merely awareness' potent dynamics within which the nucleus of luminosity continues to exist (as the ongoing source and sustainer of consciousness) - this nucleus is like the germinal seed of realization, which flowers naturally into the fruit of Buddhahood, the mere unfolding of its optimal potency such that its impure derivatives (i.e. ordinary mind) dissipate of their own accord (see 177,1 for the same "seed" imagery and my explication therein).

This seed image bridges the preceding passage with the following passage, illustrating how sentient beings are always already expansively awakened (primordial gnosis is present within them just as the seed contains the fruit's potency right from the start), while also indicating the development or transition that takes place in going from primordial awakening (applying to all beings without distinction) to re-awakening (applying only to Buddhas). The seed, the subtle dimension of depth-radiant primordial gnosis present within all of us as our innermost character, goes into the ascendancy in Buddhahood, metaphorically expressed as becoming the "fruit". Thus the following passage discusses how that re-awakening takes place as the fruit's "program" or potential unfolds from its semi-latent presence in the seed. Thus VLDC, 21,3 says "by virtue of the causal impetus (sentient beings) ripening into the fruit (Buddhas), there is "the continuity (of empty luminosity)", an etymological explanation of the Tibetan translation for "Tantra" (*rGyud*). CBD 263,3 says:

"...Self-emergent primordial gnosis is superior to "transcendent reality" (i.e. Nirvana), since by realizing or not realizing that expanse it becomes the ground of cyclic existence and transcendent reality. The *Doha* says:

*Mind-as-such by itself is the seed of all,  
Emanating fictive existence and transcendent reality as the case may be -  
I prostrate to this mind, which is like a wish-fulfilling gem  
That bestows the desired fruit..."*

In this way our own ownmost being is the seed potency of gnosis within our heart, which is the contact-point for reality's ultimate character, the key point to our re-awakening to the empty dynamics of the Ground as such. From within, it lights-up to our own senses, if only we had the eyes to see - this implies not only the manifestation of gnostic light during the practice of Direct Transcendence, but also that in our own ordinary perceptual processes reality is luminously present for an instant (recall the external elements are no other than congealed forms of the gnostic rainbow-colored lights), before the conceptual processing kicks into gear and generates the complex fantasies of cyclic existence. Thus our own nature both perceptually and in terms of our heart's nuclear luminosity is the key point or link to the access of reality, the ultimate dimension of the Universe; though we think of transcendent reality as some far off sphere, in actuality it is right within our own hearts, and before our own eyes. We need only to look to our own being to find the ultimate, the Universe within, and thus the term "your own nature" (*Rang Gi Rang bZhin*) plays off the ambiguity of the term "*Rang*" (CBD 323,7) - literally it could be rendered as "our own own-continuance" ("nature" literally being "self/own + continue/as"), indicating that the way our own being unfolds is itself reality's own movement, and thus by simply looking nakedly, abandoning our attempts to enframe it, we participate directly and freely in the Universe's ongoing self-organizing and self-referential dynamism. Thus CBD 323,7 uses the same term to refer to how the sun's very nature is to radiate rays, without it trying to do so, just like Buddhahood

radiates Emanational Bodies and enlightened activity without any effort or striving. Buddhahood is not something extraneous to us, but rather our own innermost being, which effortlessly shines forth of its own dynamics when we relax the defenses and distortions obscuring it.

Since it clearly manifests in the scope of your own sensory faculties without existing in terms of verbal expressions, its identity is such that when looked at nakedly it is free: this "naked vision" (*Cer mThong*) relates to the above mention of "seen by looking". Looking at phenomenal reality as it appears to our perceptual faculties in all its immediacy ("nakedly" indicating vision divested of the clothing of conceptions and reifications), those presences are freed from reification as concrete, static material entities, and manifest as empty light forms in dynamic transformation. In every perceptual experience, reality's dynamics clearly manifest as empty light forms, but then through categorization, conceptualization and abstraction we dissect them into the death of sterile rigidity. Yet if we step out of these confining clothes and see the immediacy (rather than the abstract), in one instant there is presence beyond words, empty and lucent. Of course it also implies the practice of Direct Transcendence whereby your inner gnostic luminosity shines out into the sky, allowing its immediate presence to be directly experienced in sensual immediacy.

Furthermore, there is not even one sentient being who by force of conditioning is unawakened into Buddhahood: conditioning" here refers to the previously discussed four conditions, or contributory forces, which lead you into cyclic existence, as well as the general conditioning of distorted appearances and so on which results in "sentient beings" rather than "Buddhas" ("the expansively awakened ones"). Yet in the present context it is denied that even one sentient being devoid of expansive awakening results from such conditions, as in essence all life remain luminous beings whose indestructible nucleus of radiant light is only adventitiously obscured; cyclic existence is a mere wisp of an illusion over the solar face of transcendence, no more existent as the primary reality than the clouds which temporarily shroud the sun from view.

Since it is self-presencing in complete harmony with primordial gnosis, cyclic existence is primordially non-existent, and therefore each (of its beings and phenomena) is naturally and innately expansively awakened: as usual "self-presencing" has many levels of meaning, indicating that sentient beings "personal experiences" form cyclic existence, while remaining the "self-presencing" of primordial gnosis, recalling that subjective consciousness is a mere derivative of the gnostic luminosity within, while objective elements are the mere dimming of the rainbow-colored gnostic lights' play. In addition it connotes that the entire drama is as thoroughly self-referential and self-interpretative as a dream-world, and in that "cyclic existence" is the Ground's own self-dream of itself interpreted as cyclic existence, it has no separate truth-status or ontological reality outside the structure of that self-referential dream. Saying they are "naturally and innately expansively awakened" (*Rang Rang Sangs rGyas*), again plays off the ambiguity of "self", indicating that at this point our strictly delimited and protected "self" dissolves into the dimension of our being "innate" to Being, our inherence within the ongoing cosmic dynamics of the Ground.

TCD2 112,2 cites a similar passage from *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra*:

*Entering the womb  
Is the manifestation of self-awareness from the Ground;  
With the initial seven weeks of the embryo's development,*

*The measures of contemplative realization are attained;  
 With the total ten months, the spiritual stages are traversed;  
 Birth is arising in the Spiritual Bodies;  
 Your body's development is the objective sphere of the Ground-presencing,  
 While remaining in your body is the Ground;  
 Through aging, distortion is cleansed away;  
 Sickness is the assurance of realization,  
 And through death you are freed into reality's emptiness.*

*Manifesting thus, all sentient beings  
 Are effortlessly and primordially freed..."*

Longchenpa then correlates these factors to the process of reversing straying, saying "...birth symbolizes the dimension of awareness being propelled forth into the expanse; the body symbolizes the ground; the external appearances are the spontaneously dynamic Ground's presencing; illness is the realization of (the Spiritual Master's) introducing (you to reality); aging is the cleansing of your straying into clinging to false notions of veracity; and dying symbolizes the ultimization within the site of the originally pure internal expanse when you recognize the visions as your own nature..."

KGYT2 150,3 has the following lovely account of an individual's embryonic development, birth, life, and death experiences as correlated to the spiritual paths and dimensions, the latter being merely the dulled aspect of the vibrant dynamics of the self-same reality:

"...mNgal Zhugs Byang Chub rNam lNga sTe: Zla Ba bCu Ni Sa bCu'i Tshul, sKyes Pa Rang bZhin sPrul Pa'i sKu, Lhun Grub sKu gSum bDag Nyid Do. Zhes Pas, Bar Do Nas Lus Tshol Ba'i Dus Tshogs Lam, mNgal Du Lus Len Pa dNgos La sByor Ba sByor Lam, mNgal Du Zhugs Dus Dang Po Thig Le dKar dMar gNyis 'Dres Pa Ni, gDan Pad Zla Las mNgon Par Byang Chub Pa, De Nas sPyan gNyis Kyi Dus Su Thig Le De Nyid Las rDo rJe Dang, Rin Po Che Dang, Pad Ma Dang, rGya Gram Dang, 'Khor Lo'i Ri Mo lTa Bur sNang Ba Ni, Thugs Phyang mTshan Las mNgon Par Byang Chub Pa; De Nas rTsa De Dag Gi Nang Du Yi Ge Phra Mo'i rNam Par Grub Pa Ni, gSung Yig 'Bru Las mNgon Par Byang Chub Pa; De Nas Lus Dang dBang Po Tshang Bar Grub Pa Ni, sKu Yongs Su rDzogs Pa'i mNgon Par Byang Chub Pa, Rig Pa'i Ye Shes Nang gSal Du Lhun Gyis Grub Pa Ni rNam Dag Ye Shes Sems dPa'i Go Nas mNgon Par Byang Chub Pa rNam Pa lNga mNgal Du rDzogs Nas, Zla Ba bCu'i Ngo Ni Rab Tu dGa' Ba La Sogs Pa Sa bCu mTshon Pa'o.

De Nas bTsa' Ba Ni sPrul Pa'i sKu'o. Des Don Byas Pa gZhon Nu'i Dus Lo bCu Drug sPrul sKu rDzogs Pa'o. De Nas Yum Dang Lhan Cig Longs sPyod rDzogs Par Longs sPyod Pa Ni Longs sPyod rDzogs Pa'i sKu'o. De Nas 'Chi Ba Ni Don Dam Pa'i bDen Pa sTe, Zhi Ba Chos Kyi sKu'i Ngang Du Mya Ngan Las 'Da' Ba'o.

De lTar Ma Dag Pa 'Khrul Dus Na'ang sKu gSum Gyi Chos Tshang Ba Ni, Dag Ma Dag Thams Cad Du sKu gSum 'Du 'Bral Med Pa'i rTags Yin Te, kLong gSal Las:

*Thog Ma Tha Mar Bar gSum Du,  
 sKu gSum dBye Ba Med Pa Ru,  
 Sems Can Kun Gyi rGyud La gNas.*

De Nas Bar Dor Yang sKu gSum 'Char Te, Bar Do Dang Po 'Od gSal Chos Kyi sKu'i Bar Do. gNyas Pa Lhun Grub Longs sPyod rDzogs Pa'i sKu'i Bar Do. De sKad Du'ang, sGron Ma rNam bKod Las:

*Bar Do rNam Pa gSum Nyid Du,  
sKu gSum Po Ni Rim bZhin 'Char.*

Zhes So. 'Gro Bas Ngo Ma Shes Kyang, sKu gSum rGyal Ba'i dGongs Pa Dus gTan Du 'Char Zhing, sKu gSum Gyi sNang Ba La sPyod Pa Yin No. De Nyid sPyod Pa'i rNal 'Byor Pa rNams Dag Ma Dag Gang ITar Shar Yang, Dag Pa Chen Po'i sNang Ba sKu gSum 'Du 'Bral Med Pa'i dGongs Pa La sPyod Pas Grol Ba Yin No. Sems Can Gyis Ma Shes Pas 'Khor Bar gTan Du 'Ching Do. De'i Phyr Dag Pa sKu gSum Gyi 'Khor Lo rGyun Chad Med Pa'i dGongs Pa La gNas Pa Gal Che'o..."

*Through your illness, reality is experientially savored:* NGB and Ati read "phenomena" for "reality". Following TDD's reading, illness nakedly displays suffering, and brings you face to face with the "reality" of cyclic existence (i.e. that it is suffering), and hence reality itself. It tears through the comfortable illusions that we use to hide the bare fact of reality from ourselves, marking a transition as we withdraw our energies from projects and attachments to externality. In illness we are brought back to the essentials, and in fatal illnesses in particular we often come to terms with the "facts" of our lives as we turn inwards (knowing that we can no longer hold on to the loved ones and things without). Aging gradually leads us to disengage from worldly concerns that once seemed all important, leading into the complete emptiness of death where the world as we knew it ceases all together.

187. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 323,7; Ati2 445,4; also cited by TCD2 279,7). This passage is spoken by "Adamantine Scepter Bearer" as an explication of the manner in which distorted appearances are inherently free.

*Your speech and actions in their own nature are the conduct of radiant and empty awareness:* literally "empty, aware, and radiant", this triad corresponds to the Ground's triune identity - its empty essence, radiantly clear nature, and pervasively aware compassionate resonance, which are also the three basic dimensions of our own existence, though clouded over and dimmed in the process of straying. Here our verbal and physical activities are being hearkened back to the Universe's own fundamental dynamism, which is empty (never reified or materialized into any static thing), radiant (in its emptiness, it is still unceasingly radiant light energy in motion), and aware (this light is self-structuring and inherent intelligent). Thus it could also be interpreted as the "radiance and awareness of the empty (expanse)", again emphasizing how emptiness is not all a sterile vacuum, but rather is always already intrinsically luminous and intelligent.

TCD2 198,4 introduces this passage thus: "...By thus realizing appearances and the psyche as reality itself, however you may conduct yourself, it never passes beyond reality. However appearances may presence, they manifest unceasingly as play, and thus dawn as the self-emergent mandala..."

Similarly, since all thought activity no matter how distorted with neuroses and psychoses it may be, remains within the range of pristine awareness as no other than its play, it is right within its own flow that we find the radiant awareness that constitutes the essence of

meditation ("contemplation's stream"). Thus all the positions, outlooks or views we adopt, which philosophically are summed up in erroneous views of "eternalism" and "nihilism" (normally seen as something to be rejected) and the valid views of "no self" held by the "Listeners" and so on (usually considered as something to be taken up), are all equally irrelevant reified formulations within the essence of awareness - for the practitioner who via yoga tunes into this pristine essence, the energy fueling "views" or "outlooks" manifests as the totally impartial view of one who has tuned into the sameness of all phenomena beyond any partiality.

All your clinging to hopes and fears is the fruit of being completely unimpeded: "hopes and fears" refers to the various psycho-emotional contractions we experience in our attachment to things and our self, blockages that can be sedimented in the body itself in the form of muscular tension and so on (witness recent psychological work on the connection between memories and muscular rigidity). But in the recognition of enlightenment, this energy is freed into an unimpeded free flow of energy unconditioned by attachment, the fruit of Buddhahood which is irreversible into such blockages and contractions of our physical, verbal and mental energy.

Those of you who earnestly desire the Great Seal make "the ritual approach" in your eating and drinking, and "actualize" the evocation in your sleeping and sitting: these lines are located elsewhere in NGB (see 325,3), where NGB and Ati gloss the "great seal" as "showing that realization doesn't depend on something other". The "great seal" is the abiding reality which pervades everywhere such that its "impression" is inescapable, while by realizing it, its empty radiance "seals" all our experience. In the process of attempting to evoke this realization in tantric meditation, it is normally advocated you practice the generation phase with its two stages of "ritual approach" and "evocation" (*bsNyen sGrub*; *Sevā-sādhana*). These two phases have different meanings in different contexts, such as in the tantric visualization and self-identification of a deity where you perform "ritual service" or "approach" through a preliminary recitation of the deity's mantra, and then ultimately "evoke" or "actualize" the deity in and as your own being (see ZMYT2 344,2-6 for a special definition of these two phases in the context of the Great Perfection). In general they can be understood as the sequential phases involved in accomplishing a given activity (i.e. preparation, or preliminary actions, and the actual accomplishing of the task). As TCD2 279,5 makes clear, the energy involved in our eating and drinking (the ingestion or incorporation of energy) is the "ritual approach" to reality itself, while the energy involved in subsequently lying down and sitting (our "eating" finished, we can now rest) is the "actualization" of enlightenment itself. Thus rather than involving some esoteric tantric meditation, these two phases of realization can be found right in our ordinary activities of eating and sitting, since they are fueled by the identical gnostic energy that lies at the heart of enlightenment.

Your habitual tendencies are the preparatory consecration, and your yawning and phlegm are the actualization of the mandala, while rain and vapor are sprinkled on the mandala of the billionfold galaxy: "habitual tendencies" are the fourth of our five psycho-physical components, the component including our emotional states and so forth which karmically form our world and motivate our actions. Here they are identified with the contemplations involved in the "preparatory consecrations" (*Lhag gNas, sTa Gon*), whereby the mandala and disciple are prepared for the conferral of empowerment in that mandala, the initial impetus and energy for the mandala's formation in terms of a sacred reality.

I have corrected "brain" to "yawn" on the basis of TCD, while Ati reads "cough" instead (which does nicely connect with phlegm, the mucus coming from one's mouth and nose). Ati puts these two terms in the instrumental as that which brings about the actualization, and glosses it as "primordially so". The symbolic basis for this correlation seems to be that just as phlegm is the result or product of coughing, the end result of the ritual activities is the actualization or production of the actual mandala.

The "billionfold galaxy" is a standard cosmological reference to a galaxy consisting of one thousand cubed world systems (i.e. one billion), each world system consisting of four continents, the cosmic mountain, sun and the moon, from the heavenly abode of Brahma to the foundation of the wind mandala. This galaxy is revealed as itself an immense cosmic mandala of divine palaces and inhabitants (the totally natural mandala as opposed to artificially constructed mandalas of paint and sand), its every feature an epiphany of the sacred. In particular, the three realms can be correlated to the three Spiritual Bodies, the formless realm forming the Reality Body's mandala and so on. The ritual sprinkling of water in the mandalic ritual is here revealed as the falling of rain and vapor, a totally natural occurrence not requiring exertion, and involving self-emergent water that spontaneously falls from above.

*The paths marking your passage are the great lines of the mandala; the imprints of your feet are designs of colored powders, your desire to go is itself the deities' ritual stances, while your bodily limbs' movements therein are their symbolic seals:* these four lines account for the ritual significance of all movement - the paths we follow to our destination are the lines of the mandala, the footprints we leave are the colored designs within the mandala, the desires or motivations behind our movements are the ritual stances of the deities, and the actual movements are the symbolic seals or gestures incarnating the mandala's significance.

"Vehicle" (*Theg*) must be corrected to "line" (*Thig*) on the basis of the other texts, which refers to the eight "great lines" forming the basis for a typical mandala used in Buddhist ritual (TCD2 279,6 says "pathways are the natural great lines"). Here the roads and paths found in the external environment are revealed to be the natural major lines of the cosmic mandala, corresponding to the artificially drawn lines of a ritually constructed mandala, while the colored powders which are used to form the internal designs are no other than your own footprints as you trod down the earth's paths. However, NGB and Ati gloss *Thig* as *Thig Le*, or "seminal nuclei": "...residing on the ground is shown to be the "seminal nuclei", without involving any exertion..." (NGB); "...that which is held to be ('Dod?) the ground and pathways is shown to be the seminal nuclei, and thus without making any exertions..." (Ati). Perhaps "seminal nuclei" here merely refers to tiny circles marking the lines of the mandala?

The desire or intention to go somewhere is symbolically correlated to the ritual "stances", referring to the deities' physical postures or appearances within the mandala, including "vajra" movements, dancing, wrathful poses and so on. Evidently the basis for this correspondence is that the desire to go somewhere is the impulse which is actualized or unfolds in the movement, just as the ritual stances or positions indicate the deity's fundamental energy or mind-set which is actualized or revealed in meditation. Ati glosses as "by virtue of all of these being the movements of the vajra stances, the hindrances of conceptuality are cleared away".



"Symbolic seals" (*Phyag rGya*) refers to the symbolic hand gestures which are an important aspect of tantric ritual (as well as the movement or gestures involving the entire body), and are here symbolically correlated to the arms and legs moving back and forth as you walk down the path, which in a sense "seal" the very action of walking as its external indicators, just as the symbolic hand gestures externally display internal spiritual processes, or progression along the meditative/ritual path.

However you speak, they are mantric words; your thoughts are the generation phase of tantric meditation: Ati glosses this with "Our own attention and mental activity is the vivid visualization of the deity of awareness", indicating that our own ordinary mental activity forms the radiant deity that is normally thought to be evocable only through strenuous visualization techniques described in the "generation phase" of tantric meditation.

The flickering movements within your psyche are the offerings themselves: Ati glosses "psyche" with "since all the flickerings within your own psyche are uncreated offerings, you attain the spiritual attainment of the linked chains" (see Chapter Six).

Your own body is the initiatory vase; its hair is the petals adorning and enriching its mouth; its blood and lymph are themselves its water, and it is filled up with the ritual substances of your essential organs and so forth: comparing the body to an initiatory vase is a perfect foundation to the imagistic description of initiatory empowerments within our own ordinary body and mind, with the latter containing a variety of substances (blood, etc.) just as the former contains a variety of ritual substances (camphor, etc.). The vase is an important ritual instrument in the first phase of the classical fourfold empowerment structure, as well as other rituals. The deity is actualized within the vase via visualization, such that the water it contains is "energized", and thereby can serve as a conduit to transfer this enlightened energy's spark to the disciple. In our present context, our own body forms this vase with its internal bodily fluids as the vase's water, such that without anything external being required, the god is actualized within ourselves, and our own bodily liquids are energized with its divine force.

Thus the giving of empowerments manifest within yourself is complete even without being conferred: "giving" in this context should be understood as "self-giving" or spontaneously there, while "conferred" connotes "other-conferred". Thus NGB glosses this line with "Since it is primordially present within yourself, it is "complete" without the ultimate being something attained through exertion - primevally, the four empowerments are conferred in their entirety".

Those desiring to transcend the commitments, and those desiring to rigidly preserve them, are fettered; the desire for freedom yields only degeneration, while those desiring nothing are the supreme of Sages: TCD explains that "your own natural flow is the continuous commitments", indicating that if you become fixated on the formal expression of the commitments and obsessed with observing them rigidly (or going beyond them in some type of transcendent experience, in which case you are still obsessed with their formal expression), it merely becomes another object of attachment that binds you to neurotic existence. The true sense of commitment is simply to remain in your own natural state, to be true to yourself in the deepest sense of "true" and "self". Similarly, if you practice meditation obsessed with goals and conditioned notions delimited by dualistic considerations ("desiring freedom" from my present state for myself as an individual ego), any actualization you might

achieve will only deteriorate without any lasting benefit. Ati glosses the final line with "primordially beyond observation (of rules)".

In NGB and Ati this final line is followed by the four lines that Longchenpa places earlier in this quotation (see note above).

*Your visual impressions are the symbolic seals, and your attachment to them is felt experience of the symbols:* this is glossed in NGB and Ati with "...this shows that everything is free as symbolic esoteric precepts..." Symbolic seals include the symbolic hand gestures and so forth, and here indicate that everything we experience visually can be read esoterically as symbolically evoking and incarnating a corresponding spiritual dimension (what is color? what is the significance of space? of a circular form?). Ordinary attachment to such visual appearances, which essentially is a deep heartfelt connection or bond, is symbolically the deeply felt experience of spiritual realities as your meditative experience deepens, linking you to their purity via the esoteric symbols manifest in conventional phenomena. Ati glosses as "(attachment) is itself deeply felt experience, and divested of craving you are awakened in innate freedom", making it clear that this symbolic connection does not entail that the latter be reduced to the former (in which case spiritual awakening would involve attachment), but rather that the former is a reduced or distorted manifestation of the latter's pure energy.

*The radiantly clear awareness of your consciousness is the oral instructions, and the coming together of objects and your mind is the object of the instructions' delivery:* NGB and Ati gloss "oral instructions" with "Your own cognitive activity is the King of Awareness, and awareness in unobstructed attention and thought is the oral instructions on the meeting of the mother and child". I have corrected "body" to "object" on the basis of the other three texts, though it is true that "the coming together of body and mind" is specified at the end of TDD's preceding quote. Ati glosses this line with "the oral precepts on the non-duality within apprehension". Thus the nondual inherent clarity of your own awareness is the spiritual precept itself, while the object of the precepts delivery is the contact of your mind with objects. Our own awareness provides the key instructions on the true significance of this contact between mind and objects, which is the site for the instructions' application since this is where the key dynamic of error (and enlightenment) occurs - the recognition or lack of recognition of the objective display of lights as being no other than your own self-presencing luminosity. Then you must gain experiential familiarization with the precepts' significance, until, finally, realization is born.

*Your birth, old age, sickness and death are the key points of meditative familiarization, and your unobstructed sixfold consciousness is realization:* TCD2 279,7 says "birth and death are the optimal measures of familiarization with reality itself", indicating that since these two events are the key liminal frames or limits of our existence between which all else happens, they symbolically correlate to the optimization of spiritual realization, the key transitional events marking our progression in spiritual life. We are "born" into the spiritual life as we first penetrate to realization, we "age" as our realization ripens, we fall "ill" as our old perceptions and beliefs deteriorate in the face of spiritual perception, and finally we "die" to our old selves and cyclic existence, as the new eon of transcendence dawns.

If we thus let these six aspects of the psyche or consciousness (the five senses plus the mind itself) naturally be without neurotic constrictions, then that energy is revealed as no other than naturally pure awareness, i.e. the "realization" or "wisdom" of enlightenment - our

own perceptual modes reveal the empty luminous presencing of reality. TCD2 279,7 explicates it as "our six modes of perceptual consciousness naturally arise as the realization of objective appearances, and thus the wisdom of the total freedom of the three realms is spontaneously present".

188. Other discussions of embryogeny in Longchenpa's corpus are ZMYT2 107,5-110,6; KGYT2 144,1-152,5; LYT1 457,4-461,6; LYT2 238,6-244,2; KGNT1 419,1ff and KGNT2 42,4-51,6. The main treatment is the lengthy and difficult discussion in TCD's eleventh chapter of TCD (TCD1 338,5-360,2). As for English language sources, see Hopkins' *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* 58-68 for a nice overview of the process, and Dr. Dolma's *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* 83-117.

189. *sGron Ma sNang Byed* (also referred to as *The Conch Shell Lettered*; VNT2 47,1; also cited by KGYT2 133,1). The first two lines here indicate that the physical forms of the six different types of living being are an ongoing adventitious and continuously changing manifestation comprised of a series of physical and mental developments involving external environmental elements (fire, earth, water, etc.) and internal energies organized by the dynamic of their particular life form. Those devoid of the spiritual teachings and awareness, and thus ignorant of the true nature of this process, grasp at their reified physical existence as a type of permanent, enduring, discrete entity with which they identify their true "self" or identity. By force of this dualistic distortion, they are impelled through countless cycles of births in the three realms.

In the fourth line I have used the image of a "water mill" since it is a familiar one in our culture, whereas actually this refers to a type of contraption for pulling water upwards, such as to a retreat situated on a mountain side. In either case the main significance is simply an image for the uninterrupted succession of lives that ensue.

190. *Nyi Zla Kha sByor* (NGB1 559,1; Ati3 232,4). As explained in the following page, "cause" refers to the father's semen, and "conditional determinant" to the mother's "blood" (roughly equivalent to the modern medical analysis of conception in terms of the "sperm" and "egg"), which together function as the physical basis for the developing embryo. This specification of the mother's contribution as "blood" must originally in part derive from the naive observation of a woman's menstruation - if there is no conception and pregnancy, the woman discharges "blood", which is retained (i.e. menstruation ceases) in the case of pregnancy, suggesting the obvious conclusion that this "blood" must go into the embryo's development (see Dr. Dolma's *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* 84). The contribution of sperm on the male's part is equally obvious as its ejaculation in the act of sexual intercourse is hard to miss. My suggestions of this theory's "basis" should not be taken as an excuse to reductively dismiss such tantric physiology, since in fact much of these schemes are based on physical "facts", yet derive much of their significance from their elaborate symbolic resonances as well as being analysis of subtle energetic characteristics of our existence which aren't treated, or acknowledged, in "Western" science. In the present case, this presentation of "white" semen and "red" blood leads into the subsequently mentioned presence of "white" conventional seminal nuclei and "red" conventional seminal nuclei in both males and females (which play key roles in normal sexual intercourse, tantric meditation practices, describing ongoing physical and mental processes, and our dying process), as well as relating to the two "Eyes" mentioned later in this chapter (that of the "elements" and that of the "lamps"), and in particular detailed at the beginning of the sixth chapter. Also see Hopkins' *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* 58-67 for a number of mentions to these

in the context of such Indo-Tibetan Buddhist views of embryogeny. For the time being, "blood" can be understood as referring to the mother's egg and nutrients in her uterus, while keeping in mind the symbolic potential of a light paternal contribution and dark maternal contribution, as well as the central role of white and red "nuclei" in tantric physiology (KGYT2 144,4, for example, talks about the white and red seminal nuclei as straightforward synonyms for "semen and blood" in the act of conception). This intersection of the sperm and blood within the mother thus forms the physical basis which an intermediate state being's consciousness may enter into, such that the true organizing force of the new embryo derives from this consciousness, which is in strict opposition to materialist interpretations reducing this moment of conception to exclusively the physical egg and sperm.

The eight stages named here are the initial phases in human embryonic development at seven day intervals, and are named imagistically in connection with the embryo's overall visual appearance, which initially at inception is the amalgamation of the father's semen of the father, the mother's "blood", and the intermediate state being's psychic complex (analyzed into two components - the "mind" and the "wind", the latter providing the momentum for the former's operations, like a horse and its rider). The specification here of seven weeks (forty nine days) is a little misleading, as in fact there are eight stages (which adds up to fifty six days all together), with the stages mentioned either on the date of their inception (the first of the given seventh day period), or the date at which they are present in their full blown aspect, right before the transition to the next stage (the seventh day of any given week). Thus the first form corresponds to the first week of the embryo's development and so on up through the eighth week. Perhaps seven weeks is specified here since the eighth stage actually is already present in the transition at the end of seven weeks, though in fact it culminates only at the end of the eighth week. Ati's glosses indicate considering the "firming-up" and "fish-like" phases as a single seven day phase, but Longchenpa's discussion doesn't support this.

These eight stages' characteristics in brief are:

i) Quivering (Mer Mer Po): this initial phase is often described as being like blood mixed with yogurt, i.e. very runny and liquid without any real consistency. LYT1 458,4 specifies it is vibrating like quicksilver, and merely the size of about three grains.

ii) Thickening (Nur Nur Po): the embryo becomes denser; Dr. Dolma in *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* 93 describes the transition as being from yogurt-like to cheese-like

iii) Elongated (ITar ITar Po): the embryo comes to have a distended appearance.

iv) Spherical (Gor Gor Po): the embryo is now ball-like, about the size/shape of an egg (KGYT2 146,5)

v) Firming-up (mKhrang 'Gyur): this is the stage where the three main channels and four main "wheels" (major nexuses of channels) take form, and overall becomes relatively firm and "hard". This could also be interpreted as "firming up (mKhrang) and changing ('Gyur)", with "changing" indicating the origination of the channels here (see Dr. Dolma's *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* 94).

vi) Fish-like (Nya ITa Bu): the embryo is about the size of the mother's fist (from outstretched thumb to pinkie) (ZMYT2 108,5), and resembles a fish in that its limbs have yet to emerge.

vii) Tortoise-like (Rus sBal bZhin): the appendages begin to just barely protrude out, and thus the embryo resembles a tortoise (ZMYT2 108,6).

viii) Frog-like (sBal Pa bZhin): the faculties and limbs fully emerge (thus like a frog), and the embryo is about the size of the mother's handspan (ZMYT2 109,1).

The bodily elements develop from the embryo's navel: it is the "channel-knot" or "wheel" of the navel which first forms in the embryo, within which originate two "eyes" (the nuclear centers which are subsequently discussed) which guide the origination of the rest of the body, psychically and physically. The name "eyes" given to what are in fact "super nuclei" indicates the innate intelligence of this process (which "sees" its way forward from a mere speck to a complex being), the key role of vision in human existence ("eyes" and "sight" being the basis of a privileged web of metaphors and images in our languages, and by far the predominant sense for humans) and in particular within the Direct Transcendence contemplation, and also their visual appearance as a mandalic center radiating out in concentric circles (like the physical eye itself). The additional significance of the embryo developing from the "navel" is revealed by ZMYT2 109,2, which says that the mother and child are "connected at the navel", referring to the child being attached to the mother at its navel via the umbilical cord, as well as the embryo being located within the mother's "belly".

191. And for nine months continue like this, such that on the face of the tenth (month): while it is often said that birth is on the tenth day of the tenth month, here it apparently merely refers to the beginning part of the tenth month without specifying the exact day. TCD2 111,6 symbolically correlates the ten levels of the Spiritual Heroes/Heroines with these ten months (as does KGYT2 151,3), in the context of an intricate correlation of all aspects of embryogeny and birth with the spiritual embryogeny and birth that takes place along the contemplative path.

192. Immeasurably many sentient beings of the post-death intermediate state: after death, all beings pass into a very attenuated type of existence here referred to as the "intermediate state" (*Bardo*), in which they only exist as a type of disembodied consciousness experiencing a succession of visions (descriptions of which have gained some popularity in English language cultures as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*). These immaterial beings are often referred to as "scent eaters" (see mini-encyclopedia), "psychic bodies" (KGYT2, 144,2), or even "wind/mind in the intermediate state with a psychic form" (LYT1 458,2). Existence in this post-death state is non-material, and the "body" they possess is merely a psychic reflection deriving from previous karmic imprints, i.e. life after life of embodied existences, and in particular that of the immediately preceding life, have left an indelible lingering impression on our minds.

Thus, most of those beings who reach a seventh day juncture in this intermediate state without completing their life span for existence in that intermediate state, then die within that state: usually the maximum length of time one can spend in this intermediate state following death is forty nine days, while at the end of each seven-day interval the being in question will experience a minor "death" (see Hopkins' *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* 52), after which it is either again born into this intermediate state or into a new rebirth (thus the actual life span within intermediate existence is only seven days). Seven such "deaths" and "life spans" can be experienced (totaling forty nine days), at which time every being must be reborn in a particular form of existence (as a deity, man, spirit, animal,

and so forth) other than the intermediate state existence. Longchenpa's use of "most" here would seem to indicate that in general most beings die and are reborn at seven day junctures, while those whose "life span" (in the intermediate state) is exhausted at some other point (the second day and so on in a given seven day series) are an exception. Those whose overall life-span in the intermediate existence is exhausted are not "reborn" into the post-death intermediate existence, but rather are reborn into a new physical life form, while the others are reborn in the intermediate existence up until the seven week limit, at which point all are reborn into a new life form. TCD2 488,6-489,4 has an interesting passage on the "life span" within the rebirth intermediate existence, where Longchenpa says that in general the shortest time is seven days while the longest is forty nine days, though just as "untimely" deaths can occur in this life so to here you can have isolated cases of untimely deaths (and thus other time spans do occur). In addition, he specifies that the births and deaths within the intermediate state are dream-like, and take place spontaneously in an instant, with the causal impetus being the memory or recall of one's previous death and birth. Thus you seem to die at the same time of day as your previous incarnation's death.

TDD 206,2 specifies that the limiting maximum possible duration of forty nine days within the intermediate state does create strong karmic imprints or latent impressions that result (in the case of those beings having human rebirth) in the main initial embryonic processes taking place within the mother's womb within the first forty nine days. This passage would imply that beings often spend forty nine days in the post-death intermediate existence (at least in the case of those beings frequently taking human rebirth), thus leaving a strong karmic imprint manifesting in the number's importance in the parallel processes of embryogeny.

Should their overall life span (for remaining within this post-death state) be completed, in accordance with their karma they then enter the womb of their new mother via her anus: an enlightened being is able to enter through the head of the mother rather than the anus, such as in traditional accounts' of the historical Buddha's conception. The type of life form you are reborn as, the particular types of parents you have, and so forth, are all in accordance with your own particular karma, as is the time of leaving the intermediate state existence - if at any particular seven day juncture your karma entails difficulty in finding an appropriate rebirth at that instant, then you are reborn in the intermediate state for the time being. KGYT2 144,2 makes the often referred to specification (given its obvious Freudian overtones of sexual feelings towards one's mother and father) that if this consciousness is to be reborn as a male, it witnesses the sexual intercourse of its future parents with feelings of aversion to the male and attachment to the female, while if it is to be reborn as a female, these feelings are reversed such that it feels aversion to the female and attachment to the male. In *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* 59, Hopkins further specifies that the intermediate state being then moves to embrace the one it feels attachment to, at which point its perceptual field is filled by that person's sexual organ, causing that intermediate state being to feel angry. It is this combined desire and hatred which acts as the direct cause of its "death" out of the intermediate state, and consequent entry into its future mother's womb - thus conception is already an emotionally packed event for the embryo, whose emotional life plays a key in the intra-uterine processes that follow over the next nine months (see later in this chapter). Also see TCD1 339,1-340,2 for a very interesting discussion of the sexual encounter in the context of conception, and a brief mention in Guenther's *The Creative Vision* p. 41.

193. Both the subtle wind energy and mind of the being appropriating this new bodily existence, the white vibrant quintessence (the causal impetus emerging from the father) and

the red vibrant quintessence (the condition emergent from the mother) are all four amalgamated together through a churning process, such that it resembles mixing blood and milk: the "energy wind and mind" refer to the psychic force of the intermediate state being, whose immaterial subtle life force after dying out of physical existence is said to be "mind" riding on the mount of the fundamental "winds". Thus at the initial moment of conception there is a psychic force present beyond the mere physical sperm and egg, with its own karmic history of countless life times and transformations coming into play as the embryo develops. Along these lines, in general the "individual" life would be considered to "originate" simultaneously with the actual conception, as the child's unique consciousness with its karmic history is present in actuality right at that very instant, even though most of its potentialities have yet to unfold.

The "vibrant quintessences" (*Dwangs Ma* - see mini-encyclopedia for comments on this term) here can also be referred to as "seminal nuclei" (ZMYT2 108,1), or even the "quintessence of seminal nuclei" (*Thig Le'i Dwangs Ma*; KGYT2 166,4), as well as just "semen" (*Khu Ba*) and blood drop/ovum (KGYT2 144,5; TCD1 367,1). As mentioned above, the literal basis for this analysis of conception derives from the observation that in sexual intercourse the male ejaculates "white" semen, while the female in menstruation (shedding the materials that would have otherwise developed into or aided the embryo) gets rid of "red" blood. This latter observation apparently led them to image the female's "egg" or ovum as "a red quintessence" into which the male's white element dissolves in conception, also allowing a potent symbolic contrast in colors. While certainly the white and red elements thus can be correlated to the sperm and egg that modern science would consider as the key factors in conception, they also have other associations in tantric physiology beyond that of the sperm and egg. ZMYT2 110,5-6 in this context says the white seminal nuclei influences the development of the brain, marrow, bone, fat, and muscular tissue, while the red seminal nuclei is the key factor in the development of flesh, lymph, skin, and hair. When the vibrant quintessences (that are the key dynamics of these seminal nuclei) expand, our body is very attractive and devoid of white hair and wrinkles, while with their deterioration our body ages. These two seminal nuclei then are extensively dealt within in tantric practices, where the white element is imaged as a moon and the syllable *Ham* (usually said to reside in the crown wheel) which influences these bodily factors by descending via the flavor channel, while the red element is imaged as a sun and the syllable *A* (usually said to reside in the navel wheel) influences the body by descending via the solitary channel (see LYT2 243,2ff). For women the locations are reversed, but in fact these white and red seminal nuclei are both present in their bodies all males and females. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the semen, egg, and psychic factor are each said to consist of the fivefold elemental energy (water, earth, fire, wind, space) that is the basis of tantric physiology (see Dr. Dolma's *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* 92) - these elements being merely a concretization or materialization of the five light hues that form the Universe's very fabric (white, red, green, blue, yellow), and thus form the essence of our mental as well as physical energy, with mental activities impelling currents ("winds") being said to consist of "water energy", "earth energy" and so on. In fact, these elements constitution material "reality" ultimately derive from the Universe's inherent intelligence since the five lights are awareness' self-presencing, and hence the materialist interpretation of consciousness as an adventitious and accidental byproduct of "material" processes is neatly reversed.

TCD1 369,7-367,1 specifies that in embryogeny the paternal "causal impetus" is particularly connected to the earth and water energies, and "sustains the body's foundation", while the maternal "conditional determinant" is particularly connected to fire and wind

energy, and "differentiates vibrancy and waste in the body". KGYT2 148,3 has a very interesting passage explicating the child's qualities in dependence upon the relative predominance in number, as well as qualities of, the father's and mother's respective "vibrant quintessences" at the moment of conception:

"...Pha Ma gNyis Kyi Dwangs Ma Drug mNyam Du 'Dres Na Mi De sTobs Dang gZugs Dang dPa' rTsal Dang lDan Pa bSod Nams Che Zhing bLo rNo Bar sKye, bZhi mNyam Du 'Dres Na 'Bring sTod, gSum 'Dres Na 'Bring, gNyis 'Dres Na 'Bring sMad, Re Re 'Dres Na Tha Ma'o. Pha 'Ma'i Dwangs Ma mNyam Du 'Dres Na Pho Mo Gang Yang sNgon Gyi bSags Pa Dang, 'Phral Gyi gDam Ngag Gis bsGyur, Pha'i Dwangs gCig Dang Ma'i Dangs Ma gNyis 'Dres Na Mor sKye Zhing, De Las Log Na Phor bTsa', mNyam Po La Pha'i Dwangs Ma sTobs Chen Mi Sha Chung La Rus sTobs Che Ba 'Ong Zhing, Ma'i sTobs Chen Sha Che La mDog dMar Ba 'Ong.

Dwangs Ma Dang sNyigs Ma gNyis 'Dres Na Mi sDar Ba Dang, gLen Pa Dang, lKugs Pa 'Ong. Pha Ma Nad Bu Can Gyi Dwangs Ma Mi Nad Bu Can 'Ong. Pha Ma'i Dwangs Ma sTobs mNyam Pa'i Dus Su Chags Na Ma Ning Du 'Ong. Dwangs Ma Ma sNyoms Na dBang Po Dang Yan Lag Nyams Pa sKye'o.

De'ang 'Dod Pa sPyod Pa'i Dus Na Thig Le dKar Zhing sNgo La 'Tsher Ba dNgul Chu'i rNam Pa 'Dra Ba Nyung Kar Tsam Drug Pha Las Thob Pa'i Thig Le dKar Po'i Nang Na Yod Pas, 'Di sPrul Pa sKu'i rGyu Yin Par bZhed Do.

Ma'i Dwangs Ma rGya sKyegs Kyi Me Tog lTa Bu Sran Ma Tsam sNum Zhing 'Tsher Ba Dang, Pha'i Dwangs Ma 'Dres Pa Las Mer Mer Po Nas bZung sTe sBal Pa'i rNam Pa'i Bar Du Chags Nas, Ma'i Zas Zos Pa'i Dwangs Mas Cher bsKyed Do.

Dwangs Ma La 'Byung bZhi'i rTsal Che Chung Gis Mi La 'Byung Ba'i Khams rNams Che Chung Du 'Ong Ba'o. 'Byung Ba Dag Ma Dag Gi Shes Pa Dang, dBang Po'i gZugs Yan Lag La Sogs Pa'i Legs Nyes Thams Cad 'Byung Ngo..."

*As your body thus takes form, the dyad of this "causal impetus" and "conditional determinant" brings about functions pertaining to the four conventional elemental energies, thereby engendering the factors of increase and accumulation in your body's development:* the terms "causal impetus" and "condition" are thus applied to the father and mother's seminal nuclei respectively in they act as the causal impetus and conditioning determinant of the embryo's physical development. The four "conventional" elemental energies (literally "all-obscuring") are those grosser energies as present in the father's semen and the mother's blood, i.e. the four energies in physical existence (corresponding to our ordinary nuclei, cells, tissue and so forth) spurring, and acting as, the bodily energies' increase (in strength and complexity) and accumulation (in particular concentrations and forms). The four "ultimate" elemental energies (literally "supremely significant") are then the four subtle energies as present in the embryo's psyche/wind complex, which derive from the intermediate state being and enable the embryo's mental and spiritual life that distinguish it from inanimate matter devoid of consciousness' subtle energy. The former thus provides the basis for the latter's dynamics (see 207 where the ultimate energies are said to depend upon the conventional energies' processes), which is why in the fourth chapter the support or basis of primordial gnosis is said to be the body, which provides a localized site where primordial gnosis can articulate itself, and, so to speak, look within its own mirror at its own face. One must keep in mind that in effect the individual's mind/winds are a potency or efflorescence of primordial



gnosis, a dimmed derivative of one's pure luminous awareness which has in some sense "lost its way" (the energy winds being a reflex of the gnostic "winds" or energy, while the "mind" is merely awareness' efflorescence mixing with those currents of light energy), which as such can at any point recapture its original lucency and radiance, as a child returns to its home/mother after a day of wandering through the neighborhood, as Ulysses returns to Penelope, or Leopold to Molly. Thus at the core of this wind/mind complex is the nuclear luminous awareness, which displays itself primarily in the rainbow-colored ultimate energies of our existence, and secondarily as the subtle psychic functioning which dominates under the conditions of alienation.

LYT1 460,4ff clarifies this passage: "...Furthermore, via the causal impetus, conditional determinants and functioning of the father and mother's two seminal nuclei's four conventional elemental energies, the body originates, develops, abides and disintegrates. Via the causal impetus (the four elements) one remains in physical existence - earth-energy generates and sustains flesh and bones, water-energy generates and sustains blood and "quintessential nutrients", fire-energy generates and sustains warmth, and wind-energy sustains the movements of outer and inner breath - while at the end the agitation of these elemental energies forms the conditions for sickness and death.

This dyad of energy wind and mind is endowed with the causal impetus, conditional determinants and functioning of the four or five ultimate energies (in that the ultimate seminal nuclei are present therein) - their causal impetus is the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosis, their conditional determinants are the lights and colors, and their functioning is the four lamps. Furthermore, awareness' essence ripens in the Tsitta as the Spiritual Bodies, in the channels as the seminal nuclei, in the eyes as the four Lamps, and its fruit is the taking hold of one's own-site, the seamless identity of the expanse and primordial gnosis..."

TDD 207 in describing the four ultimate energies specifies the corresponding four light hues (white, yellow, red, green) as forming the causal impetus of the four lamps, which then in turn are the agents that respectively generate awareness, the lights, the Spiritual Bodies, and primordial gnoses. Thus the latter factors come to the fore in dependence upon the ultimate energies' rainbow-colored light, which act as causal impetus for the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses (the "subjective" dimension), as well as the conditional determinant for the lights and colors (the "objective" dimension) in their functioning as the lamps. Alternatively, since the rainbow-colored luminosity is the essential "stuff" of all these dimensions, it could be said that it functions as the four lamps with the causal impetus of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses, and the conditioning determinants of the lights and colors. These different interpretations are not mutually exclusive as "generating" merely marks a liminal phase transition from latency to full blow manifestation, while these different terms in essence are merely different conceptual isolations of the universe's unitary flow of light-energy. Thus it can be said that by virtue of the ultimate energies' dynamics the Spiritual Bodies and so forth come to the fore as in the Ground's presencing or Direct Transcendence, while on the other hand the Spiritual Bodies as corresponding to the Ground's Essence, Nature and Compassionate resonance are always already there underlying the ultimate energies' dynamics as the four lamps.

Thus the four elements (in both their dimensions of reduced intensity and vibrant intensity) are here emphasized as the causal impetuses, conditioning determinants, and dynamic functioning of physical and spiritual processes, with the two dyads (white and red seminal

nuclei; wind-current and mind) basically indicating the lower order physical dimension and higher order psychic dimension of our lives. Actually primordial gnosis and so forth lack any causal impetus and so forth as they are primordially present, but we speak in this way to clarify one's spiritual "birth" using the analogous lower order physical processes to symbolically image its gradual unfolding. Just as in these lower order processes we have a "body" that embryonically develops in accordance with various elemental causes and conditions, analogically we speak of Spiritual Bodies, and their ontogenetic development within the seminal nuclei "eggs" in accordance with "causes" and "conditions". In fact it is rather the physical conventional dimension which images or reflects the spiritual ultimate dimension, as the former is a mere condensation of the latter, a contraction, and thus the old division between consciousness and matter is an illusory distinction which we overcome when we come to fully participate in the human being's co-evolution with the Universe.

*The dyad of your mind and energy wind brings about the functioning pertaining to the four supremely significant "ultimate" elemental energies, whereby you "take hold" and "sustain" this new body, and the ripening process of separating out and uniting (this new body's fourfold elemental energy) is effected:* the mind/wind, i.e. psyche, "takes hold", "sustains", and "informs" the body, making it into a living, sensing dynamically self-organizing being capable of creativity and rapid response. If the body's physical energies were not thus "grasped" or permeated by consciousness/psychic energy, it would be no different than an inanimate object such as a stone, which is clearly evident in the cold corpse wherein the elemental forces are still present but consciousness is not. Later in the chapter Longchenpa deals in detail with the correlation of these physical energies' transformations and the mind's karmic inheritance of emotional distortions, emphasizing the intimate relationship in the mind-body complex (here in proto-form as the nuclei and mind/wind). In addition, the embryo's mind/wind complex (its subtle psychic energy) functions to bring about the maturation process of "differentiation" and "assimilation" of physical energies' centripetal and centrifugal processes. The former term connotes the body's expansion, bringing about differentiation and function from the inchoate elemental energies as well as differentiating the vibrant dimensions from the inert dimensions, while the latter term connotes bringing together and focusing those energies' potencies in particular ways. This differentiating out and gathering together are integrated or amalgamated into a harmonious dynamic whole via psychic energy (the mind on its wind-mount), thus enabling the embryo's four energies to become something greater than the sum of their individual dimensions, something alive capable of mirroring its own being within awareness. This refers to the higher level organization and integration of embryonic development which the wind/mind complex provides, while the sperm/egg merely provides the raw impetus and physical growth. The former is the higher organizations and dimensions of psychic energy (our eightfold consciousness and so forth), whereas the latter is the lower level dimension of physical energy which (as detailed later in this chapter) is actually fueled by the latent tendencies and emotional distortions deriving from one's psychic history over the course of countless lifetimes. This is markedly distinct from the normal Western biological view which attributes embryogeny merely to the two "vibrant quintessences" (sperm and egg), with their nuclei's DNA and so forth, while denying a role and presence of psychic energy from the very start - this psychic spark makes the difference between dull inert matter and the living body as the indispensable "support" of awareness (see CB 41-2). Thus from conception onwards this functioning of subtle energy (termed the "mind/wind") animates the physical energies, bringing about the highly complex and particular development of the fetus which results in a fully endowed human being; this influence of psychic energy on one's physical well-being continues throughout life after birth.

194. The basic meaning is that every seven days (one week) an analytically discernible cycle of activity takes place in the embryo's growth, and thus the first eight weeks are discussed and given names in eight separate periods, corresponding to these seven day intervals. The main basis of this analysis rests on the functioning of the four elemental energies, which it claims "take turns" predominating for four days, then for two days operate in tandem with each other (the first day two conjoining, and then the second day the other two conjoining), and then on one day operating all in conjunction without any single element predominating. However this seven day cycle is only clearly described by Longchenpa in the first two weeks of embryogeny, while it is not clearly evident as a pattern in the following weeks.

195. See the mini-encyclopedia for a discussion of the four/five elemental energies.

196. From the four modes of functioning corresponding to these four elemental energies, on the first day these embryonic constituents are gathered together via water energy's attractive force, differentiated out via its dispersing action, and then integrated into a single whole as it "balances" them: the triune operations characteristic of the elements here are to first effect cohesion by bringing the embryo's elemental constituents together into a single entity; then second to differentiate out particular facets, functions and concentrations as a complex organization begins to be articulated; and finally to link up or integrate all of these emerging differentiations into a single cohesive, interlinked and highly complex entity or organism. This triadic functioning takes place during each of the first four days, with each of the four elements successively temporarily coming to the fore during its corresponding day. In the present context, KGYT2 145,2 clearly specifies "gathered together" as signifying that all four factors (mind, energy wind, semen, and blood) are gathered into one via the functioning of water, keeping in mind that each of these four factors in their own right consists of the five elemental energies. Thus the embryonic energies or constituents here are the four or five elements as present in these four constituents of the forming fetus, which by merging here form the foundation of the "quivering" embryonic stage, about two grains in size (LYT1, 458,2 indicates the size is only one hundredth of a grain).

The only problematic term here is "attractive force" (*Zug Pa*), which more commonly means "to enter", "to pierce", or "to run to" (such as "then the channel runs to the left side"). However in the current context it means to "attract" or "cohere", which is particularly clear on TCD1 236,5, VLDC 132,3 and *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* (Ati 50,6-52,3) which both analyze these internal elements' operations into twelve aspects, corresponding to the four elements as each characterized by the following triad of functions: "attraction" (*Zug Pa*), "dispersion" or "differentiation" (*Byer Ba*), and "balancing" or "equalization" (*sNyoms Pa*) - in short, cohesion, differentiation, and integration. In addition, subsequently the "attraction" operation can have a disruptive effect, shaking up or "destroying" the previous embryonic stage such that the transition to the next phase can take place (see TDD 205). Perhaps the etymology of this term, usually meaning to enter, pierce, or run to, is that the element is "engaged" or "activated", thus "entering" its potency so that its functioning permeates its field of activity, and it functions to contract all the constituents in its range of operations, condensing them all together under the sphere of its influence. Thus it signifies the element activating centripetally, such that all other elements are drawn into its vortex ("drawn" hither), which can have a formative effect (condensing from a state of dispersion) or a disruptive effect (see above). TEDM does give one meaning of *Zug Pa* as "to be attracted to", "to get strongly attracted to".

197. Out of this, an extremely subtle water energy channel originates by stretching straight out towards the right side of the mother, roughly speaking the size of one hundredth of a horse tail's hair, and during this time, the mother feels correspondingly cold: TDD 207,4 mentions "the channel of water wind", indicating that the channels here discussed are named in the terms of the elements since the energy winds corresponding to that particular element predominantly flow through that channel. The energy winds themselves can be analyzed into the five elements, and basically denote the elements in motion, the currents of energy whereby the elements circulate and function throughout our bodies. As such, these "winds" are involved in the circulation of our blood, nerve impulses, breathing, though, and so on. The development of the water channel within the embryo has a corresponding effect in the mother's body of chilling it (water generally being cold), just as on the second day the development of the earth channel with its "heaviness" causes the mother's cognition to become "heavy", or sluggish, and so on - the energetic processes of the embryo are inextricably linked to the mother's own physical and mental state, as one would expect.

198. As mentioned above, all four elements have the same generic three types of operations, which, though the particular terms specifying each in a given context vary, can be characterized within the three generic classes of cohesion/gathering-in/attraction, separation-differentiation, and integrating/leveling out. They take hold and gather in (centripetal), then once thus established they act to disperse or diffuse outwards (centrifugal), and then that dispersal is coordinated or linked up into a greater whole (integrative) - the energies are condensed or intensified into a single area (without which there would just be a meaningless dispersion of energy), then spread out into places of functional importance (simple condensation of energy leaves no space for functional differentiation), and finally seamlessly integrated into a single organism (such differentiation must be coordinated to operate as a meaningful whole).

As for specific references to earth energy on the second day and fire energy on the third day, TCD1 340,5 specifies that on the second day earth energy acts to "integrate" ("mix into one"), and with its weightiness suppressing the embryo, it suffers discomfort as if a mountain pressed down on its head; on the third day, fire bakes the embryo into atomic mere atomic particles, and thus the embryo suffers with sensations like being thrust into a pit of burning red coals. LYT1 458,3 and KGYT2 145,2 indicate the functions of earth energy on the second day results in "stabilizing into one", with the former also specifying that it becomes about a tenth of a grain in size. Those two texts also describe fire energy on the third day as making it like a pulsating, quivering form, that is "one third" of a grain in size (LYT). These descriptions can be understood as complementary to TDD's analysis, since the overall effect of the triune functioning can be described which emphasizes the special tone of that element, and the analysis' focus can be shifted to relatively more generic or particular modes of classification.

199. LYT1 458,4 says that on the fourth day, wind energy first scatters the embryo into hundreds and thousands of particles, and then gathers them back together, such that the embryo is about half a grain in size. It would seem that it here uses "gathers back" to indicate TDD's "reintegration", while TDD uses "gathers back" to refer to a preliminary condensation of energy. KGYT2 145,3 says "the wind's functioning scatters it into hundreds and thousands of tiny seminal nuclei", and has "scattering" first, "gathering" second, and then "ripening". This "scattering" or dispersal has the centrifugal effect of spreading the evolving

organism's energies out so that networks of organization can be developed, allowing for space so that a multiplicity of capabilities and structures to develop.

200. *Yang* (here translated as "correspondingly" based on its literal meaning of "also" or "as well"), could also be interpreted as "light", i.e. the mother's cognition is very light, without any sluggishness or drowsiness. However since there is no connecting particle between it and *Shin Tu gSal*, and *Yang* in the sense of "also" is used above in the same context, I have chosen to read it otherwise.

201. Whichever energy's influence and activity is predominating at a given time in the embryo has a corresponding influence in the mother's body.

202. LYT1 458,5 says that on the fifty day, earth energy and water energy gather together its "vibrant" and "solidified" energies, such that the embryo is about a grain in size. KGYT2 145,4, says that water energy gathers in the vibrant and solidified energies, while earth energy firms it up into the size of a single grain. As for the sixth day, LYT1 458,5 describes it as fire energy and wind energy acting to ripen and clarify the embryonic energies, thereby making it about two grains in size; KGYT2 145,4 specifies "stabilize" instead of "ripen".

203. Space energy is the fifth energy along with the previously discussed four ("space" and "sky" are the same word in the Tibetan language), and is termed the "neutral" energy (*Ma Ning Gi 'Byung Ba*), literally "neuter" (i.e. neither masculine nor feminine). On 204,5 "neutral" is used to refer to the elements operating together than dyads rather than individually, while in the present context it indicates the special status of space energy, which stands apart from the other four elements. Space-energy is openness, the transcendental matrix providing the neutral clearing space within which the other four elemental energies may operate, and as such cannot be reduced to any particular polarity (whether masculine or feminine, heavy or light, etc.) Thus space is like a "super force" which permeates all other elemental transmutations as their pervading medium/matrix, and as such not polarized into particular forms - unlike the other four energies, it is no-thing at all with clear connections to emptiness or original purity. As the "expanse" and emptiness (which are anything but a sterile nothingness), it is not at all a mere sterile absence such as within an empty container, but rather is inherently dynamically alive light energy (see Guenther's description of it as a "superforce" in *The Creative Vision* 160), as well as the potent, fertile openness that provides the clearing space for things to be, and in doing so shapes their reality. Just as we talk of "empty forms" or "forms of emptiness", we can talk of appearances as the "lighting-up of space", instead of the dualistic perception of tangible material forms existing discrete isolation within a blank, passive container-space. In purely conventional terms, within the body "space energy" can be identified in particular with the empty orifices of our body, the "space" that allows for circulation of other elements. See Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* for an interesting phenomenological exploration of "space".

204. I have discussed "the letters present within the energy channels" in earlier annotations, where I indicated that it basically refers to the energy-flows (seminal nuclei and currents) characteristically present with the channels in terms of their "sound" quality, something like a frequency or pitch of energy which is imaged in terms of different syllables. In our present context, *Kham* is the sound vibration corresponding to white light energy and the water energy-flowing down the water energy channel, *Sam* to yellow and earth energy, *Ram* to red and fire energy, and *Yam* to green and wind energy - they are the sonic vibrations of these elemental force. Khanpo Chodrak suggested that these "letters" take specific form in

accordance with the native language of one's rebirth, as their formation is impelled by one's particular karmic imprints and propensities. This use of language simultaneously ties into the pervasive symbolization of experience in tantric thought (which in particular privileges sex and language as image discourses for describing experience and the Universe), and the gnostic doctrine which images the building blocks of the Universe as the alphabet, thus giving language a status beyond its temporal origins with life on this planet, and its most highly developed dimension in humanity's oral and written languages. The origin of language undeniably lies in poetry, the revelation of worlds in words as we creatively capture and transform our experience in terms of patterns of sound vibration, and as such language is intimately connected to the elemental energies which are none other than vibrations of light, though our sensibilities are dulled to this pure sonic and photic vibrational energy, especially in our current age with its pervasive advertisement mentality. Because of this immense creative power of language (which thus opened up the entire horizon of humanity - we are what we *say*) and its fundamental energetic quality, it thus seems perfectly natural to discuss the energies as present within our body in terms of seed syllables, i.e. seminal sounds. By using language in such a way that it seems to claim language somehow inheres in reality beyond our particular uses of language, it also shocks us into rethinking our conventional "dismissal" of language as a tool of the superficial, such as Heidegger attempts to do in *On the Way to Language*, where he rethinks the relation of language to Being. Language itself is also a potent symbolic resource in our poetic thinking on the universe's beginnings, with its grammar, alphabet, capacities, and so forth possessing hermetic evocative force to image and speak to us of things that might otherwise be exceedingly difficult to touch upon. In addition, by locating language itself within reality beyond our personal consciousness, the split between "intelligence" (see as the domain of life) and the "universe" is overcome, as we are forced to sense that the universe itself is inherently intelligence at every level, continually "speaking" to and through us in a language of its own creation. Thus Universe self-originate in its initiation of a discourse with itself, articulating these worlds out of its pure potential by a systematic articulation of its own alphabet of energy vibrations capable of evoking/revealing its own experience to itself, whereby it may say, and know, itself. This language and self-speaking is thus primordial, and our own adventures in language then are a reflection and ongoing participation in this primordial discourse which are intimately tied into the universe, admitting the infinite gap between "word" and "thing" (the fissure of reference) yet still asserting the intimacy of language to the universe (not on the basis of thing-based thought obsessed with thing-referentiality, but rather on the very nature of language and being as revealed to poetic contemplation). Indeed we could say "original purity" is silence, while "spontaneous presence" is language, that the Ground's essence is to say no-thing, while its nature is to say every thing. Finally, years of sustained contemplation grant one subtle powers of perception into one's own body/mind as well as the world without, and such perception may very well grant one insights into subtle photic and sonic aspects of these processes not accessible to our ordinary survival-oriented perceptual capacities (such as the "aura" of people and plants, and so on). In addition, the subtle energies of our body are malleable to our perception of them (witness the very solidity of elements stemming from our primordial non-recognition of the light), and it is often said that the elaborate symbolic descriptions of our subtle energy in terms of "wheels", "letters", and so on only take vivid form in correlation to our advanced contemplation of them, and thus how they reveal themselves to a yogi's perception in part corresponds to how s/he sees them, the symbolic apparatus which s/he brings to his/her evolving self-perception - it is the structures rather than the particulars which are vital. A literal interpretation of these speculations on language (whether traditional or modern) must be firmly rejected, as the self-evident absurdity of granting a privileged status to Sanskrit or any other language outside of a community of

specific users should be clear. We must think through the obvious, it is true, but we must also think beyond to the wellsprings of thought and imagery so as to participate in its vital creativity and significance. Padoux's *Vāc* provides a nice discussion of the importance of the "word" in Indian tantric thought, and in particular points out how the oral word is emphasized over the written word, the phoneme over the grapheme (unlike recent "continental" philosophy with its obsessive thinking upon the significance of the "text", with its religious roots in seeing the world as the "book of God").

As for other references to these "letters within the channels" in Longchenpa's corpus, descriptions of the conventional seminal nuclei as having the form of "letters" within the main channels and elsewhere in our body are numerous, such as KGYT1 470 and KGYT2 218,6. KGYT3 169-171 in particular says the "nature" of the vibrant energy in the center of our five main energy wheels is the "seminal nuclei", their "observable aspect" is "letters", and their "essence" is the five primordial gnoses and five Spiritual Bodies. It also says the "ultimate" seminal nuclei are "externally" our five elemental energies, "internally" our five psycho-physical components, "esoterically" the five vibrant quintessences, "super-esoterically" the five letters, and "unsurpassedly" the five Sky Dancers. VLDC 17,2ff associates a letter with each one of the 80,000 channels within the human body. See Geshe Gyatso's *Clear Light of Bliss* 50-52 for a discussion of these letters in terms of the meditation of inner fire. TCD1 339-344 has a number of references in the context of conception and embryogeny.

LYT2 132,6 says the following:

"...Within the body are channels; within the channels are the energy winds, blood and constituents; within those, letters are located. By reciting the letters in accordance with the key points of your body and mind, these letters within the channels shine, and disease is extirpated.."

The passage then goes on to detail different syllables that can be used in meditation to cure corresponding types of disease in your body, with detailed correlations of syllables to different parts of the body. Since speech and breath is such an essential aspect of our physical and mental life, the intonation of sound units is an obvious resource for contemplative techniques (as is the visualization of colors and shapes), enabling us to effect dimensions of our body and mind usually beyond our conscious access via the concentration such contemplation develops, as well as possibly subtle influences each sound's vibration has on our body/mind.

In general, the use of sounds or syllables in Buddhist tantric physiology and meditation is quite pervasive, based on sound frequencies being energy pitches - for example is a pattern of energy, and hence can be expressed as a sound. In fact, the term translated here as "radiation" (*gDangs*) literally means "tone" or "pitch", i.e. a sound vibration, from which five-colored light emanates outwards. These letters are symbols, not literal, and indicate that each particular channel or flow of energy in our body is associated with a particular vibrational quality. Sound thus has a powerful effect on us as it resonates with our subtle energy system, with potentially destructive or harmonizing effects - witness the impact music can have on our total being. When we engage in negative acts and emotions, blockages and distortions are caused in our subtle energy system, which are expressed as "knots" in the channels, and can become connected with physical disease as well as mental and emotional illness. By concentrating our psycho-physical currents of energy (winds) into a letter at the

heart of seminal nuclei, these letters can thus serve as very powerful matrixes to attract and control energy, enabling us to heal these diseases and distortions through eliminating the blockages in energy-flow through concentration on visualized letters. Not only do they thus describe the subtle energy-flows in our body, they also relate to our body as an internal mandala, with each "syllable" as a seed syllable of a corresponding deity of the mandala, its subtle essence in sonic form. Additionally, each of the six types of life forms is said to have a corresponding syllable that is their essential karmic vibration, and as such are located within our own body as particular channels or energy-flows. If one's energy winds become trapped in those channels such that this "letter" is activated and engaged, it is said your state of consciousness is altered to experience that frame of being, that characteristic patten of "vibration". Indeed it is said that all states of consciousness have characteristic "letters" associated with them, and for an advanced contemplator it is thus possible to penetrate to these letters, and actually enter the lived experience of an animal, and so forth. More positively, it is possible to activate these letters' vibration through meditation, and thus liberate the energy of that channel such that it is no longer possible to fall under its compulsive control. Although in this way it is possible to liberate negative karmic energy and eliminate the possibility of its again holding sway over you in transmigration, it is also possible to erroneously force your psychic currents into the wrong channels, which can cause insanity

205. Thus here the "Quivering" phase is named as the result after the first seven days - beginning on the first day, it reaches its final form on the seventh day. KGYT2 145,1 places the foundation of the "Quivering" phase on the first day, merely mentioning a "spherical seminal nuclei" on the seventh day. While TDD here specifies only one tiny eye-like seminal nuclei, I have read "two" on the basis of LYT1 458,7 and KGYT2 145,5. Following the latter's mention of two, they can be correlated to the "element" and "lamp" Eyes, a reading supported by TDD's mention of "two eyes" on the twelfth day as if they were developing further (indicating their origination had already taken place on a previous day). While the imagery of "small eyes" (*Mig*) here connotes the alternative term for these two seminal nuclei as "Eyes" (*sPyan* - the capitalization indicating *sPyan* is the honorific form of "eye") and as such derives from these special nuclei's connection with the visual faculty (both normal and transcendent), as well as the other sensory faculties, it also has a strictly visual denotation since the seminal nuclei are usually said to appear as concentric circles, thus visually resembling an eye with its inner circle of the pupil within the larger circle of the iris. See the annotations below, as well as Chapter Six, for further details on these two "Eyes", which are like super-nuclei acting as the organizing centers for all process of vital and gnostic energy without our body and mind.

206. The term "destroyed" reoccurs throughout the account of the embryo's development, indicating that each week as the embryo begins to solidify in a certain discernible form, the elements' functioning disrupts that form to avoid stagnation and thus enable further development. There is a creative significance to destruction which is necessary for renewal - occurring every seven days, it prevents the death of rigidity, a dead end to the child's development which would result in miscarriage or being still born. In the continual reorganization of the embryonic body, forms are constantly taking shape and disintegrating in an increasingly complex pattern of reorganization. This disruption or destruction drives the process by "loosening up" or "breaking up" the previous stage so that the new stages can emerge. While it may seem this term and the following terms of "scattered" and so forth are quite violent for the process of the embryo's growth, it must be recalled that the site of their operation is only a small area within the mother's womb, and "dispersal" and so forth only



take place within the limited area rather than implying their dispersal throughout the mother's body. The term "baked" of course connotes its "maturing" and gaining solid form, such as with fruit ripening in the heat, and our baking of clay statues.

207. The eastern direction corresponds to the front side of the body, and mother's front, and LYT1 459,2 specifies this it is "the eastern channel of the embryo's heart". LYT2 239,5 also indicates that these four "directional" channels originate from among the channels which are based on the heart's radiant light.

208. LYT1 459 specifies "a fourth of a pea in size" for this twelfth day, then a "a third of a pea" in size for the thirteenth day, and only on the fourteenth day does it become a full pea in size. As for the "two eyes", see below.

209. The "four channels" refer to those corresponding to the four elemental energies (water, earth, fire, and wind), as explicit on LYT1 459,5. As for the two "eyes", Longchenpa here uses both the honorific (*sPyan*) and non-honorific (*Mig*) forms of "eye", which I have indicated by capitalizing the former. Often in philosophical discourse, the non-honorific and honorific forms of a term are contrasted to each other as non-optimal vs. optimal functioning of a given dimension - the primary example is with respect to the "Body" (*sKu*), "Speech" (*gSung*) and "Mind" (*Thugs*) of an enlightened Buddha, as contrasted with the ordinary neuroticized, distorted "body" (*Lus*), "speech" (*Ngag*) and "mind" (*Sems*) of a typical living being mired in delusion. In this contrast, the honorific form of a term often gains an expanded meaning, such that simply translating it by the capitalized form of the normal meaning - body/Body - can be misleading.

TCD2 1,2 has a very clear description of these two Eyes (which also are discussed in the sixth chapter - see my annotations to 259), which are the two super-nuclei of our existence giving rise to our entire physical and spiritual organization, and in particular to our capacity for physical and spiritual vision (see Chapter Five for a discussion of these light channels running to our eyes):

"...At the time of the body first developing, within the energy channel-knot of the generativity wheel (i.e. the navel) which previously developed in dependence upon water energy, the pair of the Eye of the Lamps and the Eye of the Elemental Energies develop. The subsequent manner in which our physical body constituted of the four energies takes form (in embryogeny) from the Elemental Energies Eye has been previously explained. From the Lamps Eye, two channels running (up from the navel/heart) to the center of the two eyes' pupils originate (resembling the horns of a buffalo yet with a narrow base and opening wide at their tips (i.e. as they reach the eyes)), operating as the foundation of the ultimate transcendent reality (*Nirvana*), which has the nature of primordial gnosis' manifestation in terms of lights, seminal nuclei, the Spiritual Bodies and so on. That is called the far ranging noose water lamp, and in dependence upon it there is the empty seminal nuclei lamp, the self-emergent insight lamp, and the thoroughly pure expanse lamp..."

ZMYT2 108,2 also specifies that these two "eyes" originate in the middle of the embryo's three cornered channel-knot at the navel. TDD's mention of the "essence of primordial gnosis" would seem to primarily refer to the Lamps Eye, which is the key matrix of primordial gnosis within our body, while the Elemental Energies Eye is involved in the organization of somewhat coarser processes, though remaining essentially gnostic energy.

210. In this context, "quintessence" (*Dwangs Ma*) indicates the pure energy of a factor, its vibrant essence with full potential unadulterated by its subsequent varied operations, and eventual accretion of diverse sedimented features and derivatives. "Warmth" or "heat" (*Drod; Ūṣman*) is a very frequent term in tantric meditation, with heat's connotations of life (as opposed to "cold" inert matter), high-energy processes (high-energy giving off heat as a byproduct), and light (heat and light generally being associated together as both derive from the sun and fire). Thus wisdom or insight is imaged as the sun, and realization is marked by our "warming up" to the issue at hand, as expressed by such statements "now we're really cooking!" See Poussin's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* 233-238 for that text's explication of the connection between our "vitality", consciousness, and "warmth". In the present context, "warmth" is related to the embryo's "incubation" and its need for inner warmth as well to fuel its developmental processes - this warmth or heat fuels consciousness' clarity or radiance, providing it with the kinetic solar energy needed for cognitive energy to operate. A good study of the Vedic roots of this multi-dimensional understanding of "heat" can be found in Kaelber's *Tapta Mārga: Asceticism and Initiation in Vedic India*.

211. The agents of action on the 16th-17th and 18th-19th are unstated, but can be inferred as "the four elements" and "the karmic winds" respectively, since the identical verbs were used in the previous paragraph, where their respective agents were explicitly specified as being such. As for the final line here, KGYT2 146,5 indicates that from the fifteenth to the twenty first day, the "Elongated" stage progresses from the initial size of two peas to the culminating size of a thumb.

212. LYT1 459,6 specifies the fourth week involves water energy gathering together, and the embryo's development up until the "Spherical" phase takes its full egg-sized form. As for this first seminal nuclei that takes form within the eastern energy channel, the ZMYT passage cited below indicates it should be identified as "the vibrant quintessence of blood". During this week a series of "quintessences" develop, which are tiny, intense concentrations of energy acting as the organizing sources of various facets of the developing embryo.

213. "Non-conceptual consciousness" indicates this cognitive energy is as yet devoid of any elaborate reifications and differentiation, and is a simple awareness, analogous to our simple bare awareness of presence in initial sensory awareness of objects, the nameless, undifferentiated moment preceding our categorizations, enframing and manipulations of that which presences to us.

214. This analogy of "gold put underneath the ground" refers to the belief that if gold is buried beneath the ground, a little vapor will raise up from the ground in a subtle way when the sun hits that spot. This analogy is often mentioned in Tibetan proverbs, used to indicate that you don't have to exhibit your good qualities to others and make a big show of them, since they are like gold - even if hidden beneath the ground (i.e. modesty), it will shine up to the sky (i.e. be subtly apparent to others). In the current context, this analogy simply serves to indicate the subtle nature of this vibrancy of breath ("breath" and "vapor" also having an obvious connection), as well as emphasize its precious nature as that which impels or drives our gnostic energy or intelligence ("gold"). This also has a nice play on meanings since originally these energy-currents or winds are derivative of primordial gnosis' dynamism (as the vapor is a pale reflex of the gold's splendor), even though subsequently it also acts to help drive that dynamism in the form of cognitive clarity.

Khanpo Tsenam identified the "quintessence of breath" as the gnostic winds in opposition to the karmic winds, though this seems to me debatable. However, STCP2 14b 2 refers to this same metaphor of "the vapor from shining gold beneath the ground" in the context of discussing how the "quintessence of breath" is present within the luminous channels, which in that context can only refer to the gnostic winds (Longchenpa also specifies there that this quintessence has diversely colored light). The essential significance of "breath" here lies in its connection to the inner "winds" or energy-currents that provide the "mount" or impulses for all mental activity. Thus, in dependence upon this vibrancy of breath, the dynamism of awareness including our normal cognitive activity is present as the "clarity" of our consciousness, the "radiance" of our inner light which illuminates this physical existence. The breath acts as inner winds or currents enabling all mental activity to function and sense, and thus this subtle essence of our inner winds in the embryo will function as the basic support for all such psychic activity. It specifies "our own psychic activity" as well, since primordial gnosis embraces the full range of awareness and intelligence as its dynamism, with some being thoroughly neuroticized though it remains utterly pure in its core reality.

215. "Flickering" (*Gyu Ba*) is a verb typically used to describe the quickness and instability of the movements of energy winds and mind in our ordinary neurotic thought activity, and indicates the "mind" (see above, where Longchenpa specified the "mind" and "psyche" as being within the southern channel). In this context, "flickering" could perhaps be differentiated from the following mention of "mind and conceptuality" as referring to the primary initial reactions or stirrings of our awareness, while "conceptuality" then refers more to the advanced phases of those reactions as they become highly discursive and manipulative, with their phenomenological correlates of conceptualized images abstracted out from sensory data and raw emotion/memories.

These vibrant quintessences within the channels thus signify subtle concentrations of energy, which form organizing nuclei that act as the "basis" for our evolving physical processes of blood, flesh, bodily heat, and breath, as well as our ordinary processes of cognition, awareness, and perception. emerge in the body's development. In this context, ZMYT2 108,3 makes the following four slightly different correlations: the quintessence of blood originates in the eastern channel in the second week; the quintessence of flesh originates in the southern channel in the third week; the quintessence of warmth originates in the western channel in the fourth week; and the quintessence of breath originates in the northern channel in the fourth week. By combining Longchenpa's comments here in TDD into a single set of four correlations, we come up with the following:

i) The eastern channel: within this is a minute seminal nuclei, in which is non-conceptual consciousness. It thus operates as the basis for dimmed awareness and emotional distortions. This non-conceptual consciousness is a pure perceptual awareness, but based on its capacity for awareness, dimmed awareness operates with its non-self-recognition, followed by which the other emotions flood in as we emotionally orient ourselves to the other things and life forms that we have mistakenly perceived as separate and discrete entities. If we follow ZMYT and identify this nuclei as "blood", then blood can be connected to emotions by virtue of our normal intuitive relation of blood to passion, as revealed in such common phrases as "my blood boils", "hot blooded", "I bleed for you", etc.

ii) The southern channel: within this is the quintessence of flesh, which acts as the basic nuclei for the psyche and mind's flickering movements. The mind's flickering movements

evidently refer to the more basic capacity to perceive and react of the mind, while the "psyche" indicates its ability to actively synthesize the resultant data and discursively process it (*Yid*), as well as its emotional life (*Nyon Yid*). The connection with "flesh" perhaps lies in our thinking of our physical body as a whole as "flesh", which provides the support for our cognition, and in particular our perception as its translucent aspects form the five sensory organs.

iii) The western channel: within this is the quintessence of warmth, via which consciousness' vibrant quintessence (or "the radiant energy (fueling) cognitive activity") becomes very clear. It is specified as the basis of cognition, intellect, and memory. In addition to my comments above on the connection between "warmth" and "cognition", "metabolic warmth" is what enables our vitality or life force to be sustained - a cold (i.e. lifeless) corpse has no such warmth, and thus its body cannot serve as a suitable support for consciousness, just as there is no cognition in a rock. TDD 207,1 explicitly identifies "warmth" as the support for "perceptual consciousness", while TCD1 341,6 identifies "vitality" as the basis for both warmth and consciousness.

iv) The northern channel: within this is the quintessence of breath, in dependence upon which awareness' potent dynamics operate, such that it serves as the basis for the "mind" and "conceptuality". As mentioned above, the connections between "breath" and "conceptuality" is that the breath as the inner winds serve as the carrier waves ("horses") for conceptuality activity, which otherwise is like a crippled person with eyes (i.e. the mind can see, but cannot do anything about its perception).

216. While our current discussion revolves around the coarser elemental energies as they give form to the embryo's neurotized and materialized mental and physical structures, Longchenpa here indicates that one must also keep in mind that the "ultimate" elemental energies as well are operative in more subtle ways (see 207,4ff for a description of how the pure light intensities operate). In addition, up until this juncture (the first four weeks) we have been discussing coarser aspects of our body, while in the following days the more subtle facets of our body's energetic system take form - the two Eyes, the energy wheels, the three main channels, and so on, all of which figure prominently in the dynamics of the four lamps and the flow of pure, ultimate gnostic energy within our existence. At the same time both orders of energy (conventional and ultimate) are found together in these processes, and certainly the subsequent days also involve the conventional elements' functions, as included in Longchenpa's descriptions. This is merely a parenthetical remark reiterating the significance of this distinction, and perhaps noting that at this point processes more connected to the ultimate elements' vibrancy (and thus the lamps as the four key operators in our inner core luminosity's dynamics) begin to become more prominent.

217. "Operate in dyads" signifies that the elements function in conjunction with each other in pairs, rather than individual elements alternately predominating in influence.

218. See Chapter Five and the mini-encyclopedia for details on the "wheels" and channels here referred to, the former being simply crucial intersections of the latter, imaged as both "wheels" or "petals" (with the "spokes"/"petals" then being the individual channels intersecting at these vital centers of energy-flow within our body. The channels acting as the basis for our five sensory faculties refer mainly to the sensory nerves enabling our perceptual data to transmit from sensory organs to the spinal cord/brain, though it can also connote the

blood vessels running to the sense organs, as well as more subtle, immaterial flows of energy involving the sense organs.

219. These two Eyes develop within each of the four wheels since they are the high intensity super-nuclei informing and directing their respective domain (physical and spiritual), and as such are naturally present in the four main centers and intersections of subtle energy-flow within our body. In this way, they link the body's center and original matrix of the body (the navel wheel), to the center of intellectual activity in the brain (the crown wheel) through the center of our psychic essence and blood flow (the heart wheel) and center of our communicatory capacities (the throat wheel), and thus can influence and direct energy throughout the body via the network of channels emanating out from these key intersections at the body's center. Additionally (see Chapter Six), these two Eyes play a key role in the exteriorization of our inner luminosity within the visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation, and as such are closely linked to the presence of channels of light running up the center of our body, from the navel up to the two eyes. The name "eyes" not only indicates their close connection to the actual eyes and other sensory perception (they are the source of consciousness, as well as the special vibrant semi-material lucency making up our sensory organs), but also indicates the inherent intelligence at work here, that rather than some type of blind physical development or mechanical process, at the heart of our existence there is an active self-organizing intelligence at work that somehow "sees" its way forward.

220. "Emptying out", as with "destroyed", evidently has the sense of loosening up and creating space, thereby preventing any dead-end rigidity of structures.

221. "The mother's fist" (literally her "full hand") was described to me as indicating a measure corresponding to the length from the pinkie to the forefinger of a hand in a fist (i.e. from the fist's bottom to its top).

222. I have interpreted the reference to "two days" here as referring to the activities of water energy and earth energy respectively, since if water energy itself functioned over two days, there would be a total of eight days during this seventh week. Along these lines, I have also interpreted "the elements' activities again operate separately" as referring to the first six days of this seven-day period.

223. During this week, we have four references to the sensory faculties: "the sensory faculties take distinct form", "the sensory faculties' gateways clearly emerge", "the eye and so forth take distinct form", and "the sensory faculties manifest". In general, the sensory faculty or organ itself refers to translucent, vibrant subtle matter capable of registering sensory data from the outside world (each acting as the basis for the corresponding perceptual consciousness), with each sense's translucent matter taking a shape in accordance with the encasement it fits in (i.e. the actual eye, nose, etc.), and as such described imagistically - the visual organ resembles the "cumin flower", the auditory organ resembles a birch leaf, the olfactory organ resembles the "ebony-flower which shapes itself into the form of a cone", the gustatory organ resembles a half-moon, and the tactile organ has the shape of the body itself as it is spread throughout (see Poussin's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* 123). The actual coarse "eye", "nose", and so forth that we can visually see on other people with our own eyesight is then the "encasement" or location of these sensory faculties, which are located within them and are not perceptible to our ordinary vision. In our present context, it would seem that the first mention of "faculties" refers to the translucent matter, while "sensory faculties' gateways" then refers to that translucent matter further developing so that it can become

capable of acting as the sensory "gateways", i.e. "doors" allowing us to "enter" the outside world, and the outside world to "enter" us. "Eyes and so forth" then apparently refer to the actual eyes, nose, etc., which act as the encasement or coarse structural support for our sensory organs, while the final mention of "sensory faculties" then simply refers to this week's events in summation.

224. "Acting directly" apparently means that up until this point the elements directly operated via "contact" such as mixing water with clay, whereas now they operate more indirectly in terms of their influencing the embryo's growth and development, such as water slowly soaks into clay without being directly mixed together, or the humidity of air slowly soaks into something. Thus the processes now taking place are more subtle, operating slowly in stages via the energies' qualities, with the elements' secondary derivatives (flesh, blood, and so forth) going into the ascendancy. This is also indicated in that previously the elements' activities were for the most part described rather coarsely as "water gathering-in" and so forth, whereas from this point on the effects of water and so forth (i.e. its moisturization, its cooling, etc.) are emphasized more in describing the elements' activities. The body is more complex now with emergent structures, so that it can't withstand the more violent processes (destroyed, scattered) previously taking place - instead there is an interlinking cycle of subtle influences by the elemental energies which flavor and direct the embryo's growth.

225. With the entry of our energy-currents into the central Avadhūti channel (one of the main conduits of energy-flow without our bodies), the potency or full capabilities of the five elements ripen, their activation evidently linked to this centralization of our inner winds. As I discuss in the annotations to Chapter Five, the term "Avadhūti" channel can be just a general term for the central channel, or, as Padmasambhava specifies in KGNT, it can signify one of the three aspects of the central channel. Those three aspects are the spinal cord, vitality channel (i.e. blood vessel trunk), and the pure luminous channel, with "Avadhūti" referring to the spinal cord in particular. KGNT1 422,6's account of embryogeny also mentions the Avadhūti at this point, which in lines with Padmasambhava's earlier remarks in KGNT we should evidently identify as the spinal cord. Whether in this context the "spinal cord" alone is intended, or the spinal cord and the arterial trunk together, the significance is that the energy-currents (nervous energy and blood circulation) within these main conduits becomes activated at this point, which thus impels the ripening of the elements throughout the body.

226. The four "bodily constituents" (*Du Ba bZhi*) refer to the three "humors" - wind, bile and phlegm (*rLung mKhris Bad Kan*) - and the conjunction of those three as a fourth (see LYT1 495,6, etc.), the relative balance or imbalance of which directly relate to our health or illness. These three are the main factors involved in our physical and mental well being (being a higher level of organization deriving from the basic five elements, i.e. the five elements as integrated into a highly complex physical existence in three characteristic modalities), with "wind" emphasizing the "ambulatory" aspect of our body and mind, i.e. the capacity to move and respond; bile emphasizing the capacities of warmth, such as digestion; and phlegm emphasizing the capacity of moisturization, and so on in our body. The name "synthesizing constituents" (literally "gather together") derives from their "interacting" with each other to "synthesize" all the various parts of our body, and as such "pervade" our entire body as the key agent in all its functions, and the continuance of our physical vitality. Should they become agitated or imbalanced with one or the other of the three predominating in our body, we become ill; if they are perfectly balanced and operating optimally, we are in the

peak of health. For details on their many functions, as well as the diseases they cause, see Dr. Dolma's *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* 22-40, Tsarong's *Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine* 45-70, and SRNY 47ff.

227. "Vishnu" refers to the famous Indian god, who was said to have twelve incarnations, two of which were a frog and a tortoise respectively. Thus naming this phase of the embryo as "the frog incarnation of Vishnu" refers to this element of Indian mythology, although the only real significance here is that of the visual appearance of a frog rather than any special meaning deriving from Vishnu as such. This is the 56th day of the embryogeny process, and thus the last day of the seven-day period associated with this stage, although Longchenpa only now mentions it by name. Thus the seven weeks mentioned by Longchenpa (i.e. 49 days) evidently just culminates in the beginning of the last stage, which then itself culminates seven days later, resulting in 56 days in all.

228. Apparently this refers to the functional clarity of the sensory organs' operations (i.e. the relative clarity they enable in terms of sight, hearing, etc.) - sound, healthy organs support clear perception, while with defects in these sensory organs our perceptual processes become correspondingly unclear and dimmed as our perceptual consciousness (visual, auditory, etc.) are based upon their corresponding sensory organs. This is supported by standard commentaries on the *Abhidharma Kośa*, which indicate that the relative clarity or non-clarity of the sensory faculty determines the relative clarity or non-clarity of the perceptual consciousness which is generated on its basis (see Poussin's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* 77 and 37).

229. "Completion, development and increase" refer, respectively to these elements becoming completely present in their general form; subsequently developing further such that the primitive forms "completed" in their initial origination now are further refined; and finally "increasing" as they progress on to their full operational structure. In the following lines, these three terms are again referred to in this sense. ZMYT2 108,1ff uses the alternative triad of "origination", "development", and "sustaining": "origination" refers to these first eight weeks of embryogeny, "development" refers to the remaining weeks of embryogeny, and "sustaining" refers to our ongoing physical state following birth (as a function of the triad of channels, energy winds, and seminal nuclei).

230. While here forty nine days are mentioned, the following lines mention fifty six - I have previously discussed this tension between 7 weeks and eight weeks, where I noted that although forty nine days are often specified as the time period for this initial period of embryogeny, in fact eight weeks are often described and even indicated as such (see LYT1 460,2). The main point of specifying this period as that of "completion" is that during these first weeks everything is originating in prototype, such that "germinally" they are "completely present", and from this basis then the body can "develop" further in integrated and concrete fashion to its full potential.

231. LYT1 460,2 says that on the 26th day of the second month the body is "completed" in the sense that all its various channel networks take distinct form, i.e. the three main channels and their four energy wheels. In the passage mentioned above, ZMYT2 109,1 also indicates that following the first eight weeks of the body's "origination", the body's ensuing "development" involves the wind-currents "entering the central channel", and the embryo's physical form ripening via the vibrant quintessences (i.e. nutrients) deriving from the mother's digested food. In our present passage, Longchenpa specifies the "Avadhūti" channel

instead of "central channel", the latter a term for one of the three main channels for energy-flow in our body (see Chapter Five). See my comments directly above as to identifying "Avadhūti" as the "spinal cord", as well as probable implication of the "vitality channel" (i.e. arterial trunk) - not only does the spinal cord "pulsate" with nervous energy and the blood vessels "pulsate" with the flow of blood, but in general the fundamental ground of our psychic energy ("the universal psychic ground") is located within the vitality channel. At this point the wind-currents, as well as the emotionally distorted mental energy they fuel, becomes activated within this channel, whereas up until this point those winds and emotional life were in a state of latency (the universal psychic ground with its latent karmic traces were present, but mainly in a latent-phase without little activated or differentiated psychic activity). This indicates that the embryo is now further gaining in active consciousness, with an evolving personality that is a continuance in terms of emotional character of its previous life-embodiment (even if those personal memories don't generally survive). The specific pattern of emotional distortions are thus derivative of that being's karmic inheritance from its long string of former lives, and their activation by these energy winds acting as their "mounts" indicates that "neurosis" now becomes an active feature of the embryo even while still in the womb. With the activation of these winds' movements, it is natural that the embryo itself will be effected such that it "pulsates" and "wavers" with their flow - since this central channel also is connected to the arterial trunk (see fourth through sixth chapters), there may also be a connotation here that the blood flow in the body's center now becomes discernible. This "wavering" and "pulsation" indicates that the embryo's psychic activity is now all astir, with these uncontrolled emotional distortions making its awareness totally unstable and "jumpy"; this emotional instability or neurosis also makes our physical energies "shaky", as our entire psycho-physical existence is made to "quiver" with the distorted ego's constant engagement in cathexis and symbolic projects of denial and union. In cyclic existence we are at all times "wavering" or unstable in our body, speech, and mind, totally unlike the Awakened Ones with their unwavering stability of Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind that remains immersed within their irreversible realization of the Ground as their own self-organizing nucleus. KGYT2 149,5 describes both the embryo's body and psyche as "vibrating".

232. The following discussion I have numbered according to the first seven weeks of embryogeny. This section discusses the formation and destruction of the embryo's characteristic form associated with each of the first seven weeks, specifying which elemental energy' plays the main functional role in a given seven-day period. In addition, Longchenpa links these particular elements' operations with emotional distortions (as well as linking the emotional distortions with the formation and destruction of the particular embryonic forms) in place at a given period both in the sense of past emotional distortions (present as latent impressions in the intermediate state being's psyche) fueling the embryonic energies' processes, and in the present embryonic processes fueling future emotional distortions in the child's psyche. At times the former sense is emphasized, while at other times the latter sense is in the foreground, and thus one must understand the both meanings as mutually present such that they evoke the ongoing mutually interdependent cycle of relationship between the body's elemental energies and the psyche's emotional distortions. These relationships between elemental energies and emotional distortions should be understood as very subtle causal relations rather than in a coarse, particularized sense.

This intimate linkage between the physical energies and emotional distortions is easily understood in our own experience, as the state of the body obviously influences our emotions as well as vice a versa. An example would be how a poor diet can cause mental depression,



while elation can cause one to feel physically revitalized (such as seeing one's destination after a long and tiresome journey). Also the linkage between physical hormones and our emotional life is well attested in modern science, as well as recent psychological work indicating that emotional patterns become deposited in terms of muscular rigidity, and so on. In this context, Longchenpa is simply giving a more subtle analysis of this linkage based on tantric physiology, descending down to the level of the elemental energies' actual modes of functioning and linking them to the root emotional distortions (thus keeping to a general correlation rather than considering the intricate emotional constellations of an individual life, which nevertheless can be ultimately reduced down to transmutations of these three basic emotional distortions), and keeping in mind the complexity of the embryo which includes a vast network of psychic impressions from the intermediate state being's wind/mind complex. Thus not only does Longchenpa reveal how the previous life tracks of the embryo influence its present formation, he also points out how even from inception within the womb physical energies' processes are already shaping and fueling the future emotional distortions which will permeate the child's being and color every aspect of his/her world. The child is from the beginning a holistically functioning integrated being, showing any strict dualism of mind/body to be a fantasy.

Thus as specified in the first line, this section treats the respective principal (i.e. coming to the fore at that time, while the other three function in the background) energies active in each stage's (one stage corresponding to one week) initial formation and subsequent "displacement", as well as indicating the deeper significance of those energies' functioning (in terms of the emotional distortions/karmic processes it fuels and which it is fueled by). This correlation of a specific energy that plays a principal role in each stage is similar to how each part of the body involves one energy playing a predominant role while the other three, though present, are in the background (earth energy and bones, water energy and blood, and so forth). Their relationship to emotional distortions (either as causal result or causal agents) is that the elements' operations in the embryo are driven by latent impressions of past emotional distortions, while these operations themselves fuel and enable future emotional distortions both in a subtle sense of energetic patterns of influence, as well as a grosser sense that the energies' operations bring about the body's winds, blood, warmth, and so forth which allow the mind, and its distorted emotional life, to function. In this latter sense, the three emotional distortions are said to depend upon these bodily factors - anger depending upon bodily warmth, desire on flesh and blood, and ignorance upon flesh - without which they could not arise, in addition to all mental states depending upon the energy winds to provide their motility.

The specific pattern of these correlations is that the initial formation of the given embryonic stage is correlated to one of the three root emotional distortions (either as its causal result or its causal agent), while its subsequent destruction is related to some aspect of the karmic process in the child's future (although the third week specifies the sensory qualities rather than explicitly mentioning karma). It would seem the latter set of relationships emphasizes the integrity-violating nature of karma, which disrupts our holistic nature by becoming exteriorly oriented, while the former set of relationships emphasizes how emotional distortions give rise, and result from, certain ways of being in the world (corresponding to the "form" of the embryo). At any rate, the emotional distortions and karmic process are merely different sides of the same coin, the former being the driving dynamics of the latter, which is itself merely how the former takes shape and continues through time. Thus the emotional distortions give rise to a way of being or mind-set, but it is inevitably disrupted and

rearranges, which simply adds fuel to the ongoing karmic process of latent impressions which flower forth into ever more intricate patterns of neurosis.

233. Earth energy acts as the causal impetus of flesh, whereby it serves as the conditional basis for the emotional distortion of ignorance to become present: ignorance's (gTi Mug) relation to "flesh" can be seen in sleepiness/sluggishness often being related to excess flesh, typical dichotomies between an ignorant life of the flesh and the enlightened life of the spirit, and so forth. As I indicated above, this and the following relationships between the four elements and emotional/cognitive states reveals the intimate relationship between emotions and our physical states, which is clear in our own culture - the connection between hormones and emotional moods, the effects certain chemicals can have on our feelings, and in general the intimate linkages between our emotional states and the internal body chemistry as well as external environment. Thus, Longchenpa here delineates the correlation of the emotional landscape of the individual's psychic life-track with the bodily elements, revealing the mutually interdependent relationship between emotions and energies.

As we shall see below, the causal relationship between a given emotional state and one of the four elemental energies (i.e. which is cause and which is caused) vacillates in both personal and cosmic contexts, such that they are locked in a mutually interdependent relationship with both acting as cause and fruit in different contexts. To an extent, the elements can be viewed as the dimension correlated with the physical dimension of our existence, while the emotional distortions are the corresponding dimension correlated with the mental side of our existence - the elements transmute and arise from the presence of the fivefold gnostic lights, while the emotional distortions transmute and arise from the presence of the five primordial gnoses themselves. As the noematic and noetic poles of the twisted transmutations taking place in the process of straying, they initially (cosmogonically) arise interdependently, and continue in this seamless relationship in the personal context of our lives. To deal with them separately is impossible as the genesis of physical matter and our emotional lives are inextricably linked from the beginning through to the end.

Thus not only are these embryonic processes of the elements' transformations driven by the pattern of emotional distortions present within the intermediate state being, but also they enable and fuel the further manifestation of these emotional distortions in the being's new life as the emotion's occurrence is linked with the energies' actions within the body at that time. During that life then, the emotional distortions will shape and effect the bodily energies, while in turn those bodily energies' activities will to a degree give rise to and modify the emotional distortions. A minor example drawn from our own experience would be sexual desire (an emotional state) can cause sweating (a physical reaction producing "water"), while in turn the presence of certain chemicals (constituted of various physical elements) can stimulate sexual desire (an emotional state). However it is important to keep in mind that actual "water", "fire" and so forth are not primarily intended here (the coarser "effects"), but rather the quality or dimension of bioenergetic energy that they imagistically can evoke (the "forces").

Its subsequent destruction by wind energy's dispersing action is the causal impetus of the embryo's karmic imprints and propensities: as mentioned above, the term "destruction" should not be understood as a complete overall devastation or change, but rather in the sense that the characteristic form, or constellation of attributes, of the previous stage (such as being "elongated" and so forth) is "destroyed", or more accurately "displaced", such that the developing embryo's visible form is "disrupted", allowing the embryo to evolve into a new

form of greater interior organization. The "karmic imprints" are inveterate tendencies impressed latently on our psyche by force of past psychic patterns and actions, with "action" ("karma") primarily indicating the conscious and unconscious motivations fueling an action, i.e. the mind riding upon the energy winds within our subtle energy system. Thus the relationship here is that wind-energy destroying the embryo's form through its separating-out is symbolically analogous to the mind riding upon the energy winds as it rents asunder our psychic integrity by haphazardly making distinctions of good/bad, valued/not valued, and so forth, thus forming karmic volitional patterns that leave enduring impressions upon our being for many lives to come.

*234. Then, by the embryonic energies being again gathered together by water energy and the other elements, the formation of the "Elongated" embryonic stage derives from earth energy acting to equalize:* "equalizing" (literally "making equal", like an ocean without waves - neither "intense nor subdued", "gross nor subtle") could also be translated as "balancing" or "leveling out", and earlier occurred with the term "integration" (in the sense of bringing about an equilibrium, i.e. equalizing) - below we have destruction occurring through such "equalizing". Thus this operation can have either an integrative effect ("balancing" the different elements into a harmonious whole) or a disintegrative effect ("leveling out" a form, in the sense of one "levels" a house), depending on the context.

*This acts as the conditional basis of flesh, and thus the chief impelling factor of desire is effected, while its subsequent destruction by wind energy's "equalizing" or leveling-out serves as causal impetus of the various karmic actions.:* while all other references to "destruction" or "displacement" in this passage refer to that week's characteristic form, in this third week we have two distinct references to "destruction". Khanpo Tsenam explained this first mention as referring to the functioning of wind-energy "displacing" the functioning of earth-energy (the former taking the foreground and forcing the latter to recede into the background).

The earth-energy influences desire (with its "solidity" relating more to affairs of the flesh), while the wind-energy's functioning here affects the variegated karmic actions (in line with the wind-currents acting as the nervous energy impelling mental operations). The relationship between flesh and desire is obvious, as sexual desire and other sensual desires revolve around the capacity to physically experience sensations, as indicated in such terms as "carnal desire", and so forth. By virtue of this functioning of earth-energy, the seed for future desire and attachment is planted. The rationale for correlating the wind energy's leveling out and "karmic actions" lies in the karmic significance of actions relating primarily to mental volition, and all mental activity being impelled by the winds. In addition, the energy winds are the agentive force behind our body's movements, as well as all our speech ("speech" being nothing more than sound vibrations from our "breath"), and thus are the key factor in any physical and verbal activity as well as mental operations. This inseparable complex of the mind and energy winds brings about a variety of latent impressions via volitional karma ("leveling-out" everything to your own preconceptions and frameworks, insensitive to the actual presence of otherness and others as you manipulate the world in accordance with your projected images of it), and thus disrupts the integrity of our being as we are tossed about by the resultant emotional distortions. Thus this initial disruption of the embryo by the winds' leveling-out operation is a subtle causal impetus for these future psychic activities.

Water energy's gathering together and so forth having then again taken place, from the 15th day until the 21st day the causal impetus of blood takes place via water energy functioning to attract and disperse. This acts as the condition of being motivated by desire, while its destruction via fire energy's attractive force is the causal impetus of sensual objects' emergence: the correlation of blood and desire is explored below (blood is here specified as the "condition" for desire, while flesh was described as its "main impelling cause"), while the relation between water-energy's functioning and blood (the liquid element of our body) is quite obvious. This embryonic form being disrupted by fire-energy attractive force is linked to the future emergence of sensual experience of visible form, scents, sounds and so forth (literally "qualities of/for desire"). The sensory experiences inflame one's passions as one heats up in sensuality and disrupt the integrity of our being as we become externally oriented ("drawn to" sensual objects like moths to a flame), just as fire energy's attractive force heats up and destroys the embryonic form. Thus the activity of fire-energy here is the causal impetus of later experience of sensuality. It is essential to recall that our entire physical structure and experience is constituted of these five elemental energies (which are not to be identified with gross, visible fire and so forth), and thus the linkages being discussed here are of a very subtle nature - if the fire-energy were absent within our bodies, then we could not have sensual experience as earth energy, water energy, wind energy and space energy by themselves cannot provide the appropriate energy for its emergence. Rather it is the qualities of fire energy - its motility, its consuming nature, its heating-up and transmutability - that enable their emergence.

235. Since the embryonic energies are ripened from the 21st day until the 28th day, there is a conjunction of both warmth and moisture via the activities of water energy leveling-out and fire energy attracting. This acts as the causal impetus of the individuating of the sensory faculties, and so forth, and is the karmic activity leading into future motivation by ignorance (as well as being motivated itself by past ignorance): "the sensory faculties and so forth" indicates the sensory organs, limbs, and other distinct parts of the body. These all ripen to their distinct forms via the operations of moisture and warmth, just as water allows one to shape clay, while heat then allows one to bake the shape into a firm form in making a statue. In addition, water's "leveling" can connote the mirroring nature of the sensory faculties, while fire's attractive force can connote how the sensory faculties function as gateways through which the sensory qualities enflame our consciousness.

In this context, as well as the following line with respect to anger, the emotional distortion as present from previous life times in the form of latent tendencies appears to be indicated as fueling the energy's movement/functioning in the embryo, as well as connoting that the impression-fueled functioning of the embryonic elements act as the causal impetus of subsequent forms of emotional distortion in the embryo's future life-track. For this reason I have translated the phrase twice to bring out this dual aspect, the second translation being indicated parenthetically. One must recall the three root emotional distortions of anger, desire and ignorance are the heart of all karmic processes, which is the same word for the "activity" or "functioning" (*Las*) of the elemental energies. Thus it is a mutually related and reliant feed-back process or causal nexus of between two interlinked dimensions, related via the mechanism of latent impressions within the universal psychic ground, which are constantly being deposited and coming to fruition. In this mutual causation, each engendering and promoting the other in an interlocking cycle, the emotional distortions fuel the child's development (TDD 206,6 specifying that flesh is generated by ignorance), as well

as being fueled themselves by these developmental processes (TDD 206,3's indication that ignorance derives from flesh).

*Its destruction by fire energy acting to equalize and disperse operates as the activity serving as causal impetus for varied non-virtuous acts:* the connection between fire and non-virtue would seem to be linked to the relationship between warmth and hatred, as discussed below. Also non-virtuous acts are based on making "discriminations" (i.e. "disperse") such as prejudice or the idea of "mine" with all the demarcations and distortions that entails, and denying or leveling out ("equalizing") that perceived as adversarial, canceling out the other. The *Las* here could also be interpreted as a grammatical particle: "... (that activity of fire) comes about via the causal impetus of various non-virtuous (acts) being formed..."

236. *The ripening taking place from the 29th day to the 35th day is the activity of fire energy dispersing and equalizing, the karmic process leading to future motivation through hatred (as well as being motivated itself via past traces of hatred):* hatred is obviously a fiery emotion ("tempers heating up", etc.), and fire-energy's separating and leveling-out correspond to the divisive "separations" that hatred makes (prejudice (we're Christian, they're Muslim), spite (he's rich, I'm not), and the negations of hatred (desiring to obliterate the other/enemy, "leveling out" or eliminating everything that irritates you).

*This form's destruction via earth energy's attractive force serves as causal impetus for the varied manifestation of karmic actions' specifics:* earth energy's attractive force provides the solidity and coherence underlying out various actions' manifestation, as well as "fleshing out" the body such that it has the concrete structure enabling it to physically act out our volitional karma-producing mind-sets within the external world.

237. *The period from the 36th day to the 42nd day involves wind energy's activities of attracting and dispersing, which develops through hatred:* unlike previous lines where emphasis sometimes seems to be on future patterns of emotional distortion being caused by the elemental energies' operations, this line clearly indicates the energetic processes as generated by past traces of emotional distortion and their present manifestation. See immediately above for the connection between hatred and "dispersing" functioning, while in particular, hatred's connection to wind energy is revealed in the colloquial expression for "anger", which literally reads "your winds raise up" (*rLung Langs*).

*This stage's destruction by earth energy's dispersion activity serves as causal impetus for accumulating the karmic activity of dreams:* our dreams are activity no less than our actions during the day, and as such both stem from, and create, karmic force (the eighth chapter links "dream" and "karmic imprints" in terms of their elimination by certain meditative techniques) - we dream via all the various dream experiences and emotions being driven by the neurotic, and at times psychotic, latent impressions within our universal psychic ground, while an Awakened One experiences only the endless continuity of radiant light, and enters dreams only to the extent that s/he observes the dream-worlds of other living beings. In addition, the following page correlates hatred and dreams (with earth-energy's "destructive" activities here serving to also link to anger). Otherwise, dream's relation to earth energy's dispersion function could be that dreams involve the mind scattering all over in helpless distraction as it alternately feels pleasure, anger, and so on in response to the constantly shifting dream images, and as such are "energetically" more in tune with "dispersal" operations than "integrative" operations. This "violation" of the mind's integrity also relates to the

"displacement" of the embryonic form, while earth energy's "solidity" in general relates to any kind of activity, even that of dreams.

238. From the 43rd day up to the 49th day, the activity of water energy equalizing is effected by ignorance and desire together: this activity is driven by ignorance and desire together, or this activity "forms "both ignorance and desire together". The significance of these two emotional distortions together with water's "leveling out" would seem to be that ignorance "levels out" with its dullness obliterating all distinctions as water gradually smooths out the rocks it flows over, while "desire" seeks satisfaction or "the stillness of satiation", "to fluidly identify" with the desired and overcome all sense of separate boundaries, just as water flows everywhere without any separation.

The parts of the body are clearly differentiated by the equalization of earth energy, a process comprised of multiple conceptual reifications: the connection between the differentiation of bodily parts and the plurality of conceptuality lies in both involving differentiation from original unity, with the distinct parts of the physical landscape corresponding to all the distinct thoughts of the mental landscape, revealing the inseparability of body/mind in our current existence - the physical and emotional/ideational are inseparable, as thought-emotional patterns are expressed in the "unlived lines of the body" such that the body's form is intimately involved with the expression of emotional patterns (witness such modern psychological therapy/theory relating to Rolf, Lowen ("bodily armor"), Feldenkrais or even Reich). Somehow if the psychic energy which sparked this embryonic process were merely a singular intense energy, rather than a swelter of emotional distortions and conceptuality ("conceptuality" being precisely that which introduces "division" and differentiation), the corresponding physical form to take shape would not need to consist of distinct parts and so forth, but instead perhaps would a type of seamless gestalt of light energy.

239. The activities thus occurring over the course of the first seven weeks take place in reliance upon the physical universal ground, with its karmic propensities for our sevenfold consciousness: Longchenpa here correlates these first seven weeks of embryogeny with the standard sevenfold classification of our consciousness: the five modes of sensory consciousness (visual, etc.), the psychic consciousness (that which synthesizes sensory data, performs conceptual operations, and so forth), and the emotionally distorted consciousness (which involves our emotional life and subjective feelings of attachment and aversion). These seven along with the "universal ground consciousness" (our basic substratum of clarity and awareness which retains the karmic imprints or latent tendencies that are in constant transformation from lifetime to lifetime) then make up the "eight-part consciousness" which human consciousness is typically analyzed into. The "universal ground" consciousness is dealt with extensively in TDD's fourth chapter, where four internal classifications are articulated (see 235 for details), the fourth being the "physical universal ground with its karmic propensities". In that context, "karmic propensities" primarily indicates that our bodies' particular form and character stems from our constellation of karmic imprints, though I have here translated it otherwise to show how the statement is intended to sum up Longchenpa's previous description of the intertwined linkage between the body's physical evolution and emotional distortions over the course of the embryo's first seven weeks. These initial seven weeks of embryogeny thus correspond to the karmic trace-inheritance of the child being encapsulated in its seven modes of consciousness, with the elements' transformations fueled by the "universal ground" consciousness of karmic potencies and propensities that is already pervasively present within, and as, its body. It could also be

translated as "activities...form the sevenfold consciousness in reliance upon the physical universal ground (formed by) karmic propensities..."

With respect to fixing these initial processes' duration at forty nine days, it occurs that way through the karma and karmic propensities accumulated due to abiding in the intermediate state for forty nine days: TCD1 358,3 says this forty nine day period's temporal duration emerges "on the basis of the karmic imprints we have accumulated via the forty nine days we spend in post-death intermediate state existence". Forty nine days is the ordinary limiting duration we can spend in the intermediate state, and, despite our not always staying the full duration, it leaves a potent impression on our consciousness such that we find a corresponding sequencing of events in human embryogeny.

240. The next page or so of discussion is identical with TCD1 358,5-359,5. the next page or so of discussion is identical with TCD1 358,5-359,5. Flesh takes concrete form from earth energy; blood takes concrete form from water energy; warmth takes concrete form from fire energy; and breath takes concrete form from wind energy: the connections between the four elements and their correlated body constituents should be obvious, while the following correlations between those four constituents and the three main emotional distortions (with "conceptuality" as a fourth) are based on common sense connections. For example we typically think of excess "flesh" (i.e. being overweight) with sluggishness and torpor; someone full of passion is "hot blooded", while an erection marks the concentration of blood in the genitals; there are numerous verbal expressions connecting anger with heat ("hot under the collar", "I'm really steamed"; "He's boiling now!", "blow off some steam", etc.); and breath operates as the energy winds serving as "mounts" or "horses" for all mental activity, including that of conceptuality (the tie between mental states and breath is also revealed in how terror can cause our breath to become rapid and panting).

241. The concrete ripening of our body via desire occurs in that originally it is motivated by desire: I have followed the TCD1 206,4 reading of "desire" in the instrumental rather than the genitive. "Originally" refers to the moment that we descend, or re-descend, into the wheel of cyclic existence, impelled helplessly towards a new rebirth by the karmic impulse of our fundamentally triadic emotional distortions. In this context Longchenpa correlates our body's taking form with desire's impetus, speech's formation with anger, and our mind's ripening with ignorance, the three main emotional distortions directly fueling the re-development of the three central dimensions of human existence (commonly referred to as the three "gateways"). These types of correlations are extremely fluid, and are often reversed in other contexts - the key point is the complete interrelation of all aspects of human life, with one's psychic life (the emotional distortions) and physical embryogeny/ontogeny indivisibly interlinked. For example in a similar passage accounting for the triadic nature of the "postures" of the Direct Transcendence meditation by linking them to the three root emotional distortions leading beings into cyclic existence, TCD2 212,1-213,1 correlates speech with desire, and the body with hatred (see below for my comments on the connection between speech and hatred/desire).

The connection between desire and the body is obvious: our attachment directly impels us toward materialization into a physical existence, as our overwhelming attachment to the pleasures of the body drives us towards embodiment in which sensual experiences can be indulged in. The term for "desire" also means "sexual intercourse" in Tibetan, and here as well the connection to one's physical existence (rather than verbal and mental) is quite clear (see Brown's *Life Against Death* for a particularly good account of the way desire is

intimately traced upon our body). In addition, the intermediate state being experiences desire for its future mother or father (depending on which sex it is to be reborn as) in observing their sexual intercourse, which attracts it towards the appropriation of a new body therein, as well as it being the mother and father's sexual act which provides the opportunity for its conception, the unified sperm and egg developing into the fetus' emerging body.

242. The ripening of our speech by hatred occurs in that originally distinct linguistic utterances take place in dependence upon hatred: while TDD doesn't specify what is being ripened here, TCD1 358,7 specifies "blood" (*Khrag*) as the object of ripening here, which I have corrected to "speech" (*Ngag*). While above and below Longchenpa correlates blood with desire, its relationship to anger is obvious - in English we say "the blood boils with anger", and while below anger is correlated to warmth ("now he's hot under the collar"), warmth itself is related to blood in that blood's circulation brings about bodily warmth (which itself is below directly related to anger). However in the present context clearly the object of ripening is "speech", just as desire ripens the body and ignorance the mind.

As mentioned above, TCD provides an alternative correlation of speech with desire, thereby indicating the twin roots of language in desire ("is" as copulation) and hatred ("no" as denial, reference itself as the negation of the Other), the latter which is emphasized here (see Brown's *Love's Body* 252). Along with the following correlation of "heat" and an "eagerness to speak", this would appear to suggest a philosophical theory of speech's origins more oriented towards Thanatos than Eros (see Brown's *Life Against Death* 68-73 for a discussion of language's origins in Eros), with linguistic utterance as phallo-aggressive in nature, asserting "I" at the expense of the other, and nihilistically negating that which is present for my own linguistic-conceptual image of it. Death is thus intimate with language, the rich integral world sacrificed on the altar of our own frames, leaving only the dry sterile bones experienced in our own projections and abstractions. This also connects with the generally negativistic view of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist traditions towards language, such as reflected in standard Buddhist theories of reference involving language as negation (see Klein's *Knowledge and Liberation* 144ff). Whereas desire can be imaged as aiming at a wordless orgasm desiring to overcome boundaries and separation, and ignorance a dullness without intellectual articulation, anger drives/fuels us to expression and negation, as the need to articulate out and reject the specific focus of hatred pushes us to separation and divisiveness. Thus both language and hatred separate us off from reality in their aggressive manipulation, cutting us off from the possibility of union and thereby creating the foundation of dualism and denial as the natural calm and unity of our mind is dispersed. In this way, the correlation of language with hatred rather than desire may stem from the classical Buddhist perception of language as essentially denial of what is "other" in the need to differentiate, rather than emphasizing language as the creative evocation and positive invocation of what is other in desire for union (a view that does, however, assume prominence in tantric theories on mantras and the importance of seed syllables in meditation, cosmogony, and tantric physiology).

243. To expand on this, the process of ignorance's ripening is revealed in drowsiness and sleep: the following correlations evidently are made in reference to the general context of human life, and no longer involve any special reference to the pregnant mother and embryogeny - they illustrate the correlation of emotional distortions in the life-track of sentient beings with the overall fluctuations of their physical, verbal and mental energies. As for the correlation of ignorance with drowsiness and sleep, in these moments the clarity of our awareness fades into the night-time world of sleep, and this murky dimming of our



faculties is thus fueled by the emotional distortion of ignorance. This ties into the correlation of flesh with ignorance, since we usually think of people or animals who are extremely fleshy or overweight as particularly prone to sleepiness and inertia. As for desire being connected to laughter, and hatred to dreams, see below.

*As a sign that warmth is generated by hatred, we have more dreams during the hot months of summer:* assuming that dreams are correlated to hatred, then this connection of dreams with heat provides a further indication of heat's strong relationship to hatred. In addition, this connection of heat and hatred is intuitively quite clear with our feeling that we "heat up" as we become angry, with our tempers "flaring" in hot weather, and our faces become flushed red with the onset of anger (as well as such phrases as "hot tempered", "my blood boils", and so forth). Interestingly, "to become angry" (*Tshig Pa Za*) in Tibetan can be "etymologized" as "eating" (*Za*, a verb often used with emotion verbs) "burning" (*Tshig Pa*, here understood as "dislike" or "anger"), while *Tshig* means "words" elsewhere - thus this etymology combines hatred, heat, and language in a single phrase.

The correlation between hatred and dream is not totally clear, but must tie in with the previous correlation of hatred with language, as language and dreams are both in essence communication based on fabricated images (the *Kālacakra Tantra* also correlates dreams and speech - see Geshe Dhargyey's *Kalachakra Tantra* 121 and Cozort's *Highest Yoga Tantra 120*). Geshe Gyatso (*Clear Light of Bliss* 116) explains that in tantric theory dream-activity is said to begin when your main psychic energy winds move from your heart wheel (deep sleep) to your throat wheel (dreaming), thus connecting dreams to language (language being originally oral, and thus intrinsically connected to our throat). Out of the initial descent into sleep, mental activity again reawakens in the form of dream-images, a form of communication between our conscious and unconscious, whereas in the absence of emotional distortions there would only be the uninterrupted experience of radiant light. While Freudian theory emphasizes dreams and language originating within and out of desire, here anger is connected to dreams and language as both are seen as essentially divisive adulterations of the seamless radiance of the Universe's enduring reality, human conceptuality "thrusting" its divisions and projections outwards.

"During the hot months of summer" literally reads "the external season of warm weather's arrival", while TCD1 359,2 adds the specification of "moist", indicating humidity. "External" refers to the environment calendar (based on the movements of the moon and sun), and so forth), while "internal" would refer to inner, lived time as phenomenologically experienced.

*As a sign that they are generated by hatred, feeling flushed with bodily heat and eager to speak (usually accompany anger):* it is quite evident from our ordinary experience that hatred is marked by an increase in body temperature and a compulsion to speak, which thus further reinforces the correlation that anger is the agentive force behind bodily warmth and speech. When you hear something that you are violently opposed to, there is a strong desire to speak out and deny - you chomp at the bit to say your piece, eager to exclaim "No, you're wrong!", "That's not how it was!", and so forth, and in your eagerness to respond or assert yourself, you become "worked up" and "hot headed" as your body heats up and your face become flushed. Thus this reinforces the notion that language is divisive, an aggressive attack on the seamless flow of experience which asserts the individual ego in phallic thrusts of anal aggression.

*As a sign that blood is generated by desire, laughter emerges in dependence upon the movements of blood, while moisture and so forth are evident when we feel desirous:* laughter's relation to blood circulation can be seen by our feeling giddy with laughter as blood rushes to our head, while Khanpo Jikphun suggested that when blood circulates well the mind is happy and at ease, and thus laughter emerges as a sign of happiness, while when the blood's flow is impaired you have headaches, depression, and so on. The connection between laughter and desire can be seen in a person giggling as s/he feels a wave of desire come over him/her, and in general the obvious correlation between laughter and states of happiness (which is more tied with desire than the other two main emotional distortions, anger and ignorance). The connection between blood and desire is also obvious, as in blood flowing to the sexual organs when sexually stimulated. The connection between moisture (related to blood in that both are liquid) and desire can be seen in how our palms become sweaty when sexual excited (TCD in fact specifies "sweat" here), as well as how sexual fluids are stimulated in sexual interaction. In addition, from the three main emotional distortions, desire alone has an intuitive relation to liquid's fluidity, while ignorance is too static and anger to divisive.

244. At this point, Longchenpa returns back to a focus on the embryo, though with ontogenetic and psychological connotations/implications as well. In the first lines, he correlates the five psycho-physical components of our existence with the internal bodily constituents of flesh, blood, warmth, and breath (counting exhalation and inhalation separately). The point appears to be simply the interdependence of all facets of our existence, and in particular the intimate interrelation of "body" and "mind".

(i) The connection of our physical form with flesh is obvious.

(ii) "Perception" or "discernment" refers to our ability to synthesize the raw sensory data, and thus consciously discriminate, and recognize, particular characteristics abstracted out from that data. In addition the term can just mean ideation, or mental activity, which in Tibetan medical theory is said to depend on the type and quality of blood, such that the specifics of our perceptions to a degree correspond to the specifics of our blood. When blood circulation is poor, our perceptions are correspondingly unclear; when our blood flows properly, perceptions retain their normal clarity. This would appear to be related to psychic activity depending on the "winds" to provide a "horse" or impetus, and the mutual connection of those "winds" and the blood's "pulsation" with our lungs' breath. This connection of ideation with blood is partially reflected in the English usage of such terms as "cold blooded" and "hot blooded" to refer to the overall tenor of someone's emotional-mental state.

(iii) As for this connection between warmth and consciousness, see my comments earlier in this chapter. Without metabolic warmth, our body loses its vitality, and as a cold corpse cannot serve as the basis for consciousness. Vitality, warmth, and consciousness are thus inextricably connected to each other, as in their absence the body becomes like mere inanimate matter completely devoid of the warmth of life, or sensations of consciousness..

(iv-v) "Habitual conditioning forces" can in this context be considered to be all the various mental states that condition our interior and exterior worlds, which are intimately bound up with karma both as the passive results of previous karma's fruition, and as processes engaged in actively creating new karma. Karma (literally, "action") is essentially a volitional phenomena, and since action is basically derived from volition (both conscious and un-

conscious, which are merely two poles of a wide spectrum), one can see that this category is closely linked to human action, which karmically shapes our world(s) in the present, as well as being that which has given rise to our current inheritance (biological, cultural, and spiritual). Along these lines, "habitual conditioning forces" can be thought to be all various personal actions of our existence, which gives rise to an easily understood analogy for explicating the connection of inhalation with "habitual conditioning forces" and exhalation with "sensation" (which in essence refers to feelings of happiness, sorrow, or indifference). When we are preparing for an important action, whether in a sport or answering a difficult question, we instinctively take a deep breath ("inhale") as we ready ourselves to actively act within/on the external environment. But as we exhale, that action dissipates and the emphasis becomes more on passively experiencing, or "feeling" sensation, in addition to now experiencing reactions to the success of the action (joy) or failure of the action (unhappiness).

In addition the various emotional/cognitive states function on the energy winds' "mount", and with inhalation there is an increased movement of the internal winds which allows for increased functioning of the mind, and resulting in karmic "conditioning forces" becoming more active. Then upon exhalation, the mental activity subsides to a degree and the more affective dimensions of experience (pleasurable, disagreeable, etc.) come to the fore in place of these complex cognitive aspects of our experience. The primary significance here can be seen in a passage found on TCD1 404,4, where exhalation is correlated to objectivity, or the noematic pole of experience (external appearances), while inhalation is connected to subjectivity, the noetic pole (internal thought activity and "feeling"), a distinction which probably reflects subtle phenomenological observation as well as the obvious connection of exhalation with "going out" towards sensory objects, and inhalation with "internal" thought activity:

"...The four activities performed by the karmic winds are as follows: by moving through the right, masculine; by moving through the left, feminine; by issuing out externally, the various appearances are engaged; and by filling up internally, the variegated swelter of concepts diffuse forth...the "issuing externally" and "filling up" internally is with reference to the going and coming (of breath): happiness is effected by its going out externally, and unhappiness is effected by its coming within. These two (i.e. inhalation and exhalation) also emerge as night and day via the key points of their projection and contraction within the energy wheels - via "moving externally" daytime appearances emerge, and via "filling up internally" the night-time visions emerge..."

ZMYT2 288,1 also relates the activity of our psychic consciousness (*Yid Shes*) to the internal movements of wind (thus the "conditioning" of all the internal mental activity as the energy winds move within us acting as mounts for psychic activity), and sensory consciousness with the external movements of wind (thus external objects and the consequent "sensations" as these energy winds go out towards external objects). VNT2 499,1-502,3 also has several references to exhalation and inhalation.

245. The flesh's lucent dimension transforms into the various channels, hardening into the coarser channels termed veins, arteries and even nerves, and also the more subtle energy channels (the flavor, solitary and central channels). These channels then act as conduits for the flow of energy-currents or "winds" within our body, a broad term including nervous energy, the circulation of blood, digestive energy, and so on. As for the classification of these winds into impure "karmic" and pure "gnostic" winds, see the section on energy winds later in this chapter.

246. See the mini-encyclopedia for a discussion of "lymph". In this context, "seminal nuclei" obviously refers to the conventional seminal nuclei, which are like organizing bioenergetic nuclei in relationship to the currents of energy-flowing through the body, and in part embrace functions attributable to hormones, regenerative fluids, and cell's nuclei. They give rise to the sensory faculties in that these sensory organs are subtle translucent material suitable for receiving sense impressions, and as such consist of the vibrant quintessences that only the seminal nuclei's lucent energy can provide.

247. "Growth" or "increase" was previously mentioned in this account of embryogeny as the third phase in the three successive phases involved in embryogeny - "completeness", "development" and "increase".

248. The identical passage is on TCD1, 359,5-360,2, though there "white" is correlated with the earth energy channel instead of the water energy channel, "red" with earth energy rather than fire energy, and yellow with fire energy rather than earth energy (TDD's correlations are the more orthodox).

The "ultimate" energies in brief refer to the elemental energies vibrant essence as five-hued light, whereas the "conventional" elemental energies signifies those lights as materialized and distorted by our ignorance into what we perceive as "matter". These channels "of" the four elements indicate that the flow of the corresponding "winds" or energy-currents of the specified element tend to be dominant in that channel. Each element is related to the hue that is its light essence ("yellow light" being the essence of earth energy, and so forth), which serves as the causal impetus of one of the four "lamps" ("lamps" being analytical divisions of our inner light, which shows us the way - see Chapter Six for an extended discussion). The subsequent correlations of the four lamps with awareness, luminosity, the seminal nuclei and primordial gnosis is obvious when considered in light of the sixth chapter's discussion of each lamp. Finally, Longchenpa correlates these four lamps with the four visions experienced in Direct Transcendence contemplation. These correlations are not rigid (indeed other systems of correlation exist), and only indicate that the given lamp comes into play in that vision in a particularly vital way, while not implying in any sense that the other lamps are absent at any given point. Thus in the first vision the water lamp is particularly vital as it is here that the our inner luminosity shines forth via our eyes into the sky, a shining forth which flows forth via our "light channels" running from our heart to our eyes (the "water lamp" principally signifies these light channels). In the second vision the seminal nuclei's spherical forms are a particularly important visual aspect of the unfolding rainbow-colored manifestations, while in the third vision the "expanse" forms the pure lands within which we see the vast mandalas of enlightened spiritual energy visually appearing as "Buddhas", and so forth. In the fourth vision, all these light visions dissolve back into emptiness as we enter the original purity of the Ground via our penetrating "insight" into the ultimate insubstantiality of all appearances.

249. In fact of the actual five sensory faculties, four exist exclusively within the head, and the fifth faculty of tactile sensation pervades the body, with concentrations in certain areas such as the hands. However, in explaining the *genesis* of the translucent material forming the sensory organs, it can be said that they *develop* in and of the energy wheels. One must recall that these "wheels" are in essence no more, or less, than the main centers of intersecting energy-flows in the body, and as such play a central role in all features of embryogeny as well as the child/adult's ensuing life. Also one must recall the presence of the two "Eyes"

(that of the Elements and of the Lamps) within the wheels, both of which play a special role in the formation of the sensory faculties (see Chapter Six). The key here is not that the sensory organs as such are located within the wheels, but rather that their origination and sustaining organization derives via the key points of the body's lucent energetics as present within these wheels, i.e. the two "Eyes".

250. Our subtle body's energetics has a triune identity in terms of the channels, winds, and seminal nuclei, with all three being mutually interlinked such that they only make sense in coordination with each other: the channels are the conduits for the winds such that the winds can be said to be channels' currents of force or the channels can be expressed as the winds' characteristic lines of movement, while the nuclei are then the "intelligence" or "organizing" energy enfold within those winds (imaged as the being the "information" or "awareness" carried along by the winds down these channels). In other words, the individual's physical and psychic energy is encapsulated in the channels which act as its site or residence for energy-flows (the stationary aspect), the winds which serve as the currents impelling the various processes into motion (the impelling or circulating aspect), and the seminal nuclei which are intense concentrations of energy acting as creative sources or nuclei for the overall organization and unfolding of the various processes constituting our experience (the arrayed aspect which also operates to "array", i.e. "in-form" this energy in meaningful patterns and structures). This triune "subtle" body (which also includes "coarse" processes discernible by scientific analysis) is often said to be exclusively the dynamism of primordial gnosis, though in our ignorance we linguistically and conceptually differentiate out this multiplicity of elements. Simply put, the various "winds" propel the multitude of "nuclei" throughout the network of "channels" within the body, thereby bringing about all physical and psychic processes in human existence - the process is often imaged as an irrigation "canal" (the channels) where "water" (the energy-currents) flows, carrying various items (the nuclei) to where they are needed (or the winds can be the "force" impelling the nuclei (i.e. water) down the canal - see STCP2 11a 5). ZMYT2 109,4 thus terms the channels as the "basis", while the winds and nuclei are "based" upon it, since the former serve as the structural conduits for the latter two's flow.

251. KGYT2 153 makes clear that 72,000 is just a number used as a basis of analytical presentations, when in fact the number of bodily channels is infinitely vaster, equal to the number of hairs. See Geshe Gyatso's *Clear Light of Bliss* 21-24 for an analysis of how the number of 72,000 is arrived at in that tantric system, though it must be kept in mind that the particulars of these channels are presented in a wide variety of ways, despite a broad structural similarity in describing three main channels and (at least) four principal energy wheels. These four wheels are simply an imagistic way of describing the main four locations at the center of our body where there energy channels intersect, without there being some independent thing apart from those channels which is referred to as "wheels" - the term is merely a reification of a network of individual channels, whose integral functioning together has a certain overall characteristic pattern at this location which is then referred to as a "wheel" of energy. In that these "hubs" of channels are imaged as "wheels" or "lotuses", the individual channels can be termed "spokes" or "petal-channels". While in fact innumerable channels radiate outwards at these organizing centers with an intricate system of branches, each wheel is often specified as having a certain number of channels by force of focusing in on the main channels stemming directly from this center. Thus KGYT2 156,5 and TCD1 363,7 enumerates the 472 channels here referred to as 64 branching from the navel wheel (primarily formed from fire vibrancy), 32 from the heart wheel (the radiation of inner space comprised of all four elements), 16 from the throat wheel (primarily formed from earth

vibrancy), and 360 from the crown wheel (formed from water vibrancy). Since all of these 472 channels ultimately derive from branches out of the four wheels, they are subsumable therein; since those wheels in turn derive from the three main channels running up the body's center (as their "channel-knots", or blooming "flowers" of influence), they can be further subsumed with them. KGYT2 explicitly says this enumeration of 472 channels doesn't include the "bliss sustaining wheel located at the genitals", a fifth wheel with 28 channels formed principally from wind vibrancy. When looked at in the reverse direction of increasing complexity, the 472 channels of course branch into many more - ZMYT2 109,6 says there are immeasurably many minute branches from these main channels; if analyzed with a conceptual demarcation of these channels at a closer phase to the wheel's center, each wheel's channels can be analyzed into (respectively) 64, 8, 16 and 32, adding up to 120 (see KGYT2, 155,6; ZMYT2 109,6), or even further analyzed in terms of 32, 4, 8, and 18 branches respectively, and so on.

252. *rTsa gNas 'Khor Lo* (text not identified yet; also cited by ZMYT2 109,4 and LYT1 240,6 as from the *Kun gSal*, though I could not locate it in TLKS on a preliminary scan). This title could also be interpreted as "the wheels of energy channels (which act) as the abodes (for energy winds)", and apparently is one of *The One Hundred and Nineteen Esoteric Precepts* of VNT which has been lost (see GTD 404,7 where Longchenpa specifies this as one of that collection's titles). This is unfortunate, as this text is extensively cited by TCD1 in regards to various channels making up the body's energy "wheels", and hence appears to be perhaps the main source of details on Great Perfection subtle body theory. ZMYT has basically identical wording, except in the first line it says "at the back and front of the body" instead of "the channel-knots of the body" (LYT reads "braided knots of the body"). "Channel-knots" (*rTsa bDud*) here describe these central nexuses of channels based on their resembling an intricate knot with these channels all tied together, and in particular connotes the kinks and blockages that exist for ordinary individuals in these channels. They are often discussed as sites where the right and left channels coil around the central channel, thereby preventing the flow of energy through that channel. In essence these channels are merely a name applied to particular flows of energy, and thus their blockages indicate distortions and weaknesses in our physical and mental energy levels. Since these channels are very subtle dimensions, their form is quite malleable, and along with their "wheels" they take ripened vivid form in accordance with how you visualize them in tantric practices, while normally they are not clearly present in such forms. In addition, tantric practice gradually dissolves these "knots" or blockages in their flow such that our psycho-mental energy becomes unimpeded, and thus operates at hitherto unprecedented optimal levels enabling us to accomplish feats far beyond what is considered possible by the light of the low levels of energy accessible to ordinary humans.

Many different energy channels meet at these four wheels, but the following three are especially important. "Wheels" merely are a term for meridians or central nexuses of the various channels within our bodies, with the term being based on their visual appearance as the converging channels resemble spokes (though generally their mandalic appearance as perfectly formed wheels only takes place by force of visualization in the yogically perfected body, while in ordinary individuals they are a tangled web of channels going in all different directions). KGYT2 154,1 images the four or five main wheels as like "stacked umbrellas" with the three central channels running up their middle resembling "pillars" or the umbrellas' stems. The three channels of primordial gnosis here refer to the flavor, solitary, all-encompassing channels, though in general the "luminous channels" are the conduits for gnostic energy par excellence. However this involves no contradiction as in fact the

luminous channels are intimately related to these three channels (see Chapter Five for details), with the former merely representing a more subtle and detailed analysis that picks out exclusively the flows of pure gnostic light energy, while the former includes impure flows of energy. Since these channels serve as the primary conduit for gnostic energy, and the Spiritual Bodies are no other than images for the triadic character of that gnostic energy, these two triads are correlated with each other with the channels acting as the "incubator" or matrix via which these Spiritual Bodies can become manifest. In addition the three main wheels are correlated with the three Spiritual Bodies, and the three types of nuclei based within these channels are said to engender the three Spiritual Bodies (see TDD 210,3).

"Supremely" not only indicates these channels are perfectly straight without any kinks, but also connotes that these three channels are of "supreme" importance in their being the primary conduit for our psycho-physical energy-flows, and above all for the ultimate gnostic light-energy. These two meanings are linked in that their functioning as the channels for the pure gnostic energy is precisely in that they are totally straight, whereas other channels are quite convoluted/twisted or only partially straight, whereby the energy-flowing with them becomes correspondingly distorted and diluted. These three channels are not always perfectly straight, and their various non-optimal conditions of being "slender", "wide", "crooked" and so on thus correspond to various distortions and disruptions of our body, speech and mind, with each distortion directly related to a corresponding defect in our flavor, solitary or all-encompassing channel (see TCD1 369,2-6 for details). TCD1 403,6 differentiates the pure gnostic winds from the impure karmic winds based upon the corresponding "twisted" and "non-twisted" nature of the channels they flow through.

253. "In one's prime" (*Dar La Bab Pa*) refers to the prime of one's life wherein the body/mind are at their peak performance levels - after youth and before the deterioration of aging sets in, it refers roughly to the time span between the age of twenty five and forty five. The exact age span varies, with TDCM defining it as thirty to fifty, SRNY defining the related term *Dar Ma* as sixteen to fifty, KGYT2 151,3 indicating that "youth" (*gZhon Nu*) lasts until the age of sixteen, and so forth. While in other contexts the life span is analyzed into a number of shorter periods, in the present context these are classified into three main periods - youth, prime, and old age. Of course the numbers of winds/breaths given here are only generalizations, and the actual number will vary in accordance with the particular person's health, constitution, environment and so on, as well as the time of the year and so forth (see TCD1 for more details). The current number is obviously chosen in particular as it allows numerical divisions to be conveniently made (into the four element winds and so on), and in general on the basis of empirical observation as to how many breaths we normally take in a given twenty four hour period. The additional number of winds present in youth accounts for the frenetic nature of youth, both with its excess of physical energy as well as its "hyper" emotional and mental activity - in a young person the energies have not fully ripened, and thus just like an uncalibrated machine goes too rapidly with wild fluctuations. When these winds dissipate and the body's energies become calibrated, then this energy calms down to a more even, natural level of activity, which is the "prime" of life devoid of both youth's "hyperactivity" of excess winds, and old age's decay or dissipation of winds. However TCD1 405,4 gives a quite different account, saying youths have thirty two less winds/breath because their energies have not expanded, while older people have fifth eight less winds because their energies are deteriorating. Also Longchenpa there gives a detailed account of the effect the winds' agitation, calm, strength, weakness and so on have on our life span, emotional states, and overall circumstances.

254. "Breaths" (*dBugs*) here literally reads "moving winds" (*'Gyu Ba'i rLung*). See VNT2 498,2 which clearly says the number 21,600 applies to inhalation and exhalation together as one cycle of breath. As these winds enter through the right and left nostrils, they enter the flavor and solitary channels (whose upper tips are located at the right and left nostrils respectively), whereby they enter the channels throughout the four wheels and function as the mounts for mental activity. In particular, they mix with awareness' radiation (emanating from the heart) within the hollow channel between the lungs and heart, here specified as connecting the mouth and lungs, resulting in what is called "the mind". This is explicated in the following passage from TCD2 306,4, which explains how along the yogic path the "rider" (awareness) and "wild horses" (karmic winds) are separated (in general, the passage is explaining the rationale for exhaling, and then remaining empty of breath in contemplation (literally "holding" without inhalation):

"...To bring the karmic winds to cessation within their own state, you exhale the breath from your mouth. Usually in inhalation the breath enters the flavor and solitary channels through the nostrils, and by thus entering within the channels throughout the four energy wheels, acts as the "mounts" for the flickering movements of variegated conceptual activity. Thus having brought them to cessation here (in the Great Perfection practice), you send the "horse" (i.e. breath/wind) of mental activity to a natural cessation within the lung channel linking the mouth and lungs (which resembles the hollow tube of a straw). To accomplish this, you must pull the winds out externally (i.e. exhale) and hold them there as long as you can remain (empty of breath). The horse and rider having thus become separated from each other, the rider dissolves within the awareness present in the heart, the key point whereby a non-conceptual meditative state is present in a natural flow..."

I must admit that I have not yet been able to resolve this two page long section on the energy winds in TDD, despite spending an inordinate amount of research time devoted to it, and questioning a number of Tibetan scholars on various points related to it. Rather than here including the extensive number of associated passages I have located, as well as the various interpretative possibilities I discern, for the time being I will merely briefly indicate the main issues and problems I perceive here. In the future, I plan to devote an article to a comprehensive treatment of these two pages which cites all parallel passages in Longchenpa's corpus, and attempt to draw some more comprehensive conclusions. The translation here proffered is, at best, a tentative attempt to merely provide a basis for further efforts towards resolution. "Breaths" here cannot be reduced to our physical respiration of oxygen and so forth, although they exist in intimate coordination - "breath" as the sustenance of our psyche's capacity to move signifies the subtle intake of energy from the Universe which is reflected on the coarse physical level by "breath" as we ordinarily conceive it. Since these two are related as pure/impure, their respective features and dynamics are marked extensive structural similarities, though it is crucial not to reduce the subtle "breath" to the coarse physical breath, since in actuality the former is "primordial" while the latter is its coarse and partial derivative (thus we must also reinterpret "exhalation" and "inhalation" without reducing these terms to their ordinarily understood reference on the coarse physical level). See my extensive discussion in annotation to TDD 245,1 for further comments on mystic physiology and the meaning of "breath".

The reference to 21,600 breaths as the number an ordinary individual takes during the average twenty four hour period is a rather common reference in Tibetan scholarship, and is generally discussed as actual breaths (amounting to 900 every hour, 14 every minute, and 1



every four seconds). The following discussion then is an attempt to analyze these 21,600 breaths in relation to the "winds" operating as the mount for mental activity, such that these "winds" can be classified as "virtuous", "emotionally distorted" and so on in accordance with the psychic activity that they operate as currents for. Thus (as with the TCD passage cited above) the "breath" (*dBugs*) of inhalation and exhalation is directly related to the inner "energy winds" (*rLung*) which serve as mounts for psychic activity, with the "breath" entering the lungs, then mixing with awareness' radiation (from the heart) in the channel which links the lungs and heart (see Chapter Four for details), and thus becoming internal energy-currents that operate like "horses" for our mental activity (the "rider"). While one could interpret the present line (one emotionally distorted wind every 60 breaths) as merely meaning that breath provides a "timer" without entailing that one breath from every 60 actually itself becomes an emotionally distorted wind, it seems from the overall context clear that this is precisely what Longchenpa means. I understand this to mean that, on the average, from every 60 breaths we take, one of those breaths will become an internal current of psychic energy acting as "mount" for emotionally distorted psychic activity (whether hatred, desire, ignorance, or one of their many derivatives). It is unclear how this analysis of the 21,600 breaths-winds in terms of psychic states (which he evidently doesn't repeat elsewhere in his corpus) correlates to other passages where Longchenpa discusses psychic activity in terms of internal winds of "slight movement" (whereas the breaths are of "great movement") which are numerically much greater than 21,600. In the current context, Longchenpa begins by analyzing these 21,600 breaths in relation to psychic activity by indicating how "frequent" a given type of psychic activity fueled by these breath/winds is in relation to the temporal sequencing of breaths we take. Following the quote, he appears to then sum up this analysis by indicating in a single day exactly how many of those 21,600 breath/winds function internally as psychically negative "emotional distorted winds", how many function as psychically positive "gnostic winds", and how many function as psychically neutral "indeterminate winds". However, as discussed below, the total numbers given for these three classifications do not quite add up to 21,600 (though that appears to be clearly the intention of Longchenpa), and neither does each number in any way correspond to its previously cited frequency of occurrence (i.e. "one gnostic wind" every 20 breaths will add up to 1080 gnostic winds over the course of a single day, not the specified total of 1530). I have been unable to resolve this discrepancy, and can only suggest that the three numbers' failure to add up to 21,600 simply reflects arithmetical error (much more frequent, perhaps, in the days before the advent of calculators), while the difference between the gnostic and emotionally distorted winds' totals and their frequencies of occurrence must involve similar errors, as well as perhaps involving "random" winds of these types occurring in addition to those occurring at the specified regular intervals (i.e. one gnostic wind regularly occurs every 20 breaths, but in addition some 450 gnostic winds will occur at random throughout the day).

In addition to these numerical problems, the following line on "coarse" and "gross" winds is unclear. I have provisionally interpreted "emotionally distorted winds" (which occur at the rate of 1 every sixty breaths) as referring to "subtly" distorted winds (which is indicated by the quoted lines that Longchenpa is here prefacing), while "coarse" refers to "coarsely" distorted winds (which occur at the rate of 1 every 120 breaths), and "gross" refers to "grossly" (i.e. even more heavily distorted than coarse) distorted winds (which occur at the rate of 1 every 360 breaths). Interpreted in this manner, these three together would constitute the general category subsequently referred to as "non-virtuous emotionally distorted winds", which can be analyzed into three divisions in relation to the severity of distortion - subtly, coarsely, and grossly distorted. Obviously the more subtle distortions would be more frequent, as indicated here by the numbers given - 360 subtle emotionally distorted winds

over the course of a twenty four hour period, 180 coarse, and 60 gross (adding up to 600 winds, no where near the 3600 "non-virtuous" emotionally distorted winds Longchenpa specifies on the following page). However, I am quite uncertain if I have interpreted Longchenpa's comment correctly at all, which in the original Tibetan goes thus:

"...Gyu Ba'i rLung Drug Cu'i mTshams Na Nyon Mongs Pa'i rLung Re Re rGyu La, brGya Nyi Shu'i Cha La Rags Pa'i rLung gCig Tu brTsis Pa'i Cha gSum La Las rLung sBom Pa Sum brGya Drug Cu..."

A further problem is the reference to "balanced winds" (*mNyam gNas Kyi rLung*), which literally reads "same-abiding" winds. I have interpreted it as referring to "one" balanced wind occurs every 120 breaths, though I must admit I have had my doubts again as to whether "120" refers to the frequency of occurrence or its overall total over the course of a single day. Additionally, I am unable to confidently identify the exact reference of "balanced winds". This term is used on GGC1 487,5's discussion of the 21,600 winds, which classifies them into the triad of "upward-flowing", "downward-eliminating" and "balanced winds" (*mNyam gNas*), three of the classifications found in the standard fivefold analysis of energy winds ("balanced winds" can also be referred to as "fire-balancing" winds (*Me mNyam*). In a rough analysis (in fact each wind's operations are much more varied), the upward-flowing winds can be understood as referring to our breath and speech, the downward-eliminating winds as governing excretion, urination, ejaculation, and so forth, and the balanced winds as governing digestive processes. As such, GGC points out three rationales for this imagery of "upwards", "balanced", and "downwards": each wind has its sphere of operations within a particular area of the body (upper, intermediate, and lower respectively); each is associated with "going outwards", "entering inwards", and "remaining balanced between those two" respectively (this may also be related to breathing's triune identity of inhalation, exhalation, and the "pause" between exhalation and inhalation, which is of vital significance in many yogic techniques, as the meditator attempts to lengthen it - see Eliade's *Yoga* pp. 56-58, Varenne's *Yoga* 109-110); and finally each breath can be classified as "male", "female", or "neuter" (i.e. "balanced") depending on which nostrils they pass through - passing through the right nostril would be a "male" breath, passing through the left nostril would be a "female" breath, and passing through both nostrils equally would be a "neuter" breath (STCP2 10b terms the upward-flowing winds "male", the downward-eliminating winds "female", and the balanced winds "neuter"). While Longchenpa on the following page obviously correlates breath to the "upward-flowing winds" (LYT2 242 and STCP2 10b both explicitly describe the upward-flowing winds' function as being the inhalation and exhalation of breath), it must be remarked that other sources often connect the vitality winds to respiration whereas the upward-flowing winds in their coarse dimension are involved in speech, swallowing, and so forth, and thus are said to be concentrated in the area of the throat, nose and mouth (it may be that the upward-flowing winds monitor breathing in its coarser dimensions, though the subtle life-essence of breath is referred to as the "vitality winds" exclusively - some sources say the upward-flowing winds govern exhalation, while the vitality-sustaining winds govern inhalation). In addition, many sources (see above) describe the breath entering the nostrils into our flavor and solitary channels, whereby their subtle currents operate as the mind's "horse", whereas TCD2 53,4 specifies the "vitality wind" as the mind's horse, thereby indicating that the vitality wind is the key wind-current operative in psychic activity. While this issue certainly requires further research, given that the other four winds are generally described as branches of the vitality winds, it may be possible to view the 21,600 breaths' subtle energy as the vitality winds, which as operative within our body then split into various modes of operations that are classified as the separate

wind-currents described in the standard fivefold classification (and which as a whole account for all "movement" or "vitality" in our psycho-physical existence). This could conceivably be harmonized with the upward-flowing winds function concerning respiration by interpreting this as meaning they govern the activity of respiration, while the actual subtle energy inhaled feeds into the "vitality winds". If this is true (which remains quite debatable), in the current context Longchenpa thus mentions the "downward-eliminating", "balancing", and "upward-flowing" wind-currents, all of which are mere aspects deriving from the vitality wind which we "inhale" and "exhale". As these 21,600 "breaths" enter our body through the lungs, their energy in subtle and coarse dimensions permeates the body to fulfill a variety of functions (including, but not limited to, the coarse air which only penetrates to the lungs, and from there is circulated throughout the body via blood by means of the pulmonary loop), in particular relating to these three types of wind-currents (with the mode of entry of the breath (i.e. which nostril) influencing which type of function that breath performs as an internal energy-current). The subtler aspects of "breath" which fuel our psychic activity then enters a subtle channel between the lungs and heart, where by interacting with awareness' radiation it forms the psychic energy that then operates throughout our body via the subtle network of channels (including, but not limited to, the nervous system and its nervous energy). This operation of the subtle breath-fueled psychic activity is thus mirrored by the coarse breath-fueled circulation of the blood (which is why the home of our fundamental psychic strata ("the universal ground") is located in the "vitality channel", which on the coarse physical level refers to the "aorta", the main blood vessel trunk), which is the physical equivalent/derivative at the temporary material level of existence (if one accepts after-death existence, one can readily see how the gross physical dimension is derivative and secondary, as it then drops away while the subtle energetics continue, though this is not deny that in our current state the two are in intimate correlation with each other). Those wind-currents of energy or subtle "breath" supporting negative, emotionally distorted psychic activity are termed "virtuous", while those currents of subtle breath supporting positive, wholesome psychic activity are termed "non-virtuous"; the third classification of the breath-wind as "morally neutral" (see following page) then apparently refers to those aspects of the breath-energy which perform such non-mental functions as internal energy-currents (i.e. digestion, etc.), as well as basic mental activity which can't be directly classified in volitional terms as "karmically virtuous" or "karmically non-virtuous". I would also like to note here Varenne's indication (*Yoga* 111) that in a "Hindu" context, the "breath" inhaled was thought to be merely a stimulant that "fanned" our innate "vital breath" into activity, rather than our actually inhaling this "vital breath" from the external atmosphere. I am uncertain as to how this would relate to our current context, but, though it is true that awareness' radiation is indwelling, and is that which is circulated via these inhaled "winds" (coarse and subtle), most descriptions seem to indicate the inhaled currents of wind-energy directly operate within our body/mind, rather than "fanning" some primary interior wind-currents (this requires further thought):

"...the tradition has a natural repugnance to thinking that human existence is a slave to the atmospheric substance; it prefers to think that we all receive a "vital breath" at birth, and that the function of respiration is to circulate it through the body. Thus, the air we inhale is rather to be thought of as a stimulant, or a vehicle, and the prana is compared to a fire being fanned into new life by every inhalation: the flame burns higher, devours the fuel brought in from outside by air and food, then expels the waste (the "ashes") in the forms of exhaled air and bodily excretions (sweat, urine, feces)..."

Ignoring Longchenpa's comments (which would clearly contradict this interpretation by its specification of "120", thus indicating this refers to the fire balancing winds), looking at the Tantra alone would indicate interpreting "balanced" as referring to the gnostic winds (which are "balanced", i.e. undistorted), with their occurrence at a frequency rate one every 20 breaths being "one third" of "60" (the original interval specified for "emotionally distorted winds", while Longchenpa interprets "one third" as referring to the immediately preceding interval of "360"). Finally, the exact significance of "gnostic winds" here (occurring at a rate of one every 20 breaths) is thrown into doubt by Longchenpa's subsequent division of the 21,600 winds into "virtuous", "non-virtuous", and "morally neutral" winds, along with his subsequent mention of "pure gnostic winds" (which evidently is opposed to "virtuous gnostic winds". In general, the energy winds are classified into the dyad of karmic winds (the impure, distorted currents impelling cyclic existence) and gnostic winds (the pure, free flowing currents impelling transcendent reality), though the exact identification of the "gnostic" winds is not without controversy. Although GGC (see above) treats "karmic winds" (*Las rLung*) and "emotionally distorted winds" (*Nyon Mongs Pa'i rLung*) as synonymous (indicating that these 21,600 breath/winds are coarse for ordinary individuals ("karmic" or "emotionally distorted" winds), yet can be "revealed" as gnostic winds for an advanced contemplator), in fact a distinction can be made, since "karmic" is a more inclusive category includes conventionally positive, "virtuous" mind-sets such as altruism, love, sympathy and so forth, as well as negative, "non-virtuous" emotional distortions such as anger, desire, and ignorance (which is thus only a lesser subset of karmic winds). For this reason, as well as the frequent specification in Longchenpa's corpus of these 21,600 winds being "karmic winds" and Longchenpa's discussion below of what appear to be the "real" gnostic winds, I currently would interpret "virtuous gnostic winds" (those that appear 1 every 20 breaths, and total 1530 in a single day) as (despite its name) referring to a section of *karmic* winds, along with the "non-virtuous emotionally distorted winds" as a separate section of the karmic winds. The section of karmic winds that "virtuous gnostic winds" refers to would be those karmic winds which act as energy-currents for conventionally positive psychic energy (sympathy, joy, etc.), and hence are relatively less distorted than their negative counterparts (the emotionally distorted winds which operate as energy-currents for hatred, etc.). Since these positive karmic winds are less distorted, they are "closer" to their pure source (the karmic winds are all in fact ultimately derivative of the pure gnostic winds, just as the ordinary impure "mind" is a derivative of pure primordial gnosis), and hence can analogically be termed "gnostic winds", though in fact the true gnostic winds are the "pure gnostic winds" detailed below. This would then be the significance of Longchenpa's discussion on 209,4-7, where he indicates that the actual gnostic winds are termed the "pure gnostic winds", and are the pure radiation of primordial gnosis as present in our subtle energy system, operating as the source of "empty forms", i.e. pure radiant light energy in the form of "seminal nuclei". He opposes these to the previously mentioned "virtuous gnostic winds", which are merely a subset of the karmic winds, and as such are currents of energy acting as the "mounts" for cognitive activity.

While I cannot guarantee that my interpretation of this possible distinction between "virtuous gnostic winds" and "pure gnostic winds" is correct, it does point to an important, and undeniable, characteristic of Longchenpa's Great Perfection-based thought - the primordial light of gnosis is primary throughout, while the phenomena (whether "matter" or "conceptuality") we currently prioritize is simply derivative of, and adventitious to, that primordial reality. Thus it is not the case that somehow we "transform" the karmic winds into the gnostic winds by inserting them into the central channel (as is commonly asserted in

other tantric systems), since these gnostic winds are always already present at our being's core as the ultimate source of the fabric of our existence, including their distorted derivative energy termed "karmic winds". While it is commonly believed enlightenment involves the transformation of the "mind" into "primordial gnosis", the "universal psychic ground" into the "Reality Body", the material "elements" into "rainbow-colored light", Longchenpa consistently criticizes such notions as absurd as saying that "clouds" are transformed into the "sun" when the former parts so that the latter may freely shine forth (a perfect analogy, since in fact clouds initially derive from the operations of the sun via vapor): the cloud's shrouding of the sun is merely a perceptual issue, while there is no inherence of the clouds within the sun other than their purely adventitious presence. Whether the clouds conceal or don't conceal the sun from our own personal view is irrelevant to the sun's own dynamic energy, which continues to be present throughout; likewise the so-called "Buddha-nature" or "nucleus of enlightened energy" present within all life is absolutely primary at all times, and totally devoid of any discontinuity - enlightenment and bondage is a question of recognition, not of ontological transformation.

255. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 138,4; Ati1 165,2).

*Via the particulars of how each one's physical constitution typically is, for the young there are sixty additional winds, and for the aged sixty winds cease - this is due to the activities/karma of the individual's bodily elements:* the point of this line is that the actual number of winds in each individual at any given point in his/her life varies in accordance with their "vessel" (*sNod*), i.e. their body and its elements, which can be matured or un-matured, exhausted, diseased and so on. "Vessel" (here translated as "bodily") can connote the external social and physical environment that the organism finds itself within, our internal body being in intimate relationship with the outside world's elements, as indicated by our constant breathing in of air, how the cells of our body are exchanged every six years, and so forth. While here the emphasis is on the number of winds/breaths in a day being related to the physical state of the person in question (which the TCD goes into greater detail on), the external environment is certainly not an irrelevant factor.

*In every 60 moving winds (i.e. breaths), there is one "subtle" (emotionally distorted wind) as revealed by considering the reality (of the winds):* NGB reads *Chig Chod* for *Chos Nyid*, but Ati agrees with TDD. This line is extremely ambiguous, and I have interpreted it in lines with Longchenpa's preface, which indicates "subtle" refers to an "emotionally distorted wind". An alternative possibility for translating "as revealed by considering the reality" could be "it is held in check (i.e. "stopped" in meditation) by considering (i.e. meditating upon) reality itself". This passage occurs in a long list of sections concerning various questions on "reality", with the present section being in response "What are the key points of reality like in terms of the interstices of the (winds') movements?"

*In brief, every twenty breaths there is one (gnostic wind) of reality's sameness:* Longchenpa's introduction obviously indicates reading this as the gnostic winds, which at a rate of 1 every 20 breaths, would accumulate to 1800 from the 21,600 breaths occurring over a twenty four hour period.

256. As mentioned above, these three numbers clearly are intended to be a triune division of the 21,600 winds/breaths occurring in a single day, yet they total only 20530. I can only account for this discrepancy as a mathematical miscalculation, which could conceivably be rectified simply by adjusting the number of "indeterminate" winds to 16470 instead of 15400.

A more serious problem is the totals given here for the gnostic winds and emotionally distorted winds do not correspond to the previously specified frequency rates for their occurrence - 1 gnostic wind per 20 breaths would yield 1080 rather than 1530, while 1 emotionally distorted wind per 60 breaths would yield 360 rather than 3600 (even by adding in the "coarse" and "gross" winds, it would only yield 600 emotionally distorted winds in all). The only rationale I can come up with for these discrepancies is that additional gnostic and emotionally distorted winds occur randomly throughout the day, which are in addition to those occurring regularly at the specified frequency rates. The numbers "1530" and "3600" do bear certain far fetched connection to the frequency rates, which at least raises the heretical possibility that some basic mathematical errors have been made here. For example, the total of 360 (resulting from 1 per 60) is identical to 3600 except for a factor of 10; while, for a more far fetched connection, "1530" would appear to be related to 21,600 and 2 (itself related to "20" by a factor of 10) - dividing the "2" in 20,000 by two, we get "1"; dividing the "10" in 1000 we get "5"; dividing the "6" in 600 we get "3"; and dividing the "0" in 00, we get 0. The result is "1530", though I admit this convoluted reasoning is most probably irrelevant to our problem.

257. This is explained at length by KGYT2 160,3-164,2 in a very interesting passage where Longchenpa offers a trenchant criticism the "channel-wind" meditations of other systems. In the present context, Longchenpa simply indicates that contemplation involves getting in touch with these gnostic currents of energy and forcefully bringing the negative currents of energy to a state of cessation, while the "neutral" winds (which perform a variety of functions, but carry no moral force) can simply be relaxed, such that they naturally cease without any special effort or force being necessitated.

258. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 51,7; Ati1 62,4). See the mini-encyclopedia under "five winds" for further explanations of these two terms, and the annotations above for a brief description. VNT2 498,2 gives these as the two functions of karmic winds.

259. As discussed in Chapter Five, these four channels are the three main channels generally found in Buddhist tantric literature, with the addition of a fourth network termed the "light channel", here referred to as the "crystal tube channel". These four are the main conduits for our pure gnostic energy as it permeates all physical and mental structures of our existence, with the luminous channel in particular serving exclusively as a conduit for such pure energy (the other channels serve dual roles, and also operate as the conduits for a variety of conventional processes). The "four elemental winds" of course refer to water, earth, fire and wind energies, which by "entering" into, or "activating and functioning in terms of" this pure radiation of our inner core of light energy, now function as "pure gnostic winds". In essence, the conventional current-flows of the elements are derivative of the five-hued radiation of primordial gnosis, and hence the gnostic winds here signify their pure vibrant, lucent light energy-currents operative within our body, while the karmic winds instead connote the conventional, solidified forms those currents take in our neuroticized existence, performing a variety of material and mental functions at non-optimal levels of operation. However their conventional fivefold operations continue to be mirrored by the fivefold optimized radiation of primordial gnosis (corresponding to the standard list of five primordial gnoses, five light hues, and so on), with the latter's currents primordially operative as the former's ongoing source - "These five vibrant wind-currents abide in our heart at the present moment in reliance upon our gnostic awareness, and thus is the key point of primordial gnosis' natural radiating shining in five-colored light..." (TCD2 117,4). At the heart of our existence gnostic awareness is located (see Chapter Four), which radiates out in pure five

toned light energy (white, blue, red, green, yellow) to permeate the four main channels as radiant, concentrated points of light ("seminal nuclei") that operate as the ultimate organizing force of all our psycho-physical processes - enlightenment entails purifying away their derivative, weakened, distorted currents ("karmic winds") that have come to obscure their self-awakened essence, such that these pure currents of our innate light energy ("gnostic winds") can totally permeate our entire being without any adulteration or weakening of potency (such as "neurotization", as found in the genitalization of our sexual energy and so on). In Direct Transcendence contemplation, this gnostic radiation is activated such that the gnostic winds carry it through these luminous channels out via our eyes into the external space of the sky, while in ordinary beings it remains latently present within, inaccessible to thing-based coarsified perception.

As I mentioned in the annotations directly above, my understanding of this passage is that Longchenpa is differentiating the term "virtuous gnostic winds" and "pure gnostic winds", with the former term actually being a subclass of karmic winds and the latter term referring to gnostic winds proper. In addition, since defining the gnostic winds in terms of primordial gnosis' radiation and elemental energy winds might again lead one to confuse them with the karmic winds (KGYT2 164,2 and elsewhere defining the ordinary neurotic mind as a mixture of awareness' radiation and the motile winds), TCD1 403,5 takes pains to distinguish them on the basis of the twisted/non-twisted of the channels they flow through, and resultant pliability of psychic energy (i.e. the distortions and kinks of the channel-conduits "transforms" the pure gnostic currents radiating out from our heart into weakened, rigid, non-optimal karmic currents, just as a series of dams transform a raging, magnificent river into a pathetic, muddy stream of placid water). This certainly must be related to the standard tantric discussions of "knots" in our energy-flows, with 21 knots or blockages in our central channel where the flavor and solitary channels wrap around it, thereby preventing the free flow of energy-currents (see YZD 680,6-691,4, and Tulku Thondup's partial translation in *Buddha Mind* 390-396's). Through successively releasing these "knots" via contemplative techniques, the psychic energy (mind-wind complex) is rendered "pliable" or "flexible" within the four main energy wheels' channels, i.e. optimized, and ultimately the gnostic currents thus move freely into these channels, while the distorted karmic currents fade away (YZD also correlates the release of these knots to the sequential passage down the standard ten stages, and fivefold path that mark progression in Buddhist contemplation). In the TCD passage as well, "gnostic winds" are referred to as "flexible or pliable cognitive energy" (*Shes Pa Las Su Rung Ba*), as opposed to karmic winds being "inflexible", which "serve as mounts for emotionally distorted psychic activity". The "crookedness" or distortion in the channels that TCD speaks of must in part thus refer these subtle knots, while the absence of such distortions corresponds to the release of those knots, such that optimal, utterly pliable gnostic currents of energy can flood without impediment throughout the body. The entire passage goes like this (TCD 403,2-7; Guenther also translates in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us II* 68-69, though slightly incorrectly):

"...The channels reside within the body, the winds reside within these channels, and these wind-currents operate in terms of both gnostic and karmic winds: the gnostic winds ripen the transcendence of misery (Nirvana), and the karmic winds ripen cyclic existence (Samsara)...Though (these two types of winds) are identical as far as movement is concerned, (awareness' radiation) becomes gnostic winds via moving through non-twisted channels, with its name "gnostic winds" deriving from its functioning to display (contemplative experiences of) bliss, emptiness, and radiance; it becomes karmic winds via moving through twisted (i.e. distorted) channels, which then function to generate negative wind-driven experiences such

as various neurotic thoughts, various nonvirtuous activities, lack of clarity, drowsiness, agitation, a state of torpor, and vertigo. An analogy for this is how a single changeling can become a tiger when infuriated, yet appears as a human being when not angry: (the karmic winds and gnostic winds) are identical in terms of being the wind-currents of awareness' radiation flowing through our body's channels, yet depending on whether the channels are twisted or non-twisted they function as the horse-mounts of either flexible psychic energy termed "primordial gnosis", or the inflexible (distorted psychic energy) of karmic actions and emotional distortions..."

It must also be noted that in some passages (TCD2 29,3, etc.), Longchenpa indicates the "karmic winds" as the active agent in impelling mental clarity (beneath the level of the immense and total clarity of Buddhahood), since in fact within ordinary living beings, the karmic winds are in the ascendancy with a full range of operational capacity, ranging from utter inflexibility and distortion (corresponding to fogginess) to pliability and near-optimum performance (corresponding to clarity, though not as yet at the level of the gnostic winds themselves). Additionally, TDD's description here might make it seem as if the "elemental energy winds" themselves are a type of neutral force, that can be either "distorted" into karmic winds, or "enlightened" into/"revealed" as gnostic winds, though other passages clearly identify the elemental winds with the karmic winds, which are derivative of the gnostic winds (themselves corresponding to the pure five-hued light energy that are the source/quintessence of the five elements). While there does seem to be some tension between these two presentations, the lights themselves can be termed the "ultimate elements", and hence the two presentations can be reconciled on the basis of this flexibility of the term "elemental energy" to embrace both conventional and ultimate dimensions of light (see TCD1 404,3's specification that the gnostic winds act as the "four ultimate elemental energies" during the meditative path). Thus TDD's reference can be understood as these elements being enlivened and enlightened into their vibrant, lucent source/quintessence as the fivefold gnostic radiation, which can be referred to as "gnostic winds" or "ultimate elements".

KGYT2 161,6ff provides the following interesting discussion of gnostic winds:

"...In brief, "gnostic winds" is just a label applied to compassionate resonance's essential awareness - since it is present with the identity of the indivisible triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance, it is termed "primordial cognition" (the literal rendering of "gnostic"). It is termed "wind" in that its mere stirring and mere aware-ing share concordant qualities with wind. The "real" energy winds (i.e. the karmic winds) should be understood as its dynamism manifesting in terms of the ordinary "mind" (i.e. the neuroticized mind), as primordial gnosis' radiation as a mere "aware-ing" is carried off by the wind-horses, and operates in terms of the pluralized modes of ordinary perceptual consciousness (*rNam Shes* rather than *Ye Shes*).

As for the gnostic winds themselves, they are beyond all extremes of discursiveness by force of being empty in their essence-dimension; they light-up as the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosises by force of being radiant in their nature-dimension; and they manifest in terms of the primordial gnosis sensitive to everything's (final reality) and the primordial gnosis sensitive to all its specifics by force of being aware in their compassionate resonance-dimension. Though this is itself labeled "wind", it in fact manifests in the contemplative path of visionaries as primordial gnosis' inner radiance, and its thoroughly pure radiation as it externally manifests.



In the "channel/winds" (praxis and theory) of lower spiritual vehicles which are ignorant of this, (they believe as follows). They view the non-elaborated essence of the moving winds as the gnostic winds, and thus seizing hold of them, insert the coarse winds from the right and left (channels) into the central channel. Having thus brought about (sensations of) "clarity" through the right channel's winds, "bliss" through the left channel's winds, and "non-conceptuality" through the central channel's winds, the winds remain in the central channel with these triune (sensations of) bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality, such that (visions of) seminal nuclei and rainbow light emerge. Furthermore, this is (believed) to be the sign of taking hold of the winds of the five elemental energies.

This is, however, a quite distorted view. If the five moving winds had color, then why doesn't the wind of our mouth and nose (i.e. breath) come with color?! As for attaining stability upon taking hold of these (winds), though they claim they have taken hold of the gnostic winds, actually they aren't cognizant or aware of even an iota of their true dimension, except for having simply heard the name "gnostic winds". I don't believe that enlightenment can be attained through checking the winds of the mouth and nose, since I don't believe (that anything ensues) through these practices of the lower vehicles involving taking hold of those "gnostic winds", apart from type of "non-conceptuality" deriving from the non-movement of breath. Such a practice resembles the filling and emptying of a bellows - not only do no enlightened qualities ensue upon exerting yourself in this, but your body grows cold and shakes, your speech becomes trivial and false, your mind becomes even more coarse than before in its dualistic conceptions, and cannot withstand any (adverse) conditions.

Here (in the context of the Great Perfection tradition), we say that taking hold like (the following) is verbally termed "gnostic winds". When in a single period you bring together the three watching postures and the three enlightened gazes via the three Spiritual Bodies, you experience a radiant, immaculate, crystal clear state of consciousness which is beyond discursiveness through the emptiness of essence, to which radiant light manifests through the clarity of nature, and which is utterly non-conceptual through the awareness of compassionate resonance. While not conceptualizing anything at all, the visual dimension of whatever might appear remains unceasing. (Because we hold that, when you say "gnostic winds" we say its taken hold like that.)..."

See GTD 382,1-383,3 for a very incisive criticism of these lower tantric practices of forcefully inserting the energy winds into the central channel in the attempt to achieve primordial gnosis, as contrasted to the Great Perfection contemplation where the luminous channels are let-be, and they naturally expand outwards from their current presence as a thin thread of light at the our body's center, such that it directly permeates our entire existence and dissolves all energy blockages therein (see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One* 340-341 for a translation of his abridged account, which is simply a reworded presentation of Longchenpa's comments in GTD).

260. This points out the key distinction between the Great Perfection view of gnostic winds, and that of the lower doctrinal systems. While those doctrinal systems tend to exclusively view the gnostic winds as the transformation of karmic winds such that now they act as mounts for "pure" internal psychic activity (see Geshe Gyatso's *Clear Light of Bliss* 140), in the Great Perfection the emphasis is on gnostic winds as the ever present vehicle for the exteriorization of the heart's luminosity, carrying it through our eyes into the vibrant expanse of the sky. Thus the karmic winds (literally "efficacious winds") act as internal

mounts for psychic energy in its role of sensing, while gnostic winds act as external vehicles for psychic energy in its role of luminously lighting-up within the sky (and in general within our body). TCD1 403,6's distinction between the gnostic and karmic winds as being between flexible psychic energy-flowing via non-crooked channels, and nonflexible psychic energy-flowing via crooked channels is related to this distinction, since pliable or flexible psychic energy is operating optimally and hence gives rise to luminous visions, while inflexible psychic energy takes the form of the twisted emotional distortions (the winds acting as carriers for "normal" distorted cognitive energy).

However this statement should not be understood to exclude the gnostic winds as acting as 'mounts' (*rTa*) for any type of psychic activity, since KGYT2 161,2, TCD2 188,2, and so on clearly often speak of the gnostic winds functioning as "mounts" for enlightened knowing and insight. The key, rather, is that the gnostic winds don't act as mounts for ordinary distorted cognition (*Shes Pa* referring to *rNam Shes* in strict opposition to "primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*), though Longchenpa usually discusses this opposition in terms of the "mind" as opposed to "primordial gnosis" - see Chapter Four), whether virtuous or nonvirtuous. With respect to this, one must also keep in mind that TCD2 specifies the linked chains as insight's radiation, and hence in this context the "mounts of insight" may again refer to the gnostic winds acting as the carrier or impetus for the display of gnostic light within the sky. Also my statement above should not be taken to exclude the presence and functioning of the gnostic currents internally, as TCD1 398,3 clearly specifies that the winds of "small movement" (which are those within the body's channels) includes the support of primordial gnosis, and in fact those gnostic currents as the ultimate source of all our psycho-physical energy necessarily must be in constant low profile motion within our bodies:

"...In general, the channels are located within the body; the energy winds are located within those channels; and those winds are of both "small" and "great" movement, which is their movement externally and internally (respectively)...In particular, if we add up (all those winds) which move through the arteries ("pulsating channels") with "small movement" as the supports of conceptuality and primordial gnosis within the channels (not counting the mouth and nose, i.e. the "great movement" winds), there are 210,600 (all together)..."

The winds of "great movement" basically refer to the relatively extensive movement of breath which involves the body's exterior as well, and are specified as being 21,600 in number (as discussed above in the TDD).

261. See KGYT2 161-3 above for its mention of the "real" winds being karmic winds, while the "gnostic winds" are implicitly only named as such analogously.

262. *sGron Ma 'Bar Ba* (NGB1 476,6; Ati1 295,2; also cited by TCD2 29,4; TDD 279,1). This and the following passage, along with the linking lines, are quoted in full on TDD 279,1 in the context of discussing the insight lamp, and are prefaced with some helpful introductory lines (see there for my translation, and annotations). TCD2, which cites the passage in the context of discussing the "site" or "residence" of the insight lamp, prefaced this quote thus:

"...Within the Tsitta, and in particular in the four great channels (or "those channels of great distinction"), awareness' primordial radiation is restrained by the inner winds, and thus does not diffuse out externally - it is indwelling within as a mere unclarity. Through karmic winds shaking its potency forth externally out of (this mere indwelling state), there arises awareness of objects. Also, as for the abiding in terms of the primordial radiation which is the ground

of language, it abides as the primordial radiation of the quartet of the elemental energies, cognition, primordial gnosis, and awareness...."

With the identity of being impelled, vibrated, pulsated, lightened, and shaken forth (by the energy winds) through the four channels of its engendering, (the psychic energy of insight) revolves in the Tsitta's mandala as utterly vibrant quintessences of cognitive energy characterized as scattering fire-sparks: the citation of this passage on TDD 279 reads "moved" ('Gyu) for "impelled" (gYo). I have corrected "engendered" (bsKyed) to "shaken forth" (bsKyod) on the basis of NGB and the citation on TDD 279. *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* (NGB 477) seems to indicate that the subject of these first five verbs are the energy winds, while their object is insight, i.e. our psychic energy. TDD 279's citation of this passage reads "in the four channels" (Nas) for "through the four channels" (Na). "The four channels of its engendering" refer to the quartet of the flavor, solitary, central and crystal tube channels, as made explicit in the following lines, while Longchenpa's prefatory comments clearly indicate "engender" refers to their acting as the conditional basis for the emergence of primordial gnosis' radiation as luminous empty forms of light. The quote here further identifies this "natural radiation" of primordial gnosis as "the quintessences of cognitive energy", i.e. the insight lamp. *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* (NGB1 476,5) and TDD 278,1 clearly indicate that "fire-sparks" is an image connoting a high-energy process, while here it indicates our psychic energy, which the energy winds impel or carry through these channels running through our existence's structure.

This fivefold (insight energy) within these four (channels) as accompanied by the karmic winds becomes intensely clear and aware cognitive energy: TCD's quotation of this line includes a gloss: "five" is glossed by "insight", "four" is glossed by "channel", and *Las* is glossed by *Nas*. See Chapter Six's last section for a discussion of the five types of insight. The only ambiguity here is to whether *Las* refers to Karmic (winds) and *Nas* is meant as an addition, or whether *Las* is a grammatical particle, and *Nas* is thus merely making that clear. The latter would, however, yield quite strange grammar here (something like *Las Kyi* as an abbreviation for *Las Yod Pa'i*). It is true that the introductory lines in the TCD also refer to "karmic winds" as generating psychic clarity in the context of ordinary beings in whom the gnostic currents are latent and underdeveloped, but as an impure factor such karmic winds cannot be present within the "crystal tube" channel (the luminous channels being completely devoid of all impurity). There are two ways to resolve this difficulty, the first being to merely consider all three elements (the five insight modes, the four channels, and the karmic winds) as being factors that give rise to psychic clarity, without necessarily implying that they are completely interrelated (i.e. those five insight modes as impelled by the karmic winds within the fourth channels). Secondly, this could be interpreted as signifying that the karmic winds impel this insight energy out of this restricted range of movement (exclusively within the four channels, and particularly within the crystal tube channel) into a wider range of operations, without however meaning that the karmic winds are operative as such within all four channels.

Resides as the great natural cognitive energy of radiant clarity: TCD as well as TDD 279 read "insight" (*Shes Rab*) for "natural cognitive energy" (*Rang Shes*).

263. *sGron Ma 'Bar Ba* (NGB1 477,4; Ati1 296,1). See TDD 278 for a clear explication of insight's dynamism. The inner winds are the activating agent of insight's dynamics or potencies, such that when they activate these dynamics go into manifest states with the

ensuing states of mental clarity. I have added "center" in the third line on the basis of TDD 279 and Ati.

264. See the mini-encyclopedia for a further discussion of these seminal nuclei. I have translated *bKod Pa* as "arrayed/arraying" to bring out the dual connotation that they are "arrayed" within the channels throughout the body, as well as being the in-forming intelligence that "arrays" or "organizes" our energy into meaningful complex patterns that are integrated to form a functioning gestalt. As with everything else, these nuclei have both a lower order "conventional" aspect (which includes our hormones, sexual fluids, genetic material, and so on) and a higher order "ultimate" aspect (which is pure immaterial light energy serving as the spiritual "genetic" material that unfolds in our visionary experiences in contemplation). These two aspects are connected to the main right and left channels in our body, while the third central channel then represents the integrated energy that transcends this ultimately false opposition between "conventional" and "ultimate", pointing out the unity of all energy. These channels are in essence only reifications of the energy that flows within them, and thus these wind-impelled nuclei constitute the inner significance of the channels in our psycho-physical existence. The key element of these seminal nuclei in all their aspects is centralized high intensity energy that radiates outwards in complex organizing patterns, which visually is thought of as minute spheres with concentric circles of rainbow light expanding outwards from their centers.

265. These exact correlations of the "conventional nuclei" with the right "flavor" channel, the "ultimate nuclei" with the left "solitary" channel, and the "natural nuclei" with the central channel can be found elsewhere, such as ZMYT2 110,4 (which also indicates right-left orientation is reversed for females). As discussed below, there is some degree of terminological fluidity between "ultimate seminal nuclei" (*Dor Dam Gyi Thig Le*) and "natural seminal nuclei" (*Rang bZhin Gyi Thig Le*) as there a number of variant names, and in fact "natural" refers to "ultimate" reality as the "nature" or uncontrived condition of all phenomena. For example, in a succinct summarization of this triad of seminal nuclei, TCD1 407,6 refers to the "natural nuclei" as located in the solitary channel rather than in the central channel as Longchenpa here indicates, specifying the "Reality Body nuclei" as being that which resides within the central channel as the ground of the blazing gnostic lamps. In fact the discussion below as well as in Chapter Five make quite clear that both the second (said to "bring the lamps to maturity within our eyes") and third types of seminal nuclei are involved with the light visions and lamps of Direct Transcendence contemplation, and that to some degree their functions overlap. On the whole, Longchenpa's discussion below tend to indicate that the former is more of an activating agent sparking the maturation of these visions, while the latter actually embodies the actual "stuff" of the light visions themselves (the LYT quote discussed below specifies it as the expanse's lighting-up, as well as the Spiritual Bodies appearing within seminal nuclei).

TCD2 79,3ff divides all seminal nuclei into the triad of Ground, Path, and Fruit ("ground-operating nuclei", "the vision-path nuclei", and "the self-maturing fruit nuclei"). The "ground nuclei" would seem to correspond to the "natural nuclei" mentioned here in the TDD, and are discussed in two parts by TCD: "(i) by virtue of appearing with encircling rims of five-colored light, they are called "natural luminous nuclei", (ii) while by those being adorned with originally pure awareness, they are termed the "Totally Positive One's nuclei". When this description of the ground nuclei locates them at our hearts within the brightness of the luminous channels (i.e. "the great kati golden channel") as opposed to the location of the "natural nuclei" here specified as within the central channel), in fact the central channel often

is used to refer to the luminous channels that exist within it. In addition, whereas the former discussion is emphasizing the ground nuclei as present throughout all sentient beings, the latter discussion of it as within the central channel can be understood as presenting its range of influence as operative within all sentient beings.

TCD then discusses the path nuclei in terms of the other two types of seminal nuclei discussed at this point in TDD, the conventional nuclei and the ultimate nuclei, which supports my previous suggestion that whereas the ultimate nuclei are more of a catalytic agent of the Direct Transcendence visions, the natural nuclei are more of the fundamental source of their reality and "substance", thoroughly empty though it may be. Thus we must not look for strict and final definitions here, as the frames of reference are fluid. A further instance can be found on TCD2 81,1, which defines the "ultimate nuclei" as the "rainbow-colored light of the luminous channels within the heart, and radiation as they manifest externally", which thus locates them within the luminous channels rather than the solitary channel (though it is true that KGYT locates the "buffalo horn" shaped branches of the luminous channel running to our two eyes as within the solitary channel's outer sheath). In addition it then discusses these nuclei in terms of two divisions ("the catalytic indwelling nuclei", and "those that emerge via an individual's meditative experience"), with the first division existing within the heart of all sentient beings, and the second division accounting for the manifestation of the nuclei and patterns of light within the Direct Transcendence visions. Significantly, TCD2 81,4 specifies of the first division that at times they flicker forth "from within" the quartet of the flavor, solitary, all-encompassing and crystal tube channels, having been impelled by the gnostic winds.

Finally, as mentioned above, the actual name specified for the seminal nuclei located within the solitary and all-encompassing channels vary considerably, even simply within TDD itself. Thus, while here the "ultimate nuclei" are located within the solitary channel, TDD 252,4 mentions the "natural ultimate nuclei" (*Rang bZhin Du Don Dam Pa'i Thig Le*) as located within the solitary channel; TDD 254,1, 255,1, 257,1 and TCD1 361,5 specify the "natural nuclei" as within the solitary channel; and TDD 256,4 locates the "ultimate gnostic nuclei" (*Don Dam Ye Shes Kyi Thig Le*) within the solitary channel. Then, while here the "natural nuclei" are specified as being located in the all-encompassing channel, TDD 255,2 specifies the "ultimate reality" nuclei (*Don Dam Pa Chos Nyid*); TDD 256,4 specifies the "natural reality nuclei" (*Rang bZhin Chos Nyid Kyi Thig Le*); and TDD 257,1 gives them as the "nuclei of the ultimate "stuff"" (*Don Dam dNgos Po'i Thig Le*). such variance is readily understandable given the generic and closely linked nature of these terms "ultimate" and "natural". In addition, a pattern can be extracted from the above variations such that the nuclei in the solitary channel are associated with primordial gnosis, while those in the all-encompassing channel are associated with reality, while the terms "ultimate" and "natural" are merely abbreviated and interchangeable manners of referring to both in shorthand. This again supports my previous suggestion that the nuclei within the solitary channel are more dynamic and catalytic as involved with gnosis in transformation, while those within the all-encompassing channel are the abiding "stuff" (*dNgos Po*) or "reality" of all the nuclei. However, as is often the case, this distinction drawn from TDD and TCD does not hold true uniformly within the texts of *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts*, such as KGYT2 159,5, which names the "gnostic nuclei" as being within the central channel (here the reference to the luminous channel within the central channel is explicit), while the "all-pervading white nuclei" are in the flavor channel, and the "ultimate red nuclei" are within the solitary channel. However, the basic distinction between the flavor channel (and its nuclei) as conventional, the solitary channel (and its nuclei) as ultimate, and the central channel (and

its nuclei) as transcendent of the two opposites is clearly explicated in TCD1 366,6, TDD's Chapter Five, and elsewhere (see Chapter Five's annotations for further discussion).

266. *rTsa gNas 'Khor Lo* (text not identified yet).

*These seminal nuclei of your mother's blood and father's semen respectively:* KGYT2 168 specifies the white quintessence ("semen") which we inherit from our father as water energy's quintessence, which is located at the upper tip of the central channel and visually resembles a white syllable "Ah"; while the red quintessence ("blood") which we inherit from our mother is fire energy's quintessence, and is located at the penis in males and in the vagina ("anthers" of flower) in females, visually resembling a red syllable "Ham". KGYT2 168-9 says that when these seminal nuclei are agitated or disturbed we become sick, while when they flourish and expand we experience pleasure, long life, enjoyment and glory. Thus these conventional nuclei embrace the functions of hormones, as well as our "biological clock", and as such are the basic regulators of our ordinary physical and mental activity. Their optimal functioning thus gives our body a healthy "glow", like an "aura" stemming from the nuclei's vibrancy, and the overall balance of the bodily elements they govern.

*You may be aware of their flickering as engendered by your inner winds, yet they are difficult to realize since their emergence is subtle:* the import of these two lines is unclear, aside from the obvious sense that it is difficult for us to gain consciousness, and meditative realization of, these seminal nuclei since they are extremely subtle presences of light:

*rLung Gis bsKyed De 'Gyu Bar Rig,  
Phra Shing 'Byung Bas rTogs Par dKa'.*

It is unclear if "engendered by your inner winds" refers to ordinary processes or a special contemplative activation of these nuclei, as well as whether "awareness" refers to our conscious awareness of these movements, or our subtle awareness which emerges in these nuclei's movements: "Since awareness is subtle in its emergence within their flickering movements engendering by your inner winds, they are difficult to comprehend". It seems advisable to interpret it as referring to these nuclei of light being activated ("engendered") by these energy winds in yogic contemplation, whereby we gain an initial awareness of them, though their presence is "flickering" and unstable (whereas in general we are oblivious to their presence). However, to actually stabilize their presence and experientially tune into their existential import is a much more difficult affair due to the subtlety of their reality. This is supported by Longchenpa's follow-up discussion on 211,5-6.

*The natural seminal nuclei are originally pure in essence, and resemble the triad of primordial gnosises present within the Ground - since primordial gnosis' luminosity, Spiritual Bodies, and awareness are not established within themselves, they flow through the central channel as the triad of unimpeded emptiness, unimpeded radiant clarity and unimpeded awareness:* as explained in the first chapter, triune primordial gnosis completely immersed within the Ground's reality corresponds to the Ground's empty essence, radiant nature and pervading compassionate resonance, which are characterized as a triad of unimpeded dimensions (i.e. pure light-energy totally devoid of any material obstructions or confinements) - emptiness, radiance, and awareness. Thus while this pulsating luminosity is present with its Spiritual Bodies and pure awareness, no forms are concretely established therein, other than being present as pure potentials in depth-radiance. To emphasize that these "natural" seminal nuclei and their energy is "originally pure" (pure potential completely

beyond any reified materialization), it is said that therein the lights, Spiritual Bodies and awareness are not established as entities, but rather there is only unimpeded emptiness (corresponding to the Spiritual Bodies), clarity (the lights) and unimpeded awareness (awareness). Thus the pure potential of these nuclei's energy within the Ground itself is signified by these three terms, whereas the description of "lights and Spiritual Bodies" connotes the exteriority of the Ground's presencing, wherein energy begins to move into manifest forms and possibility of mistaken fixation emerges.

267. The triad of "development, progress, and continued existence" refers to the body being "developed" which is an ongoing process as elements are "produced", while those elements once produced are continually being "increased" such that they "progress" further, and in this way the body is "sustained" as the structures and elements in place "endure" or "continue". Thus the conventional seminal nuclei are the main driving force and organizing factor behind the four elements' activities, their derivative formations as flesh and so forth, and the body's overall physical state. In actuality, "flesh", "blood" and so on are all derivative of the elements which are their constituents, but in the present context Longchenpa is emphasizing them as "in place", i.e. the "elements" of these nuclei operate as the fundamental "cause" of these processes, with their secondary formations as flesh, blood, and so on acting as the conditional supports of the nuclei's operations governing the ongoing process of our body. The seminal nuclei then are the overall guiding, organizational principal (like genes or hormones), with the elements themselves providing raw power and capacities and "constituents" serving as coarse structural supports. Since the conventional elements and conventional nuclei are mutually interlinked and derivative, it is only for purposes of analytical description that they are thus described in terms of cause, and so forth.

LYT1 460,4 (quoted earlier in context of TDD 200) makes it quite clear that the conventional elements as derivative of, and organized by, the conventional nuclei are what operates as causal impetus of the body's processes:

"...The body originates, develops, endures, and disintegrates via the causal impetus, conditional determinants, and functioning of the two paternal and maternal nuclei's four conventional elemental energies. Via the causal impetus (i.e. the four elements) acting to develop and sustain it (earth energy with respect to bone, water energy to blood and vibrant quintessence, fire energy to warmth, and wind energy to the external and internal movements of breath), the body endures, while those elements' becoming agitated and disrupted at the end serves as the conditions for sickness and death..."

268. These seminal nuclei move upwards from the soles of our feet on the first day of the lunar month, thereby functioning to expand our psycho-physical components and so forth in the navel wheel via the vibrant quintessences deriving from food and liquid (which we have ingested): this passage revolves around the notion that these catalytic conventional nuclei revolve through our body in concordance with the moon's monthly sequence of appearances in the sky, with the vibrant quintessences of our four internal elements tending to predominate in certain parts of our body in a pattern that first moves upwards to the top of the head, and then back down. At the start of the lunar month (new moon), the quintessences concentrate in the soles of the feet, just as the moon is a mere sliver; then as the moon gradually waxes up until the fifteenth (where it is a full moon), the nuclei move upwards in the body (culminating at the head on the fifteenth); and then as the moon wanes up until the thirtieth (when it vanishes), the nuclei descend back down sequentially to the soles of the feet again (on the opposite side). Thus all the dates here refer to the progression days (thirty in all)

within a lunar month, with the conventional nuclei's (the "moon")' movements in the body (the "sky") closely mirroring the actual moon's appearance in the sky. The term used to indicate the nuclei's movements is literally "expansion" (*rGyas Pa*), which connotes the expansion of physical and psychic energy (the "components") triggered by the catalytic nuclei's presence. In the nuclei's cyclical progression, they pass through various major energy centers of the body (the "wheels"), where they ignite the expansion or further development of the "components" stemming from or located at those centers. This is why they are termed "catalytic" nuclei, as they are triggering mechanism in the body's energetic processes, that which sparks off expansion and provides the organizational dimension to the patterns in which it grows, "energizing" our physical and mental components with their vibrant energy.

KGNT2 61,2-64,4, 78,3-81,3 and 119,1-121,6 give an expanded account of the contemplative practices revolving around this naturally occurring movement of the conventional nuclei (involving visualizations of deities in accordance with the nuclei's location at any given day). It terms such practices the "natural increase or intensification" of the seminal nuclei since it relies on nuclei's ordinary movements within the body independent of visualization, as opposed to the "conditional intensification" of the nuclei in sexual yogic practices, where you manipulate the movements of nuclei via visualization and sexual intercourse. KGYT2 298,4-300,3 also analyzes these nuclei's movement (references to KGYT below are from this section, if otherwise unspecified), but gives the location on the first as at the genitals, while on the fourth it reaches the navel, and then on the twenty fifth it descends to the navel, and on the thirtieth it descends to the genitals and soles of the feet (it agrees with TDD as to the other dates). Khanpo Tsenam indicated that in males these nuclei move from the left upwards in counterclockwise fashion, while in females the direction is reversed, beginning from the right foot and moving upwards (and then downwards) in clockwise fashion. He also said their cyclical circulation is tied in with the "letters within the channels", which act as the sequential "abodes" of the seminal nuclei as they progress up and down the body. Thus the 16 vowels and 30 consonants are the nuclei's symbolic form as sonic energy vibrations, each day corresponding to one particular syllable in that part of the body (running up from the foot to the crown, and then back down the other side to that side's foot). As I have discussed previously, the KGNT consistently describes these conventional nuclei as indivisibly present with gnostic energy, with their visual form as "syllables" and esoterically five-colored spheres of light orbiting the mandalas of deities that are their gnostic quintessence.

Whatever spiritual accumulations you have amassed develop further and your "constituents" progressively expand: "accumulations" refers to the two spiritual accumulations made along on the path (of merit and primordial gnosis respectively - KGNT2 79,4 specifies the "accumulation of merit"): since the body is especially energetic and pliable (especially the lucency of the subtle body) with an accompanying increase in mental clarity (the nuclei's vibrancy is now concentrated in the head region), virtuous activity (including meditation) can become unusually potent and accessible on these dates, with concordantly powerful transformative effects. Since this literally simply says "whatever accumulations you have amassed", it can also secondarily connote our "storage" of physical energy in the form of nutrients and so forth, which are at this point enhance or energized even further rather than being dispersed. "Constituents" (*Khams*) can refer to the eighteen sensory elements, various constituents of the body ("blood", "marrow", etc.), the seminal nuclei (especially the seminal fluid), as well as other dimensions, and in the present context



particularly points to our psycho-physical vital energy, the flow of which expands throughout the body at this point.

*Thus a practitioner should not allow his/her body to be treated with moxa or bled (at this time) since such treatments would cause their body to deteriorate and become frail - in that they are the basis for the enlightened mind's expansion, it is not suitable to disregard these conventional seminal nuclei:* "moxa" and "bleeding" refer to two standard Tibetan medical techniques, which involve burning substances on ("moxa"), or letting blood out from ("bleeding"), certain key points of the body as curative techniques. KGNT2 63,4 seems to include "ejaculation" (literally "emission of nuclei") with these two as being ill advised at this point. Since all three of these may disrupt or impair the conventional nuclei's flow (which, as mentioned above, fuel the accumulation of merit and wisdom, as well as energizing our vitality), they should be avoided for a practitioner. According to Khanpo Tsenam, this refers in particular to the fifteenth (as well as the thirtieth), since on that day in particular, the nuclei spread throughout the body from the crown (the fifteenth being the full moon wherein its light pervades the night, as well as corresponding to the paternal white lunar nuclei located in the crown wheel), following which they then reconcentrate within the crown energy wheel, and begin their downward progression for the next fifteen days. Because on this day those nuclei are spread throughout the body, any type of bleeding or application of moxa on the body is thus liable to damage their energy-flow, or simply disperse it meaninglessly (resulting in a corresponding decline in the level of our physical and mental energy). He also indicated that in general this prohibition of "letting blood" and "moxa" applied to doing so at the particular spots of the body where, on any given day, the nuclei are particularly concentrated, meaning that each day would entail different considerations (as the nuclei progressive move upward, then downward, through the body). In the current context, only the dates where the nuclei are concentrated in a major energy center (the navel, heart, throat and crown) are specified explicitly, since by virtue of being linked through the nexus of channels converging there to a wide variety of essential processes, those dates are of especial importance. Obviously this stricture also applies to masturbation/ejaculation in the case of males, though for females the situation may be somewhat different.

As for these conventional nuclei being the "basis" for the enlightened mind's expansion, it is a basic tenet of tantric physiology that our "semen" is referred to as "enlightened mind", a term drawn from standard non-tantric Great Vehicle Buddhism. In the latter context it literally means the "mind of enlightenment", but also connotes practices that attempt to instill an altruistic motivation in us which aspires to become enlightened so as to alleviate the endless suffering of living beings in the world. In a typical stunning reversal, Tantra began by interiorizing this "enlightened mind" as a man's actual semen, and then extending this terminology to include all the "seminal nuclei". Not only does this point out the importance of our body's normal processes in sustaining a life of meditation and ethical conduct, but it also makes the more radical point of identifying the entire Buddhist mandala as present in tiny points of rainbow-colored light that govern and organize our normal psycho-physical vitality. Thus the so-called "Buddha-nature", or inner gnostic luminosity, is always present throughout the fabric of our existence, with our own present vitality being the only basis for the realization of its full flowering as "enlightenment", all our fantasies of "altered states" and "other planes of existence" aside. KGNT1 433,3ff explains in detail how our own body is a mandala of deities, with the seminal nuclei actually Spiritual Heroes and so on, and since our psycho-physical existence is thus revealed as a divine reality, the absurdity of rejecting it as impure, and the danger inherent in damaging or neglecting our conventional seminal nuclei, should be clear:

"...Our own body is primordially spontaneously present as the mandala of the Victorious Ones, and all the channel constituents and seminal nuclei are actually Buddhas, Heroes, and Sky Dancers. Thus if just a single catalytic seminal nuclei the size of one hundredth of a mustard seed should be damaged, one billion Heroes and Sky Dancers will cry out, while if that isn't damaged, all that is transcendent of this transitory world will come under your power, and they will all help you...Should you not recognize your own body as the mandala of the Buddhas, and thus abandon the seminal nuclei, meditate on your tutelary deity externally...make offerings externally, search for primordial gnosis externally, and meditate (on it externally), it is impossible that you can become free from cyclic existence even should you amass these spiritual accumulations for three zillion eons. The reason is that primordial gnosis inherently shines within yourself, and by not understanding this key point, you will not understand that your body is a mandala of the Victorious Ones, that whatever you say is mantras, that whatever emotional distortions arise in you are the presencing of primordial gnosis itself, and that your seminal nuclei are no other than the Victorious Ones, Spiritual Heroes, Tutelar Deities, and Sky Dancers..."

KGYT2 170,3ff also speaks on the need to not neglect the conventional nuclei. KGNT2 54,3 says that if you allow these catalytic nuclei to deteriorate, your tantric commitments will deteriorate as well, and subsequently you will be "born in hell" (which can be interpreted as a personal hell), since the essence of those conventional nuclei is primordial gnosis, and this conventional body itself is a mandala of the Buddhas. In this way, practices harming our body damage the divine mandala itself, the most grievous of faults, as well as harming the only site enabling our inner gnostic energy to become manifest, i.e. in the Direct Transcendence visions where it shines out through our eyes into the sky around us, where we then directly perceive it. More conventionally (keeping in mind how the conventional nuclei govern every aspect of our physical existence), physical energy and vitality are essential in acting for others' benefit and/or meditation, while the body is the basis for our awareness and, as such, its processes are in intimate union with our mental and emotional states. In addition, our subtle body (including the luminous channels) which are a key to all tantric meditation is closely linked to our gross physical body, such that the latter's overall state has a direct influence on the former's energy levels, and on our ability to contemplatively utilize the subtle body to become free.

By virtue of your sensory fields and faculties expanding there (on the fifteenth), if you shave the hair on your crown to a thumb's length and massage it with an ointment that is a mixture of sesame oil, musk, and white and red sandal wood, your body's vibrant constituents expand, and its elemental energies won't be agitated: according to Pehar Rinpoche, on the fifteenth day, after massaging the head (where the nuclei are concentrated at that point) you walk out at nighttime into the light of the full moon, which thus shines down on your head, while on the thirtieth (when the moon is no longer present) your feet are massaged during the daytime, and then warmed up in the sunlight. This allows the relevant lunar/solar light energies (lunar light being intense on the fifteenth, but totally absent on the thirtieth) to fully penetrate that part of the body where the nuclei are concentrated at that time, allowing for full invigoration and revitalization of your energies.

A mixture of a variety of grain-oils, honey, and nutmeg powder: TDD only says "tasty things", but KGYT2 and KNKT2 64,1 specify "honey" explicitly.

*Your physical constituents expand, you naturally accomplish the practice of virtue, and your meditative states which depend upon these seminal nuclei intensify:* since you are overflowing with pure, vibrant energy and properly divested of toxic wastes, you enthusiastically and naturally engage in virtuous and spiritual activities without the normal reluctance, distortions, and impediments. In addition, "meditative state which depend upon these seminal nuclei" can refer to those meditative states which work with the nuclei in particular (as opposed to the energy winds, and so forth), such as in sex-yoga where the movements of the nuclei up and down are the principle process involved (see their discussion in Chapter Four). Since the vajra-body of the practitioner is particularly lucent and the nuclei intensely vibrant and pliable at this point, these meditative states come about naturally and vibrantly, while in general meditative concentration is facilitated by the overall energized levels of the body and mind.

269. I have interpreted this first line on the "ultimate nuclei" as meaning that their function is to "ripen" our latent gnostic energies, with the "catalyst" in these operations being their own "primordial gnosis" and the "conditional determinants" of these operations being their "lights and colors". Since these ultimate nuclei act to "ripen" primordial gnosis, while at the same time being essentially the dynamism of primordial gnosis (just as they radiate light, while at the same time consisting of light), such labels of "cause" and "condition" are to a certain extent rather arbitrary. The main point is that these ultimate nuclei are essentially gnostic light energy in its self-organizing capacity, such that their chief function is to ripen that self-same inner luminosity into their optimal levels of operation (which in the context of Direct Transcendence contemplation involves its activation and consequent exteriorization), which are indicated by "Spiritual Bodies", or "gestalts". Thus the "ultimate nuclei" merely picks out this "genetic" capacity of primordial gnosis, the overall guiding, organizational driving force behind the self-maturation of primordial gnosis - in this process, primordial gnosis itself acts as the essential causal impetus, its five-hued light radiance functions as the necessary conditional support, and the ultimate telos itself is the ripening or maturing of this gnostic energy into fully activated gestalts of self-conscious light energy. In this way, it can be clearly seen how artificial the linguistic differentiation of "ultimate nuclei" and "primordial gnosis" is, while still serving purposes in analytically understanding these processes. The "ultimate" nuclei thus indicate this self-activation dynamics of primordial gnosis, taking the basic "impetus" already in place (our gnostic core), and impelling it into overt ascendancy ("ripening") within our experience via the "support" of light and color.

LYT1 460,7 in the context of discussing the embryo's spiritual dimensions, states quite clearly that the "ultimate seminal nuclei" are merely a name for the central dynamic of the ultimate energies, which lie at the heart of the Spiritual Bodies and gnosés:

"...This dyad of energy wind and mind is endowed with the causal impetus, conditional determinants and functioning of the four or five ultimate energies (in that the ultimate seminal nuclei are present therein) - their causal impetus is the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosis, their conditional determinants are the lights and colors, and their functioning is the four lamps. To expand on that, awareness' essence ripens in the Tsitta as the Spiritual Bodies, in the channels as the seminal nuclei, in the eyes as the four Lamps, while its fruit is the taking hold of one's own-site, the seamless identity of the expanse and primordial gnosis..."

The final two lines in TDD's discussion here could also be translated as "they ripen *as* the Spiritual Bodies", and so forth, since Longchenpa is merely indicating the different forms or gestalts this gnostic energy takes in different locations of our body, and at different phases in its optimization. I have translated it otherwise in accordance with LYT, which indicates "awareness' essence" is the subject here, i.e. these nuclei ripen "awareness' essence" into the Spiritual bodies, and so forth, as well as TDD 231,1 specification of primordial gnosis' three "ways of abiding" as the "Spiritual Bodies, seminal nuclei, and lamps", and the following page here (which details its presence in the Tsitta as the "Spiritual Bodies", and in the channels as the "Seminal Nuclei"). While in the final analysis all three terms' significance interpenetrates as "masks" or "guises" of this fundamental gnostic energy, I would suggest that the "Spiritual Bodies" connote its abiding presence within the heart of our existence, the "seminal nuclei" point to their ongoing diversified dynamism throughout the entire structure of our existence, and the "lamps" signify this energy in a crucial state of transformation at liminal points in our ongoing life flow (such as contemplation, dreams, and death). The ultimate climax, or "fruit", as the natural telos of these nuclei's dynamics, manifests in contemplative practice that intensifies spiritual evolution towards the Universe's self-climaxing event of enlightenment, here termed "the union of the expanse and primordial gnosis" - we tune into the total interpenetration of emptiness (the expanse) and radiance/intelligence (primordial gnosis), that the macrocosmic and microcosmic reality is an indivisible triune identity of being no thing, being radiant, and being self-organizingly intelligent. The exact process in which these seminal nuclei's mandalic light energy (as revealed in our contemplative visions) brings us to this climax of enlightenment is discussed at length in the sixth through eighth chapters.

In TCD2 372,2-373,1's analysis of the seminal nuclei in the context of discussing "signs" marking our progress in contemplatively "tuning into" the seminal nuclei within meditative practice, Longchenpa classifies the seminal nuclei into these three groups: (i) the nuclei of the channels located within the body, (ii) the natural nuclei of the path, and (iii) the nuclei of the ultimate fruit. The first group includes the first two categories here (the white and red conventional nuclei as well as the ultimate gnostic nuclei), while the second group can be identified with our third category (natural nuclei - see below). In that context, Longchenpa's account suggests that this first category accounts for the nuclei's dynamics within our body's channels as they fuel the visionary presences appearing outside in the space around us, while the second category then deals with the nuclei's dynamics as those exteriorized visionary presences (i.e. how stable, clear and so forth our perception is of them as they evolve towards greater size and number). In his discussion of the first group, he classifies the ultimate gnostic nuclei in the following five subcategories (which are dealt with subsequently in TDD on 257,5-258,1 - see the annotations there for further details):

"...(i) "The excellent ground nuclei" are present unwaveringly within the channels all over the body as a sphere of light. *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* says:

*Its site within the body is like this:  
Within the channels all over and within the Tsitta,  
Unfabricated pure reality is present.*

(ii) "The excellent path nuclei" are that which is impelled forth from within the channels by the gnostic winds, and thus moves (outwards into the sky). (iii) "The nuclei of excellence" impels the shining forth of the four lamps' into the objective sphere. (iv) "The peak of

excellences nuclei" impel forth insight's diverse cognitive activities from within the channels. (v) "The ornaments of excellence nuclei" impel the display of the vision of contemplative experience's intensification" (i.e. the second vision) in dependence upon the four lamps..."

270. I have generally used the plural form "nuclei" instead of the singular form "nuclei" in my translation of TDD, though in fact the Tibetan language is not as strict as English in specifying the plural (the absence of a plural marker in no sense entails a noun is singular). While some instances are clearly plural, and others are clearly singular (such as referring to self-emergent primordial gnosis as the "singular" seminal nucleus), my decision to translate *Thig Le* as "seminal nuclei" in the remainder was not an easy one, and was based more on my feeling that in general plurality is assumed, while indicating singular forms might give inappropriate connotations of monistic entities. Despite this, in our present context it almost seems as if the singular "nucleus" might not be preferable, though I have chosen to continue my practice elsewhere of indicating the plural "nuclei". In our current context, these six terms indicate different phases of the self-same nuclei as we undergo transformative experiences via contemplation, and in no way indicate separate entities corresponding to the linguistic differentiation.

In VNT3-"Pa" 13,6-14,3, Longchenpa describes these six in virtually identical wording to TDD's description, with the exception that he identifies the "natural nuclei" in general as present "when we settle into contemplative equanimity", and then correlates the first two divisions with "when contemplative experiences develop therein" and "when those experiences are stabilized" respectively (as can be seen below, LYT agrees with VNT on this point). In LYT1 463,1ff and TCD2 372,5 (the latter including it as the second category of the "natural path nuclei" - see above), Longchenpa provides different descriptions of each of these six nuclei, which I have arranged together below with TDD's own brief definitions (in the sequence of TDD first, then LYT, then TCD). In particular LYT prefaces its discussion by referring to these six "natural seminal nuclei" as the "nuclei of the natural five lights", which flow through "the central channel of luminously radiant primordial gnosis", while the "white and red vibrant quintessences" (i.e. the conventional nuclei) flow through the flavor and solitary channels. It then leads into the following descriptions with the following: "When we settle into contemplative equanimity, by force of being divested of disturbing ("wavering-causing") discursiveness, the natural seminal nuclei remain present in that expanse without wavering". As I mentioned in my annotation directly above, TCD2 372's account clearly indicates that the present sixfold classification of seminal nuclei is chiefly with regards to those nuclei as exteriorized luminous presences in the Direct Transcendence visions, while the four or fivefold classification mentioned above (and detailed on (TDD 257,5-258,1) account for the seminal nuclei's internal dynamics within our body that ignite, fuel, and sustain those exteriorized visions of the seminal nuclei.

(i) *The reality nuclei*: "are when we settle into contemplative equanimity"; "when we have experiences of bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality via our sustained attunement to this contemplative equanimity"; "are devoid of fabrication and pervade everywhere".

(ii) *The thoroughly pure reality nuclei*: "are when contemplative experiences develop therein"; "when those contemplative experiences stabilize". Instead of this term "thoroughly pure reality nuclei", in TCD Longchenpa names "the gnostic nuclei", which he defines as "present primordially without being created", and gives as (v) such that is paired with "the great gnostic nuclei" (he also places the "Totally Positive One's nuclei" as (ii) rather than (v)).

(iii) *The expanse nuclei*: "are when visions manifest"; "when light-visions (or "luminous presences") manifest sequentially in a variety of forms"; "shines without internality or externality".

(iv) *The thoroughly pure expanse nuclei*: "are when they subsequently intensify"; "when those visions/presences intensify"; "manifests devoid of deviations, obscurations, or lapses into partiality".

(v) *The Totally Positive One's nuclei*: "are when those visions are complete and perfect"; "when it presences as the Spiritual Bodies within the Tsitta"; "manifest beyond distinctions of good and evil, or large and small".

(vi) *The great gnostic nuclei*: "are when they manifest externally"; "are when the Spiritual Bodies' radiation manifests externally"; "manifests directly without being obscured by any emotional distortions at all".

Although Longchenpa only specifies "meditative equanimity" (a standard term referring to Buddhist meditation), it would seem TDD and LYT's presentations can be most clearly explicated as referring to sequential phases in the visionary progression deriving from the practice of Direct Transcendence (as summed up into the standard "four visions"). The first two phases in part connote the first vision (with its name "the vision of reality's immediacy"), where we initially enter the contemplation, and gradually begin to stabilize our awareness within it. Additionally, it can connote Breakthrough meditation, which is generally seen as a necessary prerequisite of engaging in sustained Direct Transcendence contemplation, and in general revolves around emptiness and non-perceptual experiences (whereas Direct Transcendence, of course, is centered around visions of light perceived visually in the space around us). Finally, the second vision (that of "contemplative experience's intensification") is generally described as involving a twofold intensification, i.e. that of subjective experiences (classically summed up in the triad of bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality), and visual appearances (generally referred to as "the lighting-up" of the expanse). Thus the first two nuclei could be understood as referring to the former, while the two "expanse" nuclei would then indicate the latter component of the second vision, the complex five-colored light visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation (as the meditation moves beyond meditation focused on internal experiences of "bliss" or "emptiness"). The two divisions of the expanse nuclei simply point out those presences' initial manifestations, and then their intensification into more advanced patterns (a progression detailed in TDD's eight chapter).

Following this line of interpretation, the fifth and sixth phases of these nuclei would then refer to the third and/or fourth visions, where these visions of light take the form of complete mandalas of Buddhas and their retinues (the third vision), followed by which the entire light display dissolves into the expanse of original purity, and the contemplator is enlightened (the fourth vision). TDD's description would appear to indicate both phases referring to the third vision: first (the "Totally Positive One's nuclei") the former visions "complete" themselves (i.e. are finished) or are "perfected", such that their "culmination" as the pure lands of Buddhas can "manifest externally" in the sky ("the great gnostic nuclei"). Alternatively, "complete" could refer to a single "complete" visual image of a Buddha's body, which is said to mark the beginning of the third vision, and gradually develops into the entire mandala. However, LYT's description ("manifest as Spiritual Bodies within the Tsitta") would seem to indicate the primordial presence of the peaceful deities within the heart of all living beings,

which then in contemplation is "activated" such that it "manifests externally" in the sky (having been propelled from our hearts via our eyes in the Direct Transcendence visions). This pair of "nuclei" then wouldn't both refer to contemplative phases (as with the preceding two pairs), but rather would refer to the mandalas of Spiritual Bodies as latently present in the interior of all living beings, and those mandalas as activated into manifest ascendancy in the exterior of the living space around us. If we force "the Totally Positive One's nuclei" into a contemplative sequence, then it would appear to indicate that when the preliminary light visions are "completed and perfected" (TDD's *De Nyid rDzogs Pa'i Dus Na*) following their intensification, the contemplation's focus now turns to the Spiritual Bodies ever present within our hearts, which first become "manifest" in the heart in the sense that they are brimming with manifest energy on the threshold of activation (the "Totally Positive One's nuclei"), following which they pass the threshold and their vision within the sky is ignited as they pass through the luminous channel running from our heart to our eyes. Thus the fifth phase refers to this internally radiant "Youthful Body" of gnostic energy within our heart's encasing, which in the sixth phase then breaks free of the vase and shines forth externally against the backdrop of these completely and perfectly present patterns of rainbow-colored light (the former "expanse" becoming the pure land in general, the former "seminal nuclei" becoming the palaces within that pure land, and the "linked chains" of light becoming the Spiritual Bodies that mandalically inhabit those palaces).

As an additional note, in his *The Creative Vision* (156) Dr. Guenther points out a number of earlier references to these as "the six great seminal nuclei" (*Thig Le Chen Po Drug*), though these appear to be quite unlike Longchenpa's preface, despite the similar names. I have so far only been able to consult Rong Zom Chos Kyi bZang Po's account, which substitutes the name "spontaneous nuclei" for "thoroughly pure reality nuclei", and overall appears to be an explication of the nature of the "enlightened mind" by detailing the significance of these six aspects of the seminal nuclei. Unlike Longchenpa's account, he does not directly link these six aspects to the sequential progression of visionary contemplation.

271. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 40,2; Ati1 167,2). This passage provides alternative classifications for understanding the "pure" seminal nuclei's dynamics and significance. In fact, there are many such interpretative schemata in Longchenpa's own corpus, as well as in other tantric systems, which indicates the fluid nature of these various terms and divisions. In the Tantra itself, this passage is found within the chapter entitled "*The Array of Reality*", and in particular is in response to the following question: "What are the key points of the body like (in reference to reality)?" The response begins with the following lines (I given them as quoted on TDD 230,1 and 231,3, which omits two lines found in Ati):

*Pure unfabricated reality resides  
Within your (i) (body's) general (structures), (ii) Tsitta, and (iii) inner channels.*

*(i) Reality pervades the general structures of all sentient beings' bodies  
In the manner of wind-currents:  
Subtle, lighten-ing, moving and differentiating....*

Our present citation here then begins with the detail explication of (ii) and (iii). The same quote is given in TCD2 72,7, in the section dealing with "the radiant light in manifest radiation", which is divided internally into the five Spiritual Bodies (where this particular quote occurs, followed by an extensive discussion of the Spiritual Bodies), primordial gnosis, lights, seminal nuclei, and awareness. Longchenpa's provides very clear interpretations of

the references to the Spiritual Bodies here in his follow up comments, which I cite below. The references to the seminal nuclei are clarified on TCD2 83, which gives an extensive preface to its quotation of this passage (see below). This section in TCD on the seminal nuclei begins on 79,3, with three overall sections - the ground, path, and fruit seminal nuclei. The section on the "seminal nuclei self-ripening into the fruit" (81,7) is then divided into three subsections - the seminal nuclei of light's ripening, the seminal nuclei of primordial gnosis' ripening, and the seminal nuclei of awareness' ripening. Our present quote then is found in that third subsection (82,7). Longchenpa's preface there indicates that the subject here is the seminal nuclei with external spherical shape, in the middle of which the "pure visions" of Buddha mandalas appear to the accomplished visionary. These seminal nuclei are the external presencing of our channels' "interior radiation".

(i) *The fivefold Bodies of its radiation*: "Since the Essential Body's pure source-potential is present within our Tsitta, its radiation manifests as the individually distinct Spiritual Bodies of the five Buddha families at the time of optimization in the Direct Transcendence".

(ii) *The sixfold Bodies of its rays*: "Through the Spiritual Bodies' emanations of rays, there manifests radiating seminal nuclei within our channels, and the six aspects of subtle self-presencing Spiritual Bodies as they spread out externally". Though Longchenpa has not made this perfectly explicit, it appears that he is referring to the six stages in which the mandalas of peaceful and wrathful deities unfold during the third vision of Direct Transcendence: first only half of a Buddha's body is seen, then his complete body, then the Buddha in sexual union with his consort, then the five Buddhas with their retinues, then the five Buddhas arranged in fivefold mandalic "clusters", and finally the "great cluster" of the entire mandala in all its detail. See TDD 268,3 and TCD2 83,5 for further references to these six phases.

A less likely possibility is that "six ray Bodies" refers to the "six Able Ones", a term referring to the forms the Buddha takes in his teaching activity corresponding to the principal six types of life forms, and which are a part of the full mandala of peaceful and wrathful deities mentioned here (and as such also located within our body's channels - see KGYT 204). In general it is true that in GGC Longchenpa identifies "light rays" as the Buddha's enlightened activity, which of course the six Able Ones are an incarnation of. Also, in its description of the above six phases, TDD 268 also mentions a "Bodies of rays" as emanating from the Emanational Bodies, which appears to refer to countless light ray bodies emanating from the Emanational Bodies to continue their enlightened activity in an infinite variety of locales; LYT2 174 images the Emanational Bodies as the "rays" of a crystal. However, in the Direct Transcendence visions, all the mandalas of deities (including images of the Reality Bodies, Enjoyment Bodies, and Emanational Bodies) are the exteriorized reflection or "rays" of our own inner luminosity, and as such could be termed "ray Bodies".

(iii) *The threefold Bodies of its purity*: "The triad of primordial gnosés abiding within the Ground is the Body of the site of freedom, the taking hold of the optimal measure of exhaustion within the inner expanse".

(iv) *The eightfold Bodies of its features*: "from the nine divisions of the three Spiritual Bodies in the level of the ultimate spontaneous presence, the (division termed) the "Reality Body's Reality Body" is the thoroughly pure expanse operative as the pure potential of all, and thus can be considered as the "Ground". For this reason it isn't enumerated separately, resulting in the eight (here mentioned)...." See TDD503,2-505,2 for a lengthy description of



these nine divisions: the Reality Body of the Reality Body, the Enjoyment Body of the Reality Body, the Emanational Body of the Reality Body, the Reality Body of the Enjoyment Body, the Enjoyment Body of the Enjoyment Body, the Emanational Body of the Enjoyment Body, the Reality Body of the Emanational Body, the Enjoyment Body of the Emanational Body, and the Emanational Body of the Emanational Body.

(v) *The threefold engaging seminal nuclei*: "these seminal nuclei are the external manifestation of our channels' interior radiation, and if their types are summarized, (they can be classified) into three "engaging" seminal nuclei within the internal expanse: the nuclei of the essence's Spiritual Body, the nuclei of nature's luminosity, and the nature of compassionate resonance's rays".

(vi) *The five seminal nuclei of (primordial gnosis') engendering*: "the five seminal nuclei of (primordial gnosis') engendering correlate to the seminal nuclei involved in the expanse's lighting-up (in the second Direct Transcendence vision): weapons, lotuses, stupas, lace-work designs, and gnostic castles". These five are all light forms that appear in the visionary experiences of the second vision.

(vii) *The six seminal nuclei of (reality's) array*: "the six seminal nuclei of (reality's) array are the following visionary presences: half-Bodies of a Buddha, singular complete Bodies of a Buddha, a (Buddha and consort) in union with each other, the five Buddhas with retinue, "clusters" with each of those forming part of a mandalic quintet, and the "great clusters" of the totally complete mandala". These six represent the sequential manifestations of the great mandalas of peaceful and wrathful deities in the third vision of Direct Transcendence, which begins with the vision of half of a Buddha's body within a spherical nuclei.

Since (aside from the eightfold Bodies) we here have both Spiritual Bodies and seminal nuclei enumerated as threefold, fivefold, and sixfold, with the Tantra's descriptions of each similar in a given numerical classification (i.e. the three Spiritual Bodies' function resemble that of the three nuclei, and so on), the two sets of classifications are clearly meant to be correlated with each other - the former are our gnostic energy as present in the Tsitta, and the latter is that same gnostic energy as present in the channels, with both sharing concordant qualities otherwise. TCD's definitions for each category also match perfectly: both threefold classifications are based on the Ground's essence, nature, and compassionate resonance; both fivefold classifications relate to the fundamental fivefold distinction of primordial gnosis (the five Buddhas correlating directly to them (see Chapter Three), while the five light forms are correlated on TDD 392 (which however reads a different light form for "stupa")); and the two sixfold classifications are identical (if my above interpretation is correct).

Although these three types of nuclei can thus be neatly interpreted on the basis of TCD, there may be a secondary minor reading in TDD that suggests correlating this triad with the previously discussed triad of the conventional, ultimate, and natural nuclei: the engaging nuclei with the conventional nuclei, the engendering nuclei with the ultimate nuclei, and the "array" nuclei with the natural nuclei. The three aspects of the conventional nuclei could be their acting as the causal impetus, conditional basis and activation for the conventional energies, or simply their threefold functioning to develop, increase, and sustain our physical body (which are the "perfect mandala" in that they are indivisible from the gnostic deities that are their quintessence); the five aspects of the ultimate nuclei could be their fivefold functioning to mature the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses with the specified cause and

condition, maturing the Spiritual Bodies within the Tsitta, maturing the seminal nuclei within the channels, maturing the four lamps within the eyes, and effecting the specified fruit/climax (or it could be the fivefold classification I mention in my annotations as drawn from TCD2 372); and the six aspects of the natural nuclei are straightforward (see above). Longchenpa does at times provide variable interpretations of such numerical schemes expressed in verse, so it is possible that this constitutes a subcurrent of meaning here.

272. NGB and Ati both read *Chos rNams* for *Chos Nyid*, but TCD agrees with TDD.

273. NGB reads *mTsham Pa* for TDD's *Sa mTshams*, while Ati has *mTshan Nyid 'Dzin*, and TCD2 reads *Mya Ngan 'Das Pa'i mTshon Pa 'Dzin*. TDD's reading plays off the image of a "boundary line" or "interstice" between cyclic existence and transcendence, just as you must first make a border crossing in going from one country to another. TCD2 87,5 uses similar wording in saying "combines the interstices of both cyclic existence and transcendence" with "differentiates the boundaries of both cyclic existence and transcendence", indicating that by differentiating between the two, one reaches the fundamental luminous reality which is the common thread between them.

274. "Linking" cyclic existence and transcendent reality" signifies overcoming their duality, and seeing the fundamental unity of life. GTD 377,6 indicates that the etymology of "engaging" here is "entering (i.e. engaging) the path to unborn reality".

275. NGB reads "plants the seed of yogic experience" instead of "perfects the mandala of yogic experience", while Ati reads "establish the mandala via yogic experiences" (*rNal 'Byor Nyams Kyis dKyil 'Khor 'Jog Pa*).

276. NGB reads "reality" for "all phenomena", but TCD agrees with TDD. This line could also be interpreted as since "all phenomena are based upon these (factors), they have the identity of being the same".

277. The corresponding section is found in TCD2 115,1-120,2. These fivefold divisions given in the first lines here are completely explicated in the following pages, as well as being dealt with in the ninth chapter (455ff) and its corresponding passage in TCD (which are cited below for textual emendations). Longchenpa thus opens the section with a general account of how the five elements are involved in primordial gnosis' presence and dynamics within our being, followed by a detailed accounting of these elements' operations as such. The point of this section is to show how the five elements in their ultimate dimensions as facets of gnostic energy pervade the entire structure of our existence, such that we can begin to sense how luminous gnostic energy lies in our heart, and operates as the ongoing source of the coarser aspects of our physical, verbal and mental life. As such, some of the operations listed below are obviously "impure" neuroticized activity, evidently to indicate how these pure currents of energy are "muted" into their non-optimal, "normal" counterparts. Just as mystic physiology is the primary source-reality of physical anatomy, and primordial gnosis is the primary source-reality of the ordinary mind (with the latter member in each dyad being a type of solidified, distorted derivative of the former member, such intimate correlations exist between the two in a type of integrated coordinated, evolving hierarchy), these pure dimensions of the elemental energies are the ultimate source of the material elemental energies, such that the latter are the former's derivative adventitious form under the conditions of non-recognition, and as such share attributes and characteristics in a generic manner. We must resist the "natural" tendency to reduce the "mystic" or "subtle" dimension

to the easily observable gross material dimension, since to do so would be to precisely invert their actual relationship and lead us into the dead-end of reducing the imaginal reality to meaningless "fantasy", thereby leaving us mired in our present unconscious solidified interpretations of alienated solidified frames; at the same time, we must also reduce the tendency of "spiritualists" to simply reduce our present experience and structures as meaningless epiphenomenon to these primary spiritual realities, as this also reduces the complex hierarchy operative here which is evolutionary to its core to a flat, sterile nothingness that can neither explain our present experience, our experience as beings in its relationship to *Being*, or the significance (and dynamics) of the entire involutory movement away from the Ground's pure virtuality in the primordially "first place" (and consequently the significance of the corresponding evolutionary movement tracing its way back to that initial moment of the Universe's early history). Both of these tendencies are thoroughly reductionistic, as they attempt to collapse the intricate hierarchy of multi-valent structures and dimensions between *Being* and beings, the Ground and particularized existence, or the Universe and the world-as-we-know-it, and thus become totally desensitized to the Universe's inherent dynamism, as well as the possibility of a "path" to participate in this evolutionary dynamism in liberating modes of existence.

Just as "wind energy" is analyzed into "karmic winds" and "gnostic winds" (a very frequent classification in tantric thought), in a sense these divisions indicate that we can also speak of "karmic earth energy" and "gnostic earth energy", "karmic water energy" and "gnostic water energy", "karmic fire energy" and "gnostic fire energy", and "karmic space energy" and "gnostic space energy". In line with the pervasive importance of the number "five" to tantric thought (a mandalic four plus a centering one), each element's operations are discussed in terms of five internal divisions, while wind energy's five divisions are further sub-divided into five aspects apiece, given the central importance of the five wind energies. It may be that each set of five is intended to directly correlate to the standard fivefold primordial gnosis in an one-to-one fashion, though without any concrete specification of this I hesitate to laboriously present such correlations (though the descriptions of their respective functions appears consistent with such a correlation). The descriptions of each element's five facets are often quite terse, but are usually based on that element's normal attributes (i.e. earth energy's solidity, etc.), as well as the element's coarse form's typical attributes (i.e. soil's fertility, etc.). Since the majority of these descriptions' significance is not readily evident, I have attempted to give some preliminary analysis of each facet's meaning in my annotations below.

These internal divisions principally concern the "great elements" (*Byung Ba Chen Po*), with each name connoting a certain subtle energetic quality present within our body/mind, and intrinsically connected to our psyche, or awareness (as opposed to the more materialized elements functioning as body tissue, blood, and so forth) - following its discussion of these 25 elements, TCD2 120,1 explains that these "great elements" are those consisting of the five elemental energies' "awareness dimension", while the "lesser elements" (*Byung Ba Chung Ba*) are those acting as the former's support or basis. TCD2 106,7 explicates the "great elements" as that endowed with the five colors of luminously radiant primordial gnosis, while the "lesser elements" are the quintet of earth, water, fire, wind and space. This dyad is also closely linked (though not strictly synonymous) to the bipartite division of the subtle "internal elements" (the great elements) and the coarse "external elements" (the lesser elements), which together account for the entirety of existence, whether neurotic (sentient beings) or enlightened (Buddhas). The latter serve as the basis for the former, just as the coarse physical body is a crucial support for subtle awareness. The "external elements" have two aspects, corresponding to the elements' presence as external forms (mountains, trees,

etc.) and as the coarse bodily elements (the body's compactness, hollow spaces and so forth) which serve as the basis for the internal elements. The internal elements in turn are the five elemental energies as the supported aspects of the pure "constituents". Within the framework of human existence, the "external elements" thus refer to the elements as involved in our physical processes, while the "internal elements" are involved with the more subtle psychic processes based on that physical structural support. While the "great elements" are completely present in all living beings, they are obscured and "diluted" in ordinary beings, whereas in a Buddha's spiritual awakening all such stains and distortions dissipate, allowing the five gnostic lights to freely flow in unimpeded brilliance. The relationship between these two dyads (great and lesser, external and internal) is a bit complicated, since ultimately and primordially all the elements are subsumable within the "great elements", as they are mere derivatives of these "gnostic lights" under the conditions of non-recognition. However, once emergent, the coarser forms of the elements (the "lesser elements", which definitely include the external elements) serve as the physical support for the presence of the subtler dimensions in living beings. In particular the "internal elements" (the subtle psychic side to life) could be said to belong to the lesser elements in that within sentient beings these elements are distorted and coarsened to some degree, but since in essence they are the "great elements" (luminous psychic energy) and in practice are ontologically "closer" to the greater elements than the external physiological elements, they could also be classified within the "great elements". Thus the "internal elements" can be understood as liminal phases, where the pure gnostic awareness within the heart moves outwards into diluted and distorted psychic activity, which remains essentially pure awareness, and functionally still quite vibrant and subtle energy. In this way, there is an ontological graduation of the elements' dimensions ranging from the utterly solidified and frozen forms in inanimate objects, through the relatively dynamic physical processes of animate life and even more subtle psychic processes, to the utterly vibrant and luminous energy of the five gnostic lights. One qualification to my analysis is above discussion is that *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* (Ati 464,2) refers to "the external great elements", although this may be a separate usage of the term "great" to refer to their pervasiveness rather than their ontological purity.

Thus it appears the passage at hand primarily concerns the "great elements" as present in our body (including the internal elements ranging from pure luminosity to distorted psychic activity), and not the lesser "external" elements involved in coarser strictly physical processes (though it links them to these processes). For this reason, in the quote from *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* which Longchenpa is here leading up to, the speaker specifies the "great elements" in response to an interlocutor requesting clarification of the "internal elements", while TCD2 115,1's preface to this quote indicates these are the "internal elements", which "are the five vibrant elements based internally upon the body's five coarse elements", and divided into twenty five aspects based on the dissimilarity of their functions. Thus, in the context of wind energy, it is not the standard list of five winds (the vitality wind, upward-flowing wind, pervading wind, fire accompanied wind and downward-eliminating wind, serving as supports for water, fire, space, wind and earth energies respectively) which is given, since these are involved in all sorts of coarse physiological functions as well (digestion, excretion, and so forth). Instead a special list of the five gnostic winds is detailed (see below), which more fully bring out the subtle processes in human existence that these currents of wind energy play a major role in. A general summary of these five elements' "pure" functions is as follows:

(i) In general wind-energy is like "carrier waves", providing motility and momentum for circulation and other movements, and the gnostic winds likewise carry or impel primordial

gnosis' efflorescence, glowing and other dynamics projectively from its seat in the heart into the "external" field of the wider body and mind, as well as that of sky in Direct Transcendence contemplation. In this way, the pure dimension of wind energy is the momentum of gnosis' dynamics.

(ii) Fire energy is a catalytic force that stimulates and ripens, and as such fuels the particular dynamics that take shape in gnosis' functioning. Thus the pure dimension of fire is the dynamics themselves, the ever-changing shapes and forms in gnosis' variegated manifestation, which are then propelled here and there in an intensifying fashion by the wind energy, which "fans" the flames.

(iii) Earth energy not only constitutes the enduring stability of gnosis' essence, but also ensures that this essence is not inert, but rather provides a fertile soil for gnostic dynamics to light-up within the fiery solar/lunar light, operating as the fertile source/matrix within which psychic life flourishes. Thus its pure dimension corresponds to primordial gnosis' own fabric, the "density" which forms the matrix of all its other dynamics.

(iv) Water is remarkable for its fluidity, as well as its reflecting capacity, and as such serves as an excellent image for the psyche (the ocean as unconsciousness, and so forth) - the psyche can fluidly move out towards external objects without impediment, and mirror their presence within itself, and in fact the eyes and optic nerve (coarse and subtle) are referred to as the "water" lamp in its apprehension of manifest and empty forms (corresponding to distorted and pure appearances respectively). Thus this embraces both its functioning to reflect or mirror external objects (as an ocean's surface reflects the heavenly firmament), as well as it serving as the conduit for the mirroring of internal primordial gnosis into the objective sphere as the rainbow-colored light visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation. In essence, the pure dimension of water is this fluidity of psychic energy, which can instantly pass back and forth through the thresholds, or doors, from the external to the internal, and internal to the external, whereby our objective "worlds" come into being.

(v) Finally space is the emptiness, or opening, which allows things to take place, and as such provides the clearing-space for primordial gnosis to light-up and function. If there was total density or compactness nothing could ever take place, but by the vastness and openness of space exploding every limitation and frozen form, the ongoing transformations of light have the empty environment to flow within. The matrix and background of every form is emptiness, as without the opening of the stage the entire cosmic drama would never begin.

KGNT1 451,1 gives a nice description of the five elements' correlation with foundational gnostic awareness:

"...The correlations of gnostic awareness with the five elements: since your own mind isn't established in terms of any essence whatsoever, it's the element of space energy; since its radiant light impels the manifestation of diversity, it's wind-energy; since primordial gnosis' dynamism there is psychic activity resembling a tongue of fire, its fire-energy; since that dynamism of primordial gnosis apprehends objects, it's earth energy (\*"apprehends" also means "supports", such as the earth "supports" all life which is based on it); and since if you contemplatively realize this foundation to straying, it is reality itself, such that you are never separate from the moisture of primordial gnosis, it's water energy..."

278. As discussed above, the overall sense of these fivefold divisions of each element lies in tracing each elemental energy as present in the subtle psychic processes of animate life, and thus revealing the characteristic functional patterns of each therein. The analysis draws on common characteristics of the coarse element's external presence (such as earth's pervasiveness, its acting as fertile source, and so forth), and imagistically uses those attributes to denote psychic functions that the subtle form of that element is involved in. In a way, it can be understood as a type of "periodic table of the elements", giving the twenty five basic ways in which these elemental energies function in these subtle processes. In particular, it should be noted that in a single process (such as awareness or the seminal nuclei), it isn't simply a case of correlating that process to one elemental energy's functioning, but rather each is the result of an interplay of all five energies - for that reason, the discussion here picks out certain attributes or functions, and points out the type of elemental energy involved therein.

TCD2 119,4 specifies that each aspect of earth energy (i.e. "the all-manifesting", "the unchanging adamantine", etc.) is "present in mutual dependence" with its corresponding factor (i.e. "awareness", "lamps", etc.). My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of earth energy is as follows:

(i) *The all-manifesting earth energy abides in conjunction with awareness*: just as all vegetative life arises from, and continues to abide within, the earth's soil, the entire range of distorted and pure experience manifests from within awareness, which is the "creator of all". Thus it is this pure elemental dimension which is intimately linked to awareness in its capacity as the fertile matrix of the world coming into being.

(ii) *The unchanging adamantine earth energy abides in conjunction with the lamps*: the conventional solidity and invariance of earth (which in the context of life here is totally inescapable as it provides the base upon which we live), symbolically indicates the indestructible nature of the gnostic "lamps", which are the luminous psychic energy primordially and unwaveringly present as the "light" of sentient life, even when not directly manifest to self-consciousness as such.

(iii) *The precious universally fertile earth energy abides in conjunction with the seminal nuclei*: soil as the nutrient-rich precious matrix for the growing of fruit, vegetables, grazing grass, and so forth, is symbolically correlated with the seminal nuclei in their capacity as the high-density nuclei operating as matrices for the unfolding of physical, mental and spiritual dimensions (it also seems to draw its significance from the disc of "golden earth" said to be at the base of our world in traditional Indian Buddhist cosmology). In particular, within the Direct Transcendence visions these nuclei function like eggs, giving rise to the precious realities of the Spiritual Bodies, whose images are "born" therein. Whereas the "all-manifesting" earth energy, i.e. awareness, accounts for the entire panorama of existence and evolution, this aspect indicates awareness' functioning as its source in terms of spherical centers of concentrated energy, which unfold in particular patterns.

(iv) *The "limitless and total displaying of appearances" earth energy abides in conjunction with both the expanse and primordial gnosis*: as mentioned above, not only does the earth act as the material source of life's variety in its fertility, it also acts as its basis and "stage" upon which "appearances" can manifest in solar or lunar light such that manifest form can be visually experienced. This dimension is thus symbolically correlated to the expanse and

primordial gnosis, which together summarize the rainbow-colored images of the Direct Transcendence visions, displaying their limitless manifestation across the reaches of the sky, just as the ground provides the horizon for conventional appearances to manifest against.

(v) *The "ultimate actualization" earth energy abides in conjunction with insight:* this refers to how earth (*Sa*) connotes solidity and stability, such as a mountain or well-built house, while this stability imagistically connotes insight as the key psychic constituent in bringing things to a close, and arriving at your final destination or goal. In addition, as with the above, this seems to play on the meaning of "*Sa*" as "stage" or "level" as well as "earth" - the stage where you reach the limits of what has to be done is symbolically correlated with insight as the driving force in actualizing a psychic task, or in optimizing the visions of Direct Transcendence.

An alternative list of these five aspects of earth energy is given by VLDC 330,3, which, as with its other descriptions cited below, points out the gnostic significance of each quite clearly:

"...Sa lNga Ni: Mi 'Gyur Ba rDo rJe'i Sa gZhi La gNas Pa'i mTha' sDud; Zhi Ba gSal Dag Gi Sa Las Dang Ye Shes 'Byed Par Byed; Rags Pa dNgos 'Dzin Gyi Sas 'Gro Ba'i gNas Byed; Dangs Ma bsDus Pa'i Sas sGron Ma 'Dzin Par Byed; Rig Pa gZhi 'Dzin Gyi Sas Sems Nyid bDag Tu Med Pa'o..."

279. TCD2 119,6 indicates that by these five facets of water energy residing in their respective locations, they "moisturize and sustain the vibrant energies". Again, one must keep in mind the multivalent significance of "moisturization" (essential to prevent physical rigidity, but also to keep our minds and spirits "moist" with the fluid, life-giving force of primordial gnosis) and "vibrant energies". My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of water energy is as follows:

(i) *The unchanging water energy abides in all our inner channels:* ordinary coarsely perceptible water is imaged as "unchanging" in that whether frozen, boiled, or evaporated, it continually returns to its liquid form in never ending cycles, and thus unlike the other elements, it has a number of perceptible forms (ice, steam, and so forth) which nevertheless don't fundamentally alter its quality of being water. Thus it here appears to serve as an appropriate image for the nuclei, often characterized as "unchanging" or "invariant", and which course through the channels (a term embracing the body's blood vessels, nerves, and paths of subtle energy-flow) - though they are the source for multiple and variegated physical and psychic processes, they remain in themselves nuclei of intense energy. Just as water fuels all life on this planet without itself every becoming exhausted or altered (it being the main material component of the body), these nuclei drive and organize all the subtle processes of life without exhausting themselves in doing so (as well as being the main component of subtle energy in the body). See STCP2 11a 5 for a comparison of the channels to "irrigation canals" and the nuclei to "water", with the winds being the "force" that impels the water along the canals.

(ii) *The pure, clear "calming" water energy abides in all our bones:* a calm body of pristinely translucent water relates to our bones since the latter are white, clean structures lying within all the "messy" masses of tissue, what remains when at death when the rest all subsides back into the elements. More importantly, within the bones is located the semi-liquid marrow (*rKang Mar*), from which derives the spinal cord, also referred to as the

"white" vitality channel in Tibetan medicinal treatises (see 254,6). In this way, through denoting the marrow within the bones, this could also connote the nervous system, which involves "clear" nervous impulses and energy, as opposed to the circulatory system with its "thick" flow of blood containing all sorts of other substances. Also this term "pure and clear calmed water" (*Zhi Ba gSal Dag*) is used cosmologically to refer to the Earth's underlying disc of water (see YZD 113,7, etc.), which is the macrocosmic, environmental counterpart to the bones and marrow (the bones being the underlying support of the body, and marrow being the basis for the nervous system).

(iii) *The dynamic qualities-expanding water energy abides in all our blood:* just as water (the "life-giver") enables the rich vegetative and animal life on the planet to flourish (all of earth's "resources" or positive qualities), providing it with essential components, blood is a liquid rich in oxygen and nutrients, which it carries to the physical body's extremities, thereby nourishing all physical and psychic expansion (the brain requires oxygen to function) and enabling all positive qualities to develop. As blood is the life-fluid of existence itself, it also makes possible the development of spiritual richness which requires the basis of physical existence (attenuated states of meditative absorption are pointless in the absence of physical existence) - the arterial trunk is in fact termed the "vitality channel", and is specified as the location of our "universal ground consciousness", as well as being in close association with the "luminous channels" of our body. Finally, the *Abhidharma Kośa* has a cosmological reference to water as "rich in different potentialities", and thus giving rise to "jewels" (AK2 453).

(iv) *The non-clinging water energy abides in all our lymph:* "non-clinging" (*Chags Pa Med Pa*) has the dual sense of being devoid of "attachment" and "settling", both of which apply to the complete fluidity of water, which flows onwards without any clinging to anything in its path. While "lymph's" connection with water is obvious by virtue of it being, along with blood, one of the main essential fluid components of our body, the particular significance of "non-clinging" with respect to lymph escapes me, unless it merely points out that lymph is in constant circulation pervading our body without "settling" in any one spot permanently (as, in contrast, tissues and bone do). Another possible connection lies in lymph's function as the source of seminal nuclei, which are linked to "attachment" due to the key role they place in sexual intercourse.

(v) *The "completeness without fixation" water energy abides within our eyes:* the eyes, imaged as the "ocean" or "water lamp", reflect everything completely yet grasp nothing, just as the heavenly constellations are reflected completely in the ocean, which however in no way clings or obstructs them (see my earlier comments). TCD2 119,6's general definition of these five facets of water energy functioning to "sustain moisture and vibrant energy" here refers to the "vibrant lucent" material of the eye organ itself, as well as the tip of the luminous channels located at the eyes' center (also see Levin's *The Opening of Vision* on the connection between "crying" and spiritual vision).

An alternative list of these five aspects of water energy is given on VLDC 330,4:

"...Chu INga'i bDe Ba Ni: Zhi Ba gSal Dag Gi Chus 'Khor Ba sDud; gNas Pa Rang Dag Gi Chus Sems gNas Par Byed; 'Jug Pa Khyab Byed Kyi Chus Bag Chags Las Grol Bar Byed; 'Jug Cing Khyab brDal Gyi Chus sTong Pa Dag Pa'o; Myur 'Gro Las rDzogs Pa'i Chus rTsal sByong Bar Byed Pa'o. De Dag Las Dang Bye Brag Gi 'Byung Ba'i sDud Lam La sNang Bas, rGyas Pas Lus Kun La'ang Khyab Pa'o..."



280. TCD2 119,3 indicates that by each one of these five facets of fire energy residing within their specified locations, they act to "engender warmth" ("warmth" signifying not only physical warmth, but also the "warmth" of high-energy processes in general, and in particular that relating to the "solar" nucleus of primordial gnosis within our hearts, which we "warm up to" in meditation). My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of fire energy is as follows:

(i) *The externally and internally all-pervading fire energy abides within our lungs:* just as external fire spreads internally and externally, consuming an object from the inside as well as blazing up on its outside, the lungs involve "breath" which come in within the body from the outside in inhalation, as well as proceeding from within to the external environment in exhalation. These winds are essential physically as well as mentally (serving as mounts for different mental states), and thus the "fire energy" here refers to their dynamics. In relation to primordial gnosis, this connotes the "fiery" dynamics of gnostic energy as it pervades the entire panorama of cyclic existence and transcendent reality.

(ii) *The externally and internally all-radiant fire energy abides within our two eyes and limbs:* the all-illuminating glow or radiance of a fire symbolically images the eyes' illumination of the visible world (which in essence is a dimension of fire energy), as well as the five limbs' (two arms, two legs and head) motility. Evidently in the latter case, the fire energy is thought of as the "combustion" fueling their movements, thus giving off the glow and warmth of the animate. As for its gnostic connection, it connotes the utter clarity and radiance of our inner core of enlightened energy, the innate shining of our mind's final nature which illuminates the world.

(iii) *The externally and internally all-equalizing fire energy abides in our flesh and skin:* just as a typical fire spreads everywhere, creating a uniform inferno of flames, flesh and skin are omnipresent aspects covering the entire body uniformly (as opposed to single entities such as the liver, kidneys and so forth), and the bodily warmth between them as well is uniformly present, marking the continued life of the body. Likewise, primordial gnosis itself is the "sameness" of all phenomena, its pure light being the slender thread or "continuity" that runs through all of life without the slightest discontinuity.

(iv) *The external and internal activities-realizing fire energy abides in our two soles:* I have corrected *rTog Pa* to *rTogs Pa* on the basis of TCD, NGB and Ati. Evidently this is based on realization of activities being like a blaze of fire, burning through obstacles to get a clear understanding. The location of this dimension of fire energy in the soles could be based on "realization" being from "the bottom up" (a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step), or perhaps relating to how the legs take you to the site of activity, symbolically "orienting" you. Many of the locations specified here are not at all self-evident. This relates to our inner gnosis being able to "discern" the dynamics operative in every activity (whether "superficial" or "deep"), and thus realize what has to be done.

(v) *The external and internal activities-actualizing fire energy abides in our two palms:* the image of "actualizing" or bringing activities to fruition is based on fire being something which "ripens" things into their final nature, such as fruit, crops, or clay pottery in a kiln - this dimension of fire energy brings a given activity or process to its perceived telos via its "baking" or "ripening" force. The location of it within the hands would seem to be based on their usage in accomplishing many different types of work, being the most bodily appendage

most frequently, and conveniently, used for performing ordinary tasks. This relates to the "efficacious" primordial gnosis, which has the fine tuned sensitivity that allows it to "act" upon its realization, bringing us (and others) to a state of optimal, actualized way of being in the world.

An alternative list of these five aspects of fire energy is given on VLDC 330,5

"...Me lNga Ni: Ye Shes lNga'i mDangs sKyed Pa sTe: 'Bar Bas Las Dang Bag Chags Sreg; Rab Tu 'Bar Bas dNgos Po'i bDag sTongs Par Byed; mChed Pas sNang Ba gCig La Mi gNas; Rab Tu mChed Pas Chos Nyid La Rags Pa Mi gNas Pa Yin La; 'Bar mChed Med Pa La gNas Pa Ni, Chos Nyid Kyi gZhi Yin No..."

281. My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of wind energy is as follows:

(i) *The vitality sustaining wind energy abides in our vitality channel*: medical texts discuss the vitality channel in terms of the "white" (spinal cord) and "black" (the aorta), and thus it can be understood as the home of both the nervous system and the circulatory system. Blood and nervous energy thus constitute the life-force or vitality of both our physical and mental being, enabling us to sustain either distorted or pure experience. Great Perfection literature generally uses the term "vitality channel" in its coarse sense to refer to the arterial trunk exclusively, which in tantric physiology has an imaginal counterpart that is generally said to be intimately connected to our psychic activity (obviously this is related on the "pulsations" of the arteries, and the role of "winds" in all psychic activity). As discussed in Chapter Four, the vitality channel is also said to be the home of our "universal psychic ground", which is the dynamism of the gnostic luminosity present in our luminous channels operative as the basis for our ordinary neuroticized psychic activity. TCD2 115,7 defines its function as to "sustain our life-force (or "vitality")", which can indicate both the blood flow as being the main sustainer of our physical life (including the brain), as well as gnostic luminosity as our spiritual vitality (the latter being the primary reality and the former its derivative reflection on the coarse physical level, despite our emphasis of the former due to its being accessible to "normal" sensory and intellectual inspection). See my discussion on tantric physiology in annotations to TDD 245,1 for further details on "breath" and "life vitality".

(ii) *The luster and glow engendering wind energy abides within the space between our eyebrows*: the body's luster and glow indicates the presence of primordial gnosis' luminosity (see TDD, 216,4), as well as animate life - we talk of someone "glowing" with health, the dullness of a corpse, and even talk of someone's "aura". This wind's ordinary function is to impel digested food's vibrant energy throughout the body, as well as distributing our psychic luminosity's glow throughout the structure of our existence. TCD2 155,7 defines this wind's function simply as "engendering glowing", a term with obvious multivalent significance embracing both superficial and depth dimensions.

I have not yet determined the significance of its location "between the eyebrows", though it could relate to some glandular function located here, or mentions as a type of "third eye" located at this spot. In a different classification of five wind-currents, LYT2 242,5 locates the "engendering wind" at the spot between the eyebrows, which it describes as "engendering the strength of blood and lymph" in our body (ZMYT2 110,1 gives the same description with its full name explicitly referred to, i.e. "the luster and glow engendering wind energy). In addition, KGYT2 168,3ff locates the paternal white "nuclei" at this spot between the

eyebrows, which is specifies as the location of the central channel's upper tip. LYT2 243 then specifies the functions of this nuclei as developing the brain, marrow, fat, bones, and so forth.

(iii) The fire-balancing wind energy abides in our stomach: this wind involves the digestive "fires" operative in our intestines as they separate out the usable energy and waste matter in foods, as well as the fire of gnostic realization which burns through obscurations right in the "belly" of cyclic existence, extracting the vibrant light-essence of all phenomena ("nutrients") and discarding the solidified excrement of "matter" and our neurotic frames ("toxins" and "waste products"). TCD2 155,7 defines its function as "to dissolve/digest food".

(iv) The all-pervading wind energy abides all over our body such that it pervades it: this wind pervades our body, torso and bottom half, and fuels physical movement as well as perception, and thus has the gnostic function of spiritually propelling us to new levels of realization, and the refinement of our "perceptual" faculties to optimal levels of operation. TCD2 155,7 defines its function as "moving and sitting"

(v) The efficacious wind energy which mercilessly (ushers) in a (new) eon abides between our heart and its membrane (i.e. the pericardium): this literally reads "the merciless eon-ic action wind" (*sNyng rJe Med Pa bsKal Pa Las Kyi rLung*). Following KGYT2 161,5's indication that this wind cuts the life-force of cyclic existence with insight (also see TDD 226,6 and 277,3's mention of "insight cutting off the life of cyclic existence and transcendence"), I interpret it as "the efficacious wind which mercilessly (ushers in a new) eon (of enlightenment)". "Compassion" ("merciless" literally reads "absence of compassion") has a dual meaning: it indicates there is no mercy tendered to cyclic existence, which it "kills", as well as signifying that insight is of vital importance at this point rather than compassion (the dyad of insight and compassion being a standard classification of forces operative in healing our fragmented psyche). TCD2 115,7 defines its conventional function as "performing the function of life-transference", indicating that this wind-energy plays the key role in the "transference" of our subtle psychic energy at death, whereby it enters the post-death intermediate state limbo, and then a new physical life (it is "merciless" in that we cannot linger in our old body and existence, despite the tremendous "sentimentality" we feel for those relationships, while the "eon" here refers to the new life (and certainly resembles an entirely new "eon" when considering that our entire personal memories are lost)). This is obviously linked to its transcendent function, which "propels" us out of cyclic existence all together, into a "new life" in transcendence.

The use of "eon" here may relate to the standard Great Perfection description of three "eons" - that of the Ground, Ground-presencing and distorted-presencing (see ZMYT2 260,6) - which here would relate to the eon of enlightenment being ushered-in within the conscious awakening of a Buddha. In addition, it plays off the standard Buddhist description of the wind at the end of time, which sweeps away everything without mercy, marking a close to that eon - just so this gnostic wind sweeps away everything of distorted vision in its path, marking an end to the eon of distorted visions, and the time of cyclic existence, while conventionally this efficacious "karmic" ("karmic" literally being "action") wind mercilessly brings a particular life-span to a closure, forcing it to embark on a new life-track, or personal "eon".

Its location between the heart and its sac (the pericardium) is related to the presence of primordial gnosis within the Tsitta/heart as the psychic center of our existence, which gives off fire sparks of psychic activity. This efficacious wind which brings about transcendence is like an aura or potency of awareness, and as such is imaged as hovering outside of the actual heart (where the essence of primordial gnosis and insight resides), while still remaining within its membrane or protective field (in intimate contact with the center of psychic intensity, and yet existent in a liminal area where it can easily shift into external actions). LYT2 242,1 locates a related list of "five winds" within the heart's four root channels and their center, with the "vitality wind" located at the heart's center, while on the following page it says the "karmic winds" abide in the heart indivisibly with awareness as its radiation, thus giving rise to dualistic ideation. While "karmic winds" and "efficacious winds" translates the same term (*Las*) which literally means "action", ZMYT2 110,3-4 clearly says the merciless efficacious wind dwells within the heart indivisible from awareness, with "efficacious" signifying it "...functions" (*Las Byed*) to liberate cyclic existence within reality".

\*\*\*\*\*

While three of these five aspects of wind-energy correspond to the standard list of five inner winds operative in our body/mind, the "merciless efficacious wind" and "lustrous wind" are here substituted for the "upward-flowing" and "downward-eliminating" wind-currents (responsible for breathing and elimination of bodily wastes respectively (among other things)). If a correspondence were forced, it would seem the "efficacious wind" would relate to the downward-eliminating wind (which eliminates physical impurities downwards as the efficacious wind slices through psychic impurities), while the "lustrous wind" would correspond to the upward-flowing wind (which distributes the vibrant aspects of food throughout the body, thereby giving rise to the "glow" of a healthy individual). TDD 225,6 uses these exact five names as the five "gnostic winds", with the exception that it names the "pervading" wind as the "propelling" wind (*bsKyod rLung*; it "propels" spiritual movement rather than physical), defining each in terms of exclusively transcendent functions, while (as given above) TCD2 115,6 defines their functions in more mundane terms as the endurance of life-vitality, engendering a glow, dissolving food, going and sitting, and acting to "transfer" life (at death) respectively.

In fact, a number of fivefold classifications of the winds can be found in the tantric corpus of writings, all of which have partial concordances with each other, though not always perfectly reconcilable with each other. For example, in LYT2 242,4-243,2, Longchenpa gives a list of five "functioning winds": the supporting wind, the (i.e. luster and glow) engendering wind, the fire-balancing wind, the vibrant energy/solidified wastes-differentiating wind, and the (i.e. merciless eon-ic) efficacious wind. In ZMYT2 110,1-4 (see directly below), Longchenpa gives the same list of five "functional" or "operational" winds (literally "doing actions"), with its definitions concentrating on more "mundane" functions on the whole. Obviously the "supporting" and "differentiating" wind have been substituted for the "pervading" and "vitality" wind in TDD's fivefold classification as found here, though how to correlate the two dyads isn't at all obvious. In fact, TLKS 458,5 (in giving a list of five identical to ZMYT and LYT) explicitly identifies "luster and glow engendering wind" as a synonymous with "pervading wind", though TDD's account here gives these as two as separate items in its account. On the following page, TLKS also seems to identify the

"merciless wind" and the "vitality wind", even though TDD's account again gives these two as separate items in its fivefold classification.

"...(i) by the supporting wind abiding within the four joints (the two ankles and wrists, or a more general type-classification), the strength of our flesh and bones is generated; (ii) by force of the luster and glow engendering wind abiding within the space between our eyebrows, the blood and lymph's strength is generated; (iii) by the fire balancing wind abiding in the stomach, food is digested; (iv) by the vibrant energy/solidified waste differentiating wind residing in both the upper and lower parts of the body, the vibrant energies are dispersed throughout the body and the solidified wastes are excreted externally; (v) the efficacious wind which mercilessly (ushers in a new) eon resides within the heart indivisibly with awareness, and acts to liberate cyclic existence within reality..."

VLDC 330,1 however substitutes the "differentiating" wind for the "luster and glow engendering wind:

"...rLung lNga Ni: (i) Kun Du Khyab Byed Kyi rLung Gis Lus mGo bZhug Tu Khyab Pas, sTobs Dang dBang Po gSal Bar Byed; (ii) Dangs sNyigs 'Byed Pa'i rLung Gis 'Byung Ba Dang Ye Shes Kyi Dangs sNyigs Phye Bas Shes Pa gSal Ba'i rTa Byed; (iii) Me Dang mNyam Du gNas Pa'i rLung Gis Ye Shes Kyi mDangs sKyed Do; (iv) Srog 'Dzin Pa'i rLung Gis 'Khor 'Das Kyi gZhi 'Dzin; (v) sNying rJe Med Pa bsKal Pa Las Kyi rLung Gis gZhi 'Dzin Cing Las Zlog Par Byed Pa'o..."

282. My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of space energy is as follows:

(i) The all-pervasive space energy abides indivisibly with our real awareness: the pervasive unobstructedness of space symbolically images the "openness" of pure awareness as our "inner space", which "pervades" the entirety of existence.

(ii) The object-free bright and radiant space energy abides indivisibly with the five lights: the sky as a bright clear presence devoid of any objects or obscuration images the rainbow hued gnostic lights, which are totally translucent and radiant, yet don't constitute concrete discrete objects that can be abstracted from the overall field of display, and split off from the observer as such. In addition, this indicates that the light inheres in space itself, pointing to the indivisible coincidence of emptiness and light (also indicated in the second Direct Transcendence vision, where the diverse patterns of rainbow-colored light we visionarily experience are termed "the lighting-up of the expanse").

(iii) The unadulteratedly pure space energy abides indivisibly with the thoroughly pure expanse: the purity of a clear sky devoid of obscuring mist or clouds symbolizes the purity of the expanse lamp (see the sixth and seventh chapter for a detailed discussion - TCD2 120,1 explicitly specifies "pure expanse lamp" here), which is totally divested of any obscuring concepts or neurotic distortions. In general, the term "expanse" is imaged as the sky, and connotes emptiness.

(iv) The reality-symbolizing space energy abides indivisibly with the symbolic primordial gnosis, i.e. the empty seminal nuclei: the empty nuclei appearing in the Direct Transcendence visions are symbolic of primordial gnosis as its radiation, and as such, point beyond themselves to the real (*Don*) primordial gnosis abiding within our own heart. Thus

their presence enables us to generate belief and trust in the reality of gnosis, thereby effecting the link and motivation to come into contact with the real gnosis through sustained meditative practice. While it is not itself the essence or direct apprehension of primordial gnosis, under the guidance of a skilled Master it can operate as a gateway - s/he introduces us to gnosis' empty radiance by pointing out the similar attributes in the nuclei, such as the contemplation of the sky's vast reaches evokes an awareness of the ultimate expanse. Thus this space energy is the empty display of these nuclei, pointing beyond itself to the ultimate reality of all things, the empty gnostic light energy at the heart of cosmic and personal being. This is just as the sky is often used to evoke a sense of emptiness, even though it is not itself the true emptiness (which is indivisibly present with radiant awareness - see KGNT1 64-65). The following quote makes very clear that the empty nuclei lamp is a "sign" (*rTags*) indicating the reality (*Don*) of primordial gnosis within the heart, which we are introduced to (*Ngo sProd*) through analogies, whereby we come to believe in these spiritual dimensions of life, and no longer trivialize their presence in the pursuit of material wealth, fame, or sexual conquests (TCD2 64,4):

"...Should you think that if (primordial gnosis) is present (in the body) in such a manner, it should be directly visible, this is not the case. The Spiritual Bodies' luminous manifestation is encased by the corporeal body, and thus is not within one's range of vision. Nonetheless, an analogy for it is that like the sun, it is present within the darkness of the body-clouds, and thus one is introduced to its reality within the heart, and by indicating its signifying sign - the lamp of the empty nuclei - one comes to believe and be committed to its significance..."

(v) *The "effecting freedom within the pure lands" space energy abides indivisibly with all the manifestations of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosés:* this liberating energy is identified with the rich display of spiritual qualities and dynamics that light up within the pure lands, which just like a pellucid sky are made up of empty radiance devoid of any materiality, rainbow-colored displays of liberating forms. In addition this plays of the sense of freedom we have when contemplating the sky, such as the wondrous feeling of flight we experience in dreams, as well as our tending to locate the pure lands imaginatively in the celestial reaches (while hell realms are thought of as far beneath the surface of the earth).

TCD2 120,1 specifies this last facet as "the belief and commitment of realizing the corresponding significance or reality of the twenty one "introductions"" (see *The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction* (NGB1; Ati 2) for a discussion of each). These twenty one introductions are symbolic means (analogies, etc.) which the Master utilizes to evoke a sense of the corresponding spiritual reality (the Spiritual Bodies and gnosés) within the disciple's consciousness. The significance or underlying reality these introductions point to is no other than the spiritual realities found within the pure land, as discussed above.

VLDC 330,6 discusses the five aspects of space energy thus:

"...Nam mKha'i Ni: (i) Go sKabs 'Byed Pa'i sNang Bas sTong Pa'i Yul mTshon; (ii) mDangs sTon Pa'i Nam mKha' Rig Shes gNyis Med Du Byed; (iii) bKrag 'Don Pa'i Nam mKhas Chos Nyid Ma Dang sByor; (iv) Chos Kun Ro gCig Pa'i Nam mKhas Du Ma Las Log; (v) Dag Pa'i Zhing Du sGrol Byed Kyi Nam mKha' dPe Du Ma La bsTen Nas Ye Shes gTan La 'Bebs So. De Ni sTong Pa'i 'Byung Ba'i Rang bZhin Du'ang Khyab Pas Ye Nas rDzogs Pas Lus Kyi gZhi sTongs Par Byed Pa'o..."

283. In these divisions, Longchenpa points out the pure dimensions of energy as well as the distorted transformations they undergo in ordinary beings, thus accounting for their pristine presence and secondary obscured derivations in all living beings. In an awakened existence, or within the Ground "prior" to evolution, these five winds (from which the twenty five divisions derive) are defined as "gnostic winds", and are explicitly said to not be "motile winds" (*'Gyu Ba'i rLung*), "motile" connoting the presence of the mind's flickering movements (see LYT1 452,6). Thus in that context, any type of impure functioning or dimension is excluded, though the potential for such is indicated by defining the pervading wind as "pervading cyclic existence and transcendence throughout", or the vitality-sustaining wind as "acting as the pure potential for both cyclic existence and transcendence". Since in our present context, Longchenpa is accounting for the presence of these within our current confused existence, he explicitly points out both dimensions - their pure essence as well as their distorted forms.

284. TCD2 116,2 indicates that all five facets exists in the vitality channel (in the particular modes discussed below), and that awareness' radiation is based upon these vitality winds' radiation (i.e. they provide the fundamental currents of impetus for awareness' dynamism to function as our psyche). In addition, all the psychic radiation propelled by the vitality wind (including the nervous system, conceptuality, perceptual processes) is derivative of awareness' radiation, which flows forth from its seat in the heart's precious palace. Thus TCD2 118,1 says that the "vitality wind" is the root (the other four wind energies being its "branches"), acting as the foundation for an Awakened One's primordial gnosis' manifestation in a pure context, and as the foundation of the multiple conceptuality of sentient beings in an impure context. From this root wind energy, the other four wind energies emerge via its compassionate resonance's dynamism, like light rays radiating out from the sun. It names the normal enumeration of the other four winds (i.e. "upward-flowing", "downward-eliminating", etc.), specifying transcendental functions for each.

My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of the vitality-sustaining wind energy is as follows.

(i) *The root sustaining vitality wind engenders the glow of our awareness:* TCD2 116,1ff reads "radiation" (*gDangs*) instead of "glow" (*mDangs*) for all five facets of the vitality sustaining wind, which has a more projective connotation. The vitality wind is the root of the other winds, and by its providing impetus for primordial gnosis' life force, it sustains the root of cyclic existence and transcendence (which is no other than awareness). In our impure context, it serves as the mount for our "universal psychic ground" (see Chapter Four), thereby providing the basic impetus for awareness' pure glow or radiation to expand throughout the structure of our existence into the differentiated modalities of neurotic consciousness (the "universal psychic ground" is the impure derivative of the luminous channels' "brightness" or "radiation").

(ii) *The preserving vitality wind engenders the glow of our seminal nuclei:* while there are some variant readings of *sKyong* and *sKyod* here, the correct reading is *sKyobs* ("protecting", "preserving"). This aspect of the wind preserves or maintains energy's intensity from dissipation, guarding the high-energy organization of life (the "nuclei") from lapsing into an inanimate chaos of lifeless atoms. This retention of high intensity energy is related to the seminal nuclei in their functioning as the organizing centers of physical and psychic processes, thereby maintaining the multi-dimensional levels of organization and acting as

sources for outbursts and transformations of energy. Here we may do well to interpret (despite the general tendency to identify it as the arterial trunk only) the vitality channel as connoting the "spinal cord" as well as the arterial trunk (referred to in medical treatises as the "white" and "black" vitality channels), since they are the main conduits for the conventional nuclei's flow in our body (as nervous energy and blood circulation). In addition, just as "central channel" can refer to the luminous channel, certain texts locate the luminous channel within the vitality channel, and hence "vitality channel" could also imply pure light nuclei present within the light channels.

(iii) *The subtle-izing vitality wind engenders the glow of the lights:* the core of our life-force or vitality is the luminous gnostic energy present within our heart and "light channels", and it is this wind which propels this luminosity throughout our existence, bringing its subtle-izing influence into play. The enduring presence of this light energy as circulated throughout our existence's structure by the vitality wind ensures that our body remains a vibrant organism that does not become completely "coarsified", and that our "inner light" remains strong. Also in the context of the initial rupture which breaks open the cosmic "egg" (in this case a "vase"), it is the vitality-wind which releases and drives the ensuing display of five-colored lights.

(iv) *The unclean vitality wind engenders the glow of our mind and dimmed awareness:* the use of "glow" (*mDangs*) here plays off the imagery of psychic energy as a light or luminous dimension (i.e. a person is described as "dim-witted" or "brilliant"), which in the state of straying is dimmed into a mere soft glow, rather than brilliantly radiant as in spiritual awakening. Thus this aspect of the vitality wind is the propelling of core luminosity into the ordinary mind's distorted and neurotic activities, which dilutes its innate radiance. TCD2 116,2 says "...sustains the root of dimmed awareness' root...", which contrasts to the pure functioning of the vitality wind's first aspect (sustaining the root of awareness). Thus this aspect corresponds to the universal psychic ground's location within the vitality channel (see above) as the basis of our dimmed awareness, while the first aspect above primarily indicates its sustaining the pure radiation of awareness which is transformed into this impure glowing.

(v) *The vibrating vitality wind engenders the glow of our egoic psyche:* within the vitality channel is the psychic energy acting as the "universal foundation" of our individual modes of perceptual consciousness (itself a secondary derivation of the pure psychic luminosity within the heart), which channels into the various internal divisions of consciousness buffeted and distorted by the pervasive influence of the emotional distortions. ("vibrating"). Thus this wind's vibrations impel the glow of the mind's functioning, as it moves out towards diversified preoccupation with the external world (the "psyche") from its basic state of ignorance ("mind", "dimmed awareness"). Thus TCD2 116,2 defines it as "acting as the aid or companion to the psyche".

285. My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of the fire-balancing wind energy is as follows:

(i) *The vibrant energy and solidified waste differentiating wind is non-dual with our vitality:* as pointed out elsewhere, "fire" denotes the digestive fires, as well as the fiery lighting-up of primordial gnosis. The continued differentiation of what is "nutritious"/vibrant from what is "waste"/solidified is vital in continued physical and spiritual vitality.



(ii) *The warmth engendering wind is non-dual with our awareness:* not only is awareness reliant on a warm living body-support (heat is the sign of life), but also "warmth" generated meditatively marks our increasing nearness to the solar mandala of awareness. See my comments previously in this chapter on the relation between "warmth" and "consciousness".

(iii) *The clarifying wind is non-dual with our lamps:* this wind's fiery energy not only burns through obstacles thus allowing the underlying clarity to emerge, but also sheds illumination far and wide with its light. Thus it is the driving energy of the gnostic lamps (see the sixth chapter), which as lit by the fuel of primordial gnosis shed light on the cosmic reality of the universe, dissipating all of ignorance's gloom until only the crystal clear presences of transcendence remain.

(iv) *The gathering/synthesizing wind is non-dual with our seminal nuclei:* just as fire gathers everything into its own essence as it consumes what lies in its path (converting it into "light" and "warmth"), this wind gathering energy inwards, synthesizing and consuming all surrounding energy into its own organization. Thus it is the underlying dimension of the seminal nuclei, the nuclear points of extremely intense and fiery energy, which as germinal sources of organization "consume" all the surrounding constituents and encapsulate them into the emerging patterns they create.

(v) *The inspiring wind is non-dual with our insight:* here translated as "inspiring", literally the term means "to praise", exalting someone to a higher status, but is also often used in terms of "straightening" upper torso up. Just as fire is used sacrificially in a purificatory manner and is often imaged as reaching to the celestial heavens, this wind fuels insight's fire, which burns through obscuring veils to reveal the purity within, thereby "exalting" what is contemplated as fully participating in the ultimate reality even within its conventional trappings. It inspires us to ever greater heights, "straightening out" distortions in our psychic activity so that there remains only the optimal and smooth flowing energy of insight, and our consciousness is inspired to see the world around us in pure vision as a mandalic pure land of deities and ambrosial substances.

286. Essentially this wind revolves around the five lights of primordial gnosis, and thus includes the body's "glow" or "aura" (including the sensory faculties as "translucent receptors" of external stimulus) and the mind's clarity/luminosity. Thus this wind (the aural field of mental life) sheds light on the external world, as inner consciousness' glow penetrates the gloom and illuminates the outer environment. Thus the names of all five aspects of this wind are prefixed by "observable aspects" (*rNam Pa*), which indicates their functioning concerns the visible features of external appearances. TCD2 166,6 indicates that each of these five winds act as the "mounts" for the specified psychic operations to bring their corresponding objects into awareness, discerning features and bringing new worlds/horizons into being - they act as "mount" for (the discernment) of the objects of "insight", "presences", "lamps", "dimmed awareness", and the "psyche" respectively. The line here between subjectivity (internal winds acting as mounts for consciousness) and objectivity (the external energies we perceive in various constellations) is not strict here, as these winds are essentially the gnostic lights, which are also the nuclear heart of external elemental energies - as such, the gap between the noetic and noematic, the perceiver and the perceived, is always already bridged by a shining rainbow.

My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of the luster and glow engendering wind energy is as follows:

(i) The perceptual consciousness engendering wind brings about the objects of insight: "Consciousness" is literally the "cognition of aspects", and by this wind acting as the supporting energy-currents for perception, the perceptual field is illuminated, and insight may penetrate the gloom of darkness.

(ii) The "psyche engaging observable aspects" wind brings about apparent objects (literally, "the objects of appearances"): while "perceptual consciousness" denotes the discernment of particular aspects of the perceptual field, and "insight" connotes psychic activity which is incisively clear though devoid of conceptuality, the "psyche" or "subjective ego" (*Yid*) signifies conceptual fabrication and manipulation of these aspects, as our mind discursively processes the sensory data and extracts discrete objects or "appearances", to which it then emotionally relates in a variety of neurotic manners.

(iii) The "glowing aspects" wind brings about the objective dimensions of the lamps: this signifies the wind energy as involved in the glowing presence of the gnostic lamps, which are impelled from the depths of our interior to be revealed "objectively" across the sky's expanse in the Direct Transcendence visions.

(iv) The aspects-incinerating wind brings about dimmed awareness' objects: I have corrected *sLeg* to *Sreg* on the basis of the other texts, while *Ati* has the attractive reading of *sLad Pa* ("adulterated") which is not borne out elsewhere. Evidently the meaning here is that the psychic energy borne by this wind is inflamed by the passions and thus "burns" external features which can no longer be seen clearly. Dulled awareness "consumes" the other with its all-embracing enframing, and thus leaves nothing untouched by its tainted grasping, just as an uncontrolled fire consumes everything surrounding it and leaves only worthless ashes behind it. Khanpo Jikphun suggested it refers to setting fire to virtuous mind sets, and so on, incinerating everything positive within our psyche.

(v) The aspects-agitating wind brings about the egoic psyche's objects: this wind is involved in all of the ego's emotional distortions, which violently "agitate" our perception of things, clouding our vision of their empty luminosity by their turbulence, as well as "agitating" us out towards external sensory objects.

287. TCD2 116,7 modifies all five of these by saying they "provide the dynamism (of these respective manifestations)". While exoterically the "pervading wind" is said to account for the body's motor activity and so forth, here it is viewed as the prime impeller behind manifestation of different sorts ("manifestation" (*sNang Ba*) also means "experience", "appearance", or "lighting-up"). My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of the all-pervading wind energy is as follows:

(i) The Ground-pervading wind brings about manifestation in terms of primordial gnosis: this refers to the wind energy pervading the primordial Ground, causing the rupture of the "Vase Body's" seal, whereby the gnostic presences flow forth into exteriorization as the Ground-presencing dawns. In the context of ordinary living beings, it could be said to perform this same function in contemplative vision, "releasing" the pure gnostic energy in

light visions from its restricted latency within our hearts (the "Ground"), though this aspect appears to be signified in the next phase (see immediately below).

(ii) The present-pervading wind brings about manifestation in terms of the lamps: then in the current, post-rupture situation of our individual lives ("the present"), it pervades our existence and as such, propels the manifestation in terms of the gnostic lamps, the mechanism by which primordial gnosis lights-up to our individual fields of vision (in the "four visions" of Direct Transcendence). The term translated as "present" here could just as well be translated as "temporary" or "adventitious", thus connoting the "provisional" nature of our current human-distorted experience when juxtaposed with the definitive character of the Ground's reality - human temporality vs. the primordially of the Ground. The "lamps" sum up the dynamic presence of the Ground-presencing on the spiritual path.

(iii) The fright and panic-pervading wind brings about manifestation to our cognition: this is apparently based on interpreting "cognition" as stemming from something like a "warning system", i.e. fear of hostile forces in the external environment fueling a constant sensory monitoring of that environment. The terseness of these descriptions leaves room for further interpretation here.

(iv) The memory-pervading wind brings about manifestation to/as our thought activity: the fourth aspect then refers to these winds impelling ordinary thought activity and its experiences by their pervading of our memory/attention (*Dran*), while the fifth aspect indicates the wind-currents which pervade our entire body with psychic "retention" (i.e. the body is animate, informed and pervaded by the mind's nervous energy), and thus with its sensory reception and processing enables the manifestation of fully enframed and synthesized appearances to the mind.

(v) The "pervading our entire body with apprehension" wind brings about manifestation to our mind: although TDD here and elsewhere reads "objects", I have corrected it to "body" on the basis of TCD, NGB and Ati. In actuality the meaning would be similar in either case.

288. In general, the "merciless efficacious wind" refers to that energy which brings a "life force", movement, or state-of-being to cessation, and thus can be applied in general to all dimensions involving cessation, transition, and thus constant flux as well. Thus we could interpret its five facets as (i) the propelling wind that operates as the driving force causing all our movement, wherein the previous state ceases and a new state is initiated; (ii) the liberating wind as that which drives our internal and physical processes in a constant state of transition, such that their previous "instants" or states are ceased, and thus they are "liberated" from decay and stagnation (accounting for the body's movement-impulse); (iii) the reversing wind being that force which "reverses" us out of the intermediate state to the next state (such as after-death to rebirth, and so forth); (iv) the quickening wind involves the cessation of one thought after another in a never ending rapid fire succession (thus accounting for the mind's movement-impulse); and (v) the instantaneous wind, which involves the constant change at every level in the three instants of origination, endurance and cessation. Each one of the five facets then could also be given an interpretation emphasizing their transcendental functions in conjunction with this basic character of mercilessly moving on from old, frozen states of being. Additional light is shed on these five facets on TDD 457 and TCD2 439,6, which describe how each aspect of these elements sequentially dissolves in the process of dying. After describing each of the previous elemental energies' dissolution, including that of the previous twenty types of wind energy, these five facets of the "merciless

wind" alone are described as actively functioning (rather than dissolving) in the process of death: (i) the propelling wind propels your awareness into the sky; (ii) the liberating wind divests you of external and internal (conditioned) phenomena; (iii) the reversing wind reverses/returns awareness itself within the Ground; (iv) the quickening wind brings about the vision of awareness' objective dimension (i.e. its pure self-presencing); and (v) the instantaneous wind impels you to arrive at the site of original purity in three instants. TLKS 455,3 says that at the point of the death, and following the sequential dissolution of the other four wind energies, the "merciless efficacious wind rises up from the vitality channel", whereby the person enters the limbo of death. Then on 459 it appears to identify the "merciless wind" with the "vitality wind" (or at perhaps its "subsidiary winds" are the vitality wind - the wording is unclear), saying as long as it remains in the vitality channel, the body and mind remain together - it is the "wind that accompanies consciousness". When it is "agitated", it is impelled forth from the Tsitta (heart) into the "white silk thread" channel, and departs the body (i.e. death).

It seems to me that this "merciless" wind energy's operations are not merely confined to the dynamics of death and enlightenment (as TDD 457 describes), but also functions constantly within our normal day to day embodied existence in any given lifetime. My own explication of the rationale behind the names and descriptions of these five facets of the efficacious wind energy is as follows (these five facets in particular require further thought, and textual research):

(i) *The propelling wind pervades our psycho-physical components*: conventionally this refers to these wind-currents "propelling" physical and mental movements as well as growth from childhood to mature adulthood (including the transition of death, when awareness is "impelled" out of this body into the sky), while ultimately propelling you to the ultimate spiritual level of original purity. Thus the ultimate momentum for traversing cyclic existence to the transcendental purity of your own-place is right within your own body.

(ii) *The liberating wind pervades in an instant*: TDD 457's indication that this wind energy acts to "divest" you of internal and external phenomena in death's dissolution connects it to the functions of the previous facet - by being "propelled", we are "liberated" from stagnation. Obviously this ties in with functions of the "merciless" wind detailed above in "liberating" us from cyclic existence by mercilessly slashing at the heart of illusion. "In an instant" could connote the instantaneous nature of enlightenment, which takes place in "an instant" of self-recognition, or indicate that change takes place every instant of our existence, without even the slightest iota of enduring concrete static "self", or non-dynamic able to survive.

(iii) *The reversing wind pervades our (post-death) intermediate state existence*: "reversing" can also mean "returning", and as such TDD 457 indicates this refers to "returning awareness to the Ground" from the total immersion in evolutionary processes deriving from the Ground-presencing. Since the displays of the post-death intermediate state are in essence identical to the "Ground-presencing" (signifying the transcendental rainbow-colored mandalas of the Spiritual Bodies and gnoses), the "intermediate state" is specified here. In addition, it connotes awareness "returning" to the Ground through and via these visions, which can also be termed the "intermediate state" as made clear by TCD2 4371ff:

"...Moreover, the dimension of the spontaneously dynamic Ground's presencing within the body is in this context termed "intermediate state", as it is "between" the dissolution of the corporeal five elements therein and awareness abiding within its own internally radiant place.

Therefore when abiding within the body, by force of reality's own innate radiation (which is based on the channels within the heart) emerging from the body onto the pathway through the eyes, and thus externally, it is symbolically labeled "the intermediate state of reality". Even so nothing at all manifests other than precisely awareness with its own innate radiation, and when that dissolves internally and subsides, there is nothing but the taking hold of one's own-site of original purity..."

Thus when confronted with the vision of the purity of the Ground-presencing, whether post-death in the intermediate state or intra-life in the Direct Transcendence visions, this "reversing" wind functions to push awareness through back to the beginning, the site of original purity where it becomes utterly and irrevocably free. This "reversing" energy is thus primordial present within our heart, locating the "vehicle" to take us home within, only a moment's recognition away. In particular, post-death experience is a juncture, a crossroads of recognition and non-recognition, where return to the "mother" is only a flash (of realization) away. Thus VLDC 330,1 describes the "merciless wind" as functioning to "take hold of the Ground and reverse karma" in discussing the "efficacious wind" says it "reverse karma".

(iv) *The quickening wind pervades our ideation*: all thought is lightening quick relative to physical movement, and thus all psychic activity is permeated by the quickening and enlivening efficacious wind which enables psychic activity's rapid movements. As this lightening quick insight-energy is at the heart of even conventional thought, at any moment it can be accessed and brought into its optimally functioning form. As specified by TDD 457, as death divests us of our obscuring corporeality, this energy is momentarily unleashed to give us a clear perception of reality's pure self-presencing light energy; additionally, by refining our physical, verbal, and mental being via contemplation, we can also optimize this psychic energy to optimal levels of instantaneous speed (such as the unimaginable psychic powers attributed to a Buddha).

(v) *The instantaneous wind pervades the three instants*: TCD2 117,2 describes this as "pervades the three instants of a completed action", which refers to the classic Buddhist triad of something's beginning or emergence, its functioning or duration, and its end or dissipation (corresponding to the three times of past, present and future). This triad of origination, endurance, and cessation are the three instants discernible in any performed action no matter how brief (the action is done, it has its effect, and it is over), and thus this wind energy accounts for the continuity of existence. Here it particularly refers to the "completed action" of realization and freedom, which takes place in these three basic instants, or phases (either instantaneously or over the course of a particular temporal sequence), linked by this wind energy in a continuous process of momentum. Thus TDD 457,6 indicates that in death's dissolution process this wind-energy brings you to the site of original purity in three instants by recognizing the visions of post-death experience as inherent to your self: in the first instant you recognize, in the second instant you are free right within the recognition, and in the third instant you dissolve within original purity right within that freedom (see TCD2 443,3 and TDD 478,3ff) in the context of the intermediate state of reality.

289. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 385,6; At1 466,6; also cited in piecemeal fashion on TCD2 115,2-119,7). This is the Tantra's twentieth chapter, which treats the "internal elemental energies" following the previous chapter on the "external elemental energies".

290. Longchenpa's quotation here omits 387,1-388,4 of NGB (Ati also lacks these line), which discusses the twenty one "introductions via analogies", which have corresponding "meanings" or "realities" which they indicate or symbolize. These are symbolic ways (such as displaying a crystal in the sun) in which the Master can spark realization in the disciple, and thereby "introduce" him/her to spiritual realities and presences (see above). They are divided into three groups of seven, in correspondence with the three levels of yogic capacity in disciples - superior, average, and inferior.

291. NGB reads *rNam Par Shes Pa* in front of "glow", but Ati agrees with TDD.

### ANNOTATION-COMMENTARY TO CHAPTER THREE

292. This "Buddha-nucleus" is the "Buddha-nature" well known from Western literature on Buddhism, and often referred to by its most common Sanskrit term, *Tathāgatagarbha*. TDD 247,1 identifies this essence of primordial gnosis within us as the "ground, the Blissful One's nucleus", and in fact KGYT1 461 identifies an analogous discussion as "the manner in which primordial gnosis is present with sentient beings". This nucleus or "abiding reality of the Buddhas" (VNT2-"pa" 2,2 glosses it as the "seed of Buddhahood" in this context), has the triune identity of the Ground as discussed in Chapter One: the emptiness of its essence, the radiance of its nature, and the all-pervadingness of its compassionate resonance. TCD2 63,6-67,4 has a section corresponding to this chapter's initial discussion of the "spiritual nucleus", and there Longchenpa identifies it as the "Ground", the "enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy", "the naturally spontaneously present Buddha", and "the great fundamental primordial gnosis". Also see ZMYT2 295,1-324,2 for a detailed discussion of this "Buddha-nature" inherent in all life, where Longchenpa relies heavily on *The Unsurpassed Continuity*.

293. "Pervades" indicates that this nucleus of enlightened energy or "Buddha-nature" pervades all sentient beings as their fundamental reality, while this pervasion's dynamics expresses itself in terms of a series of fivefold facets as both pure and impure dimensions (the five Spiritual Bodies, the five psycho-physical components, and so on). Thus "that which pervades" is the nucleus, "that which is pervaded" is sentient beings, and "the qualities of the pervasion" refer to the characteristic forms in which the nucleus' pervasion expresses itself.

294. *rDo rJe Sems dPa' sNying Gi Me Long Gi rGyud* (NGB1 207,1; Ati1 334,1). Both NGB and Ati add "naturally" to this line. The point is just as its oil is utterly simultaneous with the sesame seed's own origination as its inherent nature, this enlightened nucleus is primordially at the core of all life without the slightest artificiality about it. Just as the oil isn't typically apparent when you examine the seed, yet will emerge when you crush the seed, this enlightened nucleus is not ordinarily manifest, and yet when you tear through your ordinary corporeality and neurosis (the "husk" or "shell"), it is radiantly present.

295. *Nor Bu 'Phra bKod* (NGB1 732,1; Ati2 24,1).

*The seed of the Realized Ones' enlightened energy manifests along with its concordant luminosity within the deceptive embodied experiences of sentient beings:* "deceptive embodied experiences" literally reads "body-like appearance", with "like-appearance" (*lTar sNang*) being a standard phrase meaning "ostensibly", "facsimile", "fallacious", or "deceptive". Thus I have interpreted it as referring to how our physical dimension

"deceptively" appears as an ordinary, corporeal body, though in fact it is a vibrant "hologram" of pure enlightened energy (as evoked in Chapter Two and Three). By translating it as "embodied experiences", I have tried to connote how sentient beings experience in accordance with their type of physical apparatus (which falls into one of the six generalized types of bodies corresponding to the six types of sentient beings), with each mode of experience inevitably "fallacious" in its own peculiar way due to the general condition of straying and non-recognition that pertains, despite which, the kernel/source of this embodied experiencing remains vibrant light energy (which we need only recognize to be free). In this way, I have tried to evoke how this seed of spiritual awakening lies within the heart of our ordinary body as well as mind. "Concordant luminosity" indicates not only that this "seed" or "nucleus" is essentially light energy that forms the "inner light" of our consciousness as well as our physical "glow" or "aura", but also that it is at all points "radiating" with energy that acts as the ongoing source of our psycho-physical being, rather than simply being a dormant, cold, dim seed removed from our normal existence.

296. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 91,7; Ati1 110,4). This enlightened nucleus is gnostic energy, with "self-awareness" indicating that is the core of our "own" consciousness, as well as its being the "inherent" intelligence of the Universe, with its self-organizing dynamics resulting in the exterior material as well as interior psychic worlds such that a radical non-dualism pertains - the specter of the Other is dispelled in the revelation/recognition of the One and Only engaged in a cosmic game. In general, "awareness" indicates this inherent intelligence of reality, while "primordial gnosis" (literally "primordial knowing" or "pristine cognition") signifies its dynamic expression. This inner luminous core is the source of our physical being, and thus it is reflected in our body's vibrancy, which we express as "glowing" with health, or someone's "aura". This inner primordial gnosis is also often imaged as "moisturization", since it is "water" that gives us physical life, and pervades our body totally as the single most predominant element. Similarly, primordial gnosis totally pervades our subtle energy as the ultimate "vitality" of our being, utterly fluid and spontaneous in its "quickenning" of our spirit, and its prevention of the "rigidity" of spiritual death. In observing a corpse, we immediately note that its "light has gone out", and that the supple, living quality of water has departed to leave a desiccated, rigid corpse.

297. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 432,3; Ati1 526,2). The "wisdom" or "intention" of the Buddha refers to the fundamental energy of his Enlightened Mind-Spirit, which is here placed right within our own psyches as the enlightened nucleus, or Buddha-nature. While there are different ways of classifying and enumerating the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses, in brief they refer to the way a Buddha is present in the Universe after enlightenment (his/her "Spiritual Body"), and his/her way of knowing after the transcendence of neurotic dualism (his/her "primordial gnosis", or "pristine knowing"). These two terms reflect the dynamism of the enlightened nucleus, which is here seen to be operative right within our own mental streams, even though our disease leaves us blind to its presence.

298. *Kye rDo rJe*; the Sanskrit title is *Hevajra Tantra* (Snellgrove's *Hevajra Tantra* II 2-3 has the Sanskrit and Tibetan; translation in Snellgrove's *Hevajra Tantra* I 48 ; translated in Guenther's *The Creative Vision* 17 and Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One* 291; also cited by STCP2 13a 6; partially cited by GTD 378,4). The terms "esoteric and exoteric" have shifting significance in various contexts, and here Longchenpa uses this opposition to indicate the Great Perfection teachings as the "esoteric" quintessence of the entire Buddhist tradition that preceded it, with "uncommon" qualities found nowhere else in the more "mainstream" exoteric literary canons and meditative

practices. While most of the numerous citations in TDD are drawn from the "esoteric" corpus of *The Seventeen Tantras* which exclusively belong to the Great Perfection tradition, in the first section of this chapter Longchenpa also quotes extensively from several standard exoteric Indian texts (studied in general by all Tibetan sects) to show the fundamental connection of some central Great Perfection concepts with certain non mainstream traditions of Indian Buddhism.

"Great" indicates that primordial gnosis is a type of "super" force that is highly energized, in sharp contrast to the non-honorific term for "body", which refers to the ordinary distorted physical embodiment of sentient beings. This super gnostic energy is "genuinely" devoid of all dualistic ideation, conceptual distortion, and neurosis (whether conventionally "good" or "evil"), with "genuinely" indicating it is primordially utterly devoid of such psychic distortion via its very essence, as opposed to a temporary repression or suppression of conceptuality through meditation, which however leaves its seeds undisturbed. This gnostic energy is the ultimate source of all our psycho-physical energy (the materialization and neurotization of its pure radiation) as it emanates out from the heart via its network of "luminous channels", and the material elements themselves are merely the solidification of its self-presencing five-hued light. Thus, while located within the body, it is not "of" the body in the sense of being a derivative epiphenomenon either as consciousness or as some type of super human "gnosis" contemplatively generated - the body is instead the image of primordial gnosis (see KGNT in particular), such that primordial gnosis is always simultaneously present with the body, yet itself "unborn" and inherent to the Universe's very structure as the transcendental conditions for all conditioned phenomena (while itself not conditioned in any sense).

299. *'Phags Pa Yongs Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*; the Sanskrit title is *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* (KK 229,4-230,5). This Discourse unfolds as a conversation between the Buddha and a Spiritual Hero named "Light-Protector", here addressed by the Buddha as "Son of the Lineage" (referring to his royal spiritual status, with the Buddha often termed "Royal Victor" and the Spiritual Heroes as his "Princes"). In the first paragraph, "ingenious" translates a term literally meaning "skilled-in-means", a clear sign this individual should be identified with the Buddha himself, who is said to be "skilled-in-means" in the sense that he can efficaciously bring his disciples to liberation via a variety of techniques (utilized in accordance with the particular situation and a given disciple's psycho-physical state).

*I show the Buddha-nature present in all beings, though they don't see it since it is obscured by the all-encompassing emotional distortions. This is just like the poor woman was shown the treasure which she couldn't see:* the comparison of the enlightened nucleus with the buried treasure of gold points to the preciousness of this nucleus (just as gold is the most valuable item in the external world, this nucleus is the most precious dimension of our own internal existence), as well as indicating its primordially - the nucleus is fully present right from the start just as there is no question of the treasure's presence, but it is inaccessible to us by virtue of a deficiency of knowledge and vision (thereby revealing it is a question of knowing, not ontological presence or absence). Despite the insistence on this "Buddha-nature" being completely present within all sentient beings, the implications and effect of those sentient beings' individual non-recognition or recognition should not be underestimated, as Longchenpa makes clear in his description of the mechanism by which such non-recognition inexorably fabricates the seeming solidity of matter and inescapability of suffering that characterizes our current experience as enmeshed in neurotic existence (see Chapter Two). Thus being endowed with latent "Buddha-nature" and being an actual fully



energized Buddha is as different as a seed and its mature tree, or the amnesiac prince wandering the kingdom penniless and that self-same prince with regained consciousness back in the royal sanctum - of what value is a mother who you were separated from at birth, and now meet years later but fail to recognize as such?

300. *'Phags Pa Yongs Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*; the Sanskrit title is *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (KK 234, 6-7). The entire story (KK 233,2-235,2) goes thus:

"...The Victoriously Transcendent One delivered this pronouncement to Light-Protector: "Oh Son of the lineage, it's like the following allegory. There was a champion of a King, who had an adamantine jewel (probably some type of small diamond) on his forehead. While wrestling with another champion, he banged heads with the other. Though that forehead-jewel sank into the flesh, he didn't realize where the jewel had gone. Since later a sore developed, he summoned a doctor. Since the sore had developed due to the jewel being pushed into the skin, the extremely skilled physician couldn't medically treat it.

The physician thus said "Oh Powerful One, what has become of your forehead-jewel?"

The champion became scared, and said to the physician: "Its not possible that my forehead-jewel has gone anywhere!" He thought "If it's not there, I wonder if it could be a magical illusion?", and became very upset.

Then the physician reassured him: "Don't get upset like that! When you were wrestling, the jewel sank into your flesh, and now its mere reflection is visible externally. When you were wrestling, you became angry and by virtue of that as well as the jewel's potency, though it sank into your flesh you didn't notice it". [In that such a jewel has special qualities unlike a common stone, it did not cause the type of severe hemorrhaging and so forth that the latter would cause].

Though the physician spoke to him thus, the champion didn't believe him and said "Physician, don't lie to me! If it sank into the flesh, it would be extremely foul with blood and pus, and it would have to emerge externally. Also if it sank into the sinew, it wouldn't be possible for you to see it."

Then the physician brought him before a mirror, and the jewel showed up clearly in the mirror. The champion having seen it thus emerge, was really amazed.

O Son of the lineage, all sentient beings are like that. Since they don't venerate the virtuous spiritual friends, even though the Buddha-nature is present, they are unable to see it. Obscured by attachment, hatred and ignorance, it is suppressed and thus sentient beings fall into births in a variety of ways - as hell beings, animals, tortured ghosts, demi-gods, outcastes, low castes, the royal caste, the priestly caste, and so forth.

Though they may attain a human body through the production of varied karma in their minds, they will be deaf, blind, mute, crippled and so forth. They will experience the fruit of maturation of karma in terms of the twenty five states of existence. Because their minds are obscured by desire, hatred, and ignorance, they don't recognize the Buddha-nature. Thus, just like the champion didn't recognize that the precious jewel had sunk into his flesh and thus thought he had lost it, ordinary beings are just so. Not knowing to venerate the virtuous spiritual friends, they don't recognize the extremely esoteric enlightened nucleus of realized-

energy. Thus they meditate on the absence of self and emphasize it. For example, those who are not exalted beings, though they say "absence of self", they don't understand the characteristics of the genuine "self". Even those staying near me are like that - they don't even know to venerate the virtuous spiritual friends, and thus don't understand even the meditation on selflessness, such that even the topic of selflessness isn't understood. Not understanding even the characteristics of selflessness, how can you even speak of understanding the characteristics of the ultra-pure, authentic self?!

Oh Son of the lineage, the Realized One teaches the presence of the Buddha-nature within sentient beings like that, just as the physician shows the Champion's diamond-jewel to him. Since ordinary beings are obscured by enveloping emotional distortions measureless in number and hence it is suppressed, they don't recognize the Buddha-nature. If they were to terminate the emotional distortions, they would then clearly and directly realize it, just like the champion saw the precious jewel in the radiant mirror. Oh Son of the lineage, this enlightened nucleus of realized-energy is thus immeasurable and inconceivable..."

301. *'Phags Pa Yongs Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*; the Sanskrit title is *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* (perhaps this is KK 288,7, though a few words are missing there). See the mini-encyclopedia for definitions of each of these terms, all of which are traditional characterizations of the body and mind of a fully enlightened being such as the Buddha. The intention is to shock those who might accept that somehow the Buddha-nature is present in terms of some type of vague "potential" to evolve into an awakened state, without implying that the fully characterized "Buddha" with all his/her powers, attributes and energy is already present. Yet this is exactly what the Buddha says here, forcing us to think beyond and through such easy interpretation.

302. *rGyud bLa Ma*; the Sanskrit title is *Uttaratantra* (the critical edition of the Tibetan translation 49 (verse #27); Sanskrit edition 26; English translations in Holmes' *The Changeless Nature* 31, Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga* 197, and Obermiller's *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* 156; also cited by STCP2 13b 1; GTD 378,4). I have explicated the three "reasons" that the Buddha-nucleus is present within all sentient beings as follows.

"The Spiritual Body of perfect awakening continues": this refers to the Buddha's Reality Body (pristine originally pure awareness) being continually and uninterruptedly present throughout all sentient beings (literally "radiates" or "diffuses", i.e. "pervades"), and which is the ultimate reality of their psycho-physical being despite their non-recognition of it. The ultimate depths of the Buddha's realization are always already present within us, and hence the Buddha is within.

"The as-is is undifferentiated": the "as-is" or "suchness" refers to the final reality of ourselves and of the Buddhas, which in fact is utterly without any differentiation. Since it isn't the case that our own inner being is somehow inferior or corrupted while the Buddha's inner essence is superior and immaculate, at the core all ordinary living beings and the Buddha are the same with the identical triune awareness (empty, radiant and all pervading) - by self-recognizing it within us, at any point we can bring this inner suchness into full blown ascendancy such that the marvelous qualities of Buddhahood will flow forth from within.

"The spiritual affinity is present": the "spiritual affinity" or "lineage" for enlightenment derives from our all being characterized by the empty mind-as-such by virtue of having a

psyche, and thus possessing this inner affinity with the very nature of Buddhahood. We are all born "within the fold of" or as part of the "family" of the Buddha, and hence the most natural thing possible is to fulfill our heritage by becoming liberated and joining the ranks of self-consciously liberated Buddhas (the term "affinity" thus refers to the presence of **Being** within beings). In order to explain how we may all possess this affinity and yet do not experience ourselves as fully enlightened beings, a distinction is made between a "naturally existent affinity" and an "actualized affinity": the former is the radiant light that is our mind's natural reality, and whereby we possess a natural affinity with enlightenment; the latter is the unfolding of this natural affinity via contemplative diligence and ethical conduct, whereby the affinity "evolves" or expands into its full capabilities as the incidental obscurations of dimmed awareness are dispelled and we assume our rightful place ("own-place") in the Universe. All living beings have this natural luminosity as their mind's nature despite it being obscured by the stains of their own delusion, while only the Buddhas dispel the stains and let that radiant light permeate their existence with the full force of its innate purity (ZMYT2 295,4 expresses it as "our mind's adventitiously stained radiant light" as opposed to the Buddha's "pure stainless Buddha reality", as well as "stained suchness" vs. "stainless suchness"). This distinction is readily understandable with the analogy to the amnesiac prince, who has a "natural birth right" to the kingdom by virtue of his heritage, and yet can only lay full claim to that entitlement with all its privileges by reclaiming his memory, and his position in the royal court. See STCP1 34 and 313,1-314,6.

303. *brTag gNyls*; the Sanskrit title is *Hevajra Tantra* (Snellgrove's *Hevajra Tantra* II 71 has the Sanskrit and Tibetan; English translation in Snellgrove's *Hevajra Tantra* I 107).

304. *Doha mDzod Kyi gLu*; the Sanskrit title is *Doha-koṣa-gīti* (the Tibetan translation DKS 16,5; English translation in Shahidullah's *Buddhist Mystic Songs* 151; also cited by TCD2 64,2; STCP2 13b 2; partially cited by GTD 378,4).

305. *rGyud bLa Ma*; the Sanskrit title is *Uttaratantra* (the critical edition of the Tibetan translation 123; Sanskrit edition 63; English translations in Holmes' *The Changeless Nature* 56 (verse 112), Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga* 272, and Obermiller's *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* 217).

The passage cited here is one of the nine analogies or similes given in this text to evoke how the pure enlightened nucleus is present right within our own psycho-physical impurity, and though obscured by this enveloping impurity in the present, remains stainless in itself, such that the adventitious "wrapping" can be cast off at any point. Each analogy is detailed, following which its inner significance in relation to the enlightened nucleus as present within us is explicated in detail (see Holmes' *The Changeless Nature* 51-63 and Hookham's *The Buddha Within* 221-225 for a description of each analogy; ZMYT2 309,1-313,2 also explains each, mainly in quotes from *The Unsurpassed Continuity*). The nine are as follows: a Buddha statue hidden within a withered lotus, pure delicious honey covered by a swarm of bees in a beehive, grains/kernels concealed within their husks (which are inedible until their outer husk is removed), gold covered in filth along the road side, a treasure buried beneath the a poor man's house, a tree as present in seed-form within its fruit (or the sprout within that seed), a precious statue of the Buddha covered up by tattered rags, a child destined to be a great monarch within an ugly, destitute woman's womb, and a precious gold statue still covered by its clay mold (in which it was formed, and which must be broken to reveal the statue within). The Buddha statue, pure honey, grains, and so forth correspond to the utterly pure luminous enlightened nucleus within us, while the decaying lotus, swarms of bees,

husks, and so forth signify our ordinary distorted body, speech and mind, which obscure the radiant light within by their sordid, desperate obsessions. See STCP1 316,1ff for further interpretative comments by Longchenpa on these nine analogies (Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 241 has an English translation of this passage).

306. This parable or allegory of the huge roll of silk from *The Flower Ear Adornment of the Buddhas* is cited in *The Unsurpassed Continuity's* commentary as well (see translations on Obermiller's *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* 151-3; Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga* 189; also cited by ZMYT2 299). The parable involves an inconceivably huge roll of silk cloth equal in extent to our entire galaxy (which is traditionally described as involving a billion world systems), with each world of this galaxy with their details painted upon this cloth in sizes exactly corresponding to their actual sizes (i.e. "life size"). This cloth then comes to be concentrated within a single atomic particle, a process which is repeated such that a series of such immense cloths are placed within every single minute atomic particle without exception. Subsequently, a perceptive individual with psychic vision and skill-in-means comes along, and with his clarity of vision is able to see these immense cloths within the atoms, such that he feels the tragedy in such a great cloth being contained within a tiny atom such that it is totally useless to anyone. He thus uses his own intrinsic power and a subtle diamond to split open each atom and bring forth each roll of silk, whereby they could be used by all sentient beings. In the same way, the vast infinity of the Buddha's primordial gnosis ("the roll of silk") is contained within the inner core of all living beings ("the atoms"), yet is obscured and useless by virtue of the restrictions of our limited psycho-physical states. By means of his incisive teaching and potent primordial gnosis he "splits open" our limitations to reveal this inner limitless radiant wisdom-energy (the infinitude of the macrocosmic cosmos within our own seemingly limited microcosmic identity), whereby we come to realize our own primordial identity, and this indwelling enlightened nucleus becomes of potent and limitless value to the universe of living beings.

307. These refer to the standard attributes of an Awakened One, or Buddha - his body's auspicious features, his psychic powers, and so on (for details, see the mini-encyclopedia under "ten powers" and "thirty two perfect characteristics and eighty exemplary forms"). The objection is that Longchenpa's hypothetical antagonist feels that such concrete forms and attributes are being given some type of ultimate status, while in fact the ultimate abiding reality of the Universe is utterly empty, and it would be inappropriate to speak of that emptiness in terms of such specific characteristics. Thus he cites the famous *Transcendental Consummation of Insight Discourses*, a series of canonical texts of varying length attributed to the historical Buddha, and revolving around the utter emptiness of all phenomena. *The Intermediate Length Divine "Mother" Discourse* refers to *The Twenty Five Thousand Stanza Transcendental Consummation of Insight Discourse*, with "mother" referring to insight as the spiritual mother of all the Buddhas (since it is via insight that enlightenment dawns), as well as "insight" being the feminine pole in the standard dyad of "efficacious means and insight" (see mini-encyclopedia). The hypothetical person raising the objections to Longchenpa's presentation is basing himself on the standard hermeneutical classification of Buddhist scriptures into two categories: those of "definitive meaning" (*Nges Don; Nitārtha*) and those of "provisional meaning" (*Drang Don; Neyārtha*). The exact definitions of these two terms, as well as the identification of precisely which literature falls under which classification, was controversial in both India and Tibet, but it generally relates to an associated classification of the Spiritual Discourses attributed to the historical Buddha (though the latter two would be seen as certainly apocryphal by European scholarship) into three "doctrinal cycles or wheels" (*Chos Kyi 'Khor Lo gSum*) or "successive pronouncements" (directly below, Longchenpa

refers to them as "three cycles of pronouncements"): the first turning of the wheel (focusing on the "four truths", and relating to the earliest strata of Buddhist thought especially emphasized by the Lesser Vehicle); the intermediate turning of the wheel (focusing on the ultimate emptiness of all phenomena, and above all represented in *The Transcendental Consummation of Insight Discourses*), and the final turning of the wheel (oriented towards "tuning in" to the positive presence of the Buddha-nature within us, and thus focused on "the enlightened nucleus of realized-energy"). In brief, "definitive meaning" indicates that a text or passage explicitly and clearly teaches the "ultimate truth" of reality without requiring extensive interpretative maneuvering to understand that ultimate truth, while "provisional meaning" indicates a text or passage teaches "conventional truths" requiring further interpretation to understand the ultimate reality (such non-ultimate truths are utilized by the Buddha as pedagogical tools adjusted to the psychological states, and ideological backgrounds of his audience, and thus must be understood in that context without reifying them into "truths" beyond the truth of pedagogical efficacy).

In the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Gelukpa sect took the stance that the first and third doctrinal wheels is of "provisional meaning", requiring us to interpret the Buddha's intention in stating such doctrines, while the second doctrinal wheel is of "definitive meaning", and can be taken at "face value" as describing the "ultimate" nature of reality (which is not to deny that extensive interpretation may be required to understand precisely what these discourses are describing - see Hopkins' *Mediation on Emptiness* 422-428, etc. for a clear discussion of their positions). This line of interpretation views "emptiness" exclusively as the ultimate truth, and is extremely concerned about personal and philosophical reifications of concrete "identities" or "self" that might be claimed to have a type of enduring positive reality impervious to the Great Vehicle tenet of all encompassing emptiness (whether it be some type of "godhead", personal "soul", or materialist view of "atoms", and so on). It thus views the teachings of the third doctrinal wheel as involving provisional teachings of a positive "Buddha-nature" and non-empty gnostic energy as being intended for those disciples who would not initially be able to accept direct teachings of universal emptiness because of their psychological makeup and intellectual background - this doctrine of emptiness can easily be interpreted nihilistically, and its ruthless negation of conventional phenomena and personal identity can be emotionally experienced as extremely threatening. Thus the Buddha taught these more readily assimilatable and non-threatening doctrines of a positive "nucleus of realized-energy" in order to draw them into the spiritual path, with the intention that he would gradually guide them to a contemplative encounter with the ultimate truth of utter emptiness at such time that they were psychologically, intellectually and spiritually prepared. Obviously, this is precisely the "straw man" position that Longchenpa is here setting up, and which he will refute in the following section. The objection is that since the "definitive" truth of reality is utter emptiness devoid of any type of concrete "self" or "identity" (*bDag*, literally "I" or "self", it refers to a entitative self or identity felt or thought to exist in either individual living beings or external phenomena), it is outlandish to talk as if this positively characterized "Buddha-nucleus" with all these particular features (the Buddha's "ten powers", "thirty two perfect physical characteristics" and so on) has some type of positive ontological status within the ultimate reality of our minds ("mind-as-such"). Instead, the mind's ultimate reality should be understood in accordance with its traditional descriptions as "like the sky", i.e. thoroughly "open" or "empty" without any type of positive "thing" or "identity" locatable when searched for with logical and contemplative analysis. The final blow is his/her identification of Longchenpa's presentation of an "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" with the "permanent self of the extremists". The "extremists" refer to non-Buddhists in India who were often described as philosophically adhering to the view of ultimately real entitative

"selves" or "identities" (*Ātmā*; *bDag*), whether as a personal soul, godhead, material constituents, and so on, while the prime characteristic of even the very earliest strata of Buddhism in India appears to have been its theory/praxis of "no self", as self-consciously defined in opposition to the philosophic and religious currents that formed its milieu in India at that time. As Indian Buddhism evolved over the centuries into a wide variety of philosophical and contemplative traditions, the "normative" traditions continued to view any attempts to speak positively of reality in terms similar to the mainstream Brahmanical culture as heretical, since it forsook precisely what had been understood as the defining characteristic of the Buddhist tradition as such. The ultimate "meta-criticism" (in essence saying "you're not Buddhist") was leveled frequently in India between the various traditions, and in particular was directed at supporters of the Spiritual Discourses on this enlightened nucleus of realized-energy - their doctrine of a "Buddha within" was viewed as tantamount to a Brahmanical "absolute self", and as such a rejection of "no-self" or "emptiness", the cornerstone of Buddhist thought. In Tibet itself, such a criticism would often take the form of associating a position with the indigenous Bonpo tradition, which implicitly or explicitly was assumed to not adhere to any strict type of emptiness doctrine.

The Nyingma traditions (which Longchenpa belonged to), on the other hand, tended to identify the first and second doctrinal wheels as of "provisional meaning", while describing the third doctrinal wheel (those dealing with the positive Buddha-nature) as of "definitive meaning" (see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One* 28 and 187-190 for a contemporary Nyingma presentation, as well as Hookham's *The Buddha Within* for associated Tibetan traditions). This line of tradition is extremely concerned with the negativistic tendencies of the "emptiness" doctrine, which can easily degenerate into an assertion of a "mere" or "sterile" emptiness devoid of the inherent dynamism that is coincident with emptiness, and as such oblivious to the intrinsic intelligence and light-energy of the Universe. While the current chapter is Longchenpa's explicit treatment of this issue of the "Buddha-nature" or "enlightened nucleus of bliss energy", it must be understood in the context of Chapter One, where he clearly indicates that the "ultimate truth" or "definitive meaning" is not emptiness alone, but rather is "original purity" and "spontaneous presence", i.e. the indivisible union of emptiness and dynamic light energy (he also provides an alternative triune analysis of the ultimate nature of reality (i.e. the Ground) in the triad of its empty essence, radiant nature, and all pervasive compassionate resonance (i.e. self-organizing intelligence)). In a neat reversal of the position detailed above, he describes assertions of "total emptiness" (such as found in the second doctrinal wheel) to be psychologically motivated - for many potential disciples who are hopelessly mired in their dualistic fixations and distorted perceptions, directly teaching them the "definitive" doctrines of the enlightened nucleus of realized-energy would be disastrous, as they would automatically construe such a nucleus in entitative terms (erasing the ontological difference), and develop all sorts of distorted emotions in relation to it ("my permanent self") as well as retroactively use it to justify their attribution of concrete "self" to other phenomena (such that the doctrine will be used reactionarily to reinforce their distorted experience of the world). Thus, as a necessary philosophical, contemplative, and psychological precursor to such doctrines, the "shock therapy" of utter emptiness is utilized so that these deluded "beginners" will be shaken up and scared, such that their belief in things' solidity and concreteness begins to weaken, and their hitherto unshakable belief in the enduring "real" nature of their personal identity and material phenomena wavers. Once these disciples are thus "loosened up" and are no longer in the rigid grip of dualistic thing-based perception and thought, there is a psychological opening for the "real" teaching as to the Universe's ultimate reality - the Master can now reveal the inherent nucleus of indestructible luminosity present

within each sentient being without these disciples confidently enframing it (and thus dismissing it in terms of any enduring transformative relevance) in terms of their normal dualistic, emotionally distorted categories and biases. Thus Longchenpa even feels free to speak of a "great self-identity" (*bDag Nyid Chen Po*; *Paramātmā*), a term referring to the nucleus of indestructible luminosity as a type of "super" (*Chen Po*) identity that transcends the conventional opposition of "self" and "no-self". My previously discussed distinction between logical analytical thought and "poetic thought" also comes into play here, since in part the two positions outlined here can be correlated with these two modes of thinking, with the typical consequence that the latter's thought is generally severely misrepresented by the former (which insists on everyone else "playing by their rules"). For this reason, one must be careful not to readily accept formulations of the controversy by either side, and in particular Hopkins' presentation of the two sides in his *Meditation On Emptiness* is quite inadequate to have any understanding of Longchenpa's position (including Longchenpa's interpretation of the Indian Discourses and treatises on this subject, though, to be fair to Hopkins, he is explicitly concerned only with presenting the Gelukpa tradition from the inside, so to speak). Particularly unacceptable are descriptions of Longchenpa's position as somehow reflecting a "weakening" of the emptiness doctrine, or the "enlightened nucleus" as being in opposition to thorough emptiness, as the Chapter One should make quite clear. Finally, these two traditions should not be thought of as irreconcilable, and in fact there were historically a number of great representatives in Tibet who participated fully in both the Gelukpa and Nyingma traditions, including the present Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso (as well as a number of his predecessors) and the justly famous Zhabs dKar Pa. Such a reconciliation can be based on the traditional Buddhist hermeneutical flexibility which allows for a variety of interpretative schema in accordance with the variety of psychological states and intellectual orientations found in the world (with a concordant "softness" of seeming rigid theoretical stances), the relation between "philosophy" and "contemplation" (the latter subsuming the former), and the traditional willingness to hierarchize doctrinal systems and modes of thought without feeling the compulsion to dismiss that which can be criticized, or subsumed, from another perspective (i.e. viewing Gelukpa analytical logical training (which involves meditative as well as philosophical aspects) and Great Perfection "contemplative" thought as having complementary therapeutic and soteriological force).

Along the lines of the position characterized above, in ZMYT2, 317,6ff Longchenpa characterizes the "intermediate pronouncements" as involving teaching that all phenomena are emptiness, with the emptiness being "sky-like" (318,2) and "of utter absence" (321,1). He describes these teachings as being intended for ordinary individuals with their fixations on concrete self-identities, as well as even advanced Buddhist meditators who however retain a fixation on phenomena as having some type of ultimate "self" or real constituents, while they eventually are designed to lead to the "ultimate emptiness", i.e. the true emptiness of the "radiant light of mind-as-such's nature". He says that those who fail to understand this "spontaneous presence" of the "ultimate emptiness" thus lapse into nihilistic views, which is tantamount to the position of the "outsiders" (i.e. the non-Buddhist extremists - see 321,1). This "ultimate emptiness" of course refers to the enlightened nucleus of realized-energy, the teaching of the final doctrinal wheel where the Buddha teaches the definitive meaning of the "primordial spontaneously present radiant light" (321,5). Thus ultimate reality is "empty" of emotional distortions and so forth, but not empty (in the sense of "devoid of") the spontaneously present enlightened qualities (316,3), though this statement must be understood in the context of Chapter One's discussion of everything's "essence" being empty ("emptiness" in the sense of a dynamic openness rather than a sterile nihilistic absence). On 321,6 Longchenpa mentions one of the psychological benefits of this ultimate teaching,

which is the diminishment of conceit and arrogance since this enlightened nucleus is present equally in all sentient beings, and the feeling of love since one sees the basic continuity or similarity between oneself and all other living beings. While Longchenpa here clearly classifies the second doctrinal wheel as "provisional" and the third as "definitive" (the latter teaching nihilistic emptiness rather than "ultimate emptiness"), some contemporary Nyingma scholars verbally suggested classifying both the second and third doctrinal wheels as definitive, with the former emphasizing the "emptiness" and the latter emphasizing the "radiant light" of the mind's abiding reality, which in fact is a perfect indivisible unity of emptiness and radiant light, original purity and spontaneous presence. However, I have been so far unable to find any passages in Longchenpa's corpus that would support such a view, though his inherent hermeneutical flexibility shouldn't preclude maintaining both interpretative schemes, albeit in different contexts and for different motivations (the motivation for such contemporary tendencies obviously stemming from the ecumenical non-partisan movement in Tibetan Buddhism of the last two centuries, which in part sought to synthesize the various traditions into a common ground of thought).

308. Since both Longchenpa and his adversary would agree that the first cycle is not ultimate, the point here seems to be that if the second cycle's teaching of absolute emptiness alone is of supreme significance (i.e. the "ultimate" teaching), then the subsequent teaching of yet another distinct teaching cycle makes no sense, as the absolute teaching has already been delivered. However if the third cycle is of supreme significance and a further refinement of the second, then the three cycles would reflect an ordered, rational progression to the ultimate teaching based on soteriological considerations (gradually leading disciples to the ultimate teaching with preliminary, provisional doctrines suited to their limitations).

309. *'Phags Pa Yongs Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*; the Sanskrit title is *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* (KK 230,5-231,6; partial translation in Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 245). "Series of doctrines" refers to the various sections and topics of this massive Spiritual Discourse. The parable here involves a mother with an infant son who is still breast feeding, and whom becomes ill. After taking the child to a physician, the physician examines him, makes the appropriate medicine, and gives it to the child, instructing the mother to temporarily not breast feed the child, so as to give the medicine a chance to completely dissolve within the infant's stomach. She thus puts some sour substance on her breasts to discourage her son from sucking on them, even though the child thus temporarily suffers from thirst and frustration (since he doesn't know what is ultimately good for himself, the mother must act according to her superior knowledge of the situation, despite feeling sorry for the child). The ill, confused child is of course ourselves, the physician/mother represents the Buddha himself, the sour substance is the doctrine of absolute emptiness, the disease is dualistic ignorance, and the breast milk is the true richness of the authentic "self", i.e. the enlightened nucleus. Despite the milk/true "self" being present throughout, the compassionate physician/Buddha perceives that such rich life-positive "stuff" cannot be ingested/digested by the child/disciple in throes of his/her disease/poison of emotional distortions (as the disciple would become fixated on his/her own neurotic views of concrete selves, and thus this undeniably true teaching would interfere with the medicinal therapy of the spiritual path), and thus takes the necessary step of cutting off the flow of milk (the teachings of a positive energy beyond total emptiness). Once the medicine/therapy has taken hold to eliminate the virus, then the true life-positive nutrients of milk (the teaching of a positive vibrant energy inherent to the Universe and ourselves) can be given to the child/disciple, who will now properly be sustained and physically/spiritually "grow" via



ingesting it. The allegory itself (preceding the portion Longchenpa here cites) is as follows (230,5):

"...Oh Son of the lineage, a corresponding parable goes like this. A woman is nurturing her small infant son with breast milk. When the child fell sick, the woman became quite upset and sought out a physician. The physician having concocted a medicine of the triad of butter, milk and raw sugar [Tulku Thondup renders as "mixes the medicine with milk and brown sugar], fed it to the child. He then instructed the woman with these words: "Since I gave your son this medicine, for the time being while the medicine is undigested, you shouldn't breast feed him".

Then the woman rubbed her breasts with bile in order that the boy not suck the breast milk. She told her son "I have rubbed my breasts with poison, so its not possible to breast feed". The boy was afflicted by thirst, and though he desired to suck her breast, he was unable to suck as soon as he tasted the bitter flavor.

The medicine having (finally) dissolved, the woman washed her breast clean and said "Come here son! Now you can breast feed!". Though the child was afflicted with thirst, due to his memory of the previous bitter flavor he is unwilling to breast-feed despite his mother's words. Again the mother directed him "Before you drank medicine and until the medicine dissolved, it wasn't right to give you the breast milk. Thus I rubbed it with poison. Now your medicine has dissolved, and thus I have cleaned away the bitter substance, such it no longer tastes bitter!" When she said this, (the boy) at first gradually came near, and then was willing to drink..."

Oh, Son of the Lineage, in order to similarly liberate all sentient beings, the Realized One as well teaches with a strong emphasis on the absence of any self within all sentient beings: this specifies he teaches that "within all sentient beings" there is no type of concrete "self" or "soul", while on TDD 220,1 he then teaches that similarly there is no concrete "self" or "identity" in all phenomena. This would indicate Tulku Thondup's reading of "to all sentient beings" less likely (admittedly such a meaning can be found on TDD 221,1), though this could be a secondary connotation with "all" meaning his teaching of emptiness is widespread (since in fact to say he teaches with a strong emphasis on this sky-like utter emptiness to "each and every" sentient being would be inappropriate, as for the spiritually receptive such misleading emphasis would be unnecessary).

Also, he taught thus in order to dispel the vile view of the "worldly materialists": the "wordy materialists" (*Jig rTen rGyang Phan'Phen*; Lokāyata) refer to a type of nihilistic hedonism common in ancient India, and as such often criticized in Buddhist texts (see GTD 162,6-163,7 for Longchenpa's standard description of their position, and Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One* 64 for a translation of a related passage). In essence, they denied any type of continued existence following death, any karmic causal processes, or any possibility of spiritual liberation, and in general asserted that consciousness is a mere epiphenomenon of the body, advocating a hedonistic lifestyle of "living for the moment". The etymology of this term is those "worldly" beings who "don't accept" (literally "cast far away") future lives, the karmic rule of cause and effect, or the soteriological importance of the religious path, and thus totally reject the true significance of life, impelling depth-awareness of the abiding reality far, far away. DAS provides an alternative etymology as those who are "cast far away by the world", i.e. outcasts from normal civilization. In the current context, the emphasis is on their hedonistic advocacy of

sensual pleasure and materialist philosophy (only the physical/material truly exists), which the Buddha's emphasis on emptiness or no-self is intended to undercut, since it shows the futility of such self-aggrandizing egotism and concentration on sensual pleasure (in that neither a personal "ego" or "objects" have any real status), as well as the illusory nature of our seemingly solid "grip" on a substantial physical and material identity (whether focused on the body as such (which is as equally empty as the mind), or some type of atomic theory). It must be remembered that "self" signifies any enduring, analytically locatable "identity" either in our own psycho-physical being, or the world around us. In a way, these materialists' position is "nihilistic" in the Heideggerian sense, since it involves a radical negation of **Being** in its concentration on the sensually experienced immediately-at-hand and personal pleasure, such that despite its seeming deprecation of our selves (no future life, consciousness as an epiphenomenon, the primacy of the material) in reality it is an assertion of the personal ego and its perceptual frames as absolute, denying any dimension or concern beyond its own self-ish desires and perceptions.

To help bring about these (sentient beings') transformation into a totally pure body through meditation upon the doctrine of "no-self": this line indicates that our contemplation of emptiness will help loosen up our strict fixation on duality and the solidity of the material, such that our own body will ultimately become purified into the pure light energy which its essence (in line with the fundamental belief that our physical state is in a very radical way a concomitant of the neurotic state of our mind, i.e. material corporeality only has status and force under the transcendental conditions of our personal non-recognition of the Universe as self-organizing-in-us). Thus one of the reasons for the Buddha's deceptive emphasis on utter sky-like emptiness is because only such a shocking, radical teaching will shake us out of our complacency, and have a chance to rouse us out of our strong innate beliefs in fundamental dualism and the reality of the material.

Thus, just as that woman rubbed her breast with sour bile for the sake of her son, the Realized One likewise spoke of "the absence of self in all phenomena" so that sentient beings would meditate on emptiness: the Buddha thus taught this absolute and utter emptiness with a negativistic emphasis ("bile") as shock therapy, with the intention of immersing his disciples in emptiness to cleanse away their dualistic fixations, and thereby become "healed" of the pervasive disease of dimmed awareness. In this way, the teaching of sky-like sterile emptiness is a provisional negatively oriented therapy that shouldn't be taken to have some type of ultimate status in reality itself, just as the bile is adventitiously applied to the breast for medicinal reasons, and has no ultimate inherence within the breast itself.

Oh monk, without your becoming frightened, instead just as the mother called the boy to her and he gradually drank the breast milk, O monk, you must also understand the difference - it is not the case that the "the enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" should be said to be non-existent: Tulku Thondup renders "you must also understand the difference" as "you also should identify (yourself with the infant)", which is certainly a possible reading as *Bye Brag* can mean the "details", "particulars", or "distinction". However I have chosen to interpret it as "difference" (as the term is found on TDD 184,2) to indicate that a critical differentiation must be made between the previous and current situation (between the previous distorted neurotic concepts of "self" being rejected and this authentic enlightened nucleus of Buddha-nature), such that we must realize this is an entirely different situation not in the realm of logical thing-based thought.

While at first "panic" or "fright" is useful as it helps to loosen our fixation on the world's solidity and our dualistic structures, ultimately such panic or terror is superfluous since the enlightened nucleus is present without disruption (the flow of milk untainted by the bile). However it is psychologically impossible for us immediately abandon the attitudes and perceptions conditioned by this "emptiness" shock therapy, and we are loathe to entertain any teaching of a positive identity in our total fixation on the doctrine of total emptiness (just as the infant is unwilling to breast feed because of the powerful memory of its bitter taste which is now ingrained in his mind). Yet, just as the boy gradually comes closer and drinks without any of the ill effect such nursing would have had while in the grips of his sickness, gradually we begin to "tune in" to these teachings' inner significance, and thus derive their full life-affirming benefit without any trace of thing-based reifications and emotional reactions (that applied while we were in the grips of the disease of neurosis and dualism). Thus one can also understand the "breast" itself as the enlightened nucleus, with the giving of the untainted breast milk as the Buddha's teaching of the enlightened nucleus, and the flow of milk as the infinite value we derive from such teaching, as well the presence of this nucleus within us. The infant's illness is our straying via dimmed awareness, while the compassionate mother is the Buddha himself, who advocates meditation on emptiness as a temporary means to overcome our sedimented fixations on substantiality (rubs the bile on her breast), and thus enable us to really appreciate the true significance of the enlightened nucleus or Buddha-nature (as the child can now imbibe milk and grow in a healthy manner). Thus utter emptiness is a sour negativistic teaching only useful as "medicine" for our universal neurosis, while the enlightened nucleus or Buddha-nature then is the definitive life-giving flow of positive energy temporarily obscured by such necessary expedients (with "negativistic" emptiness signifying pure, sterile emptiness devoid of the spontaneous dynamics of radiant light, and not the "ultimate" emptiness described in Chapter One as "original purity", the latter being the open, unrestricted, unmaterialized quality of the Universe which is beyond the opposition of "self" and "other").

310. This is evidently another quote from *The Discourse on the Great and Exalted Total Passage Beyond Misery*, but I was unable to locate it in the sections containing the other passages Longchenpa quotes from.

311. *brTag* must be corrected to *rTag*. "Permanence" and "non-permanence" are a thing-based opposition deriving from particular discrete things which we can perceive with our senses, and evaluate as "continuous" or "discontinuous". However Being is not a thing which we can perceptually enframe as "this" or "that", and then evaluate as "continuous" or "discontinuous", "large" or "small", "good" or "evil". While our fixation on utilitarian perceptual categories is understandable due to our evolutionary need to survive as a species in a potentially hostile environment, it does not follow that we may extend these perceptual categories into some imagined ontological realms existent beyond our particular perspectives - we must ask ourselves what it might mean to think beyond thought, to perceive beyond perception, to be beyond being.

312. This refers to the beliefs of others described on the following page, who assert the true inner self is the size of a thumb, or like a solar disc, and so forth. All of these beliefs revolve around considering the self as something which from its own side has discernible and discursively accessible features (*dNgos Po Rang mTshan*), such as every-day substantial things which make up our worlds - a vase, a thumb, a solar light.

313. This allegory (see below) involves a magnificent sword belonging to a king, which at some point is lost. A poor man subsequently talks about this sword in a dream, on the basis of which the authorities seize and interrogate him under the suspicion of having been involved in the possible theft of this sword. Thus "disputing" refers to the King interrogating the poor man about this sword, with the result that the entire crowd of the poor man, his captor, and the King's ministers all try to describe the sword, when in reality they know nothing about the true nature and characteristics of that sword (though they all had heard of the sword, they had never actually seen it). Thus this is an allegory for how false teachers delude us, ignorantly posturing in their deluded teachings of the "real" and "ultimate" self, causing vast controversies (philosophical as well as social) to rise because of other people's belief and disbelief in their words. Yet in actuality they know nothing of the real self, of its magnificence and empty reality, except for faint echoes of its presence/absence. Actually the story specifies that the poor person did see the sword, but only briefly without really getting a good look or touching it: the poor man/deluded ordinary individuals, based on a brief/faint apprehension/intimation of the sword/self, senselessly mumbles about the sword/self, and others, hearing these mumbles, dispute and/or believe them, while the original person's subsequent description of the sword/self is based on his knowledge of the mere word (and faint, obscured memory of the sword/self), since he has no real knowledge of the actual reality of the sword/self. Yet the actual sword (the enlightened nucleus) continues to exist, while the dream/imagined sword is the normal conceptions of a permanent self, distorted and ridden with emotional neuroses and fixations, our fantasy of the radiant empty reality of the enlightened nucleus-heart of spiritual awakening. The Extremists here are comparable to the poor man mumbling in his sleep, while those Buddhists who confuse the Extremists' discourses on reified "selves" and "godheads" with the Buddha-nature (the real sword) are like the man in the story who seized the poor man thinking he possessed the real sword (they only hear the words, and act up them without thought). This would appear to be a very appropriate metaphor for the numerous sectarian controversies in Tibet over the years, which generally degenerated into an egotistical exchange of insults based on such sterile classifications as "intrinsically self-empty" (*Rang sTong*) and "extrinsically other-empty" (*gZhan sTong*).

314. *'Phags Pa Yongs Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*; the Sanskrit title is *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (KK 255,6-256,4). The entire story (KK 254,1-256,5) goes thus:

"...The Victoriously Transcendent One related this precept: "Listen to the following parable. A prince became friends with a poor man, and they visited each other's residences. At that time the poor man caught a glimpse of an extremely splendid sword of the prince's, and felt covetous of it. Subsequently the prince went to another country, carrying the sword with himself.

At a later date, that poor man slept at another's home, and while asleep meaninglessly mumbled "the sword", "the sword". Thus a man near him happened to hear his mumbling, and seizing him, presented him to the King. Then the King asked the poor man: "What's this about you saying "the sword", "the sword"?"

The man, having spoken in detail as to how he had come to know of the sword, said: "Though your majesty may have my body, limbs and appendages all cut up into little pieces, I simply don't have the sword. Because I became friends with this prince, I saw with my own

eyes that the prince had a splendid sword, yet I couldn't even touch it with my hands, much less steal it!"

The King then said: "This sword you saw, what was its shape actually like?" He answered: "Oh great King, I saw it as like a horn". The King having heard those words laughed and said: "Don't fret any longer, you may go where you like! Since I certainly have no such sword in my treasury, what need is there to speculate about what you saw in the possession of this prince of yours!" Then the King questioned his ministers: "Have you seen such a sword?", and subsequently passed away not long afterwards.

Then, that King's regent having been coronated as King, the new King asked his ministers: "Previously did you see such a sword in the treasury?" The ministers replied: "We have seen it previously". The King then again asked: "When you saw it, what kind of shape did you see?" They replied: "Oh Great King, we saw it as like a horn". The King then said: "Such a sword simply doesn't exist in my treasury". Like that, for four generations of King, though they inquired about this sword, they didn't get to the bottom of the matter.

Subsequently, after many years had elapsed, that prince who had previously fled returned from the other country and was installed as King. Having become enthroned, he spoke to the ministers: "Have you seen this sword?" The ministers replied: "Oh Great King we have seen it". He then said: "If you saw it, what's its shape like?" One minister said: "Oh divine son, its extremely radiant, like the Utpala flower". Another said "Its like a horn", while yet another said "Its red in color, like a unusually intense blaze of fire", and still another said "Its like a black snake".

At that time the King laughed and said to the ministers "You haven't seen my true sword!"

Oh Son of the Lineage, Spiritual Hero and Great Heroic One, its like that. If having arrived in the world I taught the authentic characteristics of the "self", the immediately ensuing situation would be analogically just like when the prince took up the splendid sword, and fled to another country..."

At this point the passage continues with Longchenpa's quoted passage. It would seem necessary to add some details to the story to make full sense of it: apparently the prince at the beginning of the story absconded with this sword, and fled to another country for unknown reasons, such that absence of the sword became known to the king, and evidently to the populace at large, as evidenced by the immediate arrest of the poor man merely for mumbling about a sword in his sleep. This indicates that in all living beings there is a vague intuition of such an "identity" as the enlightened nucleus, though in their ignorance they can only speak wildly and erroneously about what this "identity" or "self" entails. In talking with the poor man, the King was convinced he knew nothing of the sword's absence, and hence mocked him to discourage endless gossip and "crank" reports, while his subsequent question to the ministers, as well as his successors' inquiries about the sword, shows there was a continued concern on his part about its missing. This is analogous to the Buddha's teaching "no-self" to discourage the misguided philosophies and religions offering all sorts of substantial, reified identities or substances as ultimate, as well as our own innate sense of an "ego" and material reality. Despite his insistent teaching of such strict emptiness or no-self, he however remains concerned that we are ultimately led to the positive, ultimate reality of an inherently dynamic luminous emptiness, or open self-organizing light, and thus continues to monitor our sequential progress ("interrogate") along the contemplative path so as to

discern the appropriate moment to reveal this "enlightened nucleus" ("sword"), all the while squashing "crank" accounts to prevent our going astray. When the moment arrives, the "prince" suddenly shows up from nowhere with the true sword in hand, slicing through our illusions to reveal its radiant glory.

When the Listeners and Self-Awakened Ones ask these sentient beings what the characteristics are like of this so-called "self": I have corrected Longchenpa's genitive (which would make the various opinions here expressed belong to the Listeners and Self-Awakened Ones) to an instrumental based on KK, so that the Listeners and Self-Awakened Ones are asking this question to sentient beings. After all the former are enlightened Buddhists (even if of limited scope), while these opinions expressed are expressly against the key Buddhist tenant of no-self, and ascribed to "ordinary individuals". While the only analogue in the story is when the Prince become King and asks his ministers for their various opinions as to what the sword is like, TDD 222,7 clearly says the Listeners and Self-Awakened Ones do not realize or know the enlightened nucleus/sword. Because of this, they appear similar to the succession of Kings who preceded the Prince's taking throne, who didn't get to the bottom of this matter (the actual sword), but at least knew that the fantastic descriptions of the sword by the ministers were utterly fallacious (i.e. no self like that exists). ZMYT2 317,7 specifies that the Listeners and Self Awakened Ones (who follow lower Buddhist teachings) realize the absence of self in individuals, but not that in phenomena (believing in atomic structure as having an ultimate status, and so forth).

Thus these ordinary beings don't understand the real characteristics of the so-called "self", just like the ministers: I have corrected TDD's *bLun Po* to *bLon Po* on the basis of KK.

Thus these vulgar childish people develop vile views which continue unabated. Therefore in order to eradicate such vile views, the Realized One taught "no-self", which in the allegory correlates to the King telling his ministers, "I have no sword like that in my treasury: the warped description of a "self" by we ignorant people who senselessly ramble on resembles the rampant rumors and descriptions about the king's sword by those who have no idea what it is really like. Thus just as the King rejects these idiotic descriptions in order not to be bothered by endless crank reports of the lost sword, saying he has no sword that fits those descriptions, the Buddha himself rejects these fantastic theories of the "self", saying that he knows of no self like that. However, just as the actual sword in all its majestic brilliance does in fact exist (though the others' descriptions of it are only distorted reflections of its reality), the Buddha does know of his actual self, completely radiant in its utter emptiness, a reality far beyond and unlike the "self" proposed by others, a "self" which is "no-self" at all.

315. Having overcome doubts about this enduring reality of Buddhahood ("isn't it contradicted by the teaching of emptiness?", and so on), we gain an inner certainty as to our being essentially luminous beings participating in the Universe's innate intelligence, and thus are no longer tortured by doubts as to the importance of spiritual practices. Having thus overcome attachment to the material and societal values as we awaken to the reality of the universe's indestructible radiant light, we naturally rejoice in the rare opportunities of enlightened vision offered by our Master without worrying as to the futility of our efforts, or conventional opportunities we thus fail to take advantage on. By considering the rarity of the direct vision of our own (though usually latent) inherent Buddha-nature, along with the miraculous qualities that stem out of this vision, it is quite natural that we should be filled with joy not only at the prospect of, but also at each stage of, deepening realization.

316. "The natural intermediate existence" refers to the space between birth and being afflicted with a fatal disease, the span of time in which one has a particular life form or incarnation. Thus whereas all beings experience, however briefly, these visions of reality in post-death experiences (termed "the intermediate existence of reality"), those rare individuals who have properly trained in contemplation will experience them in this very life prior to death. These visions are "self-presencing" or "natural manifestations" (*Rang sNang*) in that they involve the Ground's luminosity, or its "nature" (and thus is naturally present out of the depths of the macrocosmic universe), and in that their display wells up out of our own inherent microcosmic core of pristine luminosity and is thus spontaneously present rather than contrived or manufactured. Upon death there is a brief opening of our vision following the divesture of our gross materiality (our previous life form, and sedimented habitual perceptions), during which these visions naturally arise even to those without spiritual refinement since reality pervades all sentient beings alike, though unlike the visionaries mentioned above they will fail to recognize it as non-dual with themselves, and thus neurotically react to its presence with fear and so forth, such that the visions soon fade to be replaced by the comforting illusions of ordinary distorted vision. In contrast to this, for the visionary who experiences such self-presencing visions in his/her own lifetime with full self-recognition, the impact of these visions is immense as they enable him/her to fully unfold the enfold Buddha-nature within, and assume the status of a fully Enlightened One with remarkable psychic capacities.

317. *'Phags Pa Yongs Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*; the Sanskrit title is *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (KK 233,7-234,1).

318. *'Phags Pa Yongs Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*; the Sanskrit title is *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (KK 250,6-251,3).

...even though they reside on up to the tenth spiritual level following their total completion of the transcendental consummations: in general, each of the ten meditative levels of the Spiritual Heroes (see "ten spiritual levels") is correlated with the perfection of one consummation (or the first six levels to the first six consummations), while the attainment of full enlightenment occurs on the eleventh stage (Longchenpa elsewhere also discusses an expanded analysis of sixteen levels). While in general the attainment of the tenth spiritual level is exceedingly difficult and marks deep realization, here it is specified to show the extreme profundity and subtlety of the Buddha-nature since even these great beings fail to experience its glory.

...and were totally deceived: I have corrected TDD's *bsDus* to *bsLus* on the basis of KK.

319. *Seng Ge rTsal rDzogs Chen Po'i rGyud* (NGB1 614,6; Ati2 308,5; also cited by TCD2 64,6; translation in Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 228). CBD 322,1 explains this quotation in terms of the analogy of the hatching of the legendary Khyung bird (*Garuda*):

"...Because the offspring of a Khyung bird has completely developed wings even while within the egg, it is able to soar in the sky the moment it becomes free of the egg's encasing. In the same manner, the practitioner of the natural Great Perfection has the completely developed wings of realization even while within this corporeal body's encasing, yet even should s/he within this very lifetime exhaust the contamination of the dualistic distortions

inherent in believing in a concrete self, as long as s/he is not divested of this physical body which must be discarded since its corporeality is the ripened fruit of (previous) contamination, the dynamic qualities of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses will be unable to directly manifest in their full extent. However, when s/he divests her/himself of its corporeality, the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses which are self-presencing within the post-death intermediate state of pure reality will light-up, and by thus self-recognizing whatever manifests, s/he will be free within the space of the 'Totally Positive One...'

Analogically, it's just like a child isn't directly manifest in the encasing of its mother's womb or egg, yet although now obscured, will eventually emerge when its own inherent dynamism completely ripens: "encasing" or "seal" in refers to how the fully formed child is present within, yet is not manifest to our perception due to its being "sealed up" inside the protecting womb or egg, which functions as an "encasing" protecting it from outside predators as well as preventing it from going into full force operation. When this inner embryo's potency fully ripens, this outer covering is rent open, and the embryo is born - in the same manner, primordial gnosis is present within the "womb" or "egg" of our ordinary body and mind, with its vibrant energy in latent "incubation" not yet able to burst free of the surrounding "shell" of our corporeality and neurosis into full exterior manifestation.

As soon as this neurosis-ridden body is flung aside, you will directly encounter the self-presencing objective display: I have corrected TDD's reading of *rNam Dag Lus* to *rNam rTog Lus* ("this neurosis ridden body") on the basis of Ati, TCD2 and CBD 322,5 (*Dag* and *rTog* are quite easily confused for each other either verbally or scribally). Literally "divisive ideation-body", this reading indicates that you cast aside this body ridden with neurotic conceptuality (in the sense of Freudian descriptions of how our body's libidinal energy is "genitalized" and otherwise distorted under the conditions of mankind's "universal neurosis"), thereby enabling the heart of primordial gnosis in our inner being to well up. It could also be interpreted as "neurotic psychic activity and the body", but as interpreted above it powerfully evokes how our body is the product of our karmic traces as the depository and ongoing creation of our lack of recognition (neurosis) and consequent pervasive neurotization and materialization of existence, with the connotation that our corporeality only endures as long as we believe it to be, rather than being an inescapable fact of the Universe. CBD 322,6 in its follow-up comments emphasizes that this dissolution of the corporeal body shouldn't be misunderstood as total dissipation into nothingness:

"...Though the physical body no longer manifests for such a visionary, since it has been purified away into the expansive awakening of wisdom-energy, there is the "Emanational Body of complete activities": in the present, s/he acts for the spiritual welfare of each member of his/her retinue, while subsequently, s/he acts for the welfare of all embodied beings as limitless as the sky..."

TDD's reading of *rNam Dag Lus* could be interpreted as "...in meditative purification, the body...", or even "with its through purity (revealed) the ordinary body is cast aside), indicating that the body's nature is actually the thoroughly pure mandala of deities (see Chapter Two and Chapter Three) despite our failure to see it as such. This pure nature comes to the fore when the visionary "flings aside his ordinary body" and breaks free of ordinary impure physical limitations (corresponding to death in ordinary individuals), such that its self-presencing luminous energy is mandalically encounter as an objective dimension present to our own vision, though in actuality being no other than our own inner reality's own dynamics. This display of lights is experienced temporarily by all beings in after-death



experience, and definitively in this very embodiment by the visionary. Thus the instant you escape from this confining shell of physicality (in meditation or in death), the self-presencing objective display in its purity confronts you in a moment of naked vision, your own true potency shining forth: if you self-recognize it, freedom; if you panic in non-recognition, you stray. KGYT2 195,5:

*When freed of dimmed awareness, this body of the elemental energies  
Is "completed" (i.e. exhausted) within primordial gnosis' range without remainder...*

TCD2 64,4 introduces TDD's quotation here by speaking of the "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy", and then says the following:

"...If you think that this enlightened nucleus of realized-energy should be directly visible to us if it is present (in all living beings as I described it), my response is as follows. Since the Spiritual Body's luminous presencing is encased by this corporeal body, it is not within the scope of our vision. Nevertheless, though now analogically this sun-like (enlightened nucleus) is present in the darkness of the body's clouds, having been introduced to its fundamental reality within your heart and shown the empty bindu lamp which is its "mark", you will believe (and become committed to its realization). In that Enlightened Speech is obscured by our ordinary speech, and the Enlightened Mind is obscured by our ordinary mind, we do not see them. But when a diligent individual meditatively cultivates the four visions to their optimal limits, they become visible right in the present moment for him/her, and the pure self-presencings shine forth for a time, just as they are in the post-death intermediate existence. Now, (however), they are obscured by the sealing shell of karmic traces and inveterate propensities, just as the Khyung bird is obscured by the egg's shell..."

*Within this pure lighting-up of primordial gnosis, you see the truth of the Buddha's expansive awakening:* the truth is that the Buddha's (*Sangs rGyas*) enlightenment (*Byang Chub*) as the Universe's fully actualized intelligence (*Rig Pa sTong gSal*) is simultaneously empty (corresponding to "awakening" (*Sangs/Byang*) and the second wheel), and radiant (corresponding to "expansive" (*rGyas/Chub*) and the third wheel), rather than being a simple non-dynamic passing away into nothingness (corresponding to those who claim utter emptiness exclusively as the ultimate truth).

320. Precisely our own pristine awareness is the enlightened nucleus or "Buddha-nature" that inheres within us, while "primordial gnosis" or "gnostic energy" (*Ye Shes*) signifies that core-awareness' dynamism (here referred to as the "qualities of its pervading presence") as it expresses itself in intrinsically pure fivefold dimensions, which then are similarly fivefold as reflected in our impure experience/being where its intensity is diluted and distorted. Longchenpa here specifies the one-to-one correlations existing between the sets of pure quintets and impure quintets (the five Buddhas with the five psycho-physical components, and so on), with the key being that the former are the ultimate source of the latter, and as such, continue to be pervasively present within their impure counterparts at all times, while the inverse relationship does not pertain - in other words, even within ordinary sentient beings, these quintets of pure gnostic energy continue to be present, while in the realization of Buddhahood the corresponding impure quintets that were in the ascendancy now dissipate, leaving only the pure fivefold energy (expressing itself as the five Spiritual Bodies, the five lights, the five primordial gnoses, and so on). This is the basis for the famous tantric statements saying that if the five emotional distortions are present, it ineluctably follows that the five primordial gnoses are present as well, while the stronger the emotional distortions are

in a given person, the more intense will be the gnoses' manifestation in contemplation (since the former's energy derives from the latter).

321. I have switched the order of the first two items here in the list of impure quintets to correspond sequentially to the preceding list of pure quintets.

322. See the relevant section below where the corresponding three pure quintets are explicated as the five Spiritual Bodies (the five aspects of the essence), the five Lights (the five aspects of nature), and the five primordial gnoses (the five aspects of compassionate resonance). These three are here specified as having their impure counterparts in the fivefold characteristics of our "three gateways", i.e. human existence as encapsulated in our ordinary body, speech and mind. Just all the pure quintets here specified are in fact merely different aspects of the Ground's triune identity ("essence", "nature", and "compassionate resonance"), all these impure quintets are also mere variations deriving from our own basic triune identity ("physical", "verbal", and "mental") - the former is the triune identity of the macrocosmic Universe, and the latter the triune identity of microcosmic human existence. Thus, while in general essence "essence" correlates to "body", "nature" to "speech", and "compassionate resonance" with "mind" (see TCD1 295,4 and TCD2 65,3), below Longchenpa provides no specific fivefold analysis of the impure triad of body, speech, and mind, despite doing so for the pure triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance (correlating them with the five Spiritual Bodies, the five lights, and the five primordial gnoses respectively). We can assume that the fivefold classifications of body, speech, and mind simply should be correlated to the impure counterparts of the pure quintets to which the essence, nature, and compassionate resonance are correlated to: body correlates to the five psycho-physical components, speech correlates to the five elements (keeping in mind the connection of speech to breath/winds, which are themselves merely currents of the elemental energies), and mind correlates to the five emotional distortions. Neither the pure nor impure triad is given a new fivefold classification, since in essence the other quintets are merely facets of this fundamental triadic nature of energy, both in its pure and impure expression. This is in line with the general trend of Tantric Buddhism to classify energy predominantly into dyads, triads and quintets (four with a centering fifth), with the various classifications understood as mere expansions and contractions of each other.

Finally, though in general the "essence" is correlated with "body" and "compassionate resonance" with "mind", these correlations should not be understood as rigid and exclusive. In other contexts, the essence is correlated with the Reality Body (which generally correlates with our mind), nature is correlated with the Enjoyment Body (which generally correlates with our speech), and compassionate resonance is correlated with the Emanational Bodies (which generally correlate to body). In fact, in the subsequent discussion (226) as well as elsewhere, Longchenpa generally utilizes "physical" and "mental" imagery in describing both the essence and compassionate resonance, illustrating the fluidity of these symbolic sets of correlations.

323. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 349,6; Ati2 479,1). "Totally pervaded" indicates that it pervades all living beings with its fivefold dynamism, as well as connoting that the nucleus itself is pervaded by these quintets, i.e. it not an inert, passive stillness but rather is brimming with vibrant energy. In the fourth line, Longchenpa's preface clearly indicates interpreting "five dimensions" as referring to the five spiritual affinities, though NGB and Ati both have a gloss referring to "uncontrived, unadulterated, untransformed, unobscured, and so forth".

324. See KGYT2 220,6-221,2 for a similar account of how all five Spiritual Bodies represent facets of awareness. TDD's account of i, ii, and iii should be understood as follows.

(i) Awareness' primordial gnosis brings about the illumination of spontaneous primordial radiation from within reality's facets (gnosis' own objective sphere), and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of the Illuminator: reality (*Chos Nyid*) is not only primordial gnosis' "own object" (*Rang Yul*) in that gnosis "knows" reality (unlike we who are obsessed with what is near-at-hand, and utterly oblivious to their abiding reality), but it is also gnosis' "own sphere" (*Rang Yul*) in that despite gnosis' dynamism, it remains in seamless union with the expanse of reality (unlike our fragmentizing psychic operations, which dwell in the realm of discursively processed discrete phenomena, amidst the general background of cyclic existence); it is also gnosis' "natural objective sphere" (*Rang Yul*) in the sense that primordial gnosis presences as the five radiating light, which are the "observable facets" of reality itself. Thus this line is difficult to render given the ambiguity of *Yul*, which can mean the "object" of a cognitive act, the "objective manifestation" of a phenomena, and the "sphere" or "objective domain" of a phenomena, i.e. its location or residence. Reality's "facets" refer to its observable, manifest dimension, as opposed to its depth-radiant emptiness beyond all manifestation - in short, "reality" refers here to primordial gnosis in its dynamic capacity to light up as an objective display, whereby it "illuminates" a world.

(ii) Awareness' primordial gnosis is unshakable like an indestructible diamond scepter, immutable and unchanging, and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of the Unshakable One: the "Unshakable One" can also be referred to as the "Adamantine Hero" (*Vajrasattva*), and images the adamantine, unchanging quality of awareness as it remains undisturbed and unsoiled by all the turbulence of cyclic existence which whirls around it.

(iii) Awareness' primordial gnosis is primordially endowed with the dynamic qualities of radiant light, which manifest in an intensified fashion when you contemplatively take it into your experience, and thus emerges as the Spiritual Body of Precious Matrix: the "dynamic qualities of radiant light" refer to the luminous forms of the seminal nuclei, Spiritual Bodies and rainbow-colored lights, which we experience as "precious" by virtue of their self-evident purity and radiance. While this rich luminosity of primordial gnosis is present within us primordially, by virtue of engaging in sustained contemplation we can "activate" its energy, such that it "intensifies" until its energy level breaches an internal threshold and spills out into active manifestation so that our entire perceptual field is pervaded by its luminous presence (a process detailed in Longchenpa's account of Direct Transcendence contemplation (see Chapters Six, Seven, Eight and Nine). Since our own awareness has this intrinsic potency to act as the source of this precious self-presencing luminosity, it manifests as the Precious Matrix Buddha.

325. *Rang Shar* (passage not located yet).

326. *gSang sNying*; the corresponding Sanskrit title is *Guhyagarbha Tantra* (see Dorje's thesis 185 for his critical edition of the Tibetan translation, p. 437 for his English translation). "Component" is here translated as singular since Longchenpa's commentary interprets it as referring to awareness' simultaneous "emptiness and appearance", the "branches" of which are the five psycho-physical components. The "adamantine" psycho-physical components refers to each components corresponding pure energetic source in awareness' fivefold dynamism (imaged as the five Buddhas). This term "adamantine" plays off the typical

description of our subtle body as the "adamantine body", which indicates our own ordinary body is the indestructible purity of diamond-like awareness, despite its superficial self-perception as corporeal and contaminated.

327. *bDud rTsi mNgon Par 'Byung Ba'i rGyud* (text not identified yet). This passage provides the one-to-one correlations between the five components and the five Buddhas.

328. These five classifications of primordial gnosis are discussed in detail in Chapter Eleven, and, along with the five Buddhas, form the basic fivefold classification which all the others relate to. See KGYT2 221,2-221,5 for a similar account of how all five primordial gnoses represent facets of awareness. In TDD's account, i, iii, and iv should be understood in the following terms.

(i) Awareness itself clearly reflects phenomenon in general as well as their individual forms, which is the mirror-like primordial gnosis: awareness reflects phenomena both in terms of their generic qualities abstracted out from specific instances, and in their specific particularities (the general concept of a "tree", as well as the particular details of each individual tree). There could also be a connotation that it reflects external "phenomena in general", as well as "one's own form", i.e. one's own body image. Alternatively, "phenomena in general" (*Chos sPyi*) could be understood as our mental image of conceptually processed phenomena (*Chos Kyi Don sPyi*), while "their individual forms" refers to their own form as sensed in our non-conceptual direct sensory awareness of them, or simply as independent of our sensual perception/reflection of that form, which are phantasmagoric reflections in the mirror of primordial gnosis. For example, TDD 277,1 has the related expression "the characteristics of the inherent and general qualities of processed phenomena" (*Rang Dang sPyi'i Chos mTshan Nyid*), which roughly could be interpreted as the phenomena's own appearance (*Rang mTshan*), and our mental image of it (*sPyi mTshan*), or as "inherent" (*Rang*) referring to each phenomena's specific qualities (the bulbousness of a vase) which it doesn't share with other phenomena, while "general" (*sPyi*) refers to the general characteristics (impermanence, etc.) which it shares with other phenomena.

This mirroring process is a key dynamic in both the Universe's inception and its ongoing evolution, which in a sense can be understood as Being mirroring itself, while it also pertains to the fully enlightened stance wherein all phenomena are clearly reflected without distortion in the stainless radiant mirror of awareness. The last part of this chapter explains in detail how all the phenomena we normally think of as external, "material" phenomena are actually present within and as dimensions of awareness from the very beginning, which are somehow "mirrored" outwards.

(iii) Within awareness the specifics of all phenomenon and of (all living beings' individual intellectual and spiritual) capacities are radiantly clear without any confusion, which is the discerning primordial gnosis: "capacities" (*dBang Po*) connotes an Awakened One's incisive insight into the "capabilities" of each living being, such that s/he is acutely aware of what each disciple is "up to" in terms of intellectual studies, contemplative practices, and ethical codes (which within us is reflected in the ability to accurately "take stock" of one's own abilities, as well as "take the measure" of others). Alternatively (and much less likely - see TCD2 67,4 and elsewhere for this exact term as clearly meaning "capabilities"), *dBang Po* could also indicate our "sensory faculties", such that all the specifics that our sensory organs register (colors, sounds, etc.) are clearly perceived without any confusion or vagueness. Either way, the basic significance is that awareness has this capacity to incisively register and

discern an infinite diversity of details without jumbling them up into an inchoate swelter of jarring sensations (such as blind person registers upon gaining sight for the first time), and this is the "discerning gnostic energy".

(iv) Awareness itself is naturally and inherently free without any obstacles or impediments, which is the efficacious primordial gnosis: "efficacious gnostic energy" refers to the intrinsic freedom of awareness, which means that it has already "accomplished" its cosmic "task" or telos of freedom without any impediment, since it is primordially self-enlightened. In general "work" or "goals" involve activity aimed at "resolution" of the task such that one is "free" to relax, and enjoy the fruits of labor - as such, this intrinsic freedom of awareness indicates that it incarnates perfectly efficient activity, as it is always already completely at ease with itself, and relaxing in a state of natural liberation.

329. *rTsal rDzogs* (NGB1 593,4; Ati2 284,2)

330. *Rin Po Che sPungs Pa* (passage not located in NGB and Ati).

331. *bDe Chen sGeg Pa Māmakī'i rGyud* (text not identified yet). This passage identifies the pure facets of awareness' gnostic energy that each of the five main emotional distortions are distorted, low-energy derivatives of, providing a one-to-one correspondence between the pure and impure quintets.

332. See KGYT2 222,1-2 for a similar account of how the five lights all represent facets of awareness.

In TDD's account, "what seems to be" indicates these are not merely the colors that form our visual data, but rather indicate energy frequencies which these colors evoke metaphorically: each color of the spectrum evokes certain emotions in us, just as the various musical notes of the scale have their characteristic vibration within our inner psychic life. In addition, their rainbow spectrum signifies the pure fivefold radiation of awareness as it radiates out to become the "fabric" of the Universe, which in the case of non-recognition becomes solidified into the five coarse elements. Four colors also can be correlated to the Awakened One's four types of enlightened activity (see TCD1 249,4ff) - his/her pacification, enrichment, control, and wrathful subjugation - while the fifth represents his/her enlightened activity in general. The following makes brief indications of the qualities of each color that serve to make it the appropriate metaphor for the quality of awareness in question.

i) White: this color indicates utter immaculate purity utterly free of any type of turbidity or dirt, like a fresh blanket of snow stretching out towards the horizon, or the crystal clear water of a glacial lake completely free of any sediment or plant growth. It corresponds to water energy, and the enlightened activity of pacification or serenity.

ii) Yellow: this color in general is connected to the fertility and richness of the earth/soil and the color of the autumn harvest (including the sun's rays, which enable life to flourish on our planet), as well as the preciousness of gold, and thus evokes the dynamic qualities of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosés as completely present within the jeweled amulet of awareness. It corresponds to earth energy, and the enlightened activity of enrichment or expansion.

iii) *Red*: red is the color of dynamism (fire, warmth) and life (blood, rising and setting sun), as well as the color of royalty, in which sense it evokes the empowerments or initiations whereby our Master "empowers" us to participate in spiritual majesty (the symbolism of the empowerments is drawn from ancient rites of royal coronation, and so on). Thus red light energy signifies how awareness is "empowered" already to do everything it has to do, and is primordially the natural "King" of the universe. It corresponds to fire energy, and the enlightened activity of control, or assertive power.

iv) *Green*: this color is above all that of activity, such as the natural upsurge of green vegetation every spring, and thus perfectly evokes the natural dynamic activity of awareness, which remains totally divorced from egotistic exertion and striving (like the natural potent thrust of new plant life in the rain forest). It corresponds to wind energy, and is either associated with the enlightened activity of "wrathful subjugation" (the fury of activity), or has no separate correlation to the fourfold enlightened activities since it fuels all enlightened activity in general.

v) *Blue*: this color indicates the unchanging depth factor, like the awe inspiring deep blue of the infinite sky and ocean, and thus denotes this unchanging depth of awareness. It corresponds to space energy, and is either associated with the enlightened activity of wrathful subjugation (the connection is unclear to me), or has no separate correlation since it is the very matrix of all activity, the space within which everything takes place.

333. *gSer Phreng* (text not identified yet). See the first section of Chapter Two for an account of the mechanism by which our clinging transforms these pure light hues into the materialized solidity of the five elements (which involves the radical theory that the entire material structure of our world is in co-involution and co-evolution with our psychic interpretation (not necessarily conscious) of it).

334. *gSang sNyng*; the corresponding Sanskrit title is *Guhyagarbha Tantra* (see Dorje's thesis 185 for his critical edition of the Tibetan translation, p. 437 for his English translation, and p. 444 for his English translation of Longchenpa's commentary). The original Tibetan reads somewhat differently than Longchenpa here cites it, though the meaning is substantially identical. These five "consorts" are the female counterparts to the five Buddhas, each pair of which is iconographically depicted as engaging in sexual union (the female sitting in the male's lap such that they are face to face with each other). This passage again correlates the fivefold pure gnostic energy with the fivefold solidified neuroticized energy-as-we-know-it, basing itself on symbolic correspondences of the "energetic quality" of each. See my appendix on this fivefold symbolism for further correlations of the five consorts to the five Buddhas, and so on.

335. See KGYT2 221,5-222,1 for a similar account of how all five spiritual affinities represent facets of awareness. "Spiritual affinity" (*Rigs*) has been translated as "Buddha families" by some (literally "type" or "lineage"), and could be translated more precisely as a type of spiritual "genotype": it refers to the fivefold nature of gnostic energy as five characteristic "types" with particular combinations of features that a groups of deities can be classified under (just as a biological genotype is "a group of organisms each having the same combination of hereditary traits"). The corresponding fivefold seed-energy is the five primordial gnosers themselves (which can be imaged as the five Buddhas), and from their multidimensional energetics a wide diversity of other fivefold factors manifest, with each

being traceable back to one of these five Buddhas as its ultimate source, and to which it retains an enduring "affinity". In the mandala of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, each one of the five Buddhas is surrounded by mandalically arranged subsidiary deities of concordant energy, and hence a given Buddha with its concordant deities is imaged as a "family", with the latter deriving from the former's "lineage". As I mentioned above, this affinity can also be classified as twofold: a primordial naturally present affinity with enlightenment in that our mind's nature is always ready the luminously radiant empty mind-as-such, and an "actualized" or "evolved" affinity which is the manifest enlightenment of a Buddha which "unfolds" the natural affinity by dispelling the stains of ignorance via contemplative diligence. The existential import of such "affinities" is to evoke the fundamental affinity of the Universe-as-such to our own being, which we experience as a "calling" or distant inner voice challenging us to shake off our ego-illusions and explore the path leading back to our own origins (and those of the Universe), forsaking thing-based knowing for a ground-less journey into the liminal zone between beings and Being, between the Universe's primordial vibrant intelligence and our own particular limited modes of consciousness (Guenther aptly puts it as the presence of Being within us as a challenge to find ourselves - *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* I 52). TDD's explanation of i, ii, and iii should be understood as follows.

(i) Previously the Buddhas of the past were expansively awakened through their vision of awareness itself (i.e. the enlightened nucleus), and "thus proceeded" to the level of Buddhahood, such that there is a "Realized affinity" (literally "thus-proceeded" affinity): a standard epithet of the Buddha is the "One who has Thus Proceeded" (*De bZhin Du gShegs Pa*), which I have translated as the "Realized One": the "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" literally translates as "the nucleus of the One who has Thus Proceeded". There is a certain ambiguity in the term "gShegs Pa" which, though often meaning "depart", can mean "to come" as well as "to go"; the term "*De bZhin*" can connote the expression for "as-is" or "suchness" (*De bZhin Nyid*), resulting in the meaning "arrived at suchness". Awareness is present within our being in terms of this fivefold affinity, with this first affinity of "realization" or "the realized Buddha" relating to the Awakened One's enlightenment directly stemming from their penetration of awareness itself.

(ii) Awareness itself never undergoes mutation or change at any time no matter where a living being may be born (hell, the human sphere, etc.), and thus there is an "adamantine affinity": "adamantine" or "Vajra" connotes being impervious to destruction, as well as being beyond change or alteration. Awareness as present in every single living being cannot be extinguished even by death, and remains unsullied at its core no matter how degraded a given living being may become, such that we all, by light of being fundamentally aware-ing beings, have this basic spiritual affinity with the indestructible adamant reality of the universe (an affinity also present within the tiniest of insects, which accounts for the often noted reluctance of Buddhists to take the lives of insects, especially notable in contrast to the callous anthropo-centricity of European-based cultures, which nevertheless somehow manage to promote themselves as uniquely concerned with the individual life (i.e. human life).

(iii) Since awareness is unsullied by defects though it resides in cyclic existence, there is a "lotus affinity": the "lotus affinity" we possess by virtue of our pristine awareness remaining unsullied even in the most distorted and violent of human lives, is based on how the lotus grows in a muddy swamp, yet rises out of the filthy water to bloom in utter brilliant purity untouched by the filth that surrounds it.

336. *rDo rJe Me Long* (passage not located). The symbolic bases for these one-to-one correspondences of our five sensory faculties with these five spiritual affinities does not appear to be overly strong, and thus I will refrain from interpretative maneuvering that would be tenuous at best (only the "smell" of a lotus flower, and the "whole" body's connection to the Realized One as the "embodiment" of enlightenment strike me as clear).

337. The outline explicitly referred to these five as "gnostic" winds as opposed to the "karmic" wind-currents which dominate in cyclic existence, and Longchenpa here refers to his previous detailed analysis of their 25 internal classifications at the end of Chapter Two while here he only refers to the five main classifications in brief (see my annotations there). The "five sensual qualities" refer to the five types of sensorial experience we have, namely visible form, sounds, scents, tastes, and tactile experiences. However, Longchenpa doesn't give the one-to-one matchups of this impure quintet with the five pure winds either here, or previously in his discussion in at the end of Chapter Two, and the symbolic basis for such a correspondence is not clearly evident. KGNT1 450,4 correlates these five types of objects with the foundational gnostic awareness in an fairly general manner:

"...Self-awareness' primordial gnosis lights-up without any independent being thereby established, which is its radiant dimension, and thus its unceasing appearance as objects of our eyes' (perception) are the objects of primordial gnosis. Though sounds unceasingly manifests to our ears, they are empty of characteristics, and hence are objects of empty resounding. Whatever scents manifest to our nose or flavors to our tongue are also empty of any independent being, and thus these scents and flavors are objects of empty appearance. Whatever smooth or coarse tactile sensations manifest to our body, they are self-empty of any subjective apprehension, and thus pleasure and suffering are objects of empty awareness. Whatever pleasure and suffering is experienced in our psyche are objects whose own manifestation is simultaneous with their own natural freedom..."

In TDD's account, i, iv, and v should be understood as follows.

(i) *In that awareness brings down the heat of primordial gnosis, it is present as the "fire-balancing wind"*: all five of these winds signify facets of awareness' dynamic operations in "currents" of energy. For example, "fire-balancing wind" relates to awareness sparking the fiery, high-intensity spiritual "heat" of primordial gnosis in contemplative practice, which "incinerates" the emotional distortions and spreads the warm glow of vibrant spiritual life throughout our being.

(iv) *Since it delivers you to the level of ultra-purity, it is present as the "propelling wind"*: in conventional terms this is described as the "pervading wind", which propels physical movements rather than the spiritual impetus here indicated.

(v) *Since it "liberates"- cyclic existence within the transcendence of sorrow, it is present is the efficacious wind which mercilessly (ushers in a new) eon*: see the end of Chapter Two for a detailed discussion of the "efficacious wind which mercilessly ushers in a new eon". Here Longchenpa relies on the ancient tantric terminology of "liberation" as a euphemism for "murder", which is here applied to cyclic existence's "death" which insight (the murderer) mercilessly brings about with its efficacious, incisive action. In addition, at this critical moment of enlightenment it is insight, not compassion, which is crucial in freeing us from the bonds of ignorance.



338. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 389,4; Ati1 470,3).

339. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 389,5; Ati1 470,3). As I indicate in my translation above, the subject of all these lines is none other than awareness, which here is described as five "winds" in terms of its five main operational dynamics. As I discussed in the annotations to the final section in Chapter Two, that section's "pervading wind" corresponds to the "propelling wind" mentioned here, while the other four types of wind energies are identical in both discussions. In the line reading "the ultra-pure expanse *through* insight", TCD2 117,3 mistakenly gives a genitive here, but TDD correctly gives the instrumental.

340. The grounding triad of primordial gnoses refer to the primordial gnosis of empty essence, radiant nature, and all pervading compassionate resonance (see TCD2 55,5-56,7, which are correlated in that order to the standard triad of Spiritual Bodies: the Reality Body, Enjoyment Body, and Emanational Body. Thus, although this could be translated as "subsumed within the grounding triads of primordial gnosis and the Spiritual Bodies, I have simply combined the two into the term "gnostic Spiritual Bodies". "Grounding" refers to this gnostic energy as it is present in the ground's pure potential as yet unruptured, as opposed to its fivefold and twofold manifestations within an Awakened One's enlightenment. In this way, the significance of these quintets can be subsumed within this fundamental triune identity of the Universe (emptiness, radiance, and self-organizing intelligence ("compassionate resonance")), while if analyzed into quintets, they are as given here.

341. The essence is correlated with the five Spiritual Bodies (the Illuminator, etc.) not in terms of five manifest Buddhas, but rather in terms of their pure source potential, i.e. their virtual energetic qualities in internal radiance totally devoid of any actualization or exteriorization (see LYT1 451,4 for a similar reference to the five Spiritual Bodies present within the primordial Ground in pure potential). While the correlations of "nature" (which connotes radiance) with the five lights, and compassionate resonance (which connotes "intelligence" or "awareness) with primordial gnosis and compassion are fairly self-explanatory, the standard association of the "essence" (normally described as "emptiness" or "openness") with the Spiritual Bodies is not as readily apparent. The primary emphasis in this association appears to be on the Reality Body or "Body Within a Vase", which is generally defined as empty internal radiance devoid of any type of concrete manifestation, yet operating as the matrix source of all the other Spiritual Bodies' displays (just as the utterly empty sky-like essence functions as the pure space for the nature's radiant light, and its self-organizing intelligence in its compassionate resonance). In addition, the "Spiritual Body" or "spiritual gestalt" has more of a flavor of overall organization and reality of the entire system (of which the "lights" and "gnoses" are mere facets of), just as "essence" signifies the overall expanse of reality within which everything else manifests.

342. These five modes of compassion in a Buddha are as follows.

(i) *Naturally present compassion*: this signifies the natural compassion welling up out of the Buddha's enlightenment, which is connected with the intrinsic "resonance" or "compassionate resonance" of the Ground's radiant nature - rather than dissipating in cold interstellar nothingness with his/her realization of the Universe's nature, s/he experiences a natural warm empathy with every living being in that Universe that naturally manifests in enlightened action directed towards their liberation. Thus the VLDC passage I cite below

indicates that this natural, unforced compassionate activity manifests to each living being in accordance with his/her karma.

(ii) *His compassion consequent upon encountering an objective condition evoking it:* this could be thought of as seeing a particular being and the sufferings she/he is undergoing, which acts as the condition of this compassion expressing itself in a particular situation. However, VLDC indicates it refers to the Buddha's compassion manifesting to those living beings whose pure karma (the "objective condition") enables them to be perfectly receptive to it, such that they are naturally freed for themselves. Thus these karmically pure beings are the perfect receptacle for the Buddha's compassion, unlike ordinary defiled sentient beings whose distorted psycho-physical states and karmic blockages actively create obstacles to the Buddha's compassion directly penetrating to their hearts, and impelling their immediate liberation.

(iii) *His compassion consequent upon others' exhortations and supplications:* VLDC indicates this refers to the Buddha's compassion manifesting to those who have intense faith (and thus "supplicate" and "exhort" him to guide them along the spiritual path), whereby their karmic limitations and extremes are vanquished.

(iv) *His compassion as expressed in various activities:* this simply emphasizes how the Buddha's compassion expresses itself in an infinite diversity of activities on behalf of all living beings, as s/he does whatever is necessary to accomplish the definitive goal of liberation for each and every living being.

(v) *His unchanging compassion towards those to be trained:* this mode of compassion signifies how the Buddha is unfailingly compassionate towards his/her disciples (literally "those to be tamed", and thus including all living beings), without even the slightest self-doubt or personal egotism interfering in his/her relations to others. His/her entire life is naturally and unself-consciously devoted to the liberation of all living beings, such that there can be no question of "altruism" since this compassion and activity is as natural an expression of his/her being as the rays of the sun.

If we correlate the following five types of compassion one-to-one with the previously enumerated quintet of primordial gnoses (while Longchenpa indicates these five aspects of compassion correlate to the five primordial gnoses, he doesn't necessarily mean a specific one-to-one correspondence), it would seem most natural to merely follow the sequence given by Longchenpa: mirror-like primordial gnosis (which "naturally" reflects), sameness primordial gnosis (liberating the spiritually receptive so that they are "identical" in realization), discerning primordial gnosis (responding to "individual" needs), efficacious primordial gnosis (accomplishing "activities"), and "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis ("devoid of variance"). However, these two quintets could just as easily be correlated in some other manner (one suggestion was in the order of "reality's expanse", mirroring, discerning, efficacious, and sameness), and it is not clear that Longchenpa intends any specific one-to-one correlation beyond their basic correspondence in terms of being optimized psychic energy.

A somewhat different list of these five modes of compassion is given on VLDC 328,5 (which I refer to directly above):

"...The fivefold compassion of enlightened activity is as follows: (i) (the Awakened One's) "naturally present compassion" appears to each sentient being in accordance with their particular karma via his/her uninterrupted enlightened activity; (ii) (the Awakened One's) "compassion consequent upon encountering its objective condition" naturally frees living beings by appearing to those with pure karma; (iii) (the Awakened One's) "grounding compassion" is his/her primordial gnosis being interiorly radiant via his/her lack of any (obsessive) impulse to manifestation; (iv) (the Awakened One's) "compassion consequent upon others' exhortations and supplications" subdues karmic extremes by appearing to those filled with faith; (v) and (the Awakened One's) "compassion emergent from the essence-dimension" is the total freedom of emptiness via his/her remaining within internal radiance..."

343. All these verbs ("emerge", "is present") also indicate that these modes of insight "reside" or are continually "present" within all sentient beings' psyche as facets of the heart's inner gnostic awareness. This list of five types of insight is different from the list of five subsequently discussed in Chapter Six, which is as follows: "the self-emergent insight residing within the Ground" acts as the basis for all phenomena; "the insight which apprehends appearances" nakedly and directly realizes the (significance of the) expanse and awareness; "the insight of unceasing mindfulness" differentiates out lucid clarity within meditative equipoise; "the insight of discriminating realization" cognizes the general and specific characteristics; and "the insight of the three types of engagement" delineates the domains of learning, reflection, and meditation. However, the current list is reiterated elsewhere in Longchenpa's corpus, such as the following passage from LYT1 453, 1 which substitutes the name "cutting insight" for "liberating insight":

"...(i) Since (awareness) acts as the individual foundation of both cyclic existence and transcendent reality's manifestation, it is present as "differentiating insight"; (ii) since they are identical within the range of awareness, it is present as "subsuming insight"; (iii) since they never pass beyond awareness, it is present as "pervading insight"; (iv) since when you are aware, it impels you to the very site of freedom, it is present as "impelling insight"; and (v) since it cuts off the reifications of both cyclic existence and transcendent reality, it is present as cutting insight. These should be designated as a dimension of awareness' gnostic energy rather than being understood as discursive analytical insight..."

VLDC 328,6 gives a similar list, substituting "integrating insight" for "pervading insight":

"...(i) "Differentiating insight" differentiates between cyclic existence and transcendent reality without remaining in either; (ii) "subsuming insight" gathers-in all phenomena within awareness; (iii) "impelling insight" impels the (gnostic) lamps into the sky (\*i.e. within Direct Transcendence contemplation); (iv) "liberating insight" cuts off the life force of phenomena; and (v) "integrating insight" non-dually integrates cyclic existence and transcendent reality..."

The following is my explanation of TDD's account of the second, fourth and fifth types of insight:

(ii) *Subsuming insight*: this "subsuming insight" acts to "gather-in" all phenomena within the singularity of awareness, revealing the inner unity of life as it self-recognizes the Universe. In addition, it "synthesizes" all the phenomena of cyclic existence and

transcendent reality by bringing them into your field of vision, as well as bringing the luminous forms of the later directly into your own immediate awareness in the Direct Transcendence visions.

(iv) *Impelling insight*: "impelling insight" refers to insight as the key factor in spiritual progress, both as the force impelling our inner luminosity into the sky during the Direct Transcendence visions as well as being the recognition or self-awareness that drives us onwards to the originally pure site of freedom. This can be expressed by identifying the linked chains of light as insight's radiation, as well as identifying our lucid awareness and sensitivity to these visions of light as the self-emergent insight lamp.

(v) *Liberating insight*: In that insight's penetrating recognition "takes the air" out of our reifying superimpositions of phenomena (encapsulated into the dyad of "cyclic existence" and "transcendent reality"), it saps the life blood and vitality of our neurotic illusions (again connected to the euphemistic use of "liberation" to mean "murder").

344. This "vertically ordered triad" is usually expressed as the vertically ordered triad of primordial gnoses, i.e. the primordial gnosis of empty essence, the primordial gnosis of radiant nature, and the primordial gnosis of all-pervading compassionate resonance (see the mini-encyclopedia for my interpretation). See TDD 231,1-232,2 for a related passage on primordial gnosis' essence residing as the Spiritual Bodies, its nature as the luminous seminal nuclei, and its compassionate resonance as the gnostic lamps. In the present context, Longchenpa correlates this triune organization to the standard triad of Spiritual Bodies, lights, and primordial gnoses, all of which are to be understood as facets of awareness. TCD1 295,4 explicitly correlates essence with Spiritual Bodies, nature with Enlightened Speech, and compassionate resonance with Enlightened Mind in the context of the "Youthful Body in a Vase" prior to the Ground-presencing, and presumably this triad can also be correlated to the impure triad of ordinary body, speech, and mind (in that order- see TDD 227,3 as well). The correlation of "mind" with essence and "body" with compassionate resonance, however, would seem just as reasonable (fitting with the correlation of essence with the Reality Body, and compassionate resonance with the Emanational Body), and thus it is important to think through the contextual significance of each set of correlations, without simply accepting them as some type of rigid identity, or merely artificial arbitrary correspondences. In the present context, while correlating awareness' nature to the lights (its radiant luminosity) and its compassionate resonance to primordial gnosis (i.e. its capacity for intelligence, and self-organizing) is fairly clear, the connection between the Spiritual Bodies and its "empty essence" is not as self evident, as well as the significance of the "knowable" in relation to it. To understand this, we must keep in mind that "emptiness" also means "pure potential" or "virtual reality", and that the primary significance of "Spiritual Body" in this context is the Reality Body as the pure empty non-manifest source of the Awakened One's energy, which is thus referred to as "the Youthful Body within a Vase". TCD2 117,5-118,1 explains this clearly (see 118,1-119,1 for Longchenpa's interpretation of this passage):

"...Originally-pure-in essence awareness resides with the triune identity of essence, nature and compassionate resonance within the palace of its naturally luminous sheath of esoteric preciousness. (i) Via its essence residing as the Spiritual Bodies, though it is not (externally) radiant in its own condition, it is self-radiant as the unceasing source-potential for the manifestation of externally presencing Spiritual Bodies. (ii) Its nature is primordially present as the nucleus of Enlightened Speech, i.e. the vitality wind with its four auxiliary (gnostic winds) as the source-potential for the five lights' manifestations. (iii) Its compassionate

resonance is the nucleus of awareness in the self-emergent Enlightened Mind, which is spontaneously present as the primordial gnosis of the twofold enlightened knowing. Thus awareness resides (within us) without transferring out of, or wavering from, the wisdom-energy in this seamless union of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses..."

The primary significance of "Spiritual Bodies" here is thus the "Youthful Body Within a Vase", i.e. awareness' essence as pure potential devoid of any external actualized manifestation, yet containing the complete "gestalt" or blueprint for the fivefold Spiritual Bodies' external display enfolded within it (just as the body lays hidden within the vase, yet is in itself completely intact with face, hands, and so on). It would then seem that "knowable" refers to these exteriorized Spiritual Bodies as that aspect of awareness which "can be known" both by itself and others (without this exteriorization into a "body", it can neither know itself nor be known by others), while "self-radiant" connotes that this "knowable" aspect of awareness is in itself a mere internal shining or virtual reality rather than externalized, concrete forms of light or matter. It would also seem that "Spiritual Bodies" connotes a mandalic integrated quality where "the knowable" and the "knower" are seamlessly interwoven, rather than an alienated fragmentation into matter and the physical body on the one hand, and psychic activity and the mind on the other. It may also imply that by force of awareness taking the form of these "gestalts" or Spiritual Bodies, it thereby gains the capacity for experience for "knowing" (a capacity lacking in formless self-contained energy), such that the "knowable" naturally manifest to it, both in the primordial beginnings with the emergence of the Ground-presencing, as well as for the Awakened One who after enlightenment continues to be perfectly aware of all that can be known, both in their superficial diversity and ultimate unity (which contrasts to thinking of the Spiritual Bodies as the Awakened One's capacity to manifest *as* an object of knowledge to other living beings, and thus act efficaciously throughout cyclic existence. The use of the term "knowable" in this context bears further thought. Thus awareness' essence is the Universe's pure self-contained potential with the inherent capacity to express itself in these complex "gestalts" (which are able to both experience, and manifest to others' experience), yet in itself remaining devoid of rupture or the limitations of actuality. Awareness' "nature" then is present as the lights, signifying the dynamic expansion outwards of its light energy inherent within its pure potential, while the "compassionate resonance" denotes its primordial intelligence at work in this process, which results in the ceaseless self-organizing of this light energy into complex forms and activities. In summation, the essence provides the support of all else in its pure potential (just as a body is the basic support of our being), nature then is the vibrations of light-energy permeating that foundational matrix (just as speech/breath is the intangible sound vibrations of our body), and compassionate resonance is the capacity for self-reflection and self-interpretation that inheres in both, the ability to mirror that basic fabric in psychic activity. Thus whereas the essence provides the basic "stuff" or "fabric" of existence, which has the nature of five-colored light, the agent "arrives" (primordially) with compassionate resonance, the organizing drive behind the Buddhas' immeasurable activity - primordial gnosis' informs and enables these enlightened activities (the natural self-expression of the exteriorized Spiritual Bodies) with its high-energy resonating psychic energy.

As for related references in Longchenpa's corpus, VNT3-"Pa" 4,3ff describes the primordial Ground's essence as "empty", and identifies it with the Spiritual Body "without adornments or throne", that "blazes with varied colors" as its nature, and is ceaselessly the pure source potential for compassionate resonance; it is "unchanging" since its essence is the Spiritual Body, "naturally radiant" since its nature is the lights, and "the enlightened knowing

dimension shines unceasingly" since its compassionate resonance is primordial gnosis. Related to this, TDD 172,2 identifies the essence as the Reality Body, which is the pure source potential of all three Spiritual Bodies, while itself utterly devoid of such concrete attributes as "faces and hands". Finally, KGNT2 167,1 identifies the "manifestation in the manner of Spiritual Bodies" (as one of the eight gateways of spontaneous presence) as "cognition doesn't slip out into externality", while specifying that this manifestation's self-dissolution is like the "Body in a Vase", in that it is "thoroughly pure without involving concrete faces or hands, since the knowable is internally radiant".

345. In general, "contemplative equanimity" refers to our mind being in a state of perfect meditative absorption in (and as) emptiness in formal meditative sessions, while "post-contemplative state" indicates our state of mind as we engage in ordinary activity outside the meditative session, as well as our pure perception of all phenomena as like magical illusions or dreams (as opposed to our vision of their ultimate emptiness - see "contemplative equanimity" in the mini-encyclopedia for further details). Thus the Reality Body can be identified with this pristine awareness of pure emptiness, while the Emanational Body with its fissuring activities is the same energy active as the visionary's "post-contemplative state", where s/he emerges in normal daily activities while retaining a strong sense of their dream-like quality (i.e. not reifying them into separate identities, or engaging in negative emotional reactions to events based on a sense of "ego" as opposed to that which is other). This opposition between "contemplative equanimity" and "post-contemplative awareness" is illusory in a sense, as we must ultimately dissolve this type of partition between formal meditation and our ordinary life, such that our awareness of emptiness and radiant light is uninterrupted throughout. These moments when we are fully engaged in ordinary activity in the world about us, and yet our awareness remains in a contemplative balance fully sensitive to the empty radiance without and within, such that we transcend this false opposition between emptiness and activity, are correlated to the Enjoyment Body, wherein the Buddha manifests in pure rainbow-colored light images perceptible to those with pure vision, yet remains totally immersed in emptiness devoid of the slightest involvement with gross materiality.

346. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 367,6; Ati1 446,1). These three descriptions of awareness refer to the visionary remaining in utterly non-conceptual meditation, the vivid clarity of his/her awareness, and his/her experiencing of whatever s/he encounters in the life world as dream-like ("manifesting as anything" can also be rendered as "experiencing anything whatsoever"). These three lines can also be correlated to the traditional "three jewels" of Buddhism - the Buddha (the Reality Body, or awareness' utter lack of conceptuality or distortion), his spiritual teachings (the Enjoyment Body, or awareness' unceasing radiance), and the spiritual community of his disciples (the Emanational Body, or awareness' potency to radiate outwards into any form whatsoever). The "non-conceptuality" here referred to is not the unconsciousness of sleep nor the infant's inability to distinguish conceptually, but rather refers to the utter absence of neurotic reification by a Buddha, who self-consciously and in full recognition of his/her ultimate reality perceives the final reality of all phenomena, as well as the full diversity of their superficial modes of being (while never imposing his/her own emotional distortions, or conceptual frames onto their presences).

347. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 419,6; Ati2 148,2; VLDC explicates this passage on 188,1-2).

348. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 362,1; Ati2 493,6).

349. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 391,3; Ati1 472,3). As for the Buddhas of the three times (which in general refers to all Awakened Ones across the three times), the Tantra itself (Ati 472,2) identifies the standard triad: the Buddha of the past is "the Enlightener" (*Dīpamkara*; *Mar Me mDzad*), corresponding to the Reality Body; the Buddha of the future is "the Loving One" (*Maitreya*; *Byams Pa*), corresponding to the Enjoyment Body; and the Buddha of the present is "the great Able One of the Sākya clan" (*Sākyamuni*; *Sākya Thub Pa*), corresponding to the Emanational Body. The Tantra gives a series of such correspondences involving the Buddhas of the three times, including an evocative correlation with own luminous awareness (Ati 471,5): as radiantly luminous in our heart's mandala, it is the Buddha of the past; as unobstructedly shining forth in the post-death visions, it is the Buddha of the future; and as lighting-up in the objective dimension of the lamps of the path to enlightenment (i.e. Direct Transcendence contemplation), it is the Buddha of the present.

"Your own" in "your own great manifestation" thus refers not only to awareness, but also to ourselves - see TCD2 111,6, which correlates our birth with the Emanational Body, our remaining in embodied existence in this lifetime with the Enjoyment Body, and our death with the empty Reality Body, such that all living beings have primordially traversed the Ground, Path and Fruit and become free. Since "speech", "mind" and "body" are all here in non-honorific forms, this passage primarily indicates their non-optimal occurrence as present in our own neurotic existence, rather than their enlightened dimensions in the context of a manifest Buddha (which I indicate here by translating them as "ordinary"). Speech is the past Buddha since our ordinary speech has all the communicatory potential to access the past Buddha epitomized in their teachings; our ordinary mind is the future Buddha since it possesses the potential to become the spiritually awake Buddha by introspective realization of the mind's nature; and body is the present Buddha since if only we realized it, right here and now, our current physical existence is the Buddha, the psycho-physical components corresponding to the five Buddha families. In addition, the past Buddha is normally manifest to us only in his teachings, or "speech"; the future Buddha is still primarily an "inner light" or advanced potential in a living being's "mind" in that s/he will emerge via his/her realization of awareness; and the present Buddha was historically directly "physically" present among us, and even in the present continues to be present via his/her diverse emanations.

350. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 372,4; Ati2 508,3). The preceding line to the passage quoted here is "The wonder of it! All of these appear as cognizable objects!", and directly follows the passage quoted on TDD 170. These various aspects of the Buddhist teachings and spiritual hierarchy actually reside within the inner being of all sentient beings as dimensions of their own existence, yet now they appear as objects of our knowledge externally as if separate - what a wonder!! Alternately, this could mean that all of these "are phenomena that can be known" within our own being.

The first line names the traditional three jewels of Buddhism - the Buddha, his teachings (*Dharma*), and the spiritual community (*Sangha*) of those attempting to live those teachings. The second line then sets out the circumstances of the Buddha delivering the teachings to his disciples (the location, people involved, and time), while the final three lines correspond to (i) the Buddha (his triune Spiritual Bodies being the triadic modality in which he exists), (ii) the Teachings (summed up in the terms of the basic three genre of Buddhist exoteric literature - the Vinaya (on the rules and regulations of the monastic lifestyle), Sūtras (the basic discourses given by the Buddha himself), and Abhidharma (the more elaborate, detailed analyses of the meaning of the prior two (texts on "monastic discipline" and "spiritual

discourses") by means of classifications of the various elements of phenomenal existence, the soteriological contemplative path, and the Awakened One's existence, which was extensively elaborated on by the generations of scholar-practitioners succeeding the historical Buddha), and (iii) the spiritual community (here encapsulated in terms of the Buddha's typical audience of the spiritually mature: those with partial enlightenment stemming from the Lesser Vehicle - the Listeners and Self-Awakened - and the advanced visionaries in the Great Vehicle who are well on their way to becoming full fledged Buddhas themselves - the Spiritual Heroes and Heroines), respectively.

(i) The Tantra (Ati 515,3) further explains the "Teacher, place, retinue and time" as referring to awareness itself (the Teacher), the unchanging expanse (the place), primordial gnosis' constellations of elements (the retinue) and when you realize that through contemplative comprehension (the time)." The Tantra (Ati 514,2) explicates the three Spiritual Bodies by saying that we need not seek the three Spiritual Bodies elsewhere than our own body: our own body is the Emanational Body, the empty mind-as-such of our own self-awareness is the Reality Body, and the diverse appearances to our five senses is the Enjoyment Body.

(ii) The Tantra (Ati 514,4) explicates the tripartite canon by saying that the "spiritual discourses" are our "realization of profound reality", the "canons on monastic discipline" (literally "Taming" or "Disciplining") are the "taming of your own distorted body and speech", and the "canons on analytical phenomenology" (literally "manifest doctrines" or "further doctrines") are the "manifestation of the realization of mind-as-such in terms of awareness' linked chains".

(iii) The Tantra (Ati 508,5) indicates "Listeners" refers to the many sects which the Lesser Vehicle fissured into in India, each of which it subsequently (Ati 514,5) identifies with aspects of our awareness. It also provides such internal correlations for the traditional "four truths" of existence that the Buddha made the cornerstone of his teaching, and which is generally classified as a central aspect of the Lesser Vehicle. The various internal classifications of the "Self-Awakened Ones" and "Spiritual Heroes" presumably can be described, and thus located within the internal structure of our existence, in a similar manner, though I have not located any passages providing the explicit correlations. The first passage:

"...Nyan Thos (Shin Tu rGyas Par) Phal Chen (rTsa Ba'i sDe bZhi) sDe Pa Dang, Thams Cad Yod sMra Kun Gyis bKur, gNas bsTan Nyid Dang rTsa sDe bZhi, sDug bsNgal ('Khor Ba'i 'Bras Bu) Kun 'Byung 'Gog Pa ('Khor Ba'i rGyu 'Das Pa'i 'Bras Bu) Dang, Lam Gyi bDen Pa ('Das Pa'i rGyu) La Sogs Phye, Brag Pa bCas Dang Zag Med Dang, Sa Las 'Das Dang gNas Pa'o..."

The second passage:

"...Phal Cher sNang rDzogs (Thams Cad) Rang Rig Pa, Sems Nyid brJod Pa'i gZhir Gyur Thams Cad Yod, (Rig Pa'i Ngo Bo) Kun Las 'Phags Phyr Kun Gyis bKur, gZhi Las (Sangs rGyas Dang Sems Can La Khyad Med) Ma gYos gNas brTan Nyid, (bDe'i Ba'i sNa sDug bsNgal Gyis 'Dren Pas) bDe Ba bsKyed Phyr sDug bsNgal Nyid, Ma Lus (Rig Par) rDzogs Pas Kun 'Byung Pa, 'Gyur Ba Med Pas (Sems Can Thams Cad Bar Dor Mi Grol Mi Srid Do) Lam Zhes Bya, (Gang La Yang Rag Ma Lus Pa'i Rig Pa) rKyen Dang Bral Bas 'Gog Pa Nyid, Rang Byung Yin Phyr Zag bCas Dang, (gZhi Nyid La) sPros Dang Bral Bas Zag Med



Nyid, (Ye Nas Rig Pa Nyid) Chos sKu Thob Phyir Sa Las 'Das, (Ma Rig Pas sPags Pas) Dri Ma Dang bCas Pa gNas So..."

351. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 371,2; Ati2 506,3). This follows the long quote from this Tantra given below on TDD 277,7. "White" indicates pure or virtuous ("positive" energy rather than the gloom of negativity pervading cyclic existence), and KGYT2 173,1 clearly identifies these as the enlightened qualities of spiritual awakening, which are primordially completely and perfectly present right within ordinary individuals' bodies and mind.

352. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 378,4; Ati2 515,5). The first line refers to all the enlightened qualities and energy of the spiritual path, teachings and Awakened Ones ("that itself") ultimately deriving from the luminous nucleus of empty awareness present within all sentient life ("perfectly complete within yourself"). Since it is primordially always already present within yourself, it naturally self-emerges from within yourself with realization (as the sun naturally shines forth when obscuring clouds disperse) and thus there is no need to seek it externally, or as some type of extra-ordinary dimension beyond our ordinary existence.

353. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 368,5; Ati2 502,6). In the preceding two lines, Vajra Holder asks Vajra Bearer if sentient beings and the phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana are different or the same. The latter responds by saying that primevally the phenomena of cyclic existence are absent, but they appear by virtue of sentient beings' straying and consequent imputations (just as our nightly dream worlds have no status outside of our dreams, and yet we experience them as real because we sleep). He then enumerates those phenomena in the first of the three sections that this passage can be divided into - TCD2 112,5-115,1 quotes each section separately (whereas here Longchenpa gives the uninterrupted passage in its entirety), indicating they relate the way in which all phenomena of cyclic existence and transcendence are complete within (i-ii) the ordinary body, mind and (iii) awareness (Longchenpa relates the first two sections of this quote to the body, and then gives a different set of quotes explaining how all these phenomena are present within the ordinary mind, followed by which he gives the third, and final, section of this quote). TCD thus prefaces this first section by saying this: "the dimensions of the external environmental vessel-world, as well as those of the internal quintessence-life forms, are complete within our ordinary body that is a composite of the four elements" (the material world and life forms, i.e. the animate and inanimate, are often referred to metaphorically as "the vessel and the elixir", here rendered as "environmental vessel" and "quintessence-life"), while the second section of the quote it prefaces by saying "here is an expansive explanation of these parts".

Thus these three sections of the quote can be identified as (i) the external "objective" non-sentient phenomena, (ii) their location within our internal bodies, and (iii) their presence within our own awareness. In short, (i) the first section lists out the basic phenomena of cyclic existence including the five material elements, the masculine and feminine polarity in life forms, the celestial elements (stars, clouds), the inanimate environment (rocks, mountains), the vegetative life (especially trees), our fivefold sensory data (sounds, colors, etc.), and the inner trappings of a Buddhist temple (its musical instruments, canopies, etc.). (ii) The second section then correlates each one of these phenomena to aspects of a "visionary's" (meaning an individual seriously embarked on existentially realizing life's inner meaning) own body based on symbolic concordances (i.e. our "legs and arm's" resemble a tree's "branches"), thus locating the macrocosmic world within the visionary's own body (with an especially evocative comparison of our body to a tree, and to a temple - the latter in particular has the effect of sacralizing the body as the real temple, and forcing us to rethink

our consistent "materialization" of spirituality by focusing on the wood and concrete temple, the external Spiritual Master, the corpus as embodied in paper, and so forth). (iii) The third section then correlates the exact same list of seemingly external phenomena with aspects of our awareness, and specifically in connection to awareness as our inner nucleus of enlightened realization, and how it unfolds in the process of contemplation (with the correlation made on the basis of symbolic concordances). The point of these metaphorical intricacies is soteriologically-motivated poetic evocation, i.e. to evoke in the reader/contemplator a sense of wonder, and an aesthetic feeling for what might be meant by the drier philosophical teachings that the Universe is "self-presencing", and that we must recognize it as "self". The self-evident absurdity of insisting on a literal reading (the essence of "umbrella-hood" is human legs!) should be clear - we are invited to think poetically, and the transformative potency of such passages shouldn't be underestimated when the potential reader is understood as engaging in a variety of contemplative techniques igniting explosive psychological transformations and fluidity, such that an openness and receptivity pertains that is notably absent in our typically deadened, literal-minded analytical approach to the world.

In my commentary to the second and third sections given below, I have attempted to explicate the symbolic basis on which each concordance is made (i.e. how does a "body" resemble a "mountain"), though several correlations are far from evident, and the glosses in the original text are extremely terse. Despite our current lack of the commentarial literature which would explain these correlations at length, there can be no doubt that each set of correlations has an underlying symbolic rationale, no matter how far fetched it may seem, nor how poorly I have been able myself to reveal it. Without such symbolic connections, the poetic force of this passage dissipates, and we are left with an odd list of arbitrary correspondences with little or no evocative force that might have a transformative effect on our psyche (and as such, easily dismissed, which is the true tragedy of "literal" non-interpreted translations of Tibetan literature in the West - by relying on the "ghost within the machine" to insure some type of mystical transmission of significance from the text to the reader via the transparent medium of the "non-egotistical" translator, the true inner meaning of the text and tradition are dispelled, leaving only the dead dry husk or bones of texts originally brimming with vibrant life). Finally, it must be kept in mind that Longchenpa is never writing for the sake of some imagined "intellectual" community whose business is the manufacturing of jargon ("technical gossip") and who forsake working with their own psyche at both conscious and unconscious levels (which would involve risk, whereas this is an "academic" question), but rather is addressing the reader who is committed to an integrated journey (the "path") involving the full dimensions of our verbal, intellectual, and spiritual capacities, and as such, demands a risk-filled encounter with his/her own unconscious, psychology, and way-of-being in the social, ideological, emotional, and spiritual world. An explication of the symbolic underpinnings of the correlations is as follows (given in the sequence they occur in the text).

*Earth is flesh, which is your body's substance; water is blood, which coheres; fire is warmth, which ripens all the bodily factors; wind is breath, which sustains bodily energy; and space is your mind, which maintains your body's glow:* this first paragraph locates the five elemental energies in our body, which are glossed above to indicate that each refers to those elements energetic qualities rather than their coarse forms (as external wind, soil, etc.): earth energy is "supporting", water energy is "moisturizing", fire energy is "burning", wind energy is "differentiating", and space/sky energy is "opening up vastness and space". The Tantra locates these five elemental energies within the visionary's body and mind in terms of

their functional importance therein - see Chapter Two (TDD) for further details on these correlations and their symbolic resonances.

As for the connection between wind/breath and the sustenance of bodily energy, the breath sustains the body's life in general - without breath we would quickly die due to the lack of oxygen. In addition, wind energy connotes all the bioenergetic currents operating throughout our body (nervous energy, blood circulation, digestion, etc.), and as such, is crucial to the sustenance and circulation of the bodily constituents as they perform their various functions in an integrated fashion.

As for the connection between space/mind and the maintenance of the body's glow, the open, unobstructed quality of space evokes the unimpeded fluidity of our consciousness, so unlike the solid corporeality of our bodies. Additionally, our mind provides the body with its aural field of psychic energy (in a corpse, there is no vitality or "glow", while we talk of the "spark" dying in their eyes), just as the sky provides the open clearing space for the sun's light to shine within. Ati thus reads "the actual body" rather than the "body's glow", indicating that consciousness sustains the actual body, being that without which it would be a mere inert lump of a few chemicals and a lot of water, just as space provides a clearing space for physical existence to inhabit (and thus "sustains" it).

*The sun and moon are your eyes which illuminate; men are your birth itself, while women manifest as your death:* the sun and moon's connection with our two eyes is obvious, both in their connection with light and illumination, as well as their common spherical shape. As for relating "men" to birth and "women" to death, this involves a correlation of masculine/feminine to the readily understandable dyads of day/night and birth/death. The glosses clearly indicate that the correlation of "man" with "birth" derives from the etymology of "man" (which literally means "the born one"), as they merely say "they are concordant phenomena in that men are born from the mother's womb". Similarly, the Tibetan term "woman" (*Bud Med*) can be etymologized as "that which cannot be forsaken", and hence the negative particle "not" (*Med*) here ties into the negation and negativity of death, the "cancellation" of life, which "cannot be forsaken" since everything that lives ineluctably dies. This correlation of man/woman with birth/death is obviously a fertile ground for symbolic interpretation, examples of which are the "feminine" as the "mother", which both is the source/womb of life and thus simultaneously the all-consuming destination/end of life, the negator of the individual self-sufficient ego (Neuman's "Archetypal Feminine" as the "Terrible Devouring Mother" - see *The Great Mother* 24ff); masculine (as opposed to be simply identified with "males") as indicating preoccupation with the solar intellectual world ("birth", "day"), and feminine (not "females") as signifying orientation towards the lunar intuitive world ("death", "night").

*Planets are your mouth, and stars are your teeth:* in general, our own human cycles of life and death are reflected in the cosmos' own cycles of origination and destruction, while in particular our "mouth" symbolically correlates to the planets, and our "teeth" to the stars. TCD2 113,2 indicates "the dimension of the planets corresponds to the gateways of desire, the dyad of mouth and nostrils". The nostrils and mouth are the gateways of desire since the winds (which act as the mounts for desirous mind-sets) as breath pass through them (just as the interstellar winds of the galaxy pass by and between the planets), while they are the gateways for fragrances and tastes that we desire. The gloss indicates the connection between planets and the mouth is that they "consume/eat", which evidently refers to an eclipse being imaged in mythology as the Rahula planet "eating" the sun and moon, just like

a mouth consumes or eats food. This Rahula is described in anthropomorphic terms as having a number of mouths all over his body, and in particular a mouth in his head through which he "eats" the moon, and another mouth in his stomach through which he subsequently emits the moon, similar to how we eat food through our mouth (and breathe in through the mouth and nose) while we subsequently eliminate the waste products deriving from this food via the anal canal below (in addition to evoking to the many mouths of Rahula evoking the three apertures of the mouth and nostrils through which we inhale and exhale). Finally, "planet" (*gZa'*) and "eating" (*bZa'*) are homonyms with almost identical spelling, providing another basis for the relationship of "planet" and "mouth". These correlations are arbitrary to varying degrees, and aren't meant to be definitive, exclusive, or literal - they evoke a feeling, mood, sensation, line of thought leading to an experience which can't be directly put into words, but rather only evoked or conveyed indirectly via such highly symbolic language.

The gloss to the initial reference to "stars" indicates it refers to a standard enumeration of 28 stars, which may in part tie into the standard set of 32 teeth in an adult human, with teeth's shining ordered points of sparkling whiteness evoking stars as garlands of shining white points of light in space; in addition, both have breath/winds whistling through. The previous correspondence of planets and mouth also provides a connection, as stars are naturally associated with planets, and teeth with the mouth. NGB's gloss may read "since their movements chop up", while Ati glosses it as "since they chop up and liberate". This could indicate the sky as a vast openness which the stars' annual movements "divide up" into a variety of sectors, just as the mouth's teeth "chop up" food, thereby "liberating" the nutrients in food. "Liberate" or "make free" could indicate the stars moving from one sector of the sky to another as impelled by the winds, since they are "free" of being anchored to one spot. I have yet to definitively interpret the significance of these glosses with regards to the stars.

*Clouds are the hair on your head, and trees are your channels:* Ati glosses "clouds are hair" with "arise and are cut off" (admittedly this gloss could also be explained with regards to "trees", as NGB seems to do so), referring to how hair quickly regrows and then is suddenly "cut off" by a barber, or even ultimately falls off with age, which is analogous to how clouds suddenly emerge in the sky, and just as suddenly disperse. In addition clouds are high in the sky, just as the head is the highest part of the body; clouds "obscure" or shadow the sun and moon, just as hair can fall in our eyes.

"Trees are the channels" (blood vessels, nerves, subtle energy conduits) is based on channels being elongated and tubular in shape, resembling the shape of trees' trunks, while their intricate branches then are similar to the roots and branches of a tree. In addition, the earth's "sap" or quintessence runs through the trees, just as blood and nutrients flow through our body's various channels; the tree has networks of water/sap flowing through it, without which its entire system of branches, leaves, roots, and so on would wither away, just as these channels primarily operate as ducts for fluids without which the body would wither away,

*Mountains are your body, and rocks are your bones:* mountains and bodies (TCD2 113,3 specifies the "whole" body) are both extremely substantial, and seemingly solid, as well as sharing a basic pyramid-type shape (when considering the body as sitting in a meditative posture), and in fact the mountain is a frequent image for the body's posture in meditation, which should be perfectly immobile and beyond distraction. Rocks then are the infrastructure of mountains, just as bones are the hard frame of the body.

**Roots are your heart, and tree trunks are your marrow:** "roots are your heart" (TCD2 113,3 makes explicit that this refers to a tree's roots) is glossed with "they resemble the heart as a location of channels", i.e. the heart is a major intersection point of channels (both the tree's roots and the body's heart are primarily networks of branching channels), with the "heart" denoting both the physical organ and a subtle psychic reality. While the navel wheel is often described as the center of the body, the heart can also be considered as the "root" of our existence since it is there that primordial gnosis (the root of all psychic life) resides as well as its being the way station of blood's circulation (the "moisturizing vitality" of the body) which flows out of it, just as the liquid nutrients are present in the roots, and from there flow throughout the tree/plant. Without the plant's roots, there would be no flowers, and so forth, just as without any heart there would be no body/spirit, as the key factors of both (blood/primordial gnosis) are propelled out from the heart just as water/nutrients are propelled upward from the roots, flowering into the most amazing beauty. Thus just as the root is that from which all other dimensions of the tree manifest, from the heart/mind all of cyclic existence and transcendence emerge.

"Trunks are your marrow" is glossed by "to unify" or "gather together". This apparently refers to the marrow being the center, concentrated pith of the bones running up the center of our limbs, just as the trunk of the tree contains the sap and is the central part of the tree; in addition both are shaped cylindrically and vertically oriented. In the passage below, trunks are associated with the single taste of emptiness in the sense that they are the single basis of the tree from which all the limbs and roots branch out, which also correlates to the marrow as the pith or essence of the bones at the very center of the limbs.

**Branches are your limbs:** the tree's branches are similar to the body's arms and legs in that they are appendages from a central trunk, while Ati indicates they are similar in that if they are cut off, the central organism can survive without its entire vitality drying up (though the appendage itself will thus wither away). However if the roots or trunk should become damaged, then the entire organism including the initially undamaged appendages will deteriorate and die away.

**Flowers themselves are your five sensory faculties:** the translucent material of the sensory faculties are traditionally to visually resemble certain things in their shape, with the visual faculties said to resemble a certain type of flower. In addition, this translucency is a very lucent semi-material substance, which functions to produce lucid, clear sensations, analogously like the radiance of a flowers in their translucent beauty and shining colors. Finally just as flower generally grow out of stalks or trees near the top, four of the five sensory faculties are exclusively located in the head atop the body's "trunk".

**Fruit is the formation of your body:** the ripening of fruits such as walnuts, peaches and so on are imaged as the body's establishment, which TCD2 113,3 indicates refers to the formation of the body's "pains and pleasures". Just as the fruit is the culmination of the tree's growth as summed up in the previous separate parts of the tree, the "body" is the "fruit" or end result of the previous body parts integrated together, while its "emotional life" is the natural flowering of the entire body coming together as a functional organism.

Thus the images in this section deal with the human body as a reflection and interiorization of the natural environment, and in particular, image the human as a tree from the roots on up to the fruit. First the elements are discussed, then the sky and heavenly constellations,

followed by a tree, and now since we have described the body in its formation, we turn to the symbolic correlates of that which the body experiences, i.e. the five aspects of sensation. Thus all of these refer to the visionary (his/her hair, name, etc.) as one person's reality is described - the person taking the Great Perfection into his/her own experience finds the whole world, the entire vast cosmos in all its details within his/her own body and mind as s/he comes to understand the significance of the Universe being "self-presencing".

*Scents are your bodily hairs, and flavors are your skin:* "scents are our bodily hairs" is glossed by "fine" or "subtle", referring to both being very subtle, insubstantial factors. In the case of scent, it is an invisible presence that does not usually dominate our awareness (as sounds and noises do) and which (unlike coarse visible form which can be seen at a distance) must actually enter our nostrils to be sensed), while bodily hairs are very thin and light, unlike facial or head hair.

"Flavors are your skin" is glossed by "pervading", indicating that the similarity lies in how flavors (such as salt, etc.) pervade food they are put in, and thus our experience of that food as we consume it, just as skin pervades the body in covering it from head to foot.

*Sounds are your voice and tactile sensations are your body's illnesses:* I have corrected TDD's reading of "interior" (presumably referring to the inner "tactile" sensations of the body's processes - illness, hunger, cramps, etc.) to "sickness" on the basis of NGB and Ati (TCD has both readings). Just as sickness is a result of the three humors (the body's internal constituents) coming together internally and marked by physical sensations, tactile sensations (pleasure, pain, and neutral) are the result of the body coming into direct physical contact with external material things. In addition, sickness involves internal sensations of discomfort and pain, and thus the body's illnesses can be understood as "internal" tactile sensations corresponding directly to the "external" tactile sensations resulting from our bodies encountering external surfaces and so on.

To complete this list of the five sensory objects in this correlation of the human life to the five qualities of sensual experience normally located in the exteriority, TCD2 113,4 specifies that the dimension of visual form (i.e. the sensory date of the eyes) is the body itself.

*Musical instruments are your internal organs, and pillar hangings are your bodily fluids:* Ati glosses "musical instruments are our internal organs" with "since they give rise to and "bring down" a diversity". This would seem to indicate that just as musical instruments (which should be understood as those utilized in a monastery's ritual life) produce a variety of sounds which form a symphonic medley when harmoniously combined, the bodily organs produce a variety of substances and perform a number of functions necessary for the body's maintenance, and together form "the symphony of the body" (also there are various types of instruments, just as there are various types of organs, each with their own character and function). If one malfunctions and hits a "bad note", then the whole body/concert is out of whack, while when in harmony the body literally "sings" with health. In addition just as various sounds "flow forth" from the instruments, various substances (blood, lymph, and so forth) flow through the inner organs. TCD2 113,4 glosses "internal organs" (correcting *Nang Grol* to *Nang Khrol*) as "the intestines and so forth (*rGyu Ma La Sogs Pa'i*).

As for pillar hangings being your bodily fluids, TCD2 113,4 specifies that "bodily fluids" refers to urine, evidently in that urine flows down between one's legs in a long thin stream, just as these banners flow down the monastery's pillar in a long slender stream of cloth (leg

and pillar being visually similar). In addition bodily fluids flow up and down the body in general, just as the banners hang down around the pillar very fluidly.

*Parasols are your legs and victory banners are your names:* the connection between parasols and legs isn't clear - the glosses appear to read "since it keeps you cool and protects you (from the sun?)" (Ati), and "since it cools you and gets you around/is whirled (?)". The initial reference to parasol above is glossed by "hoisted" or "held aloft". Perhaps "whirled" relates to someone "twirling" the parasol they hold over a Master's head, while our legs propel us through religious "circumambulations" where we ritually "circle" an important religious site or structure. As for "keeping cool", obviously this refers to a parasol warding off the sun, though its connection to legs is unclear - could it be that our legs move us out of sunshine into the shade? Or even that a parasol protects from the danger of heat, while legs protect us from other dangers by running away? "Cool" (*bSil*) could also be interpreted (though rather far fetched) as "run". One suggestion was that they are similar in shape (if one considers the legs as the axle of the parasol, and the upper body as the actual parasol arching out from the body's "trunk"; another suggestion compared the movement of legs with the way a parasol moves in the wind.

"Victory banner" literally reads "victory-marker" (referring to a particular cylindrical ritual decoration in Tibetan monasteries originally held aloft to signify victory), and the word for "marker" is also the honorific form of "name". Ati glosses it with "because it proclaims and manifests" - basically both are indicators with communicatory functions via their symbolic nature, and just as the victory banner is brandished aloft to announce victory, your name is thrust forward as your personal insignia, announcing who you are (also keeping in mind that a Tibetan religious practitioner would often have a number of names, including one given to mark significant spiritual events s/he participated in, generally with the name itself indicating its special significance (i.e. "Glorious Intellect", etc.)).

*Ritual canopies are your vapors:* this section images the human body/mind as a classical Tibetan temple, with the wall-hangings, and so forth completely present. This of course is an ancient correspondence, the body as inherently a temple without any artifice involved, such that this sacred human body provides the completely qualified site for worship. Here ritual canopies are small (often square) ornate cloths hanging from the ceiling over the Master's throne in a monastery, as well as being used on certain occasions outdoors when the Master is carried in a ritual progression. Visually they are similar to the vapors issuing forth from our mouths (such as hot breath in cold air), both being billowing white shapes going above our heads. In addition, just as the canopies shield the Master from the sun and partially obscure him/her from view, the vapor temporarily covers the person's head and obscures another's vision of him/her. Thus this breath vapor is the "canopies" of the visionary's own body/temple.

*The five elemental energies are its five lights:* the five elements are of course the coarse materialization of the five lights (which are awareness' self-presencing), as discussed earlier in this chapter, as well as in the first two chapters. With Ati's glosses, it reads "(the vibrant quintessence) of the five elemental energies are the (natural shining) of the five lights".

*The sun and moon are its insight and efficacious means:* the sun and the moon are a natural complementary dyad with multi-dimensional symbolic force (the hot solar daytime and cool lunar nighttime), and as such are here correlated with the standard Buddhist complementary dyad of (feminine) insight and (masculine) efficacious means (see mini-encyclopedia).

*Man is the ground, and woman its path:* "man is the Ground" (i.e. the foundational pristine awareness) is glossed by "unchanging awareness", while "Woman is its path" (i.e. awareness as self-presencing on the spiritual path) is glossed by "since she gives rise to, and enables the movement of, everything" (NGB) and "since she gives rise to and frees everything". The basic image seems to be that the man is the firm ground of the household, providing financial support and so forth, while the woman is the fertile source of the household's new life and creativity in her giving birth and nurturing. This in turn ties into awareness as the unchanging ground of our being, as well as grounding awareness being the enduring empty reality of all; "path awareness" then refers to awareness in dynamic manifestation, "giving birth" to luminous pure visions and ultimately our freedom.

*Planets are the signs and measures (of meditative progress), and stars the doctrines:* "planets are the signs and measures" refers to the signs indicating your optimization of physical and psychic energy via contemplative practices - just as the planets are like glowing presences in the sky on a cloudless night, these signs and measures light up in the space of your being as the obscuring clouds of emotional distortions are removed. In addition, such indicators accompany the solar/lunar forces of insight and efficacious means, just as the solar system's planets accompany the sun and moon.

As for "stars are the doctrines", see TDD 159,3 imaging of the Buddha's spiritual teachings as the limitless stars in the sky, both of them being limitless in number and brilliant in their radiance.

*Clouds are its all-pervading compassion:* "clouds are its all-pervading compassion" is glossed by "realizing the doctrines of the Tantras and precepts, you take hold of the reality of the spiritual path, view, and meditation, and thus nurture sentient beings (NGB). "Take hold" appears to indicate how clouds "retain" water, which then "nourishes" life on our planet with their life-giving showers. Thus just as clouds pervade the sky in bringing biologically life-giving rain throughout the world such that they sustain animals and plants, compassion pervades all sentient beings bringing spiritual nurturing and comfort to them, a shower of rain granting spiritual life in the arid wastelands of cyclic existence.

*Trees are the path of its compassionate energy's expansion:* the Buddha's rain of compassion is a frequent image - the clouds shower rain down, and thus the water of compassion runs through roots into tree, expands within as sap, and is transformed into the tree which reaching up to the sky and offering shade and protection. However, NGB, Ati and TCD read "reality" for "compassionate energy", with NGB glossing "path" as "the grounding awareness which generates everything" (Ati has "self-awareness" for "grounding awareness"). This reading indicates that awareness is the central dynamic in the expansion of reality into the myriad of self-organizing worlds that we experience in the present.

*Mountains are its unchanging view:* Ati glosses as "mountain" as "unchanging awareness", which primordially has this non-dualistic outlook as unwaveringly as a massive rock mountain.

*Branches are its limbs of Enlightenment:* the tree's branches symbolically correspond to the "limbs of enlightenment" (both being "auxiliary" to the main trunk), which generally refer to the seven principal elements of the meditative "path of vision" which help you to attain perfect enlightenment: authentic mindfulness, insight or discernment, diligence, joy,



physical and psychic "flexibility" (deriving from contemplation), deep contemplation, and equanimity.

*Trunks are its single flavor within emptiness:* "trunks are its single flavor within emptiness" seems to be based on the trunk being the unitary part of a tree, which spreads out below into an intricate network of roots, and above into a vast canopy of leafy branches, as well as having hollow channels at its core through which the water/sap flows. Though hollow, it is in fact precisely this that allows the tree's life to continue, just as all phenomena are at their heart/core of a single flavor, emptiness, from which and within which they branch out without however ever becoming any way separate from the trunk of emptiness or originally pure awareness (emptiness thus being the tree of life).

*Petals are the pervading expanse of reality:* "pervading" is glossed by "nothing is exterior to it", or even "nothing (penetrates it) from the outside": the leaves and petals of a tree present a broad expanse pervading the area, and through which sun light and so forth can not easily penetrate, just as the expanse of reality pervades all reality and which nothing can escape.

*Flowers are its gnostic lamps:* flowers have radiant gorgeous colors, and hence are analogous to the gnostic lamps (see Chapter Six) with their radiant, magnificent presence in rainbow colors.

*Fruits are its naturally complete three Spiritual Bodies:* in philosophical terminology, the common word for "effect" or "climax" is literally "fruit", and the three Spiritual Bodies are typically described as the "fruit" of the spiritual path, being the final culmination and climax of all meditation.

*Sounds are the sound of reality's sphere:* "sound" is glossed by "indivisible sound and emptiness", and often the expression "reality's own natural sound" is referred to in these texts (the sound vibration being intimately connected with light vibrations).

*Scents are the renown of the Buddha's speech:* scents are connected to the Buddha's charismatic speech in that just as scents are carried by the winds such that they spread into the four directions, the Buddha's words are carried away into the four directions on the winds of their renown.

*Tastes are the flavor of bliss in its contemplatively felt experience:* Ati glosses this as "the presence of non-conceptual reality is born within your mind stream", which is affectively experienced a "bliss" or the "ease" as the dualistic obsession with threatening "others" fade away. This blissful tone is termed the "flavor" of meditative experience, and thus here is symbolically correlated to our tongue's taste sensations.

*Tactile sensations are the clothes of its great meditative state:* tactile sensations are correlated to the great meditative state's "clothes", with "meditative state" glossed by "primordially". Just as normal clothes give you tactile sensations of rough and smooth materials, as well as protect you from other sensations such as being scratched by thorns or chilled by winds, the meditative states generate physical sensations of bliss and ease as the body and mind's kinks are worked out, and psycho-physical energy is rendered extremely supple and flexible. These sensations are like the meditative state's "clothes" in that they are physically experienced, in addition to meditative heat protecting one from the cold just as normal clothes do. Thus both clothes and the meditative states function to provide sensations

of bliss and comfort, such that the body and mind can rest at ease in the absence of irritating tactile sensations. Just as without clothes you will be vulnerable to the vacillations of weather, without the clothes/realization of meditation you will be vulnerable to external forces (the elements) as well as the turbulence of your own interior mind.

*Musical instruments are the perfectly complete mandala of its five lights:* just as the musical instruments function together to give birth to a symphonic integrated and aesthetically pleasing sonic whole, these lights are perfectly mandalically integrated into an aesthetically harmonious photic display.

*Pillar hangings are the radiant glow of its five colors:* these pillar hangings are typically made of brightly colored material, and thus naturally correspond to awareness' rainbow-colored shining.

*Parasols are the protecting radiation of its insight:* the correspondence of "insight" to "the insight's protecting radiation" is glossed by "from cyclic existence's heat": just as parasols can shield one from the sun's rays, insight's radiation forms an aural glow of awareness around one's being, which projects one's awareness from the damage of rampant neurosis and the dualistically conceived external elements. Insight's "radiation" can also refer to the linked chains of awareness, the contemplation of which will deliver you from cyclic existence's torment, and thus enable you to gain respite from the "heat".

*Ritual canopies are the key points of the most important esoteric precepts:* "ritual canopies" is glossed "by power of which cyclic existence is emptied out", indicating that just as the canopy conceals the occupant from the hot sun, and other's invading vision ("destroying" their access), through reliance upon "the key points of the esoteric precepts" you eliminate the scorching sufferings of cyclic existence and find respite in the cool bliss of transcendence.

*Victory banners are the realization of its manifest expansive awakening of Buddhahood:* this correlation of "victory banners" with "enlightenment" is glossed in Ati by "there is nothing to say other than this", i.e. this is the "last word": the victory banners proclaim victory after the battle is finally over, which relates to Buddhahood as victory over the troops of cyclic existence, leaving nothing else to be said beyond this triumphant sign of victory. Also one must recall that the "victory banner" is a particular type of ritual decorative item in Tibetan monasteries, and thus the reference here also images the body/mind as interior elaborately decorated sacred temple.

354. NGB and TCD have a genitive after "women", indicating clearly that "forms" goes with "men and women".

355. The gloss indicates "roots, trunks, and branches" primarily refers to trees.

356. TCD2 113,2 indicates this section is the detailed explanation of the correlations implicit in the previous section, and on 113,2-4 briefly restates the correlations, with a few additional details cited below in the annotations.

357. This is glossed by "should you seek elsewhere, you won't find any manifest phenomena which aren't of the body". TCD2 114,4 quotes the following lines as its third section, which Longchenpa indicates evokes how the phenomena of cyclic existence and

transcendence are completely present within awareness itself. TCD2's first section quoted (i) and (ii) of this passage as concerning how all phenomena are perfectly complete within our own ordinary body, while its second section (113,7-114,3) cites another passage from the same Tantra describing how all these phenomena (of both cyclic existence and transcendent reality, as well as both the Ground and path) are completely present within our ordinary mind. That citation basically lists out all the standard elements of the spiritual path (mandalas, mantras, deities, empowerments, study, contemplation, meditative states, and so on, and says they are all completely present within the ordinary mind.

358. This final paragraph indicates there is a continuity of light energy that holistically interconnects all phenomena with the ultimate reality of our own awareness ("mind-as-such"), such that rather than being discrete, solid entities, all these phenomena are dream-like "holograms", beings indelibly stamped by Being. Thus the static, clearly defined universe of discrete "things" and "minds" totally divided from each other is a fantasy or "imputation", since in fact the entire world around us is in coevolution with our own psyche, with the entire process a continuity of energy rather than separate, discrete "selves" related to each other as independent, self-sufficient entities.

359. Our ordinary body and mind have both been "appropriated out" of awareness and structured as such, as well as being the "impelling cause" perpetuating the ongoing illusion of cyclic existence. Since our ordinary body and mind are both mere derivatives or reflections of this fundamental awareness or aware-ing quality that primordially exists as the inherent intelligence of the Universe, their qualities are limited by this "parentage".

360. The barren woman represents the hypothetical grounding awareness (actually the "fertile mother", the creative generatrix of everything as its own inherent lighting-up), which has no offspring of its own (in contrast to the usual description of all the phenomena of cyclic existence and transcendence as "its own inherent presencing", or radiation). Thus her son's face (the inherent presencing's phantasmagoric display) can't reflect (our worlds of experience) in her mirror (mind/body). If the image were to be tied even tighter, instead of a mirror, it would be the son's face as reflected within the mother's own eyes. Alternatively, the Mother (grounding awareness) holds up a mirror (the body/mind as awareness' dynamic reflex, here imaged as the mother holding up her mirror) so that her own offspring may reflect within it, initiating a further play of images - if she is barren, then no matter how long she stands with the mirror, no reflections will ensue.

This clarifies that this entire identification of the Universe-within-you relates to our ordinary body/mind in its pure dimensions, as the Ground mirroring itself in a process allowing both self-recognition and forgetting, rather than just our ordinary conception of this limited body and mind. These passages revolve around a macrocosm/microcosm identification based on our body/minds imaging the cosmos as the cosmos images them, with the two being in intimate coevolution rather than an accidental consciousness perceiving a dead cold external world of material things. If the external presences aren't patterns of energy fundamentally related to awareness in their final analysis (awareness as the inherent intelligent quality of the Universe's very fabric), then they simply won't exist; the mind being an image or derivative dynamic of awareness, they won't be found there either. This emphasizes the utter aliveness and intelligence permeating all aspects of the universe, which ultimately (animate and inanimate) derive from the Ground's resonating vibrations, which take form as the dynamics of awareness' five gnostic energies (its "compassionate resonance" is said to involve the Ground's "nucleus of awareness", and hence denotes awareness as the

dynamic progenitor of "single catalyst" of all phenomena - it not only self-interprets the spinning infinity of worlds that ensue, but in fact the very "material" substratum (the light) is itself the radiation of awareness, indicating a radical view of the fundamental importance of "intelligence" to the Universe-as-such). Thus our perception of concrete, substantially characterized entities is a holographic interpretative projection onto these shifting lines of gnostic light energy (the same energy which forms our own psychic inner "light"), such that this seamless continuity of intelligence and radiant light undercuts our obsession with isolated "subjects" and "objects", and the "inherence" (i.e. intimate interconnection and co-evolution) of the external world in our body and mind is revealed: this view involves the quite radical suggestion that it isn't the case that somehow we could remove the entire set of life forms in the Universe, and the material environment would continue as a lifeless, enduring presence (like the hypothetical tree with its determinate number of leaves whether we know that number or not, a favorite analogy of analytical philosophers in defense of "truth" and "certainty"). Rather there are only shifting lines of energy in resonance with each other (like the "white on white" of mentioned at Chapter One's end), and the neurotic world-dramas we live in and through are our private and shared fantasies, built from the tissue of our own compulsions; in reality, there is only the One, which thinks itself into existence, denies itself into non-existence, and in its mirroring play begins to forget itself, an insane actor who has lost himself in his role. If this inanimate, "lifeless" world's diversity were not present within **Being**, then they will not be within beings which act as the **Being's** mirror - there are only masks, behind which we find the truth, i.e. no-thing. Viewed from our thing-based ways of knowing, there is only the masks and the mirror devoid of any substantial "truth" outside of the drama/reflection, while with a radical shift in knowing to the fluid gnosis of our own inherent awareness, we tune into the very nature of this masking/mirroring process as find that in this nothing behind the masks and mirrors, is everything.

In the following line ("Appearances emerge..."), Longchenpa then reiterates that all appearances are completely present within our body/mind by virtue of their complete presence within awareness, thus clearly showing the difference between this and the purported views of Buddhist "idealism". Rather than the individual mind being primary here as the source of "imagined" external phenomena that can be purely reduced to the individual ego as such, all phenomena (internal and external, subjective and objective) arise as awareness' play via its dynamism, which is itself not to be reduced to individual self-awareness as commonly understood, but rather is the core of the Ground's third dimension, its resonating and compassionate energy (*Thugs rJe*). **Being**, the matrix and reality of the **Universe**, is such that it is utterly and primordially empty (its essence), and yet within that emptiness radiantly present as pure energy-lights (its nature), which are in dynamic evolution and transmutation (its compassionate resonance or "intelligence") as the threshold between pure potentiality and actuality is breached. Our own self-awareness then is a reflex or capacity of awareness in its third dimension, just as external phenomena (formed of the elemental energies which are congealed light-energy, which in turn are fundamentally the five primordial gnoses) are the play of awareness in its second dimension, with the two interrelated in a seamless coevolving singularity (in marked contrast to the sterile anality of negating/reducing the entire diversity of the Universe to one's own personal "emissions").

361. I am unsure of the significance (if any) of this name "Lhajin" (*Lha sByin*), which isn't a standard Tibetan personal name, and literally means "god given" or "divine gift". It may be an alternative spelling (or misspelling) for *Lhas sByin*, the Tibetan translation of the name of the historical Buddha's evil cousin (Devadatta). At any rate, the correlations in this analogy are thus: mother (awareness), "bears" Lhajin ("all phenomena" as Awareness' self-radiation),

and thus his face (their lighting-up display) can reflect (the mind's experienced worlds) in the mirror (body/mind), which his mother subsequently holds before him, or perhaps even herself manufactured and left lying around, until one day her son happens to glance within. This imagery of Lhajin, his head and face could be also be interpreted as implying the depth dimensions that all phenomena possess: generally it is only the face, the surface-appearance or "mask" that we perceive in our day-to-day worlds, while the back of the head and the entirety of their "body" don't manifest. This embraces the perspectival limitations of ordinary perception (we only see what is presented to us and thus only have a partial view of any given phenomena) as well as the transcendental limitations of ordinary perception, i.e. that we are ignorant of the given phenomena as actually pulsating vibrant patterns of light-energy intimately connected to our own body/mind as well as the Universe's ultimate awareness.

362. *Kun Byed rGyal Po*. The speaker here the Enlightened Mind, i.e. awareness' primordial gnosis here referred to as the All-Creating King in its capacity as the creative matrix of the entire Universe. The juxtaposition of "appearance" and "manifestation" in the first two lines can connote that something comes-to-presence to us ("appearance"), which we then synthetically experience or interpret further ("manifestation"), or our direct sensory awareness ("appearance") which we then "enframe" and discursively process ("manifestation"). In this way we can relate this to the final line, which encapsulates the entire world into "appearances" and "life-worlds" (literally "becoming", "possibility" or "existing", but connoting living being's fictive interpretations of those appearances, and thus elsewhere translated as "fictive existence").

363. *Nor Bu 'Phra bKod* (NGB1 730,7; Ati2 22,6). Longchenpa's reading is rather different from Ati and NGB (which read "whatever he realizes" for "whatever appears"), such that it ties into the mirror images given directly above. The preceding lines in Ati make quite clear that in fact these lines refer to the experience of the Enlightened One, who experiences the Universe as a great mandala of radiant light devoid of any reified focuses, which is a perfect mirror of his/her own radiant mandalic awareness, again indicating the coevolution and codetermination of awareness and the external world. In addition, the stainless awareness of his/her enlightened Spirit resembles a bright mirror devoid of dust or dirt, such that all phenomena light-up clearly and radiantly to it without any more substantiality than the play of reflections across a mirror's surface (with the external world inseparable from his Spirit, just as reflections can neither be separated from nor identified with the mirror's surface), perfectly mirrored without the slightest distortion or manipulation.

364. *Nor Bu 'Phra bKod* (NGB1 736,7; Ati2 29,4). The reason Longchenpa cites these two lines is that these ultimate realms pervade all in their vastness, yet even so involve no concrete things, remaining always and already pure energy, radiant and empty, and as such are the true, esoteric identity of the seemingly impure worlds around us.

#### ANNOTATION-COMMENTARY TO CHAPTER FOUR

365. This chapter's core involves the classic Great Perfection discussion of the Reality Body's relationship to (and differentiation from) our universal psychic ground, and primordial gnosis' relationship to (and differentiation from) our ordinary mind. This analysis can be found elsewhere throughout Longchenpa's corpus, with a particularly detailed account in TCD's fourteenth chapter (TCD2 31,7-106,3), which provides more elaborate detail than TDD. A related discussion (not found as frequently as these two) is the differentiation

between "insight" (*Shes Rab*) and the "psyche" or "intellect" (*Yid*), which concern the optimal and non-optimal modes of being aware of objects (and as such are derivative facets of primordial gnosis and the mind respectively). "Presence and location" indicates not only the location of primordial gnosis within our body and mind, but also the various forms in which it is present (indicated by the verbs "resides as", "abides as", "is present as").

366. The term "divine palaces" is used to indicate the main locations or residences of awareness within our body, and evokes the purity and preciousness of awareness, the harmonious mandalic nature of its presence within us, and its "royal" character ("awareness" as the intrinsic intelligence of the Universe is often imaged as the "King", since it is the ultimate source not only of our own psycho-physical existence, but also the entire material "reality" surrounding us). The divine palace within the heart is awareness' main "seat" (where its "essence" resides), while the other three (skull, eyes, and inner channels) are the principal residences of its "radiation" in our body, i.e. where its high intensity energy especially concentrates (while in fact awareness' radiation permeates the body in general at lower energy levels). The significance of the heart as the location of awareness' essence primarily relates to the heart-wheel functioning as the chief intersection of psycho-physical energy-flows ("channels") within our body via which awareness can permeate our entire existence/body from this central node (traditionally in Asia the heart rather than the head has been thought of as the center of "mind" and emotions), though it is also connected to the physical heart organ and its functions with respect to blood circulation (see my discussion in Chapter Five concerning the "vitality channel"). As for the three locations of awareness' radiation, the skull obviously relates to our brain which "blazes" with mental activity which is constantly in motion (KGNT1 498,4 explicitly connects the "brain" with the "divine palace of the Conch Shell House"); the eyes' significance is that they enable us to "see", with "vision" not only being the preeminent sensory capacity in humans but also the privileged metaphor in contemplation or realization, which is understood as "vision" (in addition, in Direct Transcendence contemplation the eyes operate as the gateway for the heart's gnostic energy to shine out of our interiority into the space around us, so that we can then retroactively directly perceive it with our "eyes"); and finally, the "channels" are the conduits enabling all "movement" (psychic and physical) within our body, which includes the "nerves" as conduits for nervous energy, the blood vessels for the flow of oxygen and nutrients, and various subtle immaterial channels whereby consciousness permeates our entire body (while awareness' radiation is thus present in the entire network of channels stretching throughout our body, in particular its most optimal, luminous form is present within the "luminous channels" - see Chapter Five).

The "sacred knot" (*dPal Gyi Be'u; Śrīvatsa*) is one of eight classic auspicious signs (see mini-encyclopedia), iconographically represented as a perfectly symmetrical series of interwoven loops that symbolically evokes infinite continuity as well as a sense of "primordality" (it resembles an "endless" knot). This auspicious mark as found on a Buddha's palms and soles constitutes one of eighty exemplary forms of an Enlightened Being (see mini-encyclopedia). The term originally referred to the India god Viṣṇu as the "beloved (*Vatsa*) of the Glorious One (*Śri*)", with "Glorious One" referring to his goddess wife Lakṣmī, and the term "beloved" also meaning "calf" or "offspring" (related in the sense of "my darling child"), which the Tibetan term literally translates with *Be'u*. It came then to refer to a curl of hair or mark on Viṣṇu's breast, and its standard iconographic representation as indicating a divine being, which was appropriated as such by the Buddhist tradition. Its original presence on the breast as well as its connection to "love" and strong emotions relates to Longchenpa's use of the term here as an image for the heart. In the current context, it not

only symbolizes awareness as primordial and "continuous" throughout every instant of our existence, but also images the heart as an interlocking network of channels, a swirling pattern of energy-flows that is "sacred" and interwoven into an intricate design of great harmony and beauty. I'm not sure I understand Dorji's rendering of the term as "heart-orb" given this usage (Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One* 961).

367. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 92,3; Ati1 111,1). The first two lines describe the heart's palace as shaped like an octagon, fashioned from precious materials and with a gateway at each of its eight corners. These eight gateways correspond to the eight root channel-petals which issue out from (or "intersect at") the heart, and which are the "gates" for the heart's awareness' radiation to emanate out from its pure center into the entire body as the eight modes of ordinary consciousness. These eight channels (or eight "gateways") can thus be directly correlated to our ordinary eight modes of consciousness, which KGYT3 118,6 gives as the universal ground consciousness (see subsequently in this chapter for a discussion of its relation to the "universal ground", the emotionally distorted psychic consciousness, the basic psychic consciousness, and the five sensory modes of consciousness (i.e. visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile)). These eight dimensions of psychic energy or consciousness are the non-optimal "dulled" modes of functioning typically operative in our daily experience, and as such, are the impure form of the radiation of the "self-emergent primordial gnosis" in our heart, which is the "root Ground" of our being. KGYT3 202,4ff explicitly correlates these eight heart-channels to the our ordinary eight modes of consciousness in its account of how Chapter One's account of the Ground-presencing takes place within our own bodies:

"...For we humans, right now via the heart's luminous channel, the Ground's self-emergent primordial gnosis is present as the particular Ground-presencing modes within the corresponding channel-networks. The Ground-presencing of primordial gnosis lights-up in the sky from the luminous channel (in the Direct Transcendence visions), while the Ground-presencing of the six life forms (come about in the following manner). The radiating radiation of the heart's primordial gnosis mixes with the lungs' wind-breath, and thus is present as the eight modes of ordinary consciousness within the heart's eight channels. Via this, its radiating radiation is present from our top to bottom as it pervades the individual channel-networks corresponding to the six life forms. The manifestation of the distorted experiences of the six life forms following one's psychic energy ("wind-mind complex") concentrating in those networks results (from this radiation) appearing (as filtered) through the impure gateway of cyclic existence. Right now we humans have our psychic energy concentrated in the human channel network, which is why we now perceive objects, the environment, and so on in characteristically human fashion..."

In relation to this, TDD 250,3 and 255 mention "four" gateways at the heart corresponding to the four luminous channels, which are the principal channels for psychic energy ("awareness' radiation") in its full luminous intensity that, in our current neuroticized existence, is constantly distorted as it further emanates out from this core thread of light to become our ordinary modes of consciousness, though in itself remaining utterly pure at the very center of our body (running from the genitals straight up the brain as a slender line of pure light). Along these lines, KGYT3 119,1 has a very interesting passage describing this pure network of "luminous channels" as "the channels of transcendent reality" after its previous explanation of the flavor, solitary, and central channels as "the non-ultimate channels of cyclic existence". Here Longchenpa very clearly indicates that the psychic

energy of our ordinary eightfold consciousness actually derives from the luminous channels' high-intensity radiation:

"...As for the primeval channel-petal complex of the great transcendent reality, it is called "the channel of self-emergent primordial gnosis", "the channel of the spontaneously present Ground-presencing", or "the kati crystal tube channel". Since self-emergent primordial gnosis (in its essence transcendent of ordinary mind) is in its own nature the visible luminous manifestations of the five spiritual families, and in its compassionate resonance unceasingly shines forth, it is that which completely pervades all appearances and life-worlds, material environments and life forms, and cyclic existence and transcendence.

Connected within the vitality channel of the eight cornered precious heart in the middle of the central channel, it acts as the support for all one's basic consciousness-attention. By force of inner winds exerting a pulling influence within this channel's hollow interior (\*evidently in the sense of these winds impelling the light outwards from the channel into the other conduits), it is also the pure source-potential for your five individual sensory modes of consciousness as well as for the universal ground and psychic consciousness. When its radiation spreads (correct *Phal* to '*Phel*') throughout the channels within one's body, it is present as light and seminal nuclei. Though (these lights) appear to exist in the clear sky's expanse on the surface of the untarnished mirror of their gateway (the water lamp, i.e. one's eyes), they are not externally existent - this can be understood by shutting your eyes, and seeing that these minute seminal nuclei and luminous presences do not thereby vanish.

To expand on this, by force of the luminous channels' radiation residing in this vitality channel under the conditions of your mere non-recognition of self-emergent primordial gnosis as your own essence, the morally neutral indeterminate "universal ground" (is operative within you). The unceasing lucidity and radiance of (this universal ground's) radiation is what is termed "the consciousness of the universal ground", which as such, is also present within the vitality channel. By its radiation then spreading outwards to the five sensory gateways (the eyes, etc.), the five modes of sensory consciousness (are operative), which involve mere non-conceptual vivid appearances (of sensory data). By then fixating and apprehending "objects" as mixed up (with your conceptual and linguistic "frames") via conceptually processing the previous presences (i.e. sensory data), the "psychic consciousness" (is operative). In its first instant it is non-conceptual, and then as varied feelings of attachment, aversion or indifference kick in, the emotionally distorted psyche (functions)..."

368. The third line indicates that this essential awareness or pure "gnostic energy" present within our hearts is fundamentally fivefold in structure, with these five facts referred to as the five "Spiritual Bodies" and five types of "primordial gnosis". In addition to this, its dynamic expression outside the heart (as its energy radiates outwards to function as the source of our entire psycho-physical existence) is also fundamentally fivefold, such that the characteristics of the lower order dimension directly reflect those of the higher order dimension. In this way, we can discern this basic fivefold structure within our ordinary cognitive activity and energy winds. The specific reference here would be to the standard fivefold classifications of the energy winds operative in human existence (see the end of Chapter Two as well as Chapter Three), and the five sensory cognitions (ZMYT2 247,3 explicitly refers to them as the "five cognitions"), which ultimately are mere derivatives of the pure psychic luminosity of awareness that is the nucleus of our being (and which is constantly radiating out dynamic potencies from the heart).



As for "everything" being fivefold, TCD2 123,6-125,1 discusses an extended series of such quintets in relation to the Enjoyment Body, while TCD2 132,7 says that within our heart the mandala of the five Spiritual Bodies' Father-Mother consort pairs' clusters are present within the center of the five colors of the spontaneously present five-hued seminal nuclei there, which it correlates to the purity of the five elements, five psycho-physical components, five Spiritual Bodies, five Spiritual families, five primordial gnoses, and five spiritual levels. "Five" is thus crucial to the entire structure of Great Perfection thought, with its basic significance deriving the most simple mandala being a basic four (arrayed at the four directions) with a centering fifth in their center.

369. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 140,1; Ati1 167,1; also cited by TCD2 372,4). I have interpreted *sPyi* (literally "general") as referring to this reality being present "within your body's general structures (literally "in our body in general" (*Lus sPyi*)), since the subsequent line in the Tantra glosses it as *Lus sPyi*, a term used in the Chapter Two by Longchenpa to mean "the general structure of the body" or "the body in general". TCD2 explicitly glosses it as "within the channels of the body in general" (*Lus sPyi'i rTsa*), and indicates these two lines refer to the "excellent ground seminal nuclei" which "is unwaveringly present as a luminous sphere within the channels of the body in general". The Tantra (Ati 167 1-7) goes on to explicate "body in general", "Tsitta" and "inner channels" separately in three sections, saying that (i) this reality is present as "winds" within our body in general, (ii) it is present as "Spiritual Bodies" within our Tsitta-heart, and (iii) it is present as "seminal nuclei" within our inner channels. Longchenpa cites the first section on TDD 231,3, and the latter two sections together on TDD 212,1. I have discussed this at length since one might be tempted to interpret *sPyi* as an abbreviation for *sPyi Bo*, or "head", which would lead to a translation of "within your head, Tsitta and inner channels". That triad would then directly correspond to Longchenpa's introductory remarks of four "divine palaces" by subsuming both "eyes" and "skull" under the general reference to "head" (even *Lus sPyi* could then be interpreted as a typical abbreviation that must be unpacked as "body" (*Lus*) and "head" (*sPyi*)). While in this context such a rendering would work nicely (and Longchenpa may even intend such a reading here as a deliberate play on this ambiguity of *sPyi*), the context of the Tantra, and general use of *Lus sPyi* indicate that such a reading can only be present as a secondary current of ambiguity against the main meaning of "throughout the body" or "the body's general structure" (literally "the body in general").

370. *Nor Bu 'Phra bKod* (NGB1 775,5; Ati2 72,6). The "great secret" refers to awareness' primordial gnosis and its radiation, identified in the Tantra as the Spiritual Body of Self-Awareness. In prefacing this passage, TCD2 94,5 provides a correlation of these four palaces with the view, meditation, conduct and contemplative fruit respectively, as well as specifying that "channels" refers to the main "four channels" (see my discussion below): (i) the foundation of the view is present in the Tsitta as awareness' self-emergent primordial gnosis; (ii) the lucent range of meditation emanates out in the four channels as gnostic nuclei of radiant light; (iii) the primordial radiation of conduct's inherent dynamism shines in the Conch Shell House; and (iv) the self-presencing primordial gnosis lights-up in the eyes as the climax (of evolution, i.e. the "fruit" of spiritual enlightenment).

371. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 454,7; Ati1 555,3). NGB and Ati read "the self-awareness of all sentient beings" instead.

372. *Seng Ge rTsal rDzogs* (NGB1 660,1; Ati2 358,2; also cited by TCD2 65,5). This passage first specifies the four locations of gnostic energy within our body (heart, channels, brain, and eyes), and then lists out the four forms its dynamism takes therein (Spiritual Bodies, seminal nuclei, light rays, and linked chains). Thus the main point is to indicate the main energy nexuses in our body, and the form in which awareness' radiation characteristically takes in each. In TCD2's preface to this passage, Longchenpa indicates that these two quartets should be directly correlated to each other: the Spiritual Bodies are the form in which awareness' gnostic energy is present within our Tsitta, the seminal nuclei are its form within our four channels, the light rays are its form within our Conch Shell House, and the linked chains are its form within our eyes:

"...Within the divine palace of the pure luminous channels at our heart's center, this great primordial gnosis' essence is present as the Spiritual Bodies, whereby the perfect characteristics and exemplary forms of an enlightened being are completely present in five-hued light; its nature is present as the lights, whereby the visionary manifestations of fivefold primordial gnosis is limitless; and its compassionate resonance is present as awareness, whereby enlightened knowing shines internally. Its radiation radiates (from the heart) to the Conch Shell House, whereby the wrathful mandala is present in total utter perfection and completeness. This radiation manifesting as light, rays, seminal nuclei, and minor seminal nuclei is naturally present within the four great channels splitting off from the heart's luminous channel, and is also present within the eyes in the form of the four lamps. Thus (this gnostic energy) is present in the Tsitta as Spiritual Bodies, in the four channels as seminal nuclei, in the Conch Shell House as light rays, and in the Briguta (i.e. eyes) as the manifestations of adamantine linked chains..."

These correlations are standard throughout TDD (see 212,1, 248,2 etc.), and in particular the wrathful deities within the brain are often mentioned in short hand as "light rays" since they are the "radiation" of the awareness' essence within the heart, as well as evoking the "furious" aggressive nature of the brain's intellection as opposed to the serenity of the heart's energy (the "peaceful deities"). The seminal nuclei are specified as within the channels since it is there that they flow through our body in a number of different modes as the mobile organizing centers for our mental and physical sustenance, while the linked chains are above all located in the eyes since they represent awareness' radiation in its dynamic seed-potency, which requires "vision" to unfold into their climaxing "fruit" as the luminous mandalas of Buddhas (also even in ordinary individuals the linked chains can be observed at any point as if they were floating just before our eyes). Despite these correlations, they should be understood as mere indications of the primary forms awareness takes in these spots rather than exclusive limitations, since in reality all four forms are present in our four locations (the Spiritual Bodies within the heart are described as within a "seminal nuclei", and emanating "light rays", etc.).

Though Longchenpa is quite clear in TCD, the Tantra's use of "in some", "in some", "in one", and "in one" is not self-evident. Correlated with TCD's preface, the first "in some" would refer to the Tsitta, the second "in some" would refer to the channels, the first "in one" would refer to the "brain", and the second "in one" would refer to the "eyes". Interpreted in this way, the problem would be why is "Tsitta" referred to with the plural "in some", though such plurality fits fine with "channels", which are specified as being four in number. The two eyes as a set could easily be referred to as "one", while the brain is of course singular. One resolution could be that "in some" indicates that these peaceful Spiritual Bodies are present in

the brain and other main energy centers as well as the heart. An alternative explanation could be to interpret "in some" (*La La Dag Na*) simply in the sense of "on the one hand", in which case it wouldn't really be different in meaning from "in one": "in some contexts it's present in the form of Spiritual Bodies; in other contexts it's present as the seminal nuclei; in still other contexts ("in one") it's present in the manner of light rays, etc." (this interpretation was suggested by one Tibetan scholar). Finally, TDD reads "in all, it is present as the linked chains", which I have corrected on the basis of NGB, Ati, and TCD (all three of which read "emerge" for "is present" as well - TCD reads "from one" instead of "in one"). In TDD's reading, it would indicate that the "linked chains" pervade our entire body, as they are present "everywhere"; it could also indicate how the linked chains can be seen by "everyone", even ordinary individuals, though even such a flickering glimpse of the Spiritual Bodies is extraordinary during this lifetime.

Finally, as a follow-up to this quotation, TCD2 66,5 says the following:

"...It manifests in the heart as the Spiritual Bodies; in the Conch Shell House as primordial gnosis (\*"primordial gnosis" denotes the wrathful deities, gnosis here in the sense of awareness' dynamics); in the Briguta (\*i.e. eyes) as awareness (\*referring to the linked chains as awareness' radiation); and in the four channels as the light of the expanse's lighting-up and the seminal nuclei..."

373. Briguta (NGB gives as "Bhrikuta") is a word of Indic origin signifying "eyes"; elsewhere Longchenpa also refers to the eyes by the ordinary Sanskrit term *Caksu*, which in transliterated Tibetan is "Tsakshu". Longchenpa's use of transliterated Sanskrit terms ("Bhanda" for the skull, "Tsitta" for the heart, "Tsakshu" for the eyes, etc.) is generally done to clearly distinguish these dimensions from the bodily areas/organs as normally understood in their gross corporeal aspects, and indicates these dimensions pertain to processes of intense subtle gnostic energy rather than ordinary bodily functions. Thus these foreign terms serve to make the language "strange" and provide a sense of numinosity, so that we are headed off from easy reductions and are forced to rethink our way to dimensions that are altogether different from what we have hitherto known. As such, the four terms for "eye" found in this text (Bhrikuta, Tsakshu, "eye" (*Mig*; standard Tibetan nonhonorific form), and "Eye" (*sPyan*; standard Tibetan honorific form) all overlap to some degree, yet a certain distinctive range of meanings can be indicated. "Eye" (*sPyan*) invariably refers to optimal processes (whether spiritual vision, the Buddha's eyes, or super-nuclei), while "eye" (*Mig*) has a more embracing reference which includes impure (such as our physical eye organ) as well as pure dimensions (though in general we would never refer to a fully enlightened Buddha's eyes as *Mig*). Any differentiation between Briguta and Tsakshu is more difficult to detail, though it would appear that the former term exclusively denotes the eye as the gateway of primordial gnosis, i.e. the tips of the luminous channels which are located in the center of our pupils (here imaged as a "palace" or residence of primordial gnosis' radiation); Tsakshu, on the other hand, has a wider range of reference embracing the eye's pure and impure qualities, and as such can be used in ordinary exoteric discourses to signify the eye as the seat of ordinary visual consciousness, as well as in esoteric texts to denote the eye as a spiritual gateway opening outwards in the Direct Transcendence visions. While we could say that *Mig* refers to the physical eye organ, Tsakshu to the eye as site of seeing (visual consciousness), and Briguta to the eye as gateway of gnosis, in fact *Mig* and Tsakshu can both refer to any one of these three aspects, while Briguta can only refer to this final pure dimension. A final possibility is that Briguta tends to be used to indicate the eye as a "palace" or residence of gnostic energy, while the term Tsakshu has more emphasis on the eye as a gateway opening

outwards, though I am uncertain if a detailed analysis of the texts would bear out such a distinction.

374. I have corrected TDD's "is present" to "manifests" on the basis of NGB and TCD, since this makes clear the contrast to the preceding paragraph - the speaker first details awareness' residence where it is "present", and then proceeds to list out the forms in which it "manifests". Awareness' essence resides exclusively within the heart, while these various forms are the derivative "dynamics" or "radiation" naturally issuing out from this pure essence.

375. This could also be rendered as "This teaches the Discourse (*Sūtra*) on (awareness') presence (within all living beings)", with "Discourse" in the sense of a short passage catching the "pith" or "crux" of a matter.

376. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 362,2; Ati2 494,1). The main point of this passage is to indicate how awareness' pure essence remains within us, while simultaneously accounting for the diversity we experience via its pure light-radiation. In the Tantra, this passage is prefaced by the following three lines, and is the response to a question asking what awareness' "residence" in living beings is like:

*"...The stainless pure Body of Reality  
Is present in this body ridden with distorted conceptions  
In the manner of being present without being sought..."*

The next three lines (which Longchenpa cites here) indicate the mandala of the peaceful deities are present in the center of our heart (here referred to as "Enlightened Heart-Mind", which signifies our own inner latent nucleus of enlightened energy present as our true heart). "Without being engendered" indicates that this presence is utterly natural and primordial within all living beings, and does not require some type of extraordinary contemplative effort of intense visualization or other technique to give it form or being. The following four lines then indicate that in essence this mandala is the single Spiritual Body (i.e. Reality Body), which is a term for the "primordial gnosis of penetrating unimpeded awareness" that pervades all living beings (here referred to as the "solitary mind", a term for the originally pure mind-as-such which is the pristine awareness constituting our unfabricated nature). Thus "totally pervading" is glossed by "furthermore it never passes beyond the single essence, like the space within a clay jar (which is identical to the space around the jar)". In the final line of this first stanza, NGB and Ati read "present within a natural, pristine state" instead of TDD's "present within yourself, natural and pristine" (*Ngang* instead of *Rang*), with "pristine" glossed by "the primordially unfabricated emptiness".

The second stanza plays off the same theme of unity and plurality in relation to awareness' radiation in the form of the linked chains, which give rise to an inconceivably varied light display (in the Direct Transcendence visions, these linked chains of light give rise to seminal nuclei, partial images of Buddhas and so forth in rainbow-colored light and encircling rims of light), yet remain a single originally pure essence (here referred to as a "single existence"). Ati2 73,2 reiterates this theme by saying "though these linked chains have innumerable phenomenal appearances, within the dimension of reality they are all non-existent other than the One". Thus while in general the linked chains are present without interruption in all living beings (i.e. awareness' radiation is present as a seamlessly interconnected continuity in our body as long as life remains within that body), in particular within the post-death or

contemplative visions they give rise to an infinite diversity of mandalic light-manifestations as these tiny "germs" of awareness unfold to their full potential in mandalic gestalts of light-display (iconographically understood as mandalas of Buddhas with their retinues). Yet all these diverse visionary manifestations are totally without division or solidification, like reflections in a mirror or holograms, and the linked chains' reality remains singular pristine awareness utterly devoid of any fragmentation. This final line simultaneously indicates how awareness can be the "one and only" as the solitary creator of the entire psychic and material universe, yet remain an utter singularity even within all this seeming diversity. Thus what initially is merely a visual experience of slender pulsating chains of minute linked spheres ultimately evokes the fertility and interconnectedness of the Ground's own self-organizing expression, which while remaining utterly empty becomes a rich luminous diversity inextricably intertwined as harmonious linked patterns of light energy. The final two lines (not cited here) thus say "possessed of the identity of emptiness and radiance, this is the lighting-up of primordial gnosis". Also see TDD 378,2 which cites the line "since these linked chains have many enumerations", and explains the "linked chains" as in reality being the luminous channels' radiation (or the "natural radiation of the enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy"), while its "parts" are all the five-colored lights and nuclei that appear in contemplative vision.

377. *Ngo sProd sPras Pa* (NGB1 291,5; Ati2 93,3). NGB and Ati read "the nucleus of primordial gnosis" for "great primordial gnosis", and gloss it with "mustard-sized Spiritual Bodies with proportionately sized eyes". I have translated in accordance with Longchenpa's quotation, though in the Tantra itself it appears these two lines are explaining the term "fundamental nucleus" as found in the Tantra's preceding line, and thus should be translated in the following manner: "...Fundamental" (*Don*) means that this "nucleus" (*sNying Po*) of primordial gnosis is present within your body's mandalic center".

378. *'Jam dPal sGyu 'Phrul Dra Ba* (this is an alternative title for *The Litany of the Eloquent One's Names*; see Davidson's *The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī* 57 (verse 102) for an edition of the Sanskrit, and p. 31 for his English translation; also cited by STCP2 13a 5; STCP2 7a 4; ZMYT2 111,3). I have translated this line in accordance with Longchenpa's interpretation of it as referring to the heart as the residence of awareness (and imaged as a "sacred knot" - see my annotations earlier in the chapter), which is "blazing" with luminous radiation that it emanates outwards. In this interpretation (and the Tibetan translation), "excellent" (*bZang*) can also evoke the presence of the *Totally Positive One* (*Kun Tu bZang Po*) within the heart (who is "positive light") as the ultimate essence of the mandala of peaceful deities (and corresponding to the Reality Body). The original text is a hymn of praise to the Eloquent One (i.e. Mañjuśrī), which for the most part lists out a series of marvelous attributes (or "names") it ascribes to him. Davidson renders this line accordingly as a series of adjectives describing Mañjuśrī, and in particular translates "sacred knot" etymologically as "the beloved of Śrī" (see my previous note). However, it appears clear that Longchenpa here interprets this as referring to Mañjuśrī either as an implicit image for our own Buddha-nature within our heart, or simply as describing his optimally energized awareness as the "blazing sacred knot". STCP identifies it as referring to the luminous channel which is at the center of the heart's eight major channels.

379. See KGNT1 453,1-456,1 and KGNT1 497,4-503,2 for similar accounts.

380. See KGYT2 201ff for a very detailed account of this, which basically involves the presence of the mandala of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities within our body

(especially note 196,4, which specifies that this gnostic energy within the heart are 'based upon a mustard-sized conventional seminal nuclei').

The heart is here imaged as a quiet still point of calm deep within us at the center of our own core-being (the locus of our "feeling" - the "heart knows"), while the brain/head then is the center of its dynamism as it interacts with the external environment (the locus of our "thought" and its aggressive tendencies), with the constant fury of activity as stimuli penetrate our five senses and effect us (four of the five senses being exclusively located in the head, and above all the eyes). Thus gnosis' dynamism or creativity is above all associated with the brain with its organizing intellection as "fierce" energy aggressively manipulating sensory data and the world around us, such that this agitated radiation can easily "go too far". The pure dimensions of these two localizations of gnostic energy are imaged by their being divine palaces (the Tsitta-heart and Conch Shell House-skull respectively) of mandalically ordered deities (the forty two peaceful and fifty eight wrathful deities), which thus image the simultaneous serenity and dynamic activity of primordial gnosis (its "empty essence" and "radiant nature"), experienced by sentient beings both as the perfectly serene "other worldly" look of a sitting Buddha, as well as the wrathful danger of a Master threatening to cut away our cherished illusions, thereby "killing" our self (our fixation on a personal self-sustaining ego) and children (the diverse illusions whereby we support our egotistic project of negation/union). In interpreting such statements, we must walk a fine line balanced between literalists' absurd reductionism (who want to see a group of minute little bodies physically located in our heart and skull) and interpretative dismissal (its just a symbol), and situate ourselves in the Tantric hermeneutical understanding with its powerful theory of multivalent symbolism fluidly spanning the material and the mental, and intimately interconnected with sophisticated psychological and contemplative techniques for both introspection and transformation (one need only reflect on the implications of viewing the material elements' solidity as essentially misinterpreted light to begin to sense the radical and potent nature of the Tantric "symbol" - beyond the "image", there is no-thing).

381. *Nor Bu 'Phra bKod* (NGB1 748,2; Ati2 42,1; also cited by KGYT2 200,4). Awareness' presence within our body/mind is imaged in terms of mandalas of deities, at the center of which are the five Buddhas (in peaceful and wrathful forms) in sexual embrace with their consorts (generally iconographically depicted as a sitting male with crossed legs, and a female in his lap facing him, with her legs wrapped around him). This basic imagery of masculine and feminine energy is then correlated to a series of other dyads to create a complex network of symbolism, which in our current context is indicated by correlating the male Buddhas to "efficacious means" and their female consorts to "insight", thus connecting their sexual union to the multivalent imagery of this traditional dyad of efficacious means and insight (see mini-encyclopedia for its significance). In short, "efficacious means" refers to the designing, planning, fragmentizing, individualizing masculine force, while "insight" signifies the feminine appreciation or receptiveness to the overall seamless wholeness. "Pairs" refers above all to the embracing pair of the Totally Positive One and his consort, though it also includes the other pairs of deities found in the peaceful mandala; "embodied" (*Cha 'Dzin*) literally means "apprehended in/as the dimension of", or "sustained in/sustains as the dimension of", and essentially points out the intimate mutual connection between these two sets of factors (i.e. in essence the Father-Mother consort pair is the visual image corresponding to the abstract philosophical notion of "efficacious means and insight").

382. As KGYT2 213,3-4 indicates in Longchenpa's preface to quoting them, these final three lines indicate that these Spiritual Bodies within the heart are surrounded by an

resplendent aura of light (referred to here as a spontaneous "seminal nuclei", and by KGYT2 as a "luminous home"), and radiate radiation ("light rays") outwards to permeate the entire body via the energy channels. Additionally, they can be characterized as a unity of the receptive openness of the empty expanse and the dynamic radiance of awareness (their dyadic identity as simultaneous emptiness and radiance), which is here imaged as these Buddhas/consorts being enhanced with such splendid adornments or "jewelry". Two pages later in the Tantra itself, the correlation is made explicit (NGB 749,5):

*"...Then when they emerge through the gateway,  
Expanse's nature is the Spiritual Body of Insight,  
And Awareness' nature is Spiritual Body of Efficacious Means,  
Which manifestly appear in a seamless identity..."*

"The great spontaneously perfectly complete seminal nuclei" not only evokes the luminous aura surrounding them (a perfect circular mandala with concentric circles of light surrounding them - see TCD2 67,2), it also indicates their primordial spontaneous inherence in all live forms, their utter holistic completeness at all times devoid of any deficiencies or lacks that need to somehow be added or altered via meditation, and that they are sources of intelligence or information, like "super" ("great") nuclei that act as spiritual genetic matrixes providing meaning and organization to our entire body and mind which surrounds them (again emphasizing that the Universe is permeated through and through with "intelligence").

383. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 140,1; Ati1 167,1; partially cited by TDD 212,1; KGYT2 160,2). This chapter in the Tantra revolves around discussing "reality" in relation to a wide variety of phenomena, such as our breathing, time, the elemental energies, and so on. The current passage is in response to the question "What are the key points of our ordinary body in relation to reality?" The beginning lines (cited by Longchenpa at the beginning of this chapter) go thus:

*The key points of the body are like this:  
Pure unfabricated reality resides  
Within your (body's) general (structures), Tsitta, and inner channels.*

The Tantra then first describes the presence of reality as the wind-currents throughout our body, as the Spiritual Bodies within our heart ("Tsitta"), and finally as the seminal nuclei within our inner channels, thus indicating the forms in which this enlightened gnostic energy takes within us (see TDD 212,1 for the remainder of the passage not cited here). "Reality" thus indicates the "enlightened nucleus" or pristine awareness present within our hearts (as well as its radiation), while the first three lines quoted here describe its dynamics as permeating the structure of our existence via these winds, or currents of energy. Longchenpa omits the next two lines, which in NGB and Ati indicate that these four verbs describe the fourfold function of wind energy: "to make subtle" (i.e. prevent from being coarse and solidified), "to lighten" (i.e. prevent from becoming weighed down), "to cause movement and circulation", and "to differentiate". In this way "reality" refers to the vibrant pure light-energy forming the nucleus of our existence (the pristine luminous awareness within our heart), while the "winds" are its dynamic movements as its high-energy vibrations pervades and sustains our psychic and physical existence (KGYT2 160,2 prefaces these lines by explicitly identifying "winds" as "gnostic winds"), which functions to "subtle-ize" our energy, "lighten" our existence as opposed to the gross corporeality of those immersed in distorted mental activity, bring about movement and circulation of pure psychic luminosity,

and differentiate vibrancy from solidified energy. The normal enumeration of five wind-currents in human existence with their impure operations are a reflex or derivative of these gnostic winds, which come to the fore as such in the context of cyclic existence. The gnostic winds are not only the key dynamic in the initial breaking forth of the Ground-presencing from the Ground's sealing enclosure, and the principal catalyst in the Direct Transcendence visions, they also remain present at our core as the main source of our energy even in the present state of distortion and non-recognition. While these wind-currents are thus the general term for the diffusion of reality's radiation throughout the body, that radiation is also referred to with separate names in relation to the particular forms it takes in certain high-energy nexuses of the body, as well as high-energy-flow channels - in the heart this luminous energy takes the gestalt-form of the Spiritual Bodies, in the channels that of the seminal nuclei, and in the brain that of the wrathful mandala.

See the complete quotation of this passage on TDD 212 for an interpretation of the final two lines concerning the "fivefold Bodies of its radiation", and an explanation of the other forms in which these Spiritual Bodies are present. In brief, this refers to awareness' radiation taking the form of the mandala of peaceful deities within our heart (with the core of that mandala being the five Buddhas and their associated "families" of deities).

384. *rTsal rDzogs* (NGB1 676,5; Ati2 376,3; also cited by TCD2 318,5); piecemeal citation by KGNT1 499,4- 502,1). This passage specifies seven locations in which awareness' gnostic energy is present (see TCD1 318,4), and the diverse forms it takes in each location. This imaging of awareness' locations as "treasures" or "treasuries" is similar to the previous imagery of them as "divine palaces", with each of these treasuries concealing the corresponding precious gnostic "jewels" of many facets, such that when opened they grant the visionary inestimable spiritual wealth with the riches of the gnostic visions (see Ati 377,2's mention of keys opening up the treasury of radiant primordial gnosis, whereby you gain access to the dynamic qualities (*Yon Tan*) of primordial gnosis).

i. *In the Ground, it is present as a "sphere" or "globe" of self-contained light energy:* immediately following its quotation of this passage, TCD2 319,1 describes awareness' essence as the "Ground", which when latently present within living beings' heart is within the "expanse of five lights", which resembles "the egg of a peacock" (which in enlightenment is "rent open" as the peacock child bursts forth, i.e. fully optimized awareness-as-a-Buddha). Thus "sphere" signifies this fundamental awareness being in a latent "internal radiance" within all living beings as pure virtual reality untainted by neurotization, but also inactivated and unrealized as a fully Enlightened Being (see TDD 232,3 for the mention of "sphere" as the spontaneously present sphere of light within which the mandala of peaceful deities is present within our heart-palace). It directly corresponds to the "Ground" described in the first chapter as the state of pure self-contained virtual potential from which the Ground-presencing breaks free. Just as with the image of an "egg" (which emphasizes its fertility), "sphere" (an archetypal image of wholeness) connotes a perfect self-contained concentration of energy in potentiality (the "Body within a Vase") devoid of any of the dissipation or irregularities that external diffusion entails, yet acting as the germinal high-intensity source of light-energy (elsewhere imaged as a "crystal ball"). TCD2 372,3 identifies this grounding "sphere of light" thus: "...The "excellent Ground seminal nuclei" is unwaveringly present within the channels throughout the body in general as a sphere of light..."

"Ground of all" (elsewhere rendered as "universal ground") here refers to the primordial ground as the source or wellspring of phenomena, the pure virtual whole operating as the



treasury-basis from which everything begins; it should not be confused with the impure universal psychic ground that operates as the fundamental basis or substratum of cyclic existence (despite the identical wording - see TDD 233,4's criticism of being misled by these two distinct usages of this term). "Source of phenomena" (*Chos 'Byung*) is a multivalent term, which can signify the vagina literally and symbolically, can be interpreted as the "wellspring of the sacred teachings" or the "fountain of reality (*Chos Nyid*)", or can be a technical term for two intersecting triangles in opposite direction which are placed in the center of mandalas to symbolize the five Buddha families, or a single triangle symbolizing emptiness - in essence, it emphasizes emptiness as the fertile source of all reality.

ii. *In the objective sphere, it is present as the expanse:* this would appear to indicate the initial exteriorization of the Ground as the Ground-presencing's seamless unbroken expanse of lights, which within human existence can be correlated to the network of "luminous channels" branching out from the heart. As opposed to the self-contained Ground-sphere, it is exteriorized ("objective sphere"), though as yet remains devoid of any of the subjective grasping and fixation so characteristic of our ordinary distorted experience, where we introduce a variety of divisions into this seamless light-continuum such that it is transformed into a world of discrete material objects and limited personal egos in our conscious experience. Just as we could describe this as referring to the initial phase of the Ground-presencing, we can also locate this seamless expanse in each moment of our experience, a point where "appearance" is a mere presencing of sheer light energy where the ego's subjectivity has not yet entered the picture, and thus has not yet been converted into something or discrete appearances (thus it is the "treasury" of what will become the particular objects fixated on in our highly charged fragmented networks of subjectivity and objectivity). While "expanse" can indicate "emptiness", in the Great Perfection it also indicates gnostic luminosity as a seamless stretch of five-colored light, the unitary Ground-presencing which stretches out towards infinity ("an expanse") while "empty" of any substantiality or division.

iii. *In our heart, it is present as the peaceful Spiritual Bodies in sexual union:* the "eight cornered esoteric assembly" refers to the heart (alternatively imaged as an eight cornered palace or an eight petalled lotus), where all the mysteries of human existence gather. In particular, it is "comprised" of the great secret of the entire Universe, i.e. awareness, and is the location of the peaceful deities' "congregation" ("esoteric" in the sense that it is not within the scope of ordinary materializing vision).

iv. *In our inner channels, it is present as the seminal nuclei:* "the four cornered precious treasury comprising life-vitality" is clearly interpreted by KGNT1 501,1 as referring to the luminous channels, which are classified into four "branches" ("corners") splitting off from the heart's luminous channel (TCD2 65,4; NGB and Ati read "nail/spike" (*gZer*) for "corner" (*Zur*), but KGNT agrees with TDD). This luminous channel (with its four corners/branches) is the treasury where primordial gnosis' "vitality" or essential "life" is concentrated, the pure light energy which sustains and animates our entire psycho-physical being, and in particular is the very quintessence of the transcendent visions which quicken our spirit. "The gathering of life-force" also connotes the conventional physical vitality channel (the residence of the vitality wind-currents which sustain our embodied life), which at times is described as encasing the luminous channel - see my annotations at the beginning of Chapter Five for a discussion of the four luminous channels (this grouping into "four" gnostic channels has at least three different enumerations in TDD), and their relation to the vitality channel (it seems most convenient to interpret "the gathering of vitality" as referring to the "great golden kati channel", and the "four corners" as indicating the other four luminous channels enumerated at

the beginning of Chapter Five - the former connotes the gnostic luminosity as it emerges from the heart, while the latter terms are merely names for that luminosity's flow-patterns within the body). Within these luminous channels, the main form of gnostic energy is as seminal nuclei, the high-energy source and organizing centers for all physical and psychic processes within our body, as well as the creative matrix or "life force" for the four visions, which flower forth from them.

Finally, there may be a minor connotation here of the "vitality wind", since the other four major wind-currents in our body are said to be its "branches", which in their gnostic form are the "carrier waves" of the nuclei, carrying the nuclei along like encoded information in radio waves.

v. *In our skull, it is present as the mandala of wrathful deities*: as discussed above, the skull is described as the location of the wrathful mandala in our body. My interpretation of *Don 'Khyil* as "where meanings spiral" (*Don 'Khyil*) is symbolically evocative, though the term remains not altogether clear. In general, Longchenpa refers to the skull by the imagistic term "Conch Shell House", evidently based on the visual and tactile resemblance of a skull's hard white surface to a conch shell, as well as playing off the ritual use of a conch shell as an item of auspicious significance. Additionally, the conch is used in Tibetan rituals as a musical item, and thus an added connection lies in potent sound emerging from a conch, just as the brain's potent activity issues forth in the mouth's "sound" (i.e. speech) resonating outwards. The term *'Khyil* is typically used with respect to a conch shell's "spirals" that spiral out from its tip, with conches "spiraling to the right" (*gYas Su 'Khyil Ba*) traditionally considered to be particularly auspicious. In fact, precisely this term "spiraling to the right" is used to describe the luminous channel's pathway within the brain, though its meaning there is far from clear - see 259,6. In addition to indicating "swirls", "furled", "coil up", or a "whirlpool", *'Khyil Ba* can also mean "come together", "gather together", "crowd together", "concentrate", or even "remain without movement" (evidently with the etymological sense of water "whirling" together into a center, or a snake "coiling up" into a ball); it is an intransitive form related to the transitive verb *bsKyil Ba*, i.e. "to dam up", or "to pen up". *Don* as well is an extremely slippery word - it can signify "meaning", "fundamental" (as a prefix), "presence", "dimension", "aim", "welfare", "point", "sense objects", "mental objects" and even our eight modes of consciousness (in the triad *Yul Don Lus* as describing the triune nature of our karmic propensities). We could thus possibly interpret *Don 'Khyil* here as "fundamentally spiraled", or even "where meanings collect", but I think the most likely and interesting interpretation is "where meanings spiral", playing off "the skull as a conch shell" metaphor to connote the brain as the center of furious intellectual activity, the site of most sensory reception (four of the five senses are located exclusively in the head) as well as our conscious psychic activity. Thus it is here that the swirl of our unceasing mental activity takes place, the site of the gathering of all "meanings" which form a spiraling circle or dance in the skull, which in its pure dimension is the gnostic energy's wrathful fury ("fury" and "spiraling" both evoking dynamism). Additionally, the conch imagery of the spiral evokes the constant interchange with our environment as our senses act as the gateways for external presences to impinge on us as well as our own psyche to move outwards into the world, thereby engaging in a constant interactional loop between the exterior environment and our interior psyche of evolving perceptions which are processed and organized into every increasingly complex patterns by the brain (thus relating to the crown wheel being termed the "ordering summit wheel", as the brain's primary function is to "organize" meanings or informational input). Thus this imagery of "spiraling" evokes the previously mentioned dynamism and furious activity of the brain as opposed to the still, quiet royal residence of the

Tsitta heart, which is described as a stately, symmetrical palace remaining serene throughout all this dynamic activity. Yet just as a spiral begins and ends in a point, this dynamic radiation of primordial gnosis stems from, and returns, to this still serenity.

This imagery is again evoked later in the chapter (see TDD 247,5), where the analogy of "lighting a butter lamp within a vase" is mentioned. This would seem to play off the wrathful deities/intellectual activity being the radiation stemming from the grounding awareness in our hearts, with the "light" curling its way up to head, where it swirls around within the hard confines of the skull, which "reflects" it back onto itself such that it continues to swirl without escaping outwards (just as the butter lamp within the vase will give the vase a subtle glow as its light swirls within, but will not be immediately apparent to the outside by virtue of being enclosed within the vase). A further dimension of the analogy relates to the butter lamps' light partially spilling out of the vase's mouth, which corresponds to the "light" in a person's eye as this radiation of awareness partially emerges in our sensory "gateways". Along these lines, perhaps we can think of the wrathful deities as also imaging the pent-up potent energy of our fundamental awareness, which is currently held in check by our egotistical dualistic obsessions, but can burst forth (or "flood forth") in furious dynamism at a "moment's notice" ("in one instant the critical differentiation is made, in one instant the perfect awakening of Buddhahood"). However, in ordinary living beings this dynamic radiation of primordial gnosis remains concentrated and restricted within the limited space of their skull, with the furious dancing of the wrathful deities a distant barely heard rumble of thunder in the background, their potent light rays the mere glimmer of a candle in the distance.

vi. *In our eyes, it is present as the expanse and linked chains:* in general, our eyes are referred to as "gateways" in that they are one of the five senses whereby sensory data can impinge upon our consciousness, while in particular they serve as gateways opening outwards for the emission of our inner gnostic light's radiation out into the sky (in the context of the Direct Transcendence visions). It is the latter which is here indicated, as both the "expanse" and linked chains are said to shine forth via the eyes, with the "expanse" said to initially appear a short distance from your eyes either in their corner, at the tip of the nose, or between the two eyebrows, while the linked chains initially appear as if floating in front of your eyes. The eye's natural clarity is connected to these radiant presences via the luminous channels running from the heart to the centers of the eyes, which thus function as a major center of our internal luminosity (in particular as the "gateway"). KGYT2 213,6 prefaces these two lines in particular thus: "the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses' natural radiation shines as the lights and seminal nuclei; thus emerging upwards from within the channels, they are present in the water far-ranging lamp (i.e. the eyes), whereby the space for their visionary manifestation is created..."

vii. *In the sky, it is present as light or luminosity:* this refers to actual content of the Direct Transcendence visions, when the heart's radiance has already shone out via your eyes, and is directly manifest as a variety of brilliant light-images in the empty sky. This treasury is of course emptiness itself imaged as the cloudless sky, and as such has no attributes or defining characteristics - it is the open sky, nothing and yet in a sense everything. At this crucial juncture in our personal spiritual evolution the awareness is now more and more the light, as it is present in the sky as observable pure light patterns totally divested of coarse corporeality, esoteric forms which we see and experience as pointing beyond themselves such that this transcendent light as it goes out incarnates the mystery of the Universe.

As indicated by the final line of this passage, these are the treasures of the "esoteric" in our life, since this pristine awareness and its ceaseless radiation in such vibrant images of light point to a dimension transcendent of the "internal" and "external", the **Being** which is no being, the no-thing that is every-thing. In summation, a definite significance to the sequential progression of these seven can be discerned: the passage begins with the pure potentiality of the Ground, then proceeds to the seamless holistic presencing of the Ground-presencing (which however forms the conditions for non-recognition, and hence cyclic existence); next the four "divine palaces" of awareness within human existence; and finally the presence of awareness' empty light forms in the sky as the visionary reenacts that primordial moment of the Ground-presencing's initial emergence, and brings involution and evolution to a localized climax as s/he enters the epoch of enlightenment.

385. KGYT2 212,5 discusses this section in greater detail (see annotations below).

386. *Nor Bu 'Phra bKod* (NGB1 748,6; Ati2 42,5; also cited by KGNT1 501,3; KGYT2 212,5). KGYT2 212,5's preface to this quote indicates that these seminal nuclei as well as light in general are primordial gnosis' luminous radiation stemming from the peaceful and wrathful deities' natural glow emanating out into all the internal channels of our body. Longchenpa also specifies there that the "adamantine linked chains" are present as well via the luminous channels' radiation.

*Within the energy channels, it resides in the manner of the seminal nuclei's Spiritual Bodies:* both KGNT1 and KGYT2 read *Thig Le'i sKu* for *Thig Le sKu*, indicating these terms should be read together as "seminal nuclei's Spiritual Bodies". The meaning of "Spiritual Bodies" here evidently is in the sense of "gestalts", as well as indicating the presence of the Spiritual Bodies within each nuclei as their inner gnostic core, with "Spiritual Body" indicating these nuclei are high-energy "gestalts", or mini-mandalas of highly organized intense energy (in addition, the mandalas of deities ordinarily within the heart and brain, as well as when appearing in visions, are described as being within luminous seminal nuclei, which are like a "dome" of light). See KGYT2 171,2-3, which says the nuclei are "in nature nuclei, in "aspect" letters, and in essence fivefold primordial gnosis and the five Spiritual Bodies..."

*The largest are equal in measure to the limits of the sky, while the smallest are merely a tenth of a horse tail's hair in measure:* KGYT2 213,2 interprets the sizes referred to here as pertaining to nuclei's current presence within our body (obviously the smaller sizes), and their subsequent manifestation in post-death experience visions (where these spherical nuclei can appear in huge sizes). We must add to this their presence in the Direct Transcendence visions as experienced by advanced visionaries, where the seminal nuclei first appear as small pea-sized circles of light, and gradually expand to immense diameters filling the sky with light.

*They go, come and abide:* KGYT2 213,2 quotes this as "naturally abide" rather than "abide", and in its follow-up comments indicates it should be interpreted as "stabilizing" the initial "comings and goings" of the nuclei, i.e. their initial unstable, vacillating presence as we engage in Direct Transcendence contemplation. Longchenpa indicates "it is accomplished in the sky's expanse when we gaze at them in direct immediacy in the current moment", referring to our visionary encounter with these light presences in Direct Transcendence contemplation. However, generally the larger seminal nuclei in that

contemplation are relatively stationary from the beginning, while it is the minute "linked chains" which are in rapid, darting movement initially, and which must be gradually stabilized and immobilized via our correct application of the "postures", gazes and looks, and sustained meditative practice. Since these linked chains consist of minute spheres linked together, they can in some context be referred to as "seminal nuclei", which appears to be the case here.

387. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 437,3; Ati1 533,6). These four types of lamps are explicated at length in the sixth chapter, and in brief refer to the four principal dynamics of our internal luminosity with a particular emphasis on the process in which we may visionarily encounter that luminosity within this very life time (termed "lamps" because they "illuminate" the path to transcendence).

388. (i) *Primordial gnosis' essence is present as the Spiritual Bodies, which resembles a Body within a Vase:* a body within a vase isn't visible to us from the outside, yet is fully present within that vase (it is unclear whether the basis for this analogy is a mythological account of a god hiding within a vase, a statue concealed within a vase, some type of child's game like the Russian "doll within a doll", etc.). It thus serves as a metaphor for the essence having the pure potential of evolution's entirety enfolded within it, yet remaining itself as virtual reality totally devoid of any actual existence as any-thing in particular. This tension between manifestation and absence perfectly captures the dynamism of Longchenpa's interpretation of emptiness (as well the cosmological state of the Universe prior to the "big bang"), which is a plenum or openness wherein anything may come to be, but which itself can be limited to no-thing. It also serves to explain how Buddha-nature can be primordially present within ourselves (the "Youthful Body in a Vase" is synonym for our "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy"), and yet we fail to recognize it as such in our delusion (since we only see the superficial exterior ("vase") and negate the interior ("body")). Finally this particular image also ties into the previous account of the essence being the peaceful deities within the heart ("Body") which are currently unmanifest to us (the heart as a "vase").

(ii) *Primordial gnosis' nature is present as luminosity, which resembles a butter lamp within a vase:* a butter lamp within a vase isn't fully visible from the outside, yet its luminosity spills over via the vase's top, as well as giving an inner glow or lucency to the vase's body; in addition, the radiance of this light diminishes in proportion to the distance from the vase at which it is perceived. It thus serves as a simile for how primordial gnosis' empty essence is simultaneously ceaselessly glowing with light energy (rather than being some type of sterile nothingness), which in human existence relates to how this inner pure core of awareness acts as the ongoing source of our psycho-physical existence despite its full capabilities remaining dormant within the shell of our neurotic existence (its light "overflowing" from the heart into the network of luminous channels, whereby it gradually diminishes in intensity as it radiates outwards, ultimately forming the solidified, sluggish energies that we ordinarily experience as "normal").

(iii) *Primordial gnosis' compassionate resonance is present as light rays, which resembles the light rays of the sun:* the sun's light rays not only are intense, infinite in number, and life-giving (the source of both light and warmth on the Earth), but also are spontaneously emitted from the sun without any conscious intention or manipulation on the sun's part. In an analogous manner, our internal core of primordial gnosis is unceasingly radiating outwards in waves of pure life-sustaining self-organizing energy totally independent of our conscious control or awareness, and as such permeates our entire existence like sunlight flooding across

the horizon. This thus indicates that primordial gnosis is high intensity energy (like the sun's fiery core) radiating outwards from its central point.

389. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 105,4; Ati1 126,5). The section in the Tantra this quote is extracted from concerns the key points of primordial gnosis in relation to our ordinary body.

*Primordial gnosis' essence is the dimension of original purity, the radiation of its Spiritual Body comprised of emptiness and clarity, with "faces and hands" completely present in the manner of a Body within a vase:* this describes the spiritual nucleus of realization ("the Buddha within"), which is essentially (i.e. as pure potential) present within all of us, with its dynamic capacities and qualities perfectly present but in a latent non-manifest state, just like a body within a vase is completely present with its hands, face and so on, but can't be seen from outside (the "face and hands" here is part of the simile (which analogously indicates that primordial gnosis is present in our hearts with its full capacities), and elsewhere Longchenpa is at pains to point out that the "Spiritual Body" described here is devoid of any such concrete characteristics). Thus we should not think of this "essence" or "original purity" as somehow a blank nothingness, or that these subsequent marvelous qualities of a Buddha are somehow created newly via yogic practice. Instead, they are all completely present in their pure energy even here, though they are in a latent state of pure internal energy ("internal radiance") rather than as manifest externalized energy ("external radiance"). The difference between this metaphor and that of the "butter lamp within a vase" (both of which refer to "internal radiance") is that the latter emphasizes the light as already partially evident, while with the former the emphasis is on pure virtual presence totally hidden from external view - a subtle distinction between the essence's pure empty energy in its perpetual potentiality, and that energy's nature as luminosity ready to move into exterior dynamics once the threshold of actuality is breached. Thus the nature is here imaged as the "sphere" of light that forms a "spontaneously present" aura around the "originally pure" essence-gestalt, such that it evokes the dimension of open emptiness which naturally self-expresses itself as dynamic light energy radiating outwards. "Compassionate resonance" then refers to this heart-luminosity emanating outwards in patterns of complex organization (including the energy that is the source of our physical and mental energy), just as light rays emanate outwards from a lamp or the sun. In the current context, it is identified as the "colors" of the spontaneously present light, which indicates its role as the "patterning" or "organizing" force within this light energy.

390. *rTsal rDzogs* (passage not located). This can also be interpreted as "it resembles the butter lamp within an inwardly radiant vase".

391. *rTsal rDzogs* (passage not located). "Thousand-fold" (*sTong*) could also connote "empty" (*sTong Pa*) in a nice play of meaning, signifying that this is pure light energy that is totally unimpeded without any substantiality or concretization (unlike matter with its solidity and obstruction).

392. I have not yet located the text composed by Vimalamitra which Longchenpa here cites. As usual, "internal radiance" must be understood in opposition to "external radiance", indicating that it glows with energy and pure potential but doesn't cross the threshold from virtuality to actuality. The significance of a "peacock's egg" is that such an egg is said to have an internal glow with a subtle hue of rainbow colors shining from within (obviously related to the adult's beautifully colored tail feather's display). This passage thus sums up the triad of Spiritual Body, lights, and primordial gnosis as the triune identity of awareness (its

essence, nature, and compassionate resonance), and though each image connotes latency, there are subtle differences as I indicate above. While the Body in the vase can't be seen ("essence") and the butter lamp glows with white light ("nature"), the peacock egg glows with the five colors as well as implying the offspring ready to burst out from the egg (whereas a butter lamp lacks this connotation of fertile generativity, and immanent emergence of a highly organized pattern). *The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* (372,4, Ati) uses this image in a slightly different way: the peacock's egg is an image for "the awareness present within the Ground" wherein the three Spiritual Bodies are completely perfect within the expanse of primordial gnosis, while the peacock's offspring breaking free of the egg is an image for "awareness taken to the ultimate (optimization)" in enlightenment.

393. The canonical tantras often describe the deities present within our body as having "mustard sized" bodies, and "*Phul Thag Tsam*" eyes, yet the exact etymology of *Phul Thag Tsam* is not clear. Its precise meaning was evidently a matter of controversy, and thus Longchenpa more than once explicitly defines the term as an old word meaning "proportionate" (see KGYT2 204,6), i.e. the deities' eyes have a size in direct proportion to their bodies' size (such that their eyes would be quite a bit smaller than a mustard seed, just as our own eyes are much smaller than our overall body). Longchenpa again discusses this issue at the chapter's end (248,6-249,2), where he indicates that some people had erroneously interpreted this term as meaning that the deities have large eyes that "telescope" out from their bodies, such that their eyes are small at their base but become quite large in diameter at the ends of these "telescopes" zooming out from their faces (evidently somewhat resembling a person holding a long telescopic lens to their eyes, except that in this case the eyes would be even larger than the body itself). In that later note, Longchenpa doesn't comment on the motivation behind such claims (i.e. whether they are intended to account for the deities' appearances within the Direct Transcendence visions, or some other phenomena), and in fact it is not totally certain that the two lines here are meant to be read together. However, I have chosen to interpret the second line here ("primordial gnosis undergoes transference") as being an explanation of other scholars' interpretation of *Phul Thag Tsam* as indicating that primordial gnosis undergoes "transference", possibly in the sense that at certain junctures in our life these minute deities' eyes "telescope outwards" to become quite large (with the eyes understood as our internal essence of primordial gnosis).

According to Khanpo Jikphun, these scholars understand *Phul Thag* to mean *Phor Pa* ("saucer"), such that the eyes resemble large inverted saucers or bowls, i.e. with their bases into the face and their larger mouths facing outwards. In general, *Phul* indicates "best", "highest", or "outstanding", while *Thag* normally means "distance", "rope" or "cord" and *Tsam* here indicates a size or resemblance. Thus intuitively it would seem to be a term indicating a large size, while specifically these scholars apparently based themselves on the meaning of "cord" in their interpretation of the eyes as being "telescoping" outwards to an immense size. They would also seem to be linking it to the standard descriptions of the luminous channels running to our eyes, which are said to resemble inverted "horns" with narrow "roots" back in the skull, and gradually expanding in diameter as they run down to the eyes (see beginning of Chapter Six). Looking at its use later in this chapter on 248,3, one might be tempted to interpret as referring to the wrathful deities being present within a larger "eye", i.e. a spherical seminal nuclei like an aura of light (such as mentioned in the previous line for the Spiritual Bodies within the heart - this also would relate to the following analogy there of the fish's eye). In fact, in VNT6-"Pha" 10,6, Longchenpa himself gives a quite different interpretation of this term that indicates understanding it as "vast" or "huge". He there says that "mustard sized" Body signifies these deities within the body are "subtle and

difficult to gain realization of", while "*Phul Thag* sized eyes" indicates the "visionary appearances of primordial gnosis become extremely vast in reliance upon subtle meditative practice" ("subtle" could also possibly be interpreted as "in reliance upon these subtle (presences of the deities via) sustained meditative practice"). While this isn't the same explanation of "telescoping eyes" that Longchenpa details at the end of this chapter, the etymology of the term he gives here would seem to be directly related - via meditative practice, this gnostic presence "telescopes" out from its initial minute presence within our hearts to become vast mandalas of light within the space around us. Thus, in this context he interprets "Eye" (*sPyan*) as referring to primordial gnosis' *visionary appearances* or *lighting-up* (*sNang Ba*) rather than primordial gnosis itself, with "Eye" relating to the "visionary" experience of this manifestation as well as the two "super-nuclei" or "Eyes" of the Elements and Lamps discussed previously ("Eye" here is the honorific form *sPyan* rather than the nonhonorific *Mig*, as appropriate when referring to deities). In KGNT1 63,1, Padmasambhava explains that the mandala of peaceful deities within our heart have "mere grain-sized Bodies" (*sKu Nyurṅ 'Bru Tsam*) by virtue of their essence-dimension, while they have "accordingly sized Eyes" (*sPyan Phul Thag Tsam*) by virtue of their primordial gnosis-dimension, thus correlating the deities' bodies to "original purity", and their eyes to "gnosis' spontaneous presence".

Assuming that this explanation of "primordial gnosis undergoing transference" is connected to an interpretation of *Phul Thag Tsam* here, it would seem that these scholars' mistake is twofold (neither aspect of which pertains to Longchenpa's second interpretation of *Phul Thag Tsam* as found in VNT). These scholars evidently agree that it is unfeasible to think of small Bodies with huge eyes, yet argue that these "Eyes" project outwards like telescopes, and since the Eyes embody primordial gnosis, primordial gnosis itself thus projects outwards from the heart. Presumably, following VNT's interpretation, the intention is to account for the appearance of the exteriorized Buddha-mandalas within the Direct Transcendence visions (experienced by visionaries in this very life time): the minute Bodies are an internally radiant latent dimension, while the gnostic Eyes account for their externally radiant and manifest dimension. Longchenpa rejects this interpretation on two levels, the first being simply an attack on the ludicrousness of describing minute little bodies with huge eyes (see TDD 248,7). The second aspect of his rejection hinges upon my interpretation of the second line here ("primordial gnosis undergoes transference") as describing some scholars' erroneous interpretation of *Phul Thag Tsam*, which I further interpret in relation to VNT's description. In general, Longchenpa often explains that the Direct Transcendence visions are simply "reflections" of our inner gnostic energy, and should not be understood as our primordial gnosis itself, which remains as our essential life force within our hearts, despite its efflorescence moving outwards as the source of our psychic energy and inner vitality (and the visions). Yet these scholars' interpretation appears to be that these telescoping "Eyes" indicate primordial gnosis itself departing our body and "transferring" into the sky. Yet should it transfer out of the heart and body, the body would become mere inanimate matter devoid of any life (while the body acts as the support of primordial gnosis with its conventional channels and so on, its own vitality derives from primordial gnosis itself). Instead, we must understand the visions as involving the radiation or efflorescence of primordial gnosis, as carried through the eyes by the waves of gnostic winds, while the essence of primordial gnosis remains serene within our hearts. Then at death the indestructible essence of primordial gnosis departs from the body (marking the separation of body and mind such that the body becomes a dead corpse), and thus "transfers" out of the body to the post-death intermediate state, or a pure land.



One last point regards the term *rLung Gi sPor Shab*, which I have interpreted as "utter nonsense" (i.e. "just hot air") following Khanpo Jikphun's explanation that it was a colloquialism found in nomadic Tibetan still as "*Hor Shab*" (*rLung* means "breath" or "air", while *Shab Shub* can mean "lie" or "joke" - *sPor* would then not have its ordinary literary meaning, as it would be of colloquial derivation). Prior to that, I wondered if this term might somehow relate to the visions being the reflections of gnostic radiation as "ignited" or "raised" (*sPor*) by the gnostic winds rather than primordial gnosis itself (*Shab* as a verb can mean "emerge from within").

394. As mentioned previously, this discussion differentiating the "Reality Body" from the "universal ground" via a standard sequence of topics is a type of mini-genre repeated many times in Longchenpa's corpus (see ZMYT1 444,6-449, etc.). In brief, the "Reality Body" signifies the pure intensity of self-recognized awareness that is at the core of an Enlightened One's realization, while "universal ground" signifies the indeterminate psychic energy that has failed to self-recognize itself, and thus functions as the basic substratum for all distorted psychic functioning within the framework of cyclic existence. In rTse Le sNa Tshogs Rang Grol's *The Nucleus of the Sun* (34b 1) he gives an alternate characterization of this differentiation as between "original purity" and the universal ground", since the Reality's Body's essence is none other than original purity.

395. The universal ground is imaged as a small reservoir or pond, such that the karmic propensities can be understood as the water gathered therein. This contrasts sharply with the Reality Body being imaged as an ocean, with its connotations of naturalness, peacefulness, permanence, vastness, profound depths, and rich variety of life forms, as opposed to the reservoir's artificialness, turbulent changes, provisional nature (it can easily dry up at any point), tightly delimited and constricted domain, shallowness, and relative homogeneity and sparsity of life. With water itself imaging psychic energy in its fluidity and non-substantiality, the ocean evokes a vast pool of limitless energy while the reservoir signifies a constantly fluctuating (its depth depending on extrinsic circumstances) small pool of psychic energy. Just so the Reality Body indicates the empty luminosity within us of pristine purity, while the universal ground is that same energy (all water deriving from and returning to the ocean) but in a constricted form which then in small uncertain streams feeds the other aspects of our psyche (sensation and so forth). It must be kept in mind that "karmic propensities" implies distortions and neurotic conditioning of our psychic energy which cause us to perpetually engage in emotionally distorted reactions to the world, and as such are totally absent in the Reality Body.

396. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 380,3; Ati2 518,4; also cited by TCD2 32,7; ZMYT1 447,6).

397. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 380,3; Ati2 519,1; also cited by TCD2 33,1; ZMYT1 448,2).

*This universal ground which involves causes and conditioning:* "universal ground" is glossed "within the body", while Ati glosses "causes" as "dimmed awareness", and "conditions" as "the five elemental energies", tying this into the analysis of the main "cause" and "condition" of our straying into cyclic existence (see Chapter Two).

*The Reality Body is beyond such karmic imprints:* "Reality Body" is glossed by "because of its unchanging essence", while "karmic propensities" is glossed by "of previous attachments and which will emerge in the future", which signifies how these karmic traces are sedimented into our psyche's substratum by our previous actions over the course of many lifetimes, and subsequently flower forth into new actions and reactions, a process which is in perpetual motion as these propensities are continually being "deposited" in seed-traces on our universal ground substratum while "older" propensities are simultaneously "flowering" forth.

*Via the ordinary psyche, mind, and so on coming together, the universal ground of embodied beings manifests as a plurality:* the "mind" (*Sems*) is a more general term for our non-optimal dualistic mental life, while "psyche" (*Yid*) denotes particular aspects of the mind with special connotations of its specific perceptual function as that which synthesizes the experienced objects out of raw sensory data, and what we might term the "ego". "Manifests as a plurality" refers in particular to our experience of the world as a series of discrete things and beings, which we zero in on as constituting separate "selves" or "identities", as well as how each "species" or type of living being has their own general "gestalt" of experiencing the world in accordance with the general character of their karmic propensities (often signified by pointing out how what humans may perceive as "water" will be seen by deities as "ambrosia", by starving spirits as "pus", and so on). The universal ground's karmic propensities not only determine the specific shape of our own bodies, perceptual apparatus, and mental states, they also effect the external environment, which, contrary to popular belief, is seen as in coevolution with living beings' minds. Thus the karmic propensities are usually classified into a triad corresponding to their determination of our external environment, internal consciousness, and physical existence (*Yul Don Lus* - see YZD 90,7ff, 92,2ff), all of which obscure our nucleus of awareness' natural radiant light.

*Since the Reality Body is beyond the psyche and concordant dimensions, it is devoid of a psyche to which a plurality of forms would manifest:* NGB and Ati gloss "is beyond" as "within self-awareness", or "its intrinsic awareness". NGB, Ati, TCD2, and ZMYT all read "is devoid of an ordinary body" instead of "is devoid of a psyche", which Ati glosses by "it is naturally and inherently free". "Forms" here indicates "manifest material forms" (*gZugs sNang*) as opposed to pure visions (*Dag sNang*), which are experienced as fragmented rather than seamless, substantial rather than dream-like, and dim rather than brilliant. Since the Reality Body has no dualistic psyche with its network of karmic traces fueling our dualistic experience, it introduces no divisions into reality's seamless expanse of light.

398. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 537,5; Ati1 667,6; also cited by TCD2 100,7; also see Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 217 and Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 211 for mentions). TCD2 prefaces this quote by saying that though these two are ultimately the "Same" within the singular expanse, the universal ground can be described as like a "boat" which "rises up" within the ocean-like range of the Reality Body, and thus manifests as an "obscuration", "pathway", or "dynamism" of the Reality Body. TCD2 34,5-35,3 has a lengthy discussion of this analogy, including the additional metaphor of sleep and awakening where the Reality Body is described as recovering your "senses" after the long night of dream-filled sleep of dimmed awareness. As for TDD's discussion here, "grounding Reality Body" (see TDD 184,4) refers to the Reality Body as the triune Ground of the Universe and our own personal microcosmic existence, which is here imaged as the ocean that is the ground of this journey and support of the boat, as well as evoking water/energy remaining in its infinite source rather than being channeled into rivers, streams, pools, and so on (which all stem from this

"Ground"). "Sets out on the path" is literally "the path emerges", which connotes that from this immense self-contained ground the path of cyclic existence adventitiously emerges, which in itself is ultimately a spiritual path taking the long way around to the Ground's self-awakening. Between the "ground" and the "climax" (i.e. enlightenment) we are "neither here nor there" but rather on a journey, departed from where we came from yet not arrived at where we are going to, a long wandering which ultimately is a journey retracing our own footsteps back to the source, the ever vibrant womb of original purity. It is often said that within the single Ground there are two paths: the path of transcendence (recognition) and the path of cyclic existence (non-recognition), and thus "path" could be the path of straying, or the path to freedom (which can be an instant in duration as with the Totally Positive One, or a roundabout path to self-recognition via eons of confusion). Thus "path" indicates the Ground's entire search via the Ground-presencing and onwards, such that Tulku Thondup's rendering of "path of enlightenment" is too limited as it implies that immediately after the filling up of the boat with karma, etc., its sets out directly on the path to enlightenment, when in fact we know from experience that the way to Truth is a detour, from which no one may demure. Thus "on the path through the Reality Body's range" not only indicates we travel "through" the ocean, but also can connote we seemingly go "away from" the Reality Body as we stray, though in fact we never depart from its infinite range, just as while in the "boat" (universal ground) we can go nowhere but in the "ocean" (Reality Body). However, despite our conscious conviction that our "destination" is some distant island or country which we must first traverse the ocean to reach, that destination and the egotistical beliefs that underpin it are illusions, as it is the ocean itself which is our ultimate destination - our true destiny is to "drown" within the ocean such that our old self "dies" away, and we learn to our amazement an innate affinity with the ocean that we once perceived as a threatening immensity in which we could only be destroyed utterly (the ego's perception), such that we are "reborn" as creatures eminently suited to life in ocean's vastness (i.e. Buddhas). The "boat" is insignificant when compared to the ocean's vastness, and yet while in this tiny boat it appears to be our whole world and sole salvation even with its absurd limitations; we cling to its confinement, unwilling to enter the Ocean for fear we can't "breathe" its water, or stay afloat (our notion of "self" will not survive). In this analogy, "awareness" can either be identified with the ocean/Reality Body, or, as elsewhere, can be understood as the "passenger" (here identified as the ordinary "mind" or "universal ground"), which in its "mask" as the mind strays from its own essential reality.

399. This is a very important point, and involves a strict differentiation between two distinct and quite separate usages of the term "all-ground" (*Kun gZhi*): our personal "universal ground" as the fundamental conventional substratum of our existence which operates as the impure reservoir of the karmic imprints, and the "Ground" or "Reality Body" which is the "Ground of all" in its role as the ultimate pure foundation of our existence ("the dimension of the Ground" here refers to the Reality Body, especially as present within our own heart's essence - see above for Longchenpa's description of the Reality Body as "grounding", i.e. present as and within the Ground). The "universal ground" in the former sense must be understood as referring to that indeterminate "cognitive capacity" (*Shes Pa*) discussed in the beginning of the second chapter, which fails to recognize the lights as "self" in the Ground-presencing, and thus inexorably evolves into a complex psycho-physical system with this indeterminate psychic energy continuing to act as the basic substratum of dimmed awareness (which, as noted previously, is a derivative dynamism of awareness). While in fact this single term (literally "all-ground") is being used with two totally distinct referents (though they share a functional similarity in terms of acting as a "foundation" for a plurality of phenomena, the former only acts as the foundation for impure phenomena, while

the latter operates as the "ground" for both impure and pure phenomena in their entirety), many scholars before and during Longchenpa's time made the mistake of deducing that this indicates the pure "Reality Body" and impure "universal psychic ground" should be identified with each other. Longchenpa totally rejects such an identification, and in the following lines points out the numerous logical fallacies inherent in making such an assertion (in short, it would either deny our own current undeniable experience of dualistic, distorted appearances, or it would reduce the ultimate into a fluctuating, impure source of neurosis, thereby denying the possibility of enlightenment). Such a rejection is in line with Longchenpa's overall hermeneutical approach, which is to maintain that our ordinary consciousness, physical existence, and material elements are mere non-optimal derivative reflections of a primary reality that is empty, radiant, and intelligent, such that rather than being a question of the former being "transformed" into the latter by yogic techniques, the latter is primordially and uninterruptedly present as the former's ongoing source and reality - enlightenment is in the end an epistemological question of "recognition", not an ontological matter of "transformation". For this reason he rejects such indiscriminate claims as "our ordinary mind is primordial gnosis" or "our universal psychic ground is the Reality Body", which (outside the context of a sophisticated, evocative poem) make no sense of our current experience of distortion and suffering, undercut the need for a soteriological path of study and contemplation to overcome our strong ingrained sense of alienated "self" and "otherness", and tend to concretize the primary reality (gnostic energy) in terms of the secondary derivative (ordinary mind, etc.), thus feeding into our "natural" desire to continue on our present course, understanding "Being" as just another "being", enlightenment as an aspect of neurosis, and the great "self" as our personal ego. Additionally, he rejects more subtle interpretations that describe the "stainless" mind or "purified" universal ground as the Reality Body, such that by contemplatively "polishing up" the former we can arrive at the latter (such descriptions appear to be found throughout Indian Buddhist literature). Longchenpa consistently rejects these interpretative trends as well, since they describe the primary reality in terms of its secondary derivatives, such as describing the "sun" as "unobscured clouds", since the clouds obscure the sun from our view, and their dissipation reveals its glorious, life-giving presence to us - the mind obscures our spontaneously present enlightened nucleus of pristine awareness from our consciousness, while when we contemplatively dispel its obscuring neuroses, that radiant light naturally expands outwards to permeate our being with its high-intensity energy (the "cloud-like" mind is *dispelled*, not transformed or "cleaned"). Along these lines, in KGYT2 212,4 Longchenpa gives a distinctive interpretation of the famous passage "The mind is not the mind; the mind's nature is radiant light" (from *The Transcendental Consummation of Insight in Eight Thousand Lines*), which is so often quoted in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist literature, and at first sight seems to support the positions Longchenpa here rejects. "The mind is not the mind" is interpreted as referring to the sublime primordially pure Reality Body, which is the "primordial gnosis of originally pure essence" (TCD2 42,6ff indicates that the first and third occurrence of "mind" refers to "mind as such", i.e. primordial gnosis, which then is denied as being the ordinary distorted "mind" (the second reference to "mind" then indicating our ordinary distorted dualistically based mind)). "The mind's nature is radiant light" then is taken to indicate the sublime Form Bodies of the "primordial gnosis of spontaneously present nature" (usually understood as the various discernible forms or enlightened activities that issue out of the Buddha's formless enlightenment (the "Reality Body")). As for the obvious objection that the quote says "the nature of the ordinary mind" rather than "the nature of primordial gnosis", Longchenpa responds by saying that since the ordinary mind is "the derivative dynamism (*rTsal*) of primordial gnosis", its name is used here, just as "sunrays" (which are the dynamism of the sun) can be linguistically referred to as the "sun", or vice a versa. Also see ZMYT2 221,4-6

where Longchenpa discusses how awareness' radiation is often referred to as "awareness", which is a case of using the cause's name (i.e. awareness) to refer to its effect (i.e. radiation), just as we refer to the sun's light as the "sun".

In summation, I would say that the significance of Longchenpa's insistence on such clear distinctions ties into his resolutely "evolutionary" emphasis that insists on the validity of a detailed type of a "cosmogony", and attempts to precisely articulate the original mechanism of alienation (its "causes" and "conditions") while holding that the enlightened nucleus of light-energy continues to pervade all living beings. To perform this balancing act between "primordial purity" on the one hand and the soteriological importance of study and contemplation on the other hand (which is directly related to not denying the extent to which our experience is distorted in our current state of being), Longchenpa must maintain a strict demarcation between our superficial, neuroticized modes of beings and our primordial core-reality of empty and radiant awareness, with a particular emphasis on the latter as the former's source to head off attempts by others to rationalize neurotic behavior as unconventional "enlightened energy", as well as to override the ontological difference and reduce *Being* to a circumscribed being, or the Ground to an enframed "thing" (and thus continue unaltered in their dualistic obsessions). By doing this, he is able to both maintain his theory of primordial purity and the inherent intelligence of the Universe, while simultaneously accounting for our continuing non-recognition and alienation, along with the consequent importance of study and contemplation. It is important also to look to the wider cultural context of fourteenth century Tibet which Longchenpa wrote, thought, and contemplated within, an era which shortly afterwards was to give rise to Tsongkhapa's "reformation", which revalorized conventional ethical and intellectual processes (i.e. monastic institutions and logical reasoning). Longchenpa's comments often point to a deep dissatisfaction with his fellow Tibetans' philosophical and religious habits, and an analysis of these currents in connection to this issue would certainly shed mutually illuminating light (which must include the evolving need for "credentials" in the Tibetan scholastic community that was becoming increasingly rigid and reactionary at that time, as well as the connected "religious" community of itinerant visionaries, frauds, and pilgrims with their "tantric" lifestyles at times tending to a degenerate free for all). Finally, I must point out that Longchenpa's own exoteric (and most probably earlier) writings often override precisely the distinction he is so concerned with here, as they discuss the "universal ground" in very fluid terms that oscillate freely between the "primordial Reality Body" and the impure distorting "universal psychic ground" (see YZD 89,7, 90,2; STCP1 80a 4ff; Tulku Thondup's translations in *Buddha Mind* 216,4ff). STCP1's account in particular clearly defines the "universal ground" and "linking-up universal ground" as the primordially pure expanse and its spontaneous presence respectively, upon which impure karmic propensities are then based in the eventuality of straying. A definitive study of the difficult matter of the internal dating of Longchenpa's corpus would certainly be helpful in understanding the evolution of his thought here, though it can be said that he is consistent in the sense that he strictly differentiates between the universal ground and Reality Body in all of his Great Perfection writings, while any blurring of that distinction can only be found in such exoterically oriented works as YZD and STCP. Deductions relating this to possible internal developments in Longchenpa's thought and/or the intellectual environment he found himself in at different points in his life must be based upon a preliminary study of the dating of these texts and other biographical matters, especially NSK in relation to TDD and TCD (the former are almost certainly earlier works - see my discussion in the introduction). It shouldn't be thought that Longchenpa is simply rejecting the view in STCP, since in part they are two different types of discourses based on quite different groups of canonical texts (TDD on the Great Perfection

Tantras, and STCP on standard Great Vehicle texts), with the latter lacking the former's evolutionary focus in its precise analysis of the Universe's initial emergence and the phases involved in our going astray. Thus STCP, despite its detailed account of the universal ground, only gives a very broad sketch of it in relation to the detailed phases involved in the Universe's beginning (in line with the canonical texts it is based upon), such that it is liable to misinterpretation. In TDD, on the other hand, Longchenpa is quite concerned about the "early history" of the Universe, and thus is driven to strictly demarcate between pure and impure dimensions to clearly delineate the mechanism operative in illusion and universal neurosis, thereby heading off likely erroneous hermeneutical tendencies "at the pass".

Also see *From Reductionism to Creativity* 220ff for Dr. Guenther's discussion of this issue in the context of Vimalamitra's writings (which distinguish *Kun Kyi gZhi* from *Kun gZhi*), and Karmay's *The Great Perfection* 178-184 for his discussion of the term *Kun gZhi* in early Great Perfection literature (while Karmay gives an admirably wide ranging account of this controversy, it would appear to me he has not understood Longchenpa's account clearly).

400. In one sense "transformation" could be taken to indicate "change" or ongoing flux, as the quote below indicates (see annotations there). As a technical term, however, "transformation" (*gNas 'Gyur; Āsraya-parāvṛtti*) signifies the fundamental "transformation" involved in enlightenment, where our entire psycho-physical structure is "turned upside down" - see Davidson's *Buddhist Systems of Transformation* for a systematic analysis of this term. While the "universal ground" must undergo such "transformation" as the basic substratum of our neurotic dualism (though with Longchenpa it is more of a "dissipation" than a "transformation"), it is inadmissible that the Reality Body would undergo any alteration or transformation since it is by definition the "unchanging essence" of our existence, and in particular constitutes the inner quintessence of the Awakened One's realization. In TCD2 33,4ff, Longchenpa also mentions a tantric interpretation that claims the universal ground undergoes "transformation" such that its "pure dimension" is the "reality's expanse primordial gnosis" (*Chos Kyi dByings Kyi Ye Shes*) and "the Essence" Body (*Ngo Bo Nyid Kyi sKu*), and thus the universal ground operates as the foundation of transcendent reality as well as cyclic existence. Longchenpa rejects this interpretation as nonsensical for the same reasons he articulates here in TDD (i.e. the Reality Body and universal ground by definition mutually contradict each other).

401. TDD 234,1 clearly indicates that "temporary" refers to vacillation, in the sense that at certain points it will be "distorted" and other times "enlightened", since the universal ground's character is provisional. In addition it only applies in the context of cyclic existence, not in transcendence, which would imply that the Reality Body as well could become discontinuous - "provisional" is in direct opposition to "ultimate". This also resonates with the ocean/reservoir imagery, as the former is primordially enduring while the latter can dry up or be fundamentally altered at any point. Such provisional character and discontinuity, however, cannot apply to Reality Body, which is present primevally without the slightest rupture as the core pristine "knowing" or intelligence at the very fabric of the Universe, as well as the empty virtual radiance which is the ultimate source of our own psycho-physical existence. In contrast to its primordial inherence, the "universal ground" is an adventitious phenomena that results from a localized non-recognition, which serves as a constantly fluctuating substratum for the consequent systematic misinterpretation and coevolution of an "animate" and "inanimate" world, yet ultimately dissipates again into absolute nothingness when enlightenment occurs.

402. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 593,7; Ati1 736,6; also cited by TCD2 34,1). This passage is a theoretical debate between two people, and I have marked the erroneous position's remarks with asterisks; see NGB 586-7 (Ati 728-9) for the setting to this passage, which involves a member of his retinue requesting that the Buddha provide logical debate-discourses (i.e. potential objections and the appropriate responses) that can be utilized by his disciples to refute erroneous views and criticisms following the Buddha's departure from a manifest presence in this world. This particular section begins with the hypothetical (and erroneous) assertion that the Reality Body and universal ground are identical, and then proceeds to reject the assertion in the format of a debate by pointing out the faulty logical consequences of such an assertion.

403. I have corrected TDD and TCD's *'Di ITar to Ji ITar* on the basis of NGB and Ati.

404. "Questions" refers to the stating of undesirable consequence, then saying "Why?", and giving the reason for this consequence (I have added the first "why?" on the basis of NGB and Ati). All the following lines are based on the other person's assertion that the Reality Body and universal ground are identical, which would entail that their respective attributes applied to each other. The speaker thus merely points out the problems that would result if the universal ground's attributes applied to the Reality Body.

405. The universal ground with its repository of karmic seed-propensities acts as the substratum for constantly varying manifestations such that it is in perpetual metamorphosis and flux, and thus likewise the state of Buddhahood (the Reality Body being the quintessence of Buddhahood) will be subject to such change and vacillation (including lapses into impurity), which contradicts the standard descriptions of Buddhahood as being beyond phenomenal change and vacillation. As for the second reason, the proponent of this thesis just described the universal ground as involving "everything being completely present within it", which would entail it involving every variety of impure emotion and phenomena as well transcendent dimensions. This means not only that the Reality Body (which is identical to the universal ground in this theory) would "change" (since "everything" includes all change and oscillation), but also that it would come to be its opposite, i.e. ordinary distorted sentient beings (as the following line here indicates).

406. The difference between "undergo change" and "vacillation" is obviously one of connotation rather than substance, with the former term emphasizing diversity and the latter instability.

407. NGB and Ati (and the quote on TCD2) end this dialogue with the following lines not given here (though the next to last three lines are quoted on line 5 below in TDD):

*Then these questions are countered, (your opponent asks):  
"Well then, is the universal ground non-existent or what?"*

*Then (you) answer the question (thus):*

*"The universal ground, due to its supporting conceptuality,  
Is adulterated by variegated cognitive processes;  
The universal ground is the real dimmed awareness,  
And the term "universal ground" should be applied there".*

408. *Kun Du bZang Po Thugs Kyi Me Long* (NGB1 261,5; Ati1 258,2). The speaker here is the Totally Positive One.

409. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 593,5; Ati1 736,4; also cited by TCD2 32,6). This is in a section of debate directed against an advocacy of total non-dualism. This crucial difference between the active "grounds" of sentient beings and Enlightened Ones is recognition and non-recognition, which can be harmonized with the image of one Ground and two pathways (that of the Buddha's awakening in recognition and sentient being's straying in non-recognition) in that the "universal psychic ground" has no ultimate ontological status (as the primordial Ground does), but rather only epistemological, or phenomenological, status operative under the general conditions of straying. Thus whether recognized or not recognized, there remains only one ultimate Ground, just as the manifestation of cyclic existence remains in fact simply the play of the one and only self-emergent primordial gnosis. In this context, the "grounds" are classified separately for analytical purposes to point out the "substratums" directly operative in both cases, when in fact the primordially pure ground in its three dimensions of utter emptiness, radiant light, and resonating energy lies at the heart of all being and non-being alike. The lines in the Tantra following this passage clearly show that the difference between the Ground and universal ground is related to the distinction between primordial gnosis and ordinary cognition, between awareness and dimmed awareness (I follow NGB's reading here):

*Why is there a single difference?*

*Because "a single difference" exists:*

*Within the Buddhas' ground is "primordial cognition" ("primordial gnosis"),*

*And within sentient beings' ground is "cognition".*

*When both "primordial" and "cognition" are brought together,*

*It is the Buddhas' authentic wisdom.*

This is followed by the previously cited passage on the distinction between the universal ground and the Reality Body. Preceding this passage on (NGB 592,7), the Tantra has these related lines:

*When there are neither Buddhas or sentient beings,*

*There are no twos or threes within the Ground;*

*Due to the dynamism of play arising therein,*

*Both Buddhas and sentient beings emerge;*

*And in the present Ground there is this duality.*

TCD2 32,1's preface to this quote also points out the "difference" quite clearly (which Longchenpa clearly indicates as "awareness" contrasted to "dimmed awareness"):

"...In dependence upon the ground of sentient beings and the ground of Awakened Ones, (in the latter case) there is the essence of awareness which is stainless and originally pure, while (in the former case) there is stained dimmed awareness adulterated by a host of neurotic thoughts, and thus acting as the ground for all sorts of distorted appearances and distorted fixations. In light of this, we must understand the dyad of the universal ground and Reality Body as distinct (from each other)..."



410. Unlike the exoteric Indian Buddhist texts which principally speak of an "underlying consciousness" or "foundational consciousness" (literally "all-ground consciousness; *Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes*), Longchenpa makes a clear analytical distinction between the "universal ground" (*Kun gZhi*) and the "consciousness of the universal ground" (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes*). There are, however, certain classical Indian texts suggesting a proto-distinction between these terms, such as the text by Sthiramati cited on STCP1 83b 5, or the passage from the Asaṅga's *Bodhisattva Bhūmi* cited on STCP1 85,2, which makes the distinction quite explicit. The former signifies our most fundamental substratum of distorted psychic energy (though itself derivative of the pure enlightened nucleus of radiant awareness within our heart), which is indeterminate in the sense that it is the basic dimmed awareness or non-recognition that operates as the transcendental condition of all the other emotional distortions, yet in itself is without any positive or negative ethical valuation - it is merely a deficiency in knowledge, evoking that initial moment in the Ground-presencing when its cognitive capacity fails to recognize itself, a moment which inexorably leads into cyclic existence while as yet devoid of any of the active dualism, enframing, and emotional fury characteristic of alienated life. This basic substratum also operates as our "unconscious", serving as the repository or storehouse for our vast array of karmic propensities and tendencies, and as such continually shaping our life in a largely unconscious symbolic quest to resolve the inherent dilemma in our troubled dream of an isolated ego (which Brown analyzes so powerfully in his *Life Against Death*). In addition, there is a more radical element to this theory absent in the "Freudian" unconscious, since the material elements' present form and our physical constraints are ultimately seen as derivative of the state of our personal "universal ground" (see KGYT3 202,5-203,3 for a brief account of how the Ground, Ground-presencing, the impure gateway to cyclic existence, and the gestalts of the sixfold life forms are all present within our heart, and the main channels issuing out from it). This substratum then acts as the basis for all other modes of consciousness, and in that its radiance tends to diffuse outwards into these diverse modes of psychic activity, it is labeled "the consciousness of the universal ground" (the universal psychic ground in its tendency towards perceptual modes of consciousness, as yet undivided into "external" or "internal" orientation - see TCD2 36,4). This consciousness-substratum then becomes actualized into the five sensory modes of consciousness, the psychic or intellectual consciousness which organizes sensory data and engages in conceptuality, and the emotionally distorted psychic consciousness which signifies our emotional life. Thus KGYT3 202,1ff identifies the "universal ground" as "original dimmed awareness, the indeterminate universal ground", which "as the source-potential of all cognition and consciousness" is the "consciousness of the universal ground". Its (i.e. psychic energy) "facing outwards" is the five sensory modes of consciousness, while its "facing inwards" is the psychic and emotionally distorted psychic modes of consciousness. KGYT3 120,1ff specifies that our universal ground is the luminous channels' radiation as present in the vitality channel under the conditions of non-recognition, showing that it is twice removed from our core gnostic energy - not only is it the core's "radiation" rather than the core itself, but also it is distorted and dimmed radiation at that. Its radiation being unceasingly lucent and clear is then labeled the "universal ground consciousness", which is also present in the vitality channel. Thus while the "universal ground" is our secondary psychic core (though in terms of actual functioning in our present neurotic state the primary one), the "universal ground consciousness" is its dynamics as it begins to spread out into manifest consciousness from the unconscious pool of energy, such that its radiation spreads out from the vitality channel to our five senses. The five non-conceptual sensory perceptual modes of consciousness then clearly operate in an exteriority-oriented manner, and the psychic or intellectual consciousness itself operates in an interiority-oriented manner.

Finally, STCP1 83a 5ff says that the "universal ground of diverse karmic propensities" is "like a mirror" and the "consciousness of the universal ground" is "like the mirror's clarity and brightness", while the five sensory modes of consciousness are "like the manifestation of reflections (in the mirror)". The initial manifestation of the thought "this" with respect to the percepts of the five senses, i.e. the initial discursive processing of the sensory data, is the "psychic consciousness", while its subsequent association with feelings of attachment, aversion, and indifference is the "emotionally distorted psychic consciousness".

For this reason, Khanpo Jikphun described the "universal ground" and the "consciousness of the universal ground" as being conceptual isolates of a single dimension: the universal ground isolates out the dimension of non-conceptuality, while the "consciousness of the universal ground" isolates out the dimension of its clarity and radiance, and since they are indivisible as such, it cannot be said that the karmic seeds and traces reside exclusively in one or the other. The above description clearly reveals the relationship of this universal ground to our primary nucleus of radiant stainless awareness (i.e. the Reality Body), and points out the absurdity of talking about "transforming" the former into the latter via contemplation such as an alchemist transforms metal into gold, when in fact the dispelling of clouds obscuring the sun's presence is a more appropriate analogy. I have also indicated how this "universal ground" is an extremely localized and personalized phenomena found in each living being, rather than some type of transcendent matrix or "storehouse" that might be confused with *Being* or the *Universe* as such. At the same time, there is a certain communality deriving from the shared karmic structures resulting in our common gestalts of experience (and relating to KGYT3 202,6's specification that these gestalts exist within our heart's psychic channels, like "archetypes" of experience), which indicates a transpersonal dimension to the universal ground that may be explored in connection to Jungian archetypal theory. Finally, ZMYT2 (267,3ff etc.) has a series of provoking comments regarding terming the "mirroring primordial gnosis" the "universal ground", which Longchenpa strictly differentiates from "the universal ground of the eight modes of ordinary consciousness". He indicates that our current state is termed "universal ground" because in our present state of stained neurosis, awareness continues to be within cyclic existence, while the potential for those stains to be reversed is perpetually present (which would result in "transcendence"). While awareness itself is unfragmented ~~and~~ either pole of this opposition, its radiation as our psychic substratum can fuel the experience of either (thus "foundation-of-all"). However, once we become free via realization, this experience of cyclic existence is no longer possible as awareness functions as foundation exclusively for transcendence (in the utter absence of non-recognition and concomitant presence of enlightenment's self-conscious recognition), such that this term "universal ground" no longer pertains, and we instead must speak of awareness as "the sheath of precious spontaneous presence".

411. Since this universal substratum is dimmed awareness permeated by karmic traces of many lifetimes of deluded emotions and karmic actions, it functions as the unconscious source of our ongoing psychic life, while remaining itself "morally neutral" (*Lung Ma bsTan*), i.e. not classifiable as either "virtuous" or "non-virtuous", "good" or "evil" (see STCP1 82a,4). This fundamental stratum of our personality or "unconscious" is itself devoid of active emotional distortions or conscious action, since though it registers their karmic traces, retains them (as seeds for morally determinate tendencies), and enables them to influence our worlds subsequently, it does not itself actively create them as such. "Morally neutral" also connotes that this basic level of dimmed awareness is a dull blankness, or unknowing, that, despite its lacking any conceptual differentiation or active emotions, sustains all such active conceptualizing and distorting emotions with its fundamental lack of

insight, i.e. self-recognition, and is that which the active conscious psyche then looks back on as its "self". In this way "good" and "evil" are not ultimate, as this most basic foundation of our psyche is simply "not aware" or "straying", and on the basis of this error leads us to base our lives on the premise of dualism, whereby we create superficial "good" and "evil" in terms of how "I" relate to the "others", and the consciously perceived damage and benefits accruing from such interaction. As such, the notion or image of "evil" has very little resonance in the tradition.

412. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,3; Ati1 128,6).

413. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 594,4; Ati1 737,5).

414. CBD 233,4 etymologizes the "universal ground" as the "ground of all the phenomena of cyclic existence".

415. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,3; Ati1 128,6). The etymology of "ground" here is that it is the "foundation" or "base" upon which the karmic imprints and traces accumulate. TCD2 35,6 says "universal" means "a multitude", and "ground" means it functions as "the site, or foundation, of a plurality of collections gathering together".

416. These four aspects of the universal ground are as follows: (i) the Ground's own cognitive energy failing to self-recognize itself (i.e. dimmed awareness), and thus operating as the transcendental condition for cyclic existence (see TCD2 36,3); (ii) this cognitive energy's deepest substratum operating as the unifying karmic mechanism linking, and impelling, our continuous existence across many lifetimes and experiences; (iii) this stratum as a depository/source for the network of psychic seed-potencies and karmic propensities that function as our "unconscious", and the source for all our particular mental states and modes of consciousness; (iv) and as the substratum creating our particular body image and perceptual apparatus, in addition to connoting the body itself as a unifying orientational point for our experience of the world ("body" here seen as a "sheath" for our psyche in the sense of the materialized form of our karmic propensities). TCD2 35,6-36,6 has the corresponding discussion of these four classifications of the universal ground: (i) the primordial universal ground refers to the initial ground-source of the entirety of cyclic existence, which is "the original stirring of cognitive processing (of the Ground-presencing) being in conjunction with non-awareness (i.e. dimmed awareness which is dependent upon awareness)"; (ii) the linking-up universal ground indicates that "if that psychic energy is not self-aware it links-up to cyclic existence, while if it is aware it links-up to transcendence"; (iii) the universal ground of varied karmic propensities signifies that "this psychic energy functions as the exclusive foundation-source for all the impure karmic actions and propensities"; and (iv) the universal ground of our karmic propensities-imaged body relates to "this root psychic energy having the karmic propensities for physical embodiment such that it manifests a flesh and blood, light, or psychic body". This description quite clearly indicates that these are four aspects of the single wellspring of all our psychic energy (from the primordial emergence of that consciousness from the Ground's self-contained virtual reality up until the current moment), and not four independent discrete phenomena.

It should be obvious that the "universal ground" and "dimmed awareness" are two masks of a single actor, and as such it would seem natural to correlate the three aspects of dimmed awareness (see Chapter Two) with these four aspects of dimmed awareness. The most natural correlation that suggests itself is the "single identity dimmed awareness" with the

"universal ground of primordial presence", "coemergent dimmed awareness" with the "linking-up universal ground", and the "dimmed awareness of rampant reification" with the final two aspects of the universal ground, both which deal with the network of karmic propensities (in fact ZMYT1 445,3 and elsewhere only treat three classifications of the universal ground, putting these last two into a single category). However such a matchup is not a totally comfortable fit (as the two passages cited directly below suggest), and the main point to keep in mind is the evident link between the "primordial universal ground" and the "catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity". ZMYT1 446,4ff correlates the universal ground of primordial presence to "indeterminate dimmed awareness", and the linking-up universal ground to our eightfold ordinary consciousness; KGYT2 175,3ff, on the other hand, in its analysis of the twelve links of interdependent origination describes "non-recognition (of the Ground-presencing) as self-presencing" as the first link (termed "dimmed awareness"), the second link of "karmic conditioning" as stemming from "the dimmed awareness of rampant reification" clinging and fixating on objects, and the third link ("perceptual consciousness") as deriving from the universal ground, which is "awareness adulterated with karmic propensities".

A detailed commentary on TDD's explanation of these four divisions of the universal ground is as follows.

(i) *The universal ground of primordial presence*: the use of "primordial" here must not be confused with the Ground's originally pure primordially, as instead it indicates that this non-recognition is primordial to cyclic existence in that it operates as the latter's transcendental condition. This also ties into my discussion in commentary to Chapter Two as to how there is no indeterminate moment in the Ground-presencing where awareness neither recognizes nor fails to recognize, such that right "from the very first" (the "big bang" where the Ground-presencing emerges from the Ground) awareness is either accompanied by recognition (and thus free as the Totally Positive One), or by non-recognition (and thus straying as a "sentient being"). Since cyclic existence only applies in the later eventuality, we can see that this dimmed awareness (here termed "the universal ground of primordial presence") is present with awareness itself right from the very inception of cyclic existence (though its presence never stained the Totally Positive One, nor the primordial undifferentiated Ground). Thus "primordial" indicates it pertains primordially with respect to this system of "distorted appearances" (as well as being coemergent with the Ground-presencing in this straying-mode, though not so in its freedom-mode), while there is no question of confusing it with the primordially of "original purity", or that it implies the inherence of such stain within the Universe's nucleus. As for details on this non-recognition, see my extensive discussions in the context of the "catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity" (TDD 187,6, 190,4). In essence, the Ground's emergent capacity for self-reflection at the Ground-presencing's initial manifestation either recognizes the Universe as self-presencing such that it dissolves into its essential awareness (termed the "Reality Body") and its energy is optimized, or it fails to recognize it as such, whereby it develops into the "universal ground", a stratum of psycho-physical energy permeated by dimmed levels of energy, and obscuring its own inner core of radiant light.

My interpretation of "primordial" here, as well as my identification of the "universal ground of primordial presence" with the "dimmed awareness of the single identity", is supported by LYT2 17,3 (see Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 202 for a translation): the dimension of not being self-aware is analytically split up into the three aspects of dimmed awareness in that the "single identity" aspect is "in the manner of being

primordial", the "coemergent" aspect is "in the manner of being simultaneous", and the "rampant reification" aspect is "in the manner of being subsequently emergent". "Primordial" thus means that this non-recognition precedes cyclic existence's actualized onset, and operates as the prior primordial conditions of distorted existence as the six types of living beings. The second aspect of dimmed awareness then coincides with the actual onset of cyclic existence, and hence is termed "simultaneous"; the third aspect of dimmed awareness then has its onset within cyclic existence's framework (signifying the proliferation of conceptual and emotional divisions based on the second aspect's fundamental dualism), and as such is termed "subsequent". The first dimmed awareness can thus be said to "have a beginning" in that there is a specific onset to it (with the Ground-presencing's emergence), while in that its onset precedes cyclic existence itself, it can be said to be "beginningless" in the context of cyclic existence, since from the moment cyclic existence begins it is always already there. Since this dimmed awareness or "universal ground of primordial presence" emerges right at the Ground-presencing's own inception, it "tarnishes" the gold of awareness from the very first (in this eventuality of the Ground-presencing's going astray), while the gold itself remains essentially unblemished by such adventitious superficial dulling (i.e. the Ground remains beyond all faults or defects). As cited above, TCD2 35,7ff's definitions of these four classifications makes quite clear that this cosmogonically initial "flickering" or "stirring" of the Ground's capacity for conscious self-reflection is termed the "universal ground" in the case of non-recognition, since all subsequent material, physical, and psychic involution and evolution is based upon it (and as such, remains "primordial" to all these elaborations). As a complicated physical and mental "human" structure evolves based upon it, it remains within the human body's central vitality channel as a radiation of the heart's radiant light via the network of the latter's luminous channels.

The rendering of the difficult word *Don* in *Ye Don Gyi Kun gZhi* ("the universal ground of primordial presence") is not without ambiguity, and I cannot admit to be totally satisfied with my choice of "presence". *Don Gyi* as a prefix can mean "fundamental" or "ultimate", while *Don* itself has a wide variety of meanings, including "meaning", "dimension", and so on. As mentioned above, Longchenpa's treatment here differs radically from his exoteric analysis in STCP and YZD, where he identifies the *Ye Don Gyi Kun gZhi* as the ultimate Ground or enlightened nucleus and thus "ultimate" might well be an appropriate translation (see Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 214-218 for an English translation of one passage from STCP). Indeed, Tulku Thondup on 211ff has chosen to render it as "ultimate" here, as well as in the following term *sByor Ba Don Gyi Kun gZhi* (which I render as "the universal ground linking-up to all states of existencce"). However I find this translation unconvincing in our current context, with the only possible sense being that this indicates these first two aspects of the universal ground are "fundamental" to the third and fourth aspects, as well as "fundamental" to all aspects of cyclic existence as their substratum. Guenther translates *Don* as "concrete situations" in both terms in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* I 50-51 ("the stratum of concrete situations that has been there since time without beginning", and "the stratum (remaining self-identical) in concrete situations with which it becomes involved"), while subsequently in *From Reductionism to Creativity* 214 he renders it as "one's existentiality" ("the ontical foundation in its modality of presenting one's existentiality as the grounding for the organizing notions within experience" and "the ontical foundational modality...becoming engaged...such...that thinking and body intermesh and jointly encounter the joys and sorrows the world has to offer"). Guenther here also points out an interesting interpretation of *Ye Don*, such that evokes how we as beings share in both Being's "primordality" (*Ye*) and its actuality (*Don*), though in our current context I have rejected such an interpretation for the reasons detailed above (which is not to deny such an undercurrent of meaning could be

present, especially in considering how Longchenpa uses the term in YZD and STCP). I agree with the general tendency of his interpretation of *Don* as referring to "situations" or "existentiality", and think it here connotes all the various states of consciousness, contextual situations, interpretations, and so on that emerge in wild diversity within cyclic existence as based upon this stratum, along with a possible connotation of these as the "fundamental" strata or basis of all that we experience (the first as the "primordial" condition of cyclic existence and distorted experience, and the latter emphasizing how it links to the fundamental two paths available to us (cyclic existence and transcendence) as well as the vicious circle of rebirths we pass through in the former). For the time being, I have rendered *Don Gyi* in the first case as "present" to connote its being a primordial "dimension", and in the second case ("linking-up universal ground") as all the "states of existence or being" which are summed up in the dyad of cyclic existence and transcendence. This is the basic foundation of all the situations and states of being in cyclic existence that ensue upon the non-recognition of the universe's multi-faceted manifestation as one's own natural energy, as well as functioning to link one to the subsequent re-cognition of transcendent reality. Though it is the substantial ground of the former's reality, in the latter case it only functions to help polish away itself (the "tarnish") obscuring transcendent reality (the "gold") through its karmic mechanisms acting to self-destruct through the cleansing influence of positive ethical and meditative actions. While Guenther (*From Reductionism to Creativity* 277) suggests that the author has in mind "bronze and patina" rather than "gold and rust" (Tulku Thondup in *Buddha Mind* 211 renders as "gold and oxide"), I have observed that the type of twenty four carat gold preferred in Tibetan areas tends to develop a type of tarnish on it.

(ii) *The universal ground linking-up to all states of existence*: "links up" indicates that each straying sentient being is linked to cyclic existence and transcendence through its storing and preserving of karmic potencies as determined by that being's particular actions, as well as "coordinating" all this in a network of karmic traces stretching across individual life-tracks and impelling us from state of being to another, while in particular tightly "intermeshing" us with cyclic existence in our total physical, verbal, and mental being. CBD 233,4 defines the linking-up universal ground thus:

"...the dimmed awareness operating as the basis for the accumulation of all karmic actions, such that it links us to all aspects of fictive existence (the psycho-physical components, etc.)."

(iii) *The universal ground of varied karmic propensities*: this third aspect of the universal ground emphasizes the network of karmic propensities, which are latent traces or impressions left on our psychic substratum by our physical, verbal, and mental "actions" (or "karma"), as each action's conscious and unconscious motivation shapes our ongoing existence by leaving seed-potencies of similar energy in the substratum, which then eventually flower into propensities to repeat such types of action in the future. As previous karmic traces flower into present emotions and mind-sets, our current psychological state and action create new karmic traces, such that a vicious cycle of neurosis and obsessions perpetuates itself into the indefinite future. This network of karmic propensities is "morally indeterminate" in that it is the effect of morally determinate actions, while itself being a latent, unconscious dimension beyond personal volition that could be classified with such ethical valuations as "virtuous" or "nonvirtuous" (and which thus can only karmically influence our future as the mechanism for the dead hand of the past, without itself being a psychic state capable of generating any new karmic energy).

(iv) The universal ground of the karmic propensities-derived body-image: CBD 233,4 says the "universal ground-as-body" is the "beginningless karmic propensities for manifestation in terms of a body" (or "embodied experience"), which becomes the "basis for the constellation of factors making up our individual bodies". In general, our ordinary body is termed "ripened karmic propensities" since it forms via the mechanism of karmic propensities (see TCD2 329,6, etc.). KGYT3 202,3 indicates the "body" is like a "sheath" to our psychic energy, and is the result of matured karmic propensities manifesting in that form:

"...when the mind, constellation of eight modes of consciousness, and fifty one mental factors manifest along with the karmic imprints, it is termed the "sheath" or "body" of the ripening karmic imprints. Furthermore, they are three in number - the flesh and blood body of the desire realm, the light body ripening in the four meditative states, and the psychic body which is latent in the formless realm..."

Thus TDD's triad corresponds to the characteristic "bodies" found in the three realms of cyclic existence: the first is our flesh and blood corporeal body of the sensual realm, with the major limbs (the two arms, two legs and head) and auxiliary appendages (the fingers, toes, chin, and so forth); the second is the luminous, etherialized body of the form realm, which corresponds to various levels of deities and rarefied states of meditation (the four meditative states); and the third is the "psychic bodies" of the formless realm, where material physicality is latent and our existence is attenuated to mere concentrated psychic energy, such that the only "body" we have is a psychic body similar to the ghost-like existence we have in the post-death intermediate states (a mere mental image deriving from the karmic imprints of eons of embodied existence). In this way, the lived body can manifest on three different levels, which can also be understood as dimensions of experience accessible to us in this life - the coarse physical level enmeshed in material existence, a vibrant subtle body of radiant light, and a mere psychic image of a body as one feels oneself to be pure consciousness beyond any material incarnation. TCD2 36,2 sums it up thus: "...since the karmic imprints for a body are present within the root psychic energy (of the universal ground), the bodies of flesh and blood, light, and the psyche manifest, and hence (this division of the universal ground) is termed (the "universal ground of the karmic imprints-derived body"..." LYT2 238,6ff makes substantially similar comments, with the additional specification that the psychic body only involves the four "name" components without the component of physical form, and that the light body is of rainbow-colored light.

417. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,3; Ati1 128,6).

418. In other sources the spiritual nucleus of enlightenment (essentially pristine inner awareness) is often spoken of as "stained" and "stainless", the former referring to it being adventitiously obscured in the case of sentient beings, and the latter to its becoming divested of these obscurations in the enlightenment of a Buddha. However the former state must be understood as an epistemological stain rather than an ontological one affecting awareness' own being, just as the sun may be obscured from someone's view by clouds while remaining itself essentially untouched by their presence. Thus the ordinary mind and universal psychic ground, which are merely impure derivatives of awareness' radiation, are distinct from awareness' natural essence, which itself remains utterly pure throughout - its only "stained" condition is an epistemological one, and not the semi-ontological stained nature of its derivatives under the conditions of non-recognition. Since awareness itself is the primary reality while the universal psychic ground is simply a derivative of it, to identify the two

would be as absurd as identifying a vase with its "whiteness", while in fact the vase is the primary reality and the whiteness is only one of its qualities, or identifying "tarnish" (the various karmic propensities) with the gold it appears on (awareness), or the "rays" with the sun. If the essence of awareness were to involve stains, then it would become a phenomenon of cyclic existence rather than the pristine transcendent dimension it is, and liberation would be impossible no matter how many yogic exertions you may make, just as it is impossible to clean a piece of charcoal white not matter how hard you may try. Thus it must be understood that the universal psychic ground is merely the natural radiation of awareness becoming adulterated with impurities and crisscrossed with a network of karmic propensities, while the solar essence of awareness remains immaculate within the heart, primordially present but shining forth manifestly only when the obscuring clouds of psychic energy (derivative from its radiation) are dispersed. This is not to deny that both cyclic existence and transcendence, as well as the universal ground and Reality Body, remain of a single essence in that they are based on the single self-emergent awareness, as made clear by ZMYT1 444,6. In fact, 445,1's definition of the "universal ground" refers to it as "stained awareness", indicating that Longchenpa's main concern here in the TDD in rejecting such language is not to totally deny that such imagery can be valid and evocative in some discourses, but rather that these descriptions can be easily misinterpreted in the above manner, and as such, must be carefully worded and interpreted.

419. Here and below I have translated *Lung Ma bsTan* in two different ways ("indeterminate" and "morally neutral") to bring out the dual connotation of the term.

420. This passage appears to have "karmic propensities" in a verbal sense (*Bag Chags Pa'i*) instead of its usual nominative form (*Bag Chags*), perhaps with the meaning of "latent (*Bag*) origination (*Chags Pa*)", i.e. it acts as the foundation for latent impressions in our psyche giving rise to a physical existence. At any rate, this passage shows how this network of karmic propensities in the universal ground give rise to (i) our current experience of a body, (ii) our present mental consciousness, (iii) our present experience of external appearances, and (iv) dimmed awareness' pervasion of all aspects of our experience (which precisely correlates to the four aspects of the universal ground detailed above, though in reverse order). The first three correspond to the standard triune classification of karmic propensities based upon the nature of their effect: the appearances of the external environment, consciousness, and our body (*gNas Don Lus gSum Gi sNang Ba*). This accounting for our entire experience and world in terms of the karmic propensities indicates that the material and psychic world is inherently karmic, and hence its evolution is an inextricably coordinated event with its material elements themselves stemming from the solidification of the five lights via non-recognition, and its inexorable movement into the twelve linked karmic processes of interdependent origination (which gives rise to the outer and inner world-as-we-know-it). Since our own consciousness stems from (and is) the Universe's innate intelligence, the Universe's "fabric" is in flux in direct correlation to its self-perception of itself, such that its self-recognition is accompanied by pure swirling light energy, and its forgetting materializes itself into the still, inert material elements that we believe in so fervently.

Further notes on (iii) and (iv) are as follows:

(iii) Since it functions as the foundation of our karmic propensities in their full diversity, it manifests as the luminous presences currently experienced by us as distinct (external) appearances: though this name corresponds to the third division of the universal ground, it would seem that functionally speaking it corresponds to the second aspect of the universal



ground ("linking-up") in the sense of it linking one to the "appearances" or "visions" of cyclic existence and transcendence, and in particular "interlinking" all the characteristic appearances we experience in a given life form as filtered through our cognitive-perceptual apparatus. On the other hand, Longchenpa points out these distinctions are provisional and, as such, leave room for a certain fluidity - for instance, ZMYT1 446,3 collapses the third division into the second division, explaining the "linking-up" universal ground as associated with the eight modes of consciousness. The main point here is that these three together account for our physical existence, our interior psychic life, and the external appearances which presence to us.

The Tibetan for the latter part of the line goes thus: *Da lTa sNang Ba Tha Dad Du Shar mDangs sNang Du Byung*. There may be a textual corruption here, as the wording is rather awkward. I have provisionally interpreted it as referring to two distinct phases in our experiencing of appearances, the first which is a simple luminous presence (*mDangs sNang*) manifest to our senses, which we then enframe with our conceptual apparatus and structure the presence into particular entities (*sNang Ba Tha Dad*) crisscrossed by our hopes and fears, our beginningless history of karmic projections.

(iv) Since it functions as (our) primordial foundation, all (our present experience) is totally in conjunction with dimmed awareness: as discussed at length above, "primordial foundation" here indicates our psychic substratum "primordial" to cyclic existence as its stained matrix, and not our "primordial ground" of empty resonating radiance. While we remain within the domain of its dimmed awareness, our entire experience is permeated by this fundamental unawareness of the unity of life, and hence our physical, verbal and mental states are distorted into the dualistic structures it entails.

421. The universal ground is itself indeterminate or morally neutral just as a seed is unripened into any actual state, yet it carries within it the full potential for complex structures to develop from within it. The karmic propensities are only potential psychic traces resulting from previous actual manifest acts or karma committed consciously, and which in turn influence the future manifestation of actual virtuous and non-virtuous acts (though the psychic traces left behind by such acts cannot themselves be labeled as karma-producing "virtuous" or "non-virtuous" acts). These unripened seed-potencies in our psychic substratum gives rise to three distinct types of effects ("seedlings"), namely our external material environment (here referred to as "appearances"), our bodily structure, and our conscious mental life (all of which are pervaded by dimmed awareness, i.e. their energy levels are characteristically low-intensity and a certain opaqueness has set in). The "fourfold dimmed awareness" here mentioned thus refers to the four aspects of the universal ground, which as detailed above correspond to the triune latent karmic energy giving rise to the triad of our body, mind, and appearances respectively, and their primordial pervasion by dimmed awareness as such. The substantial continuity between these karmic propensities and their full fledged manifestations as the material environment, physical structure, and consciousness can be understood on the analogy of seeds and their sprouts, and are here indicated as "growths" or the multivalent flowering of dimmed awareness, which exhibits itself throughout the physical, mental and phenomenal aspects of our life as their ultimate depth-dynamic and transcendental condition.

422. TCD2 36,6 discusses the universal ground's functions by describing the chief function pertaining to each one of its four aspects: (i) the primordial universal ground serves as the foundation of straying; (ii) the linking-up universal ground serves to "connect" our body and

mind such that it links us to all the joys and sorrows that characterize our lives; (iii) the body-universal ground acts as the condition for our body and its constellation of qualities; (iv) and the karmic propensities-universal ground serves to accumulate karma and emotional distortions via the karmic propensities, as well as acting as their conditional determinant. While TDD's account also details four functions, and the latter three clearly correspond to (ii)-(iv) in TCD, the first function specified in TDD doesn't seem to directly correspond to TCD's (i), nor to the definition of the primordial universal ground given above. "Previous" indicates the karmic propensities and traces accumulated within the universal ground in the past, and acting to influence the present, while "subsequent" indicates these "previous" karmic propensities influencing our present psychological state, such that via new emotionally distorted motivated acts we accumulate new karmic energy, that is then deposited in this psychic substratum, and so on ad infinitum.

423. I have interpreted "pluralized constellation" as referring to the various qualities of the body (its organs, channels, etc.) in accordance with TCD2 definition cited above.

424. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 380,3; Ati2 518,4).

425. This section entitled "the rationale for terming this the universal ground" (which can mean "how a term is used"), is obviously quite similar to the previous section titled "etymology". The distinction would appear to be that the former is a more analytical, functional way of connecting the particular term with its referent's characteristics, while the latter is often a quite creative way of unpacking the signified phenomena's inner meaning via an often brilliant (and frequently "false") etymology of its name. In the present context, however, the "etymology" sections are just very brief indications of a primary meaning of each syllable of the term in question, while the "rationale" sections are more detailed functional interpretations of each syllable's significance (one must keep in mind that each syllable generally has a discernible distinct meaning in the Tibetan language, making etymologies especially fertile grounds for spinning intricate webs of meaning).

426. These three all refer to the universal ground in its function as the unifying substratum providing personal continuity to our characteristic karmic identity (both within a given lifetime and across the abyss of death between two lifetimes) by functioning as the repository for the network of karmic propensities, which are continually being stored ("previous"), registered ("current"), and ripened ("subsequent") in this psychic substratum at all points. "Karmic propensities" emphasizes the latent dimension of this process as our "karmic inheritance"; "maturation" signifies the manifest dimension of this process in how it shapes our present psycho-physical state, environment, and actions; and "positive and negative causal forces" emphasizes the ethical significance of this karmic process (as well as the practical implications for own happiness and suffering), i.e. it accounts for how our negative, unethical actions give shape to our own sufferings and negative situations in the future via this karmic mechanism of traces and ripening (literally, have a "black" causal force), and how our positive, ethical actions likewise give shape to our own future joys and positive situations (literally, have a "white" causal force). This last item is especially important soteriologically, since it indicates not only that we can take control of our own destiny, but that we must.

427. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,2; Ati1 128,5). "Non-phenomenon" evidently refers to imaginary or non-existent things, like a destroyed vase or mirage.

428. *rGyud bLa Ma'i 'Grel Pa* (passage not located yet). "Purification" signifies contemplative purificatory activities directed towards dispelling our emotional distortions and intellectual obscurations, thereby cleansing away our spiritual "stains" and progress towards the utter clarity of enlightenment. STCP1 80a 3 describes it clearly: "all the karmic activities of cyclic existence and purification are based on the universal ground in the manner of seeds".

429. My interpretation of this line is quite uncertain since there are a number of ambiguities in it, though Longchenpa's following discussion is quite clear. Literally, I have interpreted it thus: "In general (*sPyir*), "ground" (*gZhi*) indicates (*Zer*) (the universal ground) is the foundation (*gZhi*) of (*Kyi*) (impure phenomena's very) substance (*dNgos*), and thus (*Las*) resembles the sun (*Nyi Ma Ita Bu*) (in its radiation of rays)". In more succinct terms, "In general "ground" is a term for the "foundation of things", and hence is analogous to the sun"; i.e. while this type of relationship pertains between cyclic existence and the universal ground, such a direct causal relationship does not exist between transcendent reality and the universal ground. Instead, the universal ground can serve as the catalyst for clearing away the cognitive and emotional obscurations hiding transcendent reality from our view, and thus the relationship is epistemological, not substantive. Assuming my provisional translation is correct for the time being, my interpretation of its significance is as follows. The "primordial universal ground" is the actual source of the substance of the phenomena of cyclic existence, just like the sun emanates out rays, while it is not the ground of transcendent reality in the sense of generating the latter's very being or existence. Rather it is the ground or foundation of transcendent reality coming to the fore in manifest recognition via its mechanism of karmic propensities - you accumulate virtuous energy, and thus dispel the obscurations clouding the primordially present inner pure luminosity from your view. In fact, the relationship between the universal ground and transcendent reality is such that the former is a derivative or "tarnish" of the latter, which is the primary and primordial reality of indestructible radiant light at the core of the universe and our own being.

430. It must be kept in mind that "karma" literally means "activity", and though it implies conditioned activity based on the fundamental neurotic illusion of a personal, alienated ego, the term is not entirely pejorative, since we can speak of "positive" karma and "negative" karma" (the Awakened One, on the other hand, performs no karmic actions, and instead engages in "enlightened activity" (*'Phrin Las*), which is totally devoid of any egotistic concerns or karmic retributions, like a circle drawn upon water). All sentient being are constantly engaged in such conditioned activity in positive and negative forms, with the former bearing fruit in relatively pleasant rebirths, and the latter impelling us eventually to tremendous suffering in hellish rebirth-environments, as each act creates an impression on our psychic substratum, and the overall constellation of such karmic energy traces determines our evolving state of existence. It is also possible to go beyond superficially "virtuous" activities, and engage in virtuous or spiritual actions (primarily contemplation and study, though ethical codes are an important support) which can ignite purificatory processes that enable us to traverse the spiritual path structure towards the climaxing fruit of Buddhahood itself, a traversal imaged as clearing away the stains that obscure the enlightened nucleus always already present within us. Thus STCP1 80b 2 says that "non-virtuous" and "superficially virtuous" activities are enmeshed in the causal network of cyclic existence, while the "activities of purification" are those karmic actions which are "conducive to liberation", and function to generate spiritual realization as the catalyst behind our "divesting" ourselves of obscurations to reveal transcendence. In this way, the contemplative

process is sustained and intensified through the same karmic mechanism of traces and seed-potencies within the universal ground that keeps us chained in delusion, and our positive activities within this process remain karmic processes, though ultimately such activity "conducive to liberation" leads to the destruction of the very mechanism it is based upon (i.e. the universal ground). In this way, the "fruit or climax of divesture" (i.e. manifest enlightenment divested of our obscuring stains or neurosis) is based upon our primordial spiritual affinity (i.e. enlightened nucleus of realized-energy) and not the impure universal psychic ground, even though the actions effecting that divesture were based on the latter - when clouds part to reveal the formerly obscured sun, the sun's radiant warmth and illumination is based upon the sun itself (and not the clouds), even though the clouds' dissipation was a necessary precondition for us to experience it as such (STCP1 80b 3-4). Within Buddhahood itself then, the universal psychic ground and its network of karmic seed-potencies is utterly absent, and it is no sense the foundation of the transcendent dimension, though it performs the vital role of grounding our attempts to *reach* and *access* that dimension hidden far below in the depths of our own being (see STCP1 82b, which Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 219 and Guenther's *Kindly Bent to Ease Us I* 52 translate into English) for analogies as to how the universal ground "consumes" itself in the process).

In summation, Longchenpa's main point here is to describe how the universal ground plays an important role in our achieving enlightenment or transcendence, yet cannot be said itself to be actual source/origin of transcendent reality. Our actions create and reinforce certain positive patterns of psychic energy within this fundamental substratum, and this in turn makes such virtue more and more natural to our psyche. This results in a feedback loop whereby your body and psyche are increasingly refined and energy levels optimized (progression along the "spiritual path"), which finally allows what was always already present (Buddhahood) to flower forth as the corporeal and neurotic obscurations normally surrounding it dissipate (it is the "clouds" parting to reveal the sun, not the sun itself).

431. *rGyud bLa Ma*; the Sanskrit title is *Uttaratantra* (the critical edition of the Tibetan translation 11; Sanskrit edition 7; English translations in Holmes' *The Changeless Nature* 16, Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga* 156, and Obermiller's *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation* 124). The following three verses explain these lines (I have rearranged the verses' divisions to clarify the meaning)

*It is unconditioned since its nature  
Is without beginning, middle or end;  
It is described as "spontaneous"  
Since it is endowed with the serene Reality Body;  
And it is not realized through extrinsic conditions  
Since it is realized by and within one's own self.*

*It is "knowing" since it realizes these three dimensions,  
"Loving" since it teaches the path,  
And "potent" since it can uproot the emotional distortions and suffering  
Via its primordial gnosis and compassion.*

*The first three qualities fulfill its own spiritual aim,  
The latter three qualities fulfill the spiritual aims of others.*

432. This term "similar base" indicates two factors which either have a fundamental/apparent similarity or common source, yet are in fact functionally quite different from each other. Longchenpa subsequently describes it as the two being of "one essence", yet distinct as "conceptual isolates". A provoking discussion of a series of such distinctions can be found on TCD2 100,1-106,2, which Guenther has partially translated in *From Reductionism to Creativity* 217-219 along with some valuable interpretative remarks. Dr. Guenther correctly points out that the majority of these are homologies ("discussing similarities on the basis of their common origin") rather than analogies ("discussing similarities of functions not based on a common origin"), and penetrates to the heart of Longchenpa's discussion by pointing to the evolutionary-based "coordinated hierarchy" that is implicit here. In our present context, the Reality Body and universal ground have a common origin in "the self-emergent awareness that is their essence" (ZMYT1 444,6) or "the singular expanse" (TCD2 100,6), as well as sharing functional similarities in terms of their status in their respective milieus (cyclic existence and transcendence) - it is often said that in the Ground-presencing, two paths open up from a single ground (non-recognition leading to the universal ground acting as the substratum of our being, and recognition leading to the full unfoldment of the Reality Body as the exclusive substratum of an Awakened One's being). Yet despite these functional similarities and common origin in pristine awareness (here referred to as "cognitive capacity", i.e. the inherent intelligence of the Universe), phenomenologically they are quite different, and the implications they have for the system as a whole (the "material" environment being in coevolution with the system's self-interpretation of itself) are markedly different (which Longchenpa consistently draws our attention to). For those who simply insist on making sterile identifications and simplistic "solutions" ( $a=b$ ), the subtle nuances of their evolutionary and "coordinated hierarchical" relationship is lost, with a variety of disastrous consequences: Being is reduced to the status of beings as the ontological difference is thrown to the wayside; the undeniable strength of our erroneous perceptions is denigrated, such that we don't feel enthusiasm for spiritual practices that have the potency to overturn such perceptions in actuality; and in general we reduce the complex Universe to a simplistic monadic "entity" ("awareness") which undergoes simple sterile transformations ("stained", "unstained"), while being oblivious to the multivalent Universe with its complex interlocking hierarchies and inherent intelligence that Great Perfection texts/contemplations are designed to evoke within-and-as-us. The Great Perfection tradition walks a tightrope the yawning abyss of reducing Being to beings, and the equally immense abyss of reducing beings to Being; there is both the One and Only which is primordially devoid of change or distortion, and yet simultaneously within and as ourselves we experience dynamic interlocking flows of energy, the call of a loss origin echoing in our hearts though it cannot be said that we forget, for in essence we never knew, and thus the climax of our experience in enlightenment marks an entirely different epoch than the primordial Ground. Longchenpa often makes statements such as identifying "dimmed awareness" with "awareness that doesn't recognize its own self-essence" (TCD1 322,7), or pointing out the common source of two disparate dimensions like the Reality Body and universal ground, which function to remind us of the seamless unity of life and the Universe forming the "backdrop" for the complexity of our own existence, an Awakened One's existence, and the Universe itself, with every single dimension inherently intelligent, dynamically self-organizing, and utterly empty of being a reified "self" cut off from the flows of light-energy that is its context. Ultimately, if we fail to make such distinctions, it is Longchenpa's implicit view that we will also fail to make the "critical differentiation" with regards to mystery of self, and be unable to pare away the false egotistic self to approach the

mystery of a self which is no self at all, thereby remaining enmeshed in the web of perpetual suffering and desire.

Finally, it would seem that *Shes Pa'i sTeng Na* could also be interpreted as "in the context of understanding these two" instead of "in terms of (the Ground's) cognitive capacity", since *sTeng Na* literally means "on top of". However, such a use of *sTeng Na* would be uncharacteristic of Longchenpa's writings, and the latter interpretation yields a quite appropriate reading by itself.

433. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 434,1; Ati2 165,5; VLDC explicates this passage on 232,6ff; also cited by TCD2 34,5). TDD and TCD read "two forms" while NGB, Ati and VLDC have "one form", which VLDC clearly indicates is the correct reading. VLDC explains that it's like someone perceiving a single physical form of a given living being, and erroneously seeing it as differentiated into three, or four, or ten, or hundreds and thousands of separate forms - although you may very well see these different forms in your own experience, except for the one actual form, none of these other forms will have any functional efficacy (for example, you may hallucinate five apples where there is only one, but those other four apples will not prevent your starvation in any way, shape or form). In the same way, these scholars verbally differentiate between the Reality Body and universal ground, yet in fact have not precisely understood the distinction between them (including each one's particular attributes, and their dynamic interaction), such that their notions of each have no more truth than the hallucinated double and triple images of perception gone haywire, and thus lack any experiential utility in terms of advancing their intellectual and contemplative progression along the spiritual path (analogous to how forms differentiated only by our perceptual and linguistic apparatus cannot function in actuality as a real form would). Since the universal ground must be overturned and the Reality Body brought to the fore in the enlightenment experience, existentially forceful and intellectually precise encounters with these two's respective realities and mutual differentiation is crucial, while pale conceptually confused linguistic descriptions of such a differentiation will be of no more help in quenching the fiery torment of cyclic existence than a hallucinated apple will save a starving woman from death. Longchenpa's reading stresses the "two forms" which are illusory products of a misperception, rather than the "one form" which is the source of that misperception believing it to be multiple while actually it is only one. There is also a connotation that if the Reality Body and universal psychic ground are actually substantially equal and we only perceive them as different (stained vs. unstained), it would be incomprehensible how the pure Reality Body could serve as reservoir for the impure karmic propensities (and remain the stainless abiding reality of the Universe), or how the impure universal ground itself could be utterly empty and optimized psychic energy (and remain the operative substratum of our neurotic psyche). Although it is true that they have a common source and origin, a sterile identification of this type levels out their entirely different sets of dynamics and functional significance, and thus involves a reductionism that is of no enduring value to us in discerning the true nature of what is happening.

434. TCD2 37,2-38,3 describes the Reality Body as it is present within the Ground: "the primeval internally radiant great original purity present as the subtle gnostic energy which is the pure source-potential of natural spontaneous presence". In our present state of straying, we must relax in its radiation, and thereby realize its singular presence beyond the discursiveness of the intellect and things, such that we come to have a deeply felt experience of it; in the meantime, it is present within the esoteric treasury of our heart's sacred knot. This Reality Body can also be termed "grounding primordial gnosis" or "the foundation of

freedom", and should be recognized as the "wisdom-energy of the seamless union between the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses" (i.e. the spiritual gestalts and their dynamic intelligence).

435. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,4; Ati1 129,1).

436. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 380,4; Ati2 518,5; also cited by TCD2 32,7; ZMYT1 447,6).

*The Reality Body is the exhaustion of contamination; empty and radiant, it is pervasive in that radiance:* NGB and Ati's gloss indicate that the Reality Body is totally beyond the limitations of our ordinary body, or what we conceive of as "physical". Ati glosses "empty" as "inherently lucent", "radiant" as "awareness", and "pervasive in that radiance" as "compassionate resonance". Thus this line indicates the triune identity of the Reality Body (see ZMYT1 447,1): its emptiness, radiance, and pervading self-organizing intelligence, i.e. "compassionate resonance". It repeats the middle term as the link between the first and third term, i.e. this emptiness is inherently radiant, while the radiance is intrinsically pervasive (indicating it is not a still, inert radiance, but rather is ceaselessly organizing itself in an intelligent fashion).

*Not polluted by ordinary thought, it is cleansed of instinctive ego-memory:* the gloss indicates that affectively we experience the Reality Body in terms of "intense bliss", since it is beyond our ordinary instinctive thought driven by ego-memory (see mini-encyclopedia) with its insistent dualism, and consequent experience of frustrating alienation.

*Utterly beyond any illustrations or indications in its inherent purity:* I have corrected TDD's *Rang Gar* to *Rang Dag* on the basis of NGB, Ati, TCD2 and ZMYT1 (though TDD's reading is perfectly viable in itself). The Reality Body can't be captured or enframed by any of our conceptual and linguistic "indicators" (i.e. signifiers), since it is not a discrete perceivable "thing" amenable to such survival-oriented categories.

437. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,5; Ati1 129,2; also cited by CBD 234,1). The "reality" (*Chos*) in "Reality Body" (*Chos sKu*) can be understood in a variety of ways, as *Chos* can mean "religion", "spirituality", the "Buddhist teachings and precepts", the "spiritual way" and so on, as well as connoting "reality" (*Chos Nyid*). In the present context, these meanings are evoked to connect it with the authentic spiritual path of contemplation and study, which it both supports (in the sense of *Chos sKu* referring to our primordial enlightened nucleus that both impels us towards enlightenment as an inner urge, and ultimately constitutes the quintessence of enlightenment) and results from (in the sense of the fully activated and unfolded Reality Body emerging via our fully conscious encounter with it inside-and-as-us via our progress along the spiritual path). This dual aspect can also be located in the term "Body" (*sKu*), which could be taken as indicating that this "reality" or "spiritual way" is accomplished as a "substantial" gestalt or way of being in enlightenment via one's sustained contemplation along this path (Tulku Thondup in *Buddha Mind* 212 renders as "Body means the accomplishment derived from it (the path)", just as our physical body "takes form" as the fruit of the path-process of embryogeny (though here the sense is more that it is "revealed" as an active, empowered force rather than actually "created" substantially - it is "fleshed out" spiritually). CBD 233,6 introduces its quotation of these lines by saying this: "...As for its etymology, it is the ultimate essence of the authentic ("ultra-pure") spiritual precepts (*Chos*), and since it serves as its basis, (it is termed) "Body" (*sKu*)..." This also could be interpreted

as the precepts serving as the basis for the Reality Body's manifest emergence ("the Body (provisionally) deriving from the Spiritual Precepts"); it could alternatively be interpreted as the Reality Body serving as the "basis" for the spiritual way, since its pristine awareness is the ultimate foundation for our progress and realization of the spiritual teachings along the path ("the Body/substratum for the Spiritual Precepts"). In this way, "Body" can connote how the Reality-Body-as-spiritual-climax (i.e. enlightenment) is the "stuff" of all the dynamic enlightened qualities of a Buddha that are accomplished via our progress along the spiritual path, as well as evoke how the Reality-Body-as-primordial-nucleus-of-our-existence is the "substratum" or "basis" of all the spiritual teachings and spiritual qualities (which in no sense is the substantial "effect" of the path). Since both interpretations are valid (though the latter in particular accords with the unique tenor of the Great Perfection tradition), I have left the translation intentionally ambiguous so as to capture this dual aspect of the Reality Body (both as ground and fruit, the primordial foundation and climaxing reality of our lives).

TCD2 38,3 etymologizes the Reality Body thus: "...it is termed the "Reality Body" (*Chos sKu*) since it encapsulates the nucleus of the profound and vast spiritual precepts (*Chos*)..." ZMYT1 447,1 puts it thus: "...since it is the "reality" or "phenomena" (*Chos*) of the ultimate enlightened qualities of liberation, it is termed the "Reality Body" (*Chos sKu*)..." This connects with Longchenpa's interpretation just below in TDD, which connects *Chos* with its sense of "qualities" since all the enlightened qualities of a Buddha are perfectly complete within the Reality Body.

438. CBD 233,6 and ZMYT1 447,1 refer to this triune identity of the Reality Body as the essence, nature, and compassionate resonance, which CBD explicitly links with TDD's specification of the three Spiritual Bodies: "it is triune since it is present as the dimensions of the three Spiritual Bodies via its triad of essence, nature, and compassionate resonance". ZMYT1 defines the three thus: "the Reality Body of the essence's thoroughly pure emptiness; the Reality Body of nature's depth-radiant pure source-potential; and the Reality Body of compassionate resonance's pervading empty awareness". TCD2 38,3ff provides a much more extensive ninefold classification, which is arrived at by analyzing each of the three Spiritual Bodies into internal triads correlated with the three Spiritual Bodies themselves (i.e. the Reality Body of the Reality Body, the Enjoyment Body of the Reality Body, the Emanational Body of the Reality Body, and so on - I have translated the first term in each triad as "reality gestalt", "enjoyment gestalt", and "emanational gestalt", since their literal rendering is rather numbing). Longchenpa also says its triune identity as the three Spiritual Bodies is related to the following three dimensions of the Reality Body: (i) its thoroughly pure dimension as the great originally pure Ground (i.e. pre-evolution undifferentiated unity); (ii) its presence within our ordinary body (in the midst of the evolutionary search for self-recognition); and (iii) the authentic Reality Body which has been divested of adventitious stains (i.e. a fully awakened Buddha). From the descriptions of each Spiritual Body's internal divisions, it can be deduced that the first dimension correlates to the Reality Body proper (which is "beyond characterized objects"), the second to the Emanational Body (which is "beyond objects of attachment"), and the third to the Enjoyment Body (which is "beyond apprehendable objects"). For the purpose of clarity, I will summarize the nine classifications at this point rather than translating the passage directly.

(I) The Reality Body can be divided into the triad of the reality gestalt of the Reality Body (awareness - *Chos* is its lighting-up objectively, and *sKu* is its unimpeded essence of awareness), the enjoyment gestalt of the Reality Body (the five lights), and the emanational gestalt of the Reality Body (the unobstructed vision by the visual sensory faculty). The



Reality Body's objective sphere is the thoroughly pure sky; its location within us is the Tsitta; and its pathway within us is the precious crystal tube.

(II) The Enjoyment Body can be divided into the triad of the reality gestalt of the Enjoyment Body (the visionary manifestation of the five primordial gnosés being vividly present without any impediment), the enjoyment gestalt of the Enjoyment Body (their pathway(-manifestation) with the fivefold seminal nuclei), and the emanational gestalt of the Enjoyment Body (awareness in the manifestation of objects to our five sensory modes of consciousness). The Enjoyment Body's objective sphere is not specified, its location within us is the Avadhūti channel, and its pathway within us is the right "little tip" channel.

(III) The Emanational Body can be divided into the triad of the reality gestalt of the Emanational Body (the two gnostic lamps), the enjoyment gestalt of the Emanational Body (seeing the five lights), and the emanational gestalt of the Emanational Body (our individual self-awareness in the manifestation of fivefold emotional distortion). The Emanational Body's objective sphere is the distorted appearances (we experience), its location in us is the brain, and its pathway in us is the eyes.

In his follow-up remarks, Longchenpa deals with one potential criticism of this manifestation, i.e. that the emanational gestalts of the Enjoyment Body and Emanational Body involve the five sensory modes of consciousness and the emotional distortions, while in fact the Reality Body is utterly devoid of the ordinary mind and its emotional distortions. Longchenpa responds by explaining the significance of these correlations is that awareness' natural radiation is present right when those perceptual modes and emotional distortions are operative, and shouldn't be understood as indicating that the actual sensory modes of consciousness and emotional distortions themselves are the Emanational Body. In essence, these three "gestalts" or modes indicate how awareness moves outwards into greater differentiation and actualization via its self-organizing radiation, while at the same time maintaining an internal unity throughout its hierarchical, evolving structure. In this way the "reality gestalt" indicates awareness' essence that remains highly concentrated energy as yet largely "virtual" or pure potential; "enjoyment gestalt" signifies how awareness' nature is to express itself in radiant fivefold exteriorization (the five lights being awareness' self-presencing); and the "emanational gestalt" then connotes how awareness' energy emanates throughout existence as resonating intelligence and self-organizing energy (which is here emphasized as the ultimate source of our own impure mental life). Along these lines, we can interpret the correlation of each of the Spiritual Bodies with their respective sites and pathways in two ways (the Reality Body in our heart and luminous channel; the Enjoyment Body in the Avadhūti channel and "small tip" channel; and the Emanational Body in the brain and eyes). While in one sense this sequence reflects our own hierarchically ordered psychic energy with the pure enlightened nucleus in our heart, its derivative radiation as our basic psychic substratum in our vitality channel (i.e. the universal ground), and our conscious experience based upon that substratum indicated by our brain's functioning and our eyes' visual experience, the progression also evokes how that inner gnostic energy unfolds from its pure virtual essence in the heart into the manifest visions within the sky in Direct Transcendence contemplation: the Reality Body is one's stainless self-awareness within the heart, the Enjoyment Body is awareness' luminosity as it is ignited within the luminous channels, and the Emanational Body is that luminosity as it emerges through our eyes, about to enter the external expanse in varied patterns and shapes.

439. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,4; Ati1 129,2; also cited by CBD 234,1).

440. TCD2 39,5-6 describes its functions thus: "The originally-pure-in-essence Reality Body serves as the foundation of freedom, and the lucent Reality Body (operative) during (our engagement of) the spiritual path performs the function of freeing (us) - thus the three Spiritual Bodies perform the function of both the purifying (force) and the foundation of purification". In short, the Reality Body both forms the foundation of our enlightened freedom as that which contemplative purification reveals, and provides the purifying energy that dispels the obscurations on our way to enlightenment.

ZMYT1 447 describes the Reality's Body function thus: "since it is the seamless union of the expanse and primordial gnosis, it serves as the foundation for freeing cyclic existence within reality itself".

441. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 357,7; Ati1 432,2).

*Unobstructed, without clinging, and unattached - this is the Reality Body's conduct:* Ati's glosses indicate this line signifies the Reality Body's conduct is "unobstructed" by appearances (or "unceasing in its manifestation"), "devoid of clinging" to objects, and "devoid of attachment" in its "mind".

*Serene, vividly alert, and undistracted - this is the Reality Body's meditation:* Ati's glosses indicate that the Reality's Body's meditation is "serene" in that it is non-conceptual, "vividly alert" in that it is not distracted, and "undistracted" in that it is unwavering.

*Not to be seen, always already seen, the perfectly complete view - this is the Reality Body's view:* less literally, "having always already seen without seeing, the view is perfectly complete": there is ultimately nothing physical and exterior to be seen with coarse vision, yet primordially we always already "see" it, and thus its view is perfectly complete without our doing the slightest thing about it. Ati's glosses indicate that the Reality's Body's view is "one's own self-awareness", which is "not to be seen" since it is perfectly complete within yourself, is "always already seen" since it is perfectly complete within the Ground, and is "the perfectly complete view" in that there is nothing to be done about it.

*Uncreated, not emergent in the past, nor emerging (in the present/future) - this is the Reality Body's fruit:* Ati glosses "uncreated" as "from what is other", and "not emerging" as "in the present". This line indicates that the Reality Body's primordially entails that it is not newly emergent or synthesized in the past, present, or future, despite the possibility of its being recognized and revealed as opposed to unrecognized and unrevealed. "Uncreated" indicates that this "fruit" or "effect" (that is our own destiny's "climax") is not created by some other force (whether a "God" or a superhuman visionary) extrinsic to us, but rather is our inner reality welling up from within (not some "thing" that "emerged" in the past by divine command, or that emerges in spatio-temporal coordinates in the present as if it were some new life form created by causes and conditions).

*Not actualized, always already actualized, completely actualized - this is the Reality Body's enlightened activity:* the spiritual levels, paths and realities are not something that must be actualized newly at a given point, but rather are always already spontaneously present primordially within awareness, without the slightest deficiency or imperfection that need be rectified: "having always already actualized without actualizing, actualization is perfectly complete". Ati's glosses indicate that the Reality Body's enlightened activity is "not

actualized" since it is free of all limitations, it is "always already actualized" since it accompanies yourself/itself, and is "completely actualized" since it is naturally impelled forth.

*One emerging, two emerging, all emerging - this is the Reality Body's enlightened qualities:* Ati's glosses indicate "one emerging" refers to awareness, "two emerging" refers to the two lamps (i.e. the expanse and seminal nuclei lamp), and "all emerging" refers to "primordial gnosis' visionary manifestations", thereby relating it to the Direct Transcendence visions. Other possible interpretations (there is no need to limit us to Ati, though presumably its glosses stem from an authentic and now lost commentary) are that "one" refers to the Reality Body's essence, "two" to the Enjoyment Body and Emanational Body which proceed outwards from that singular essence for the benefit of sentient beings, and "all" to all the enlightened displays of Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses that flow out from the enlightened experience, just as the Ground's essence expresses itself in terms of its luminous nature and compassionate resonance, and thus as the entire panorama of cyclic existence and transcendent reality (see ZMYT2 263,6 and 264,3 for support of this interpretation). Khanpo Jikphun suggested reading "one" as the "solitary primordial gnosis", "two" as the dyadic primordial gnosis knowing phenomena in all their plurality, and phenomena in their final reality, while "all" then refers to all the primordial gnosis in their various forms, which together form the enlightened qualities or display of the Reality Body. Finally, there is the connotation of these enlightened qualities being an uninterrupted seamless flow, one after another in an utterly inconceivable splendor and profusion.

442. The following two accounts apparently play off the sense of *Chos* as "phenomena" or "quality". TCD2 39,6 gives this section as follows: "...it is termed "the Body of Reality" in that primordially it is beyond atomic particles and stainless; in the current context, it is present as the secret "phenomena" since we don't recognize it despite its presence within us; and it is the "phenomena" present as the desired spiritual fruit when we reach the ultimate limits (of enlightenment)..." ZMYT1 447,3 puts it like this: "...Since in its being stainless, spontaneously present, and an unobstructed clearing space, it acts as the source of the "phenomena" (or "qualities") found in the manifestation of the gnostic visions and collections of enlightened qualities, it is termed "Reality Body"..."

443. See the mini-encyclopedia for definitions of the ten enlightened powers, four modes of fearlessness, and eighteen unique attributes of a fully enlightened Buddha, which are the standard numerical references of these three terms (explicit in LYT1 322,1, and so on). This etymology is based upon the meaning of *Chos* as "qualities", here referred to in the sense of the various enlightened qualities that are special attributes of a fully Awakened One. Despite this description resembling that of a normal physical "body" and its attributes, Longchenpa's description of it as "empty" and "without concrete characteristics" clearly indicates that the Reality Body contains such attributes in the sense of being their source and foundation, while itself pure virtual energy (which also evokes *Chos* as "reality"). In short, these signify the dynamic qualities of pristine awareness, which has the "strength" to suppress all distortion and obscurations by that which is other, is fearless and impervious to harm by the elements or external factors, and is radiantly clear in its own essence, all of which stem from the (now) latent presence of the enlightened nucleus or Buddha-nature within us ("the Reality Body"). This summarized triad then includes all the particular enumerations found in the standard exoteric texts of Buddhism, such as the ten powers, four types of fearlessness, various forms of "clarity" of yogic vision resulting from dispersing obscuring factors in meditation, and so on, which together indicate the full, manifest presence of Buddhahood.

444. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 357,5; Ati1 431,3; also cited by TCD2 121,7). All three other texts read "emptiness" for "powers" (which would indicate translating "clarity" as "radiance"), but I left TDD's text as is, since Longchenpa's preface indicates it may be a deliberate misquotation in this context (although it may very well also be a scribal "correction"). TCD2 121,6-7 explains the meaning of "emptiness" in this context clearly: "the Reality Body's essence is empty, radiant, and unimpeded natural lucency". Longchenpa then prefaces these three lines thus: "Since it embodies (*sKu*) the luminously radiant reality (*Chos Nyid*) of the primordially pure spontaneously present expanse, it is the "reality" (*Chos*) of the unchanging, undistorted and originally pure essence, and the great naturally indwelling Spiritual Body (*sKu*) of the spontaneously present luminously radiant nature". Thus the Reality Body is thoroughly "empty", and yet that emptiness is inherently dynamic with its spontaneous "radiance", such that one who is attuned to it is utterly "fearless" (fear being dependent upon the ego's self-perception of its own alienated "self", and threats to it from the "outside"), and all activity is spontaneously and perfectly complete. In this reading, *Chos* would seem to be etymologized in the sense of "reality" (*Chos Nyid*) rather than "qualities".

445. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 357,4; Ati1 431,2; also cited by TCD2 122,5). TCD2 emphasizes these three are "indivisible". See Ati for an extensive set of glosses here.

446. As mentioned previously, this discussion differentiating the "ordinary mind" (*Sems*) from "primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*) via a standard sequence of topics is a type of mini-genre repeated many times in Longchenpa's corpus ("ordinary consciousness" (*rNam Shes*) can be specified instead of "mind" (KGYT2 203,3); "awareness" can be referred to instead of "primordial gnosis" (see rTse Le sNa Tshogs Rang Grol's *The Nucleus of the Sun* 34b 1-2); or the distinction can be referred to as between "mind" and "mind as such" (*Sems Nyid* - see TCD2 42,6ff). This distinction in the Great Perfection tradition is the subject of thesis by Kent Johnson (see bibliography). In short, *Sems* is the ordinary nonhonorific term signifying "mind", such that in our current context it denotes the neurotic, conceptually dualistic, and emotionally distorted psyche characterizing ordinary non-enlightened sentient beings, who wander obsessively through cyclic existence lifetime after lifetime because of its insistent delusion; *Ye Shes* (literally "primordial knowing" or "pristine cognition") is generally used exclusively as a term signifying the gnosis or "wisdom" of a Buddha (*Sems* and *rNam Shes* no longer being operative within a Buddha, all his psychic activity is termed "gnosis" or "insight"), while in our current context it signifies the primordial intelligence of the Universe, which functions within us as our own internal nucleus of "gnostic energy" organizing and sustaining our psycho-physical being (through its "super-nuclei" ("Eye of the Lamps") and network of "luminous channels), eventually "intensifying" into optimum, non-distorted energy levels through sustained contemplation and study. In this way the "mind" and "universal ground" are closely linked to each other, as are "primordial gnosis" and the "Reality Body", with the latter term in each dyad being more of a "substratum" or essence, and the previous term in each dyad describing the actual dynamics of energy issuing forth from within that essence/substratum (TCD2 41,6 says primordial gnosis is "eternally present within the "home" of the Reality Body"; TDD 242,4 defines the "location" or "milieu" of the mind as the universal ground, and the "residence" of primordial gnosis as the Reality Body). The corresponding discussion in TCD is TCD2 39,7-69,3 (Longchenpa continues to discuss primordial gnosis up until 100,1, but those sections correspond to sections found elsewhere in TDD); also see ZMYT1 449,1-456,2, etc.

447. This first section discusses the mind and primordial gnosis together with each other and in general exoteric terms, while the second section treats each in separate subsections, and details certain esoteric points unique to the Great Perfection tradition.

448. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 379,5; Ati2 517,2; also cited in piecemeal fashion on TCD2 40,2-42,4; ZMYT1 453,2).

*The mind, in its dualistic apprehension of perceivable objects, is therefore the reality of cyclic existence:* NGB and Ati instead read, with glosses, "There is the apprehended (objects) and the apprehender (mind)", though the basic thrust is the same: the ordinary mind is instinctively fixated on dualistic modes of experience, with its enframing of presences into isolated "things" against the ever present background of its strong sense of a personal "ego" quite separate and distinct from them. TCD2 40,1-2 comments on these opening lines thus:

"...The ordinary mind is associated with dimmed awareness as the stained phenomena which constitutes ordinary instinctive cyclic existence, and thus is cloud-like in its obscuration of primordial gnosis. Primordial gnosis is stainlessly associated with the Reality Body, and is never found together with the mind's memory and thought-processes - it is like the sun..."

*When you are divested of this mind, you are expansively awakened into Buddhahood:* Ati glosses "when" by "When you recognize primordial gnosis which is transcendent of the ordinary mind, all appearances and experiences are pure right as they are". See TCD2 40,7-41,1's interpretation, which emphasizes that the ordinary mind is precisely what obscures enlightened awareness within us, and as such, is precisely what we must divest ourselves of.

*The transmigrating beings transmigrate via the mind, and if the mind were absent, they would have no capacity to transmigrate; it is thus like the device or mechanism of transmigrating beings:* these three lines are commented on in TCD2 40,7-41,1. The mind is termed the "reality of cyclic existence" since its dualistic obsessions are the inner mechanism which accumulate our karmic "baggage" ("karma" connotes the reactive effect our actions have on us, with the key element being the mind's motivation that impelled those acts), thereby impelling us to circle obsessively and repeatedly through its domain of frustration and pain. "Device" (*Khrul 'Khor*) is literally "wheel of error", and thus connotes cyclic existence, which we circle through "one life time after another life time", one error after the next, one delusion after another. The mind is not only the driving force sustaining cyclic existence and that which impels us from one life to another life within it, but also at a more mundane movement our physical actions and movements are directed and initiated by the mind (at conscious and unconscious levels), as a lord to his servant (such that it alone is responsible for the "stains" or distortions in our being); at death in the mind's absence the body is incapable of movement, such that it lies inert and still. Since the Tibetan word for "transmigrate" is also the common word for "go" ("transmigrators" is literally "those who go"), these two meanings are simultaneously present.

*The Enlightened Mind is beyond all agitation, and yet is not like inert matter: conscious and aware, it manifests radiantly:* these three lines are interpreted on TCD2 41,7-42,4, where Longchenpa makes clear that this is connected to our intuitive sense that without the "mind", there would only be darkness or inert matter, since the cessation of mind would involve the cessation of our awareness (what could no-mind be but spiritual death, and utter

dissipation?!). Longchenpa responds to this intuition by pointing out that we are ignoring the positive depth-dimension of primordial gnosis, which is able to shine forth freely following the mind's dissipation, just as the day/sun rises following nighttime's dissipation. He also clarifies that while it is true that dimmed awareness "pervades" the mind (i.e. is always present when the mind is present), it is not true that dimmed awareness pervades awareness, but rather it is true that awareness pervades dimmed awareness (i.e. even in sentient beings' rampant dimmed awareness, awareness continues to be present, yet in a Buddha's enlightened knowing pure awareness is present utterly devoid of even the vestige of dimmed awareness), and thus dimmed awareness' cessation does not entail the cessation of awareness. While the Enlightened Mind of an Awakened One is not "agitated" with neurotic thought forms and obsessive emotional projections/reactions, since it remains serene and unattached throughout all eventualities, this does not entail an "inert" nothingness devoid of action and dynamism (like a rock in its total lack of awareness, or a candle which has gone out), since it is inherently dynamic vibrant pure aware-ing energy which, however, neither attempts to "capture" phenomena in aggressive manipulations nor is "captured" by phenomena in futile obsessions (both driven by largely unconscious symbolic projects to resolve the inherent contradictions in the ordinary ego's alienated sense of self). TCD2 42,4 interprets "manifests radiantly" as referring to the expansion of gnostic energy in enlightenment as the Awakened One enjoys the dual modes of enlightened knowing (sensitivity to all phenomena in their final reality as well as their infinite range of superficial modes), in addition to connecting to his imagery of enlightenment as "daybreak" where the gloom of night dissipates.

And incinerates all distorting conceptuality, as primordial gnosis itself consumes it like a fire: the glosses indicate that insight incinerates our distorting conceptuality, just as firewood is totally consumed in the blazing fire it ignited.

It is similar to the sky, empty and radiant, yet also aware: these two lines along with the preceding two lines are commented on by TCD2 41,5-6. NGB and Ati both indicate "it is not similar to the sky" since the sky is pure absence devoid of awareness, while the emptiness of primordial gnosis is inherently radiant and intelligent. While evoking the Reality Body's emptiness with the image of the sky is common throughout Buddhist literature, Longchenpa often points out that such images are of limited validity given the critical difference of the presence/absence of awareness (see KGNT1 64-65). However, TCD2 41,7 and ZMYT1 agree with TDD's reading ("it is similar to the sky"), and his preface on TCD2 41,5 specifies "it is like the sky in that all discursiveness is calmed therein...". In this reading, the second line then points out that although these two are similar in terms of being "empty" and "radiant" ("radiant" evokes both the "clarity" of a cloudless sky and the "luminosity" of the sky at midday), the latter is "aware" as well (thereby both using the image, and pointing out its limits). The striking contrast between imaging primordial gnosis as the fiery sun's blazing dynamics as well as the empty sky's vast expanse is also rather evocative (Ati indicates its "emptiness" ensures it is beyond eternalists' view of permanent substances or things, while its "radiance" ensures it is equally beyond nihilists' view of radical discontinuity and nothingness), and thus I have translated in accordance with Longchenpa's intention here.

Primordial gnosis thus displays itself through lighting-up, and by virtue of its undifferentiated compassionate resonance naturally manifesting, it pervades and is interlinked with all, such that all phenomena are perfectly and completely present within it: the glosses analogize this to the sun, whose own essence is to ceaselessly radiate light rays outwards from itself without any conscious exertion or actualization on its part. Likewise, it is primordial gnosis' very essence to naturally radiate outwards in self-organizing dynamic

energy ("compassionate resonance" is its "rays"), which in itself is "undifferentiated" since it radiates outward as a seamless continuum of light-energy devoid of bias or discontinuity (Ati reads "effortless" for "undifferentiated", but NGB agrees with TDD). In this way, just as the sun pervades our world and interlinks all of us both in our communality of requiring its light and warmth, as well as its illumination enabling us to see each other, primordial gnosis pervades all living beings as the unbroken line of continuity that "guarantees" the unity of all life, both linked itself with everything and interlinking all that is (also indicating the inextricable coevolution of life and the material environment, since even the five material elements are merely its congealed light-presencing). In particular, "interlinked with all" could also be rendered as "links all", "is in relationship with all", or "runs through all". "Links" (*Brel*) signifies causal dependence as well, evoking how awareness is the singular causal impetus of the entire panorama of cyclic existence and transcendence, the vibrant resonating intelligence of the Universe at work in every level of the complex world around, and within, us. The entire universe is a seamless interwoven unity devoid of discontinuous "empty space" or "lifeless dead matter", as gnostic light-energy (light as the base of "materiality" (*Od INga*) and of "psychic energy" (*Od gSal*) weaves beings inextricably and intimately within Being, the Ground's emptiness "alive" with Being", thereby primordially bridging all seeming dualism between self and other, life and matter, individual and Universe, being and Being (it is "wise" in knowing how to "harmonize cyclic existence and transcendence" - see TDD 183,3). Finally, just as the sun sheds light and warmth on everything on our planet, such that everything that exists is within its domain (its sun rays contain our own vital energy in potential with their concentrated "packets" of warmth and light - a sun-less universe is also a lifeless one), primordial gnosis is the spiritual solar force that is both "completely present" within all phenomena as their ultimate source of vitality and existence, and contains all phenomena's essence completely within it as pure potential. Gnosis' radiating resonance which embodies "care" throughout the universe ("care" indicating responsiveness and intelligence rather than dead matter) thus arises as naturally as light from the sun, with any differentiations introduced only epistemologically (not ontologically) via the dynamics of non-recognition and straying, such that it is perfectly complete within all phenomena despite our non-recognition of it (see TDD's second and third chapter, where this is evoked imagistically by locating all phenomena within the human body).

Since your memory is itself devoid of memory, primordial gnosis is beyond the basis of memory: the gloss of the first phrase indicates that "the psyche is beyond the psyche", clearly evoking the famous line "the mind is not the mind" (see my previous annotation in this chapter from KGYT2 212,1ff), as well as Zen aphorisms urging us to the state of "no mind", and Saraha's famous verses on "nonmemory" (see Guenther's translation in *The Royal Song of Saraha*, verse 29 and 30 on page 69, commentary 169-176; also see "memory" in mini-encyclopedia). "Your memory is itself devoid of memory" indicates that if you contemplatively seek for the ultimate root of that ego-distorted memory, it will dissipate before you, leaving the originally pure essence of primordial gnosis that is primordially beyond memory's "fixating conceptuality" (the gloss here), and as such tunes you into the unity of life rather than memory's tightly restricted sense of alienated "self". The "mind" and ordinary ego are our old friends of many lifetimes which we seem to know so well, yet when we rigorously seek for their ultimate foundation and status in a radical "no holds barred" quest for the "truth", we discover to our amazement the inner core of empty pristine awareness that is their source, and where they have no status at all. It is as if we lived in a world perpetually covered by billowing clouds such that we believed the clouds themselves were the source of light in our world, yet when one day we construct a aircraft and search for

the ultimate roots of this cloud-light, we break through their hazy presence into the empty space beyond them where the dynamic radiant presence of the sun stands revealed, and in our shock we feel that the clouds are ultimately not clouds at all (since from our new perspective, we see the emptiness of our previous millennia-old ingrained notion of "clouds" as the ultimate source of light and warmth). Finally, as with Longchenpa's interpretation of the "mind is not the mind" (TCD2 42,6-7), we can also interpret the first occurrence of "memory" as referring to "memory as such" (i.e. pointing to the primordial gnosis as the ultimate source of memory, such as with the common term "mind as such"), which is devoid of ordinary dualistic ego-driven memory (which the second reference to "memory" refers to): "memory-as-such is devoid of memory, and thus primordial gnosis (i.e. memory-as-such) is beyond the basis of memory (i.e. the superficial foundation of normal ego-driven memory)".

449. There is a minor problem with the outline headings here, since this reference to the second section's beginning is repeated on the following page (239,3). However, the second reference is clearly mistaken since this discussion begins at this point, and thus I have simply omitted the reference ("the second (section) on the defects of not understanding (this differentiation)") where it occurs on the following page.

450. *Seng Ge rTsal rDzogs* (NGB1 694,3; Ati2 395,1). NGB and Ati read "devoid of conditioning" for "defect-free", and "all" for "presence", but I have followed TDD's text since it would appear probable that it reflects Longchenpa's intention rather than scribal errors. In this context, "apparent objects" indicates the dualistically enframed distorted objects that our ordinary mind abstracts out from sensory presences, and crisscrosses with its reifying sense of isolation, and intense conscious and unconscious emotional cathexis. This is in strict opposition to primordial gnosis' objective sphere as indicated on the following line, which is a vast pure space of radiant non-material presences of light totally devoid of conditioning and defects. If we fail to clearly understand the key differences between our ordinary mental activity and inner core of primordial gnosis, then we cannot contemplatively penetrate the mind's obscurations to tune into primordial gnosis' empty radiance, since in the face of the mind's incessant operations we will be helpless to penetrate to this sky-like openness of reality because of the intervening cluttered layers of the mind's wild variety of objects and subterranean currents of neurotic fantasies intertwined with them ("difficult" means "impossible" here). Thus we cannot gain spiritual realization via contemplating this sky-like presence of reality (primordial gnosis' objective sphere), which is defect-free and unconditioned, totally unlike our normal range of fabricated objects invested with our own projected neurotic energy (and deriving from our karmic propensities), such that they perpetually condition us into an ultimately frustrating vicious circle of desire and hatred (as we seek to symbolically resolve our inherent alienation via the externalized imagery we invest in the "other", both people and things).

451. "Strands of hair" refers to a person with blurred vision, who erroneously sees something resembling hair strands floating before his/her eyes, when in fact there is nothing at all present that corresponds to his/her visual experience. Thus this suggests a very radical view of even this basic sensory data being illusory in its being derivative of the mind's own karmic propensities, without any ontologically substantive correlate independent of the perceiver. This is not an "idealist" position (to the degree that such a term has any significance), however, since ultimately it leads back to the dynamics of the Universe itself, with its inherent intelligence and fivefold light-energy in dynamic hierarchically ordered co-evolution, and does not imply that the personal "ego" as such is the "creator" of all that it perceives (though it does determine the way in which it perceives).



452. This use of "object" (*Yul*) indicates that "reality" is the "sphere" for primordial gnosis' lighting-up, while additionally signifying that these luminous presences are the "object" of primordial gnosis in the sense of their being the objective correlate to gnosis as a cognitive act, and that they are the exteriorization or "objective dimension" of primordial gnosis' own radiation.

453. Such statements are extremely common in the canonical literature, and thus Longchenpa is not criticizing the statements per se, but rather particular trends of interpretations of them that were popular in Tibet during his time.

454. *bDen gNyes*; the Sanskrit title is *Satyadvayavibhaṅgakārikā* (see Eckel's critical edition of the Tibetan translation in *Jñānagarbha's Commentary on the Distinction between the Two Truths* 183, and his English translation on p. 97; also cited by TCD2 51,6). While I have translated it in accordance with the original text (which describing "conceptuality"), Longchenpa's focus is on the "mind", as indicated by his preface in TCD: "the ordinary mind and its fifty one mental operations/factors (as found in the three realms) are all exclusively reifying activity which must be overcome (to attain enlightenment)" (see TCD2 51,3-6 for the complete explanation).

455. These lines reject the identification of ordinary "appearances" with "radiant light" (their transcendent "equivalent") by showing the many fallacies entailed by the one's attributes applying to the other (which must be the case assuming they are to be identified with each other).

456. It must be kept in mind the ambiguity of "appearances" (*sNang Ba*) in the case of primordial gnosis, since it signifies both the "appearance" or "presences" which primordial gnosis "perceives" as a cognitive agent, yet also connotes gnosis' "lighting-up" or "manifestation" as accounting for these exteriorized appearances that it then retroactively perceives (referred to as "self-presencing"). These ambiguities of "appearance" and "object" in the context of primordial gnosis derive from the difficulty of using such meaning-laden ordinary perceptual terms to describe an entirely different way of knowing, and ultimately this fundamental mystery of "self-presencing" can only be fully understood by our existential commitment to the transformative contemplations of Direct Transcendence, where we experience this mystery with our own senses in a vivid immediacy (such that the full impact of realization can take hold in our own being, which mere intellectual "philosophical" analysis can never yield - the hermeneutics of these discourses are unavoidably linked to their accompanying traditions of transformative psychology or "contemplation", which in European philosophy continues to be poorly understood with its rampant compartmentalization and over intellectualization of discourse, despite the revolution ignited by Husserl and Heidegger). This radical notion of "self-presencing" also has implications in terms of our ordinary mental activity, both in a Freudian sense of the symbolic overlay of projected libidinal energy unconsciously exteriorized into the world, as well as the more radical implications of the material environment being in co-involution and co-evolution with the psychic perceiver (indicated both in matter being light energy congealed by force of our non-recognition, and in how "objects" are said to stem from karmic propensity-traces stored in our own fundamental psychic substratum, i.e. the "universal ground").

457. On TCD2 42,5-43,3, Longchenpa indicates that this careful distinction between "mind" and "mind as such" (i.e. primordial gnosis) can also be found in exoteric Buddhist

texts (such as the famous line "the mind is not the mind; the mind's nature is radiant light"), though their style of presentation leaves them open to misinterpretations that consider the ordinary mind to be the ground, path, and fruit of Buddhahood. For this reason, the Great Perfection texts make perfectly explicit that primordial gnosis is the ground, path and fruit of Buddhahood, and not the mind:

"...In our spiritual vehicle, primordial gnosis is considered to be the ground, path and fruit of Buddhahood, and thus we are quickly free from cyclic existence. Since the others hope for enlightenment in what is the root of cyclic existence (i.e. our ordinary mind), it's difficult for them to attain such enlightenment even after a long time due to their inversion of the proper way to establish its ground..."

458. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 588,7; Ati1 730,6; also cited by TCD2 44,3). To help clarify this hypothetical debate between the proponent of this erroneous position (marked with asterisks here) and the adherent to Longchenpa's own position, I have added "they" and "you" to the text (as if a teacher were explaining to you how to properly debate this erroneous position). TCD2 43,4-44,3 gives an extensive introduction to this passage, which begins by pointing out that since the mind by definition involves dualistic perception, its identification as the "ground, path, and fruit" would entail that each of those three is permeated by dualistic thought activity (which is particularly unacceptable in the case of the fruit, since "Buddhahood" is by definition the freedom from such dualistic modes of thought). It would thus be either impossible to attain Buddhahood, or the Buddhahood attained would be a perversion of the actual state of enlightenment, since there could be no freedom from dualistic thinking (which the mind, by definition, involves). He also points out that while it is true that the mind as "that which must be purified (away)" is crucial in the revealing Buddhahood, it is not the case that Buddhahood can thus be said to emerge from that ordinary mind, since Buddhahood is a question of the presence or absence of the Reality Body's primordial gnosis, not the relative absence or presence of the ordinary mind. This is just as the dissipation of clouds reveals the sun, yet the clouds cannot thus be identified as the source of the sun. As scriptural support for his position, Longchenpa cites a controversial line from Candrakirti's *Entrance into the Middle Way* (Chapter Eleven):

*With the mind's cessation, (Buddhahood) is made directly manifest via the (Reality) Body..."*

In a separate citation of this line, in LYT2 250,2-4 Longchenpa clearly explains his interpretation of it. Provisionally on the spiritual path (i.e. before enlightenment), the cessation of the mind enables the Spiritual Body of non-conceptual self-awareness to "make directly manifest" radiant light (i.e. the Direct Transcendence visions); ultimately, those visions are completed within the transcendence of misery (i.e. enlightenment) by "making directly manifest" the Reality Body as the seamless union of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses.

*\*Some people's claims involve (erroneously) searching for the "climax" (the "fruit" of enlightenment) within their ordinary mind:* this is identical to Longchenpa's frequent assertions of his belief that many Tibetans during his own lifetime confused the ordinary mind with primordial gnosis, and thus sought to attain enlightenment through "polishing up" their own mind, thinking that such a "stainless mind" would be equivalent to the fruit of enlightenment itself. Unable to see beyond their ordinary dualistic thought structures, they remain chained to the coarsely analytical, thing-based reasoning and perception that is so

efficient in our material survival and personal self-ish assertion, unable to make the transition to poetic, contemplative modes of thought and experience which would allow them to radically "re-interpret" the world at every level (entering a self-conscious imaginal mode as opposed to the unconscious sedimented imaginal structures that we think of as "real", or "common sense").

*\*Their response to that question will be along these lines: "The characteristic of the mind is reality". You should move to counter that statement by asking them: "Does subject-object dualism exist within reality or not?"*

I have added the extra three lines from NGB. Although Ati, TDD and TCD all lack these lines (TCD does have the additional line "Since the mind has no substantiality..."), these extra lines make the dialogue much more comprehensible.

*If subject-object dualism is operative within the mind, Buddhahood would be unobtainable through meditative exertion, the reason being that subject-object dualism exist within the mind:* I have corrected TDD's reading of "obtainable" to "unobtainable" on the basis of NGB, Ati and TCD (TCD2 43,4-5 also clearly explains this in its preface). While Buddhahood by definition is devoid of any polarized dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity, these people's identification of the ordinary mind as the fruit of enlightenment entails that precisely such dualistic structures characteristic of the mind will also pertain in Buddhahood - just as black coal (the blackness being intrinsic to the coal just as fragmenting dichotomy is to the mind) cannot be transformed into a white coal no matter how much you scrub it ("white" referring to the transcendence of dualism, which Buddhahood is normally defined as), no matter how much you exert yourself in contemplation you will be unable to obtain true authentic spiritual awakening out of this ordinary mind. For these reasons, the speaker advocates abandoning the other's identification of the mind with Buddhahood's ground or causal impetus. A possible counter response to this would be that analogically just as coal can be transmuted into diamonds not by "scrubbing" but by a long evolutionary process of intense pressures (which could be collapsed into a short time through extraordinary means), so to the mind could be transmuted into Buddhahood through either a long evolutionary process (such as the Bodhisattva's eons of practice) or by the extraordinarily intense and dangerous means of the tantric path, such that its basic being completely restructures itself. This, however would be against TDD's consistent critique of such lines of thinking (whether in Great Vehicle or Tantric traditions), and additionally would reveal a basic failure to participate in Longchenpa's thinking, and instead be content with petty analytic tricks that merely show the basic truth that any image can be easily turned back upon itself and inverted.

*They will then attempt to counter you with this objection: "If the absence of mind is Buddhahood, then how can it ever be attained?"*

That the "absence of mind" results in Buddhahood is clearly Longchenpa's view, such as TDD 238,2-4, where "separation from the mind" ensues in the expansive awakening of enlightenment. "How can it ever be attained?" can literally be rendered as "Do you attain it, and if so through what mechanism?" The basic point of this would seem to be that if there were no intrinsic relationship of Buddhahood to the mind, then how could the former ever be attained from the state of the latter? Thus this person is stuck in his/her view that Buddhahood must somehow represent a transmutation or restructuring of one's psychic energy as presently understood (the mind), and cannot see that actually s/he has precisely

inverted the relationship between the two. In actuality, rather than Buddhahood being an effect or transformation of the mind, the mind itself is an effect of Buddhahood: the essence of Buddhahood is stainless awareness' primordial presence, while the ordinary mind is awareness' impure radiation mixed with the energy winds from our lungs, and thus by clearing away the obscuring mind one penetrates to its ever vibrant source, which is thereby able to shine forth freely in manifest immediacy. In this way the true ground of Buddhahood is our primordially enlightened awareness (enlightenment means its "primordial expansive awakening" is "re-awakened"), while the mind is a non-optimal derivative of its efflorescence - Buddhahood is primary and original, the "mind" is secondary and derivative. Longchenpa interprets this question (TCD2 43,6) as indicating that the questioner believes that Buddhahood isn't possible in the absence of the mind, since "we all" accept that the mind plays a crucial role in enlightenment as "that which must be purified" (*Dag Bya*). Longchenpa's response (TCD2 43,6-44,1) to this objection is to indicate "that which must be purified" signifies the adventitious mind as that which must be "purified or cleansed away" to reveal the inner pristine awareness it hides, and does not have the sense of the mind being "purified or transformed into" Buddhahood, such that he explicitly rejects the description that "Buddhahood emerges from the mind" (Buddhahood is a question of the presence or absence of primordial gnosis (the inherent self-intelligence of the Universe), and not a question of the presence or absence of ordinary mind (our own limited self-alienated ego).

*Your elaboration in response to this question should go like this: "We don't seek for the "climax" ("fruit of enlightenment") in the mind, since a variety (karmic propensities and so forth) emerges within the mind:* as I discuss directly above, the questioner ignores the positive factor of primordial gnosis, as well as implicitly inverts the relationship between the mind and the state of Buddhahood - after his own position has been shown to be incoherent, he testily replies "if it's not the mind, where are you going to dredge Buddhahood up from?" The response then indicates that since the emotionally distorted mind is a totally incompatible phenomena with Buddhahood, it was ludicrous to seek for the latter within the former to begin with, implying that instead one must look to primordial gnosis of awareness as the source and reality of an Awakened One's enlightenment. "Variety" indicates the mind's uncertain vacillation in its ceaseless neurotic conceptuality, such that it is radically unstable and distorted, unlike the "secure site" (*bTsan Sa*) and beautiful holistic harmony of the Enlightened Spirit. The lines immediately following this final line in NGB, Ati, and TCD are as follows (I have followed NGB and Ati in the final line):

*"...The mind retains and subsumes one's karmic propensities.  
Why? Because it flickers outwards towards dualistically apprehended objects.*

*The mind is the root of cyclic existence;  
The mind is a phase to be overcome (in enlightenment).  
Why? Because the real self-awareness exists..."*

TCD2 41,7-42,4 (see my annotations to TDD 238,5 for a synopsis of this passage) also refutes the notion that the "absence of mind" must entail an utter dissipation into darkness or inert matter (like a corpse with its inner light snuffed out), though this is a natural feeling on the part of sentient beings' whose entire conscious experience revolves around the mind's dualistic structures and ego-sense ("I'm losing my mind!"). This also was a center of scholastic controversy in Tibet, as certain other sects viewed the Enlightened Mind as a purification of the ordinary mind resultant from purging the latter of emotional distortions, but by no means not eradicating it all together. However, Longchenpa views the ordinary

mind itself as precisely what must be discarded or cleared away so that the inner sun of gnosis may shine forth, and rejects criticism by saying that "though the mind is absent (in enlightenment), primordial gnosis is present, and thus it in no way involves a cessation of awareness". He images this as the sun's dawning clearing away the gloom of night, and criticizes the position that the mind's cessation entails awareness' cessation as "a major error" - awareness subsumes dimmed awareness (i.e. the former is present in every instant of the latter), yet the reverse does not hold true since the Awakened One's primordial gnosis is devoid of dimmed awareness (and hence of the mind, which is derivative of dimmed awareness).

459. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 590,3; Ati1 732,3).

460. *Kun Du bZang Po Thug Gi Me Long* (NGB1 259,7; Ati1 256,2). Longchenpa omits two lines found in NGB and Ati between the second and third line here, though this is obviously intentional as he uses these three lines as the structure for his subsequent comments. Longchenpa's virulent anti-idealism is especially evident in this section, as he clearly and unequivocally rejects any notion that "appearances" are the "mind".

461. "The head is the ass!"

I have corrected 'Phang to 'Phong on the basis of the DD edition of TDD.

It would entail that even when you are absent, your mind would exist in the area where you previously were, since the appearances there continue to exist (despite your leaving): since other people witness these same appearances in a given location even when we are not present, and it is our general experience that roughly similar appearances generally reoccur every time we return to a given location, this strongly suggests that these "appearances" continue to be present in a given location even during our absence. Yet if appearances and our mind are equivalent, this would suggest some type of ludicrous notion of little pieces of our mind being somehow simultaneously present at each and every location we have perceived "appearances".

Furthermore, it would entail that through one thing being born, everything is born; and through one thing dying, everything dies: since all appearances are identified with a given being's mind, this would entail the absurdity that when one sentient being is born (and thus its mind comes into being), the entire world of appearances would be "born" with it; when one sentient being dies (and its mind thus ceases to operate), the entire world of appearances would pass away within it.

When ten million people see a vase, it would entail that the entire vase is (part and parcel of each person's own particular) mind, and just so, all those individuals would be of a single mind: this single vase is perceived in similar terms by a wide variety of people, and yet for each person this entire "appearance" of the vase must be identified as being part of that person's "mind" (since "appearances are the mind" is the position being asserted here). Yet this would entail that all these different people perceiving the same vase have the same mind, since that single appearance is identified with each one's own particular mind.

Since all phenomena appear in the scope of a Buddha's "enlightened knowing of things in all their plurality", it would entail that cyclic existence is the Buddha's primordial gnosis: since an Awakened One is able to perceive the entire range of superficial plurality as well as

all phenomena's abiding reality, s/he is also aware of the full extent of cyclic existence as phenomenologically experienced by the suffering living beings within it. Since all one's appearances must be identified with one's mind, this would entail that impure distorted cyclic existence would have to be an inherent part of the Awakened One's pure primordial gnosis (the equivalent to our "mind"), since it appears to him/her.

When a sentient being sees a Buddha, it would necessarily follow that this Buddha is distorted, since s/he is the sentient being's mind: TDD's genitive following "sentient being" must be corrected to the instrumental here.

This position would also entail that these appearances could become totally adrift in a single instant, just as in a single instant our mind's movements drift here and there: "become totally adrift" and "drift here and there" literally means "swaying", "drifting", "tossed about" or "wafting", and connotes a cloud, which is insubstantial and in rapid flux while constantly buffeted by the atmospheric winds. Although experientially we can see that our mind is usually in a similar type of flux as it darts from object to object with constantly shifting fantasies and conceptual schemes, it isn't ordinarily our experience that external day-time appearances are highly volatile and mutable in this fashion (though certainly our ethereal dream-appearances while asleep do share this character, since in that case appearances truly are our mind). While the mind constantly drifts from one thing to another in rapid succession without obstructions, appearances generally seem relatively stable, substantial, and seemingly concrete, without any of the radical instability and rapid vacillation of our mind's flickering interior movements (for example, we don't find tables suddenly becoming apples, or an ocean replaced by a desert without warning, and so on). Yet if appearances are merely our own mind, then it would follow that all appearances would likewise share in this character of the mind, such that we would live in total confusion with constantly changing appearances devoid of rhyme or reason, and experience no more regularity or stability in our waking vision than we do in our dream-worlds at night (which obviously contradicts our experience of precisely such a distinction between waking perception, and dream perception).

If appearances are the Reality Body, then it would entail that appearances are beyond appearance and non-appearance, since the Reality Body is beyond appearance and non-appearance: "appearances" here is obviously used in the sense of the distorted dualistically enframed appearances perceived by our ordinary neurotic mind, though the same word can also denote the "visions" of an advanced meditator, or the "presencing" and "lighting-up" of pure gnostic energy in the Awakened One's pure lands.

462. *Byang Chub Sems dPa'i sPyod Pa La 'Jug Pa*; its Sanskrit title is *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (English translation in Batchelor's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* 131). While literally meaning "completely obscured", *Kun rDzob* also means "conventional", such as "conventional truth" opposed to "ultimate truth". The intellect, i.e. our normal dualistic mind, works fine for conventional survival-oriented tasks in the daily world, but it fails miserably with its thing-based strategies in attempting to realize the ultimate - it inevitably tries to see Being as a being, convert the no-thing into some-thing, and in general reduce the ultimate empty radiance to its conventional categories and frames, such that it is totally obscured from the ultimate's truth (i.e. it is only suited to the conventional, or superficial).

463. *rDo rJe gCod Pa*; its Sanskrit title is *Vajracchedikā* (see Conze's Sanskrit edition 57 and English translation 89 in his *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*; see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The*

*Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One* 336 for a translation of the preceding lines). The "Guides" refer to the Buddhas, who guide us along the spiritual path. This verse identifies the true essence of these Buddhas as being their "Reality Body" rather than their superficial physical form or appearance, and yet denies that this "reality" is a "thing" which can be a discrete object of our ordinary dualistic cognition. Thus our dualistic egological thought obsessed with particular material things can gain no foothold here, and its insistent, aggressive demand that everything be reduced into its convenient frames leaves no possibility that it may access or know this reality which is the quintessence of the Buddhas. This is not to say that it is thus some type of unknowable Kantian noumena, but rather that our knowing of it must involve a radically different type of experience that transcends the limitations and structure of our ordinary dualistic, reifying conceptuality. The surrounding lines in this Discourse present one paradox after another, as the Buddha attempts to force us by such shock therapy to surrender our instinctive thing-based modes of thought obsessed with concrete identities and "selves", thereby allowing us to open up our minds to a contemplative awareness receptive to that which is no-thing (obviously with lines of connection to Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit*).

464. The "bulls" refer to all these erroneous positions which share a basic reductionist outlook focused on simple sterile self-contradictory equations, which if Longchenpa were to refute individually would require hundreds of pages of pointless refutations. Thus, after refuting some of the main problematic positions characteristic of this tendency, Longchenpa here simply dismisses the entire reductionist trend (which was obviously rampant in Tibet during his time) as being fundamentally misguided in orientation, and thus not worthy of being addressed on individual points (just as a "cowboy" will corral the entire herd in a single spot, so he doesn't have to search after each bull individually). In essence, he implies that these people's basic notions of what "thought" and "contemplation" are all about are fundamentally mistaken, and thus all their particular claims and assertions based upon that foundation are irrelevant. By touching briefly on a few of these claims, Longchenpa has clarified his own approach for us, and whether we are then able to "clue in" and be willing to participate in his thought-journey is up to us; if we choose instead to persist in reductionist thinking, the specific arguments we can make are endless, and Longchenpa thus refuses to be drawn in to this vicious cycle (one is reminded of recent "criticisms" of Heidegger by well known American analytical philosophers, who often seem up the stream without the proverbial paddle).

465. *Tshad Ma rNam Par Nges Pa (Pramāṇaviniścaya)*.

466. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 379,3; Ati2 516,6; also cited by ZMYT1 452,6).

*Since the mind gathers-together and accumulates (emotional distortions via karmic propensities), it is stained and polluted:* I have inserted the parenthetical remark on the basis of NGB and Ati's gloss ("since it retains/gathers-in the emotional distortions"), as well as statements elsewhere that the mind amasses karmic activities and karmic propensities, or retains/synthesizes the various karmic propensities (TDD 243,5, etc.). The gloss to "stained and polluted" indicates that the ordinary mind is the basic energy or dynamics of emotional distortion (the other three texts have this line in the instrumental with respect to the following lines, which I have followed here - "and thus...").

*And thus a long list of stains come about therein - "the mind as the universal ground's retentive and synthesizing function", and so forth:* "long list of stains" indicates all the

different types of stains ensuing from the mind's neurotic structure, which the gloss sums up into the standard twofold classification of emotional obscurations and cognitive obscurations. The mention of the "mind as the universal ground" indicates some type of more expansive enumeration of the mind's diverse distorting functions - it indicates in particular the mind as involved in the universal ground's perpetual retention and synthesis of karmic propensities, while "and so forth" indicates other facets of its stained nature not here specified (this may signify the mention the fivefold ordinary mind on TDD 194,6 - see there). In general the mind can be identified with the "consciousness of the universal ground" (TDD 244,7), while its essence is often defined as being "the assembling and gathering-in" of the diverse karmic propensities and dualistically enframined objects (TDD 245,7; 243,5). The following line here in Ati reads as follows: "As the ground of all the karmic propensities, the ordinary mind is what stains embodied beings". Though the "mind" and "universal ground" are thus closely linked and partially interchangeable terms (both are also located in the vitality channel), the "universal ground" exclusively signifies our latent psychic substratum, while the "mind" denotes all our conscious activities as well - TDD 252,5 defines the mind's "residence" or "milieu" as being the universal ground. "Mind" as a term is more embracing, and includes all current manifestations of non-optimal psychic activity (many of which are accessible to cursory inspection - lusting for someone, frustration, and so forth), while the "universal ground" is an explanatory term focusing in on our psyche's depth dynamics, how past actions/emotions influence present experience (via its operating as the unconscious mechanism for the storage of karmic propensities), and how the ongoing dynamism of current psychic states transform one's future. The mind also plays the crucial role in the formation of karmic energy ("actions"), which is registered on the universal ground, since it is the mind's conscious and unconscious volition or motivation fueling our particular activities that gives those activities their karmic energy (i.e. their lingering retributive affect on our psyche - the body and speech are "servants" carrying out its "will", though this will may not be known to itself).

467. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,6; Ati1 129,4).

468. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,7; Ati1 129,5).

469. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 433,6; Ati2 165,3; VLDC explicates this passage on 230,5ff; also cited by TCD2 33,2). CBD 234,5 gives an alternate description of the relationship between primordial gnosis and the Reality Body: "...Primordial gnosis' essence should be identified as a conceptual isolate of the Reality Body zeroing in on its capacity for knowing and awareness. Its etymology: since it is the knowing which is thus present primordially within the Reality Body, it is termed "primordial gnosis" (literally "primordial knowing", or "pristine cognition")..."

VLDC's commentary on this passage:

"...De Ni gNyis Pa Sems Dang Ye Shes Kyi gNas Sa Dris Lan Dang bCas Pa bsTan Pa Ni, Yang gSol Ba Kye sTon Pa Kun Tu bZang Po Ces Pa La Sogs Pa bsTan La, De Yang sDud Pa Pos Yang gSol Ba, Kye sTon Pa Yon Tan Khyad Par Dang lDan Pa La dMigs Pa, Kun Tu bZang Po Ces Pa sKyon Du Mas 'Das Nas Yon Tan Yongs Su rDzogs Pa'o. Dri Ba gNyis Pa gZhung Na gSal. Yang bKa' rTsal Pa Ni Lan, Kye Sems dPa' Chen Po Ces Bos Nas, Sems Kyi gNas Ni Bag Chags Lus Dang bCas Pa'i Kun gZhi'i dPe sNod Dang 'Dra Ba Yin No. gTan Tshigs Ci'i Phyr Zhe Na, Bag Chags Du Ma bSags Pa'i Lus Kyi Kun gZhi Ni bSams



Pa'i Yul dGa' Pa Dang Mi dGa' Ba sNa Tshogs Pa Thams Cad sDud Cing, Khams rNam Pa gSum Gyi 'Du Shes Tsam Du gNas Pas, Khams gSum Rang rGyud Du 'Dzin Pa'i Phyr Ro.

De Yang gZhi gNas Kyi Ye Shes Kyi gNas Chos Kyi sKu Yin No. De Yang gNas Pas Chos Nyid La mKhyen Pas sKur Byung Bas gNas Zhes Bya'o. mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i gNas Longs sKu Yin No. De'ang Ye Shes Kyi Longs sPyod La rDzogs Par Rol Pa'i sKur Byung Bas gNas So. Shes Bya'i Ye Shes Kyi gNas sPrul Pa'i sKu sTe, De Yang Shes Bya sNa Tshogs Su Shar Bas sPrul Pa Yin La, mKhyen Pa Rang Shar Bas sKur Byung Bas Na gNas So. De gTan Tshigs De Ci'i Phyr Zhe Na, De Yang Chos sKu Ni sNga Phyi Bag Chags Kyi mTshams Nye Bar sDud Pa'i Dran rTog Thams Cad Rang Dag Tu Song Bad, Sems Mi mNga' Zhing, Longs sKu La Yul Can Tha Dad Du 'Dzin Pa'i rNam Par rTog Pa Med La, sPrul sKu La Shes Pa bDag Tu 'Dzin Pa Med Pa'i Phyr Ro. Zhes gNyas Pa Sems Dang Ye Shes Kyi gNas Pa'i Dris Lan rGyas Par bsTan Nas..."

*Oh Great Being! The mind's location is the universal psychic ground. If you ask why that is, it's because the universal ground comprises and synthesizes all mental objects, and cognizes in terms of the ordinary mind:*

NGB, Ati and VLDC read "discernment" (*'Du Shes*) for "cognized" (*Shes Pa*), but TCD2 agrees with TDD. VLDC interprets it thus: "This is because the universal ground (the foundation of the body which is itself the accumulation of many karmic propensities) comprises and synthesizes all the various likes and dislikes which constitute mental objects, while by its being present as the mere discernment of the threefold realms (of cyclic existence), we fixate on those three realms in our own mental stream..." Thus VLDC emphasizes how the universal ground's karmic traces flower into the body which is the matrix for the mind's various experiences and activities, as well as influencing the mind's own particular feelings - it operates as our "karmic memory", and hence shapes current mental objects in determining what we "bring to" any given situation, as well as registering our ongoing psychic tendencies such that they become sedimented patterns for the future. VLDC also indicates that "cognizes" signifies how the universal ground is in essence dimmed awareness, such that its basic dualistic discrimination or non-recognition forms the foundation for our fixation on cyclic existence's threefold realm, and all the more elaborate conceptual and emotional distortions. Thus the universal ground is the mind's "location" or "milieu" in that the former signifies the deeper structural dimensions upon which the former's more "superficial" functions and operations are based, and thus the latter is not immediately apparent (though discernible via careful analysis), while the former is accordingly quite accessible in many of its facets to ordinary perception or introspection. This is similar to Longchenpa's distinction between the "universal ground" and the "consciousness of the universal ground" (the latter which TDD 244,7 identifies with the mind), and is in line with his tendency to phenomenologically and evolutionarily analyze experience into coordinated hierarchies in interlinked patterns of increasing diffusion or concentration of energy (with "water" and "light" serving as the most common images for that energy): we begin with a generalized pool of psychic energy ("universal ground") with a wild diversity of intense little whirlpools ("karmic propensities"), which then spin outwards ("the consciousness of the universal ground") into streams of psychic energy that run throughout our body (our other "seven modes of consciousness"). Along these lines, TCD2 32,3 describes the universal ground as being formed via dimmed awareness, and thus functioning as the "vessel" of karmic propensities such that it is the initial basis, intermediate location, and ultimate home of the mind and all its specific operations/factors; in this way it resembles a reservoir or pool. Our ordinary conscious experience then is focused exclusively on this plurality of psychic

"streams", while generally remaining oblivious to the latent "pool" from which these streams derive as well as the infinitely vaster ocean of light present within our heart, and totally transcendent of the universal ground's "reservoir" or "pool" - our normal consciousness is but a faint echo of this optimal intensity of awareness buried within our inner core, and which we re-experience in its full intensity only in spiritual awakening. In this way contemplation is a question of recovery and return rather than "transformation" and creation, as we penetrate back to the pure matrix of energy within the palace of our own heart/mind, bypassing the entire malfunctioning network of our ordinary conscious and unconscious, which thus subsides as our inner kernel of gnostic light flowers forth in full recognition and intensity ("the heart's lotus light"). This is explained clearly in ZMYT2 288,5 under the two headings of (i) the manner in which the mind and primordial gnosis meet in the present as we engage in contemplation (the child returning to its mother-source), and (ii) the ultimate manner in which they separate (within radical awakening as the child consummates its return, and "grows up", such that the "child" no longer exists).

Furthermore, TCD2 32,4 describes the universal ground thus: "it operates as the foundation for pluralized appearances and experience: it appears as the material environment-vessel with its diverse objects, and appears as the life forms-quintessence (within that vessel), i.e. the many "subjects" in the sixfold life forms within the three realms, as well as sustaining the many facets of their bodies, positive and negative emotions, and mental distortions..." This passage emphasizes that the universal ground "synthesizes" both the noetic and noematic poles of our experience in the seamless co-evolution of material and psychic reality, keeping in mind that the "objective" worlds we live through are in essence the perspectively solidified frozen transmutations of the primordially prior panoramic display of five-hued light energy - there is seeming alienation from, and resistance to, our psyche (and its physical extension) are not an inalienable fact of the Universe, but rather relate to our own self-imposed estrangement from the unity of awareness. In this way, along with the more conventional relativity of our particular perceptions to the nature of our filtering/organizing perceptual and conceptual apparatus we possess (biological, cultural and personal), there is an additional radical perspectivalism that, however, does not lapse into a sterile idealism or solipsism. The worlds lighting-up within the Universe-in-evolution ("Ground-presencing") cannot ultimately be reduced to our personal ego, though it is true that in a fundamentally radical sense the manner in which we experience/interpret that world is utterly dependent upon the grounding depths (*Kun gZhi*) of the particular physical and mental structures that have accumulated not only in this life, but over the winding path of our personal karmic history spanning countless transmutations and life forms throughout the ages. Thus while the Ground-presencing itself is not derivative of that universal ground (the latter being the system's localized and distorted self-perception, i.e. the Universe's inherent intelligence somehow gone astray), the distorted worlds in which we experience the Ground-presencing (including our experience of material limitations and solidity) are derivative of our basic psychic substratum and its network of karmic traces. In the ultimate analysis, there is an intelligent Universe engaged in constant self-interpretation of itself with the consequent divisions of "material" and "psychic" in a constant localized intertwined mutually determining flux, such that in understanding Longchenpa we must be prepared to radically reinterpret the notion of our personal self-identity, as well as how that identity relates to the world around us. The standard descriptions of an Awakened One as passing away in bodies of rainbow light and walking through stone indicate the extraordinary implications of such a contemplative reevaluation, and awakening perhaps faintly shadowed in the common experience of extraordinary perceptions of color and light deriving from the ingestion of hallucinogenic drugs (like a false dawn).

Primordial gnosis' location is the Reality Body. If you wonder why that is, it's because the Reality Body doesn't possess any memory-based conceptuality, and is devoid of any psychic activity which fixates on objects and their "possessors" (i.e. subjects) as distinct from each other: TDD, Ati and VLDC read "subjects" (literally "object possessors"), while TCD2 reads "objects" only. In accordance with the former, I have rendered it as "objects and their possessors" to clarify the implication here. This could also be read more literally as "apprehending/clinging to subjects as distinct", though it obviously implies the incipient polarity between a given subjective experience and the variety of objects that it perceives (while with gnosis there is a seamless continuity between both poles, the exterior being a self-presencing of the interior). There can also be a connotation here that psychic activity is not differentiated, while with our ordinary mind there is the split between consciousness and unconsciousness, as well as the various internalized polarizations of our psyche (most shockingly evident in multiple personality cases, but also clearly evident in all of us as the "superego" vs. the "libido", our mind vs. our heart, our oscillation between various "roles", and so on). Finally, gnosis is constantly sensitive to the abiding "sameness" of all phenomena in their abiding reality even in its perception of superficial plurality, while our ordinary psyche is obsessed with these superficial differences and its reification of utterly distinct "things" while totally tuning out the inner unity that characterizes them (and it).

VLDC's interpretation revolves around the standard tripartite classification of primordial gnosis into the threefold grounding primordial gnosis, the fivefold characteristics-endowed primordial gnosis, and the twofold "primordial gnosis of what can be known": the first has its location in the Reality Body, the second has its location in the Enjoyment Body, and the third has its location in the Emanational Body. Vimalamitra then analyzes the second line into three parts corresponding to these three Spiritual Bodies: "Since the Reality Body involves all memory-based conceptuality (which interweave past and future karmic propensities) being intrinsically purified away, it doesn't possess an ordinary mind; the Enjoyment Body is devoid of any distorting conceptuality which fixates on objects and their "possessors" as distinct from each other; and the Emanational Body is devoid of any clinging at a "self" in its psychic activity..." Thus the first connotes the Reality Body's inherent purity; the second indicates that even as communication and "plurality" emerge in the Enjoyment Body's splendid display in the pure lands, it is not in terms of distinct entities related to each other as "self" and "other"; and the third signifies the Emanational Bodies as completely fluid even as they engage in complicated concrete situations in our impure frames of reference, without any type of neurotic fixations on permanence and "self" despite taking on an incredible variety of forms in compassionate response to the needs of living beings.

470. In YZD 91,3-92,2, Longchenpa elaborates on imaging the ordinary mind as "clouds" which obscure primordial gnosis. Just as from within the sky's space clouds unleash torrents of rain that enable the summer's crops to flourish, the clouds of the mind's dualistic dimmed awareness are thoroughly "shaken up" or "impelled from the range of thoroughly pure mind as such (i.e. primordial gnosis) and thus shower down the "rain" of virtuous and evil karmic actions, giving rise to the "fruit" of cyclic existence's three realms, and enabling the "crops" of the various joys and sufferings in the world to flourish.

471. "Which links you back to reality" is merely one possible interpretation of a term that literally merely signifies "linking" or "joining" (there may be a textual corruption here). Thus "linking" can be interpreted in two different ways: in our current distorted state, primordial gnosis' essence is adventitiously linked to the mind's obscuration, just as obscuring clouds

seem to be "joined" to the sun since they conceal it from our view its own essence (indicating the translation of "whereby its own essence (as linked to the mind's adventitious presence and distortion) can't manifest"); alternatively, it could indicate that primordial gnosis' own essence "links" us to the mandala of awareness, i.e. the transcendental reality of enlightenment (indicating the translation of "whereby its own essence (which links you back to reality) can't manifest"). One Tibetan scholar suggested it referred to primordial gnosis' own essence being that which "links" you to the five paths, another similarly suggested it referred to "linking" you to the authentic spiritual path, and yet another read it as indicating primordial gnosis is adventitiously "linked" to our emotional distortions and neurotic conceptuality, such that it cannot shine forth freely. TDD 236,2 has virtuous actions "linking" one to transcendence; TCD1 370,1 has all-encompassing channel "linking us to self-emergent primordial gnosis"; LYT1 467,5 has the function of lamps or awareness as "linking" one to the condition of the primeval expanse"; and ZMYT2 284,1 says that primordial gnosis acts to "link" one to awareness taking hold of its own-site. Since this verb is used thus elsewhere, I have provisionally chosen to interpret it here as "link you back to reality", though both meanings can be understood as operative. Either way, it plays off the image of the sun of primordial gnosis not being able to shine out because of the mind's clouds obscuring it, such that its fiery core of radiating energy is blocked from our experience by the adventitious presence of billowing clouds of emotional distortions, though its own internal essence is not in the slightest bit affected. In an interesting variation, we could also thus interpret this as "(primordial gnosis) is unable to experience its own condition", since "manifest" (literally "light-up") also means "what appears to the mind", i.e. "experience".

472. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 433,2; Ati2 164,5; VLDC explicates this passage on 229,3ff). VLDC's commentary:

"...Da Ni lNga Pa Sems Dang Ye Shes dBye Ba La Sogs Pa So So'i Tshad bsTan Pa La gSum Gyis bsTan Pa'i Dang Po, Sems Dang Ye Shes Ji lTar dBye Ba'i Dris Lan Khyad Par Dang lDan Par bsTan Pa Ni, Kye Sems dPa' Chen Po Ces Pa La Sogs Pas bsTan Te, sDud Pa Po Kye Sems dPa' Chen Po Ces Bos Nas, Sems Dang Zhes Khyab Pa sPyir bTang Nas, Ye Shes Rang Gi Ngo Bo mTshan Nyid Rang gSal Du bsTan Nas, Ma Phye Na Zhes Bye Brag Tu sDud Pa'i rNam Pa rNams gSal Bar Byed Pa sTe, De Yang dPer Na Nyi Ma sPrin Phung Gis sGribs Pa Dang 'Dra sTe, Ye Shes Kyi Ngo Bo Rang Dag Tu mNgon Du sNang Du Ma sTer Bas, Sems sPrin Pa Dang 'Dra Ba bSam Pa sNa Tshogs Pas bsGribs Te, Yul Dang Yul Can bDag Tu 'Dzin Par Gyur Te, De Yang Ye Shes Phyir sNang Ba'i Don Byed Mi Nus So.

De sNang Bar Ma Nus Na, Ji lTar bsGoms Kyang Ye Shes Mi sKye, De Ma sKyes Na Khams gSum Las Grol Mi Srid Do. De Las Ma Grol Na bLa Ma'i Man Ngang La God Med Do. De'i Phyir Na Sems La mKhas Pa'i Ni Dang Po Sems Kyi Byung Sa La mKhas Pas 'Khrul Pa'i rGyu Ngo Shes Pa Dang, Bar Du gNas Sa La mKhas Pas 'Khrul Pa'i rKyen gTan La Phebs Pa Dang, Tha Ma Sems Kyi 'Gro Sa La mKhas Pas 'Khrul Pa'i 'Bras Bu Ngo Shes Pa'o. De lTar Shes Pa'i rNal 'Byor Pa rNams Kyis, Gong Du bShad Pa'i Phyi Rol Gyi Sa Chu Me rLung sGo lNga'i Yul bDag Med Du rTogs Pas sNang Ba sNang Thog Nas Grol Bas Na, Sems Ni brTags Shing dPyad Pas Grol Ba Zhes Bya'o.

De Yang gZhi gNas Kyi Ye Shes La mKhas Pas Sems La Byung Sa Ma rNyed Pas rGyu mTshan Med Pas bSams Pa'i rGyu sTongs La, mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Ye Shes La mKhas Pas Bar Du Sems Kyi gNas Sa Ma rNyed Pas mTshan Nyid Ngo Bo Ngos gZung Las 'Das Pa'o. De 'Das Pas bSams Pa'i Yul sTongs Pa'o. Shes Bya'i Ye Shes La mKhas Pas Tha Ma Sems Kyi 'Gro Sa Ma rNyed De, bSams Pa'i 'Bras Bu sTongs Pas Ye Shes Rang Ngo Na

gSal Ba'i rNal 'Byor Ba rNams Kyis, Sems Kyi bSam Ngo Rang Dag Pas Chos Thams Cad Rang Rig Pa mNgon Sum Nyid Du Shar Bas Na, Sems Las 'Das Pa'i Ye Shes Te, rDzas Su Grub Pa Med Pa'i sTong Pa Zang Thal Ba Nyid Kyi Ye Shes gZhi La gNas Pas gNas Lugs La bCos Su Med, mTshan Nyid So Sor bZung Bas, mNgon Sum Du blTar Yod Pas, Lam La sByang Du Med Pa Ces Bya'o. Shes Bya Dang Shes Pa La Rang Ngo Na gSal Bas 'Bras Bu La sPangs Thob Med Pas Na, Chos Dang Chos Nyid La dBang sGyur Pa'o..."

Oh Great Being! If you don't differentiate between your mind and primordial gnosis' own essences, it'll be just like when the sun is obscured by a bank of clouds - you will be unable to differentiate out the presence of (solar gnosis') external manifestation: NGB, Ati and VLDC read *Don Byed* for TDD's *Don Phyed*, which translates as "(the sun/primordial gnosis) will be unable to fulfill its external manifestation" (literally, "perform its function of manifesting externally"). The sun's rays are analogous to primordial gnosis' external lighting-up, which can't fulfill their natural function of granting light and warmth when clouds obscure them from reaching us. VLDC makes quite clear that this reference is in the context of contemplation, saying that if primordial gnosis cannot manifest, all your meditation will be futile, and you will never be free from cyclic existence no matter what you resort to. As for the following two categories of visionaries, VLDC appears to indicate the first type represents someone who attains freedom via analytical contemplation focused on the mind's origin, endurance, and cessation (where does it arise from? where does it abide? where does it depart to?), whereby they gain clear insight into the mechanism of distortion and error (i.e. neurosis); the second type, however, is more focused on the direct immediacy of primordial gnosis itself, penetrating right to pristine awareness such that the ordinary "mind" dissipates before his/her eyes. Thus the former's achievement is characterized negatively as the realization that there is "no self", while the latter is said to gain mastery over phenomena and reality as s/he tune into the positive primordial dynamics of the Universe itself beyond the negation of our personal illusory restrictions (obviously the latter corresponds to the Great Perfection approach, and the former to standard exoteric meditations advocated in the Great Vehicle literature, though VLDC does "name names" here).

Therefore, visionaries who are learned as to the mind realize that external objects: though I have yet to see an explicit etymology indicating this, interestingly enough the standard Tibetan term for "outside" or "external" (*Phyi Rol*) could literally be read as "outside (*Phyi*) play (*Rol*), while Longchenpa generally refers to phenomena as the "play" of primordial gnosis.

473. While earlier in the chapter I rendered *Khyad Par* as "distinctive qualities" in Longchenpa's discussion of the Reality Body and Universal Ground, in the present context it clearly indicates the special qualities of the mind or primordial gnosis that are only detailed as such in the Great Perfection tradition, and is opposed to the "exoteric classifications" that are mostly discussions common to the Great Vehicle tradition as a whole. I have thus glossed this out here and below in my translation to clearly indicate its significance (it could also be rendered literally as "the topics relating to its distinctive qualities", implying that these qualities are only understood and spoken of in the Great Perfection tradition).

474. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,6; Ati1 129,4). "Enter" (*Jug Pa*) is in the sense of "go after", "engage" the external world and become "involved", just as our sensory modes of consciousness are termed "engaging cognition" (*Jug Shes*). Once the external world is engaged or entered, the mind then acts to pervade these sensory data and presences with its conceptual processing: our worlds are not experienced nakedly, but rather as pervaded by the

web of our own mind, which interweaves our fantasies and dreams with the presences which light up, distorting them and trivializing them in the process. The basic thrust of "enter" and "pervade" connotes that the mind is in constant motion, "other" oriented, and totally pervasive of all aspects of our experience, such that it operates as the basis for all our ordinary thought processes and "memory" (see mini-encyclopedia).

475. *Seng Ge rTsal rDzogs* (NGB1 694,3; Ati2 395,1).

476. *kLong Drug* (NGB1 433,1; Ati2 164,5; VLDC explicates this passage on 228,4ff).

*In brief, "the individual grasping mind operating with its own particular characteristics" is all the phenomena in cyclic existence, i.e. all the ordinary instinctive appearances of the six types of living beings:* I have yet to resolve this term "the ordinary mind operating with its own particular characteristics" (*Rang Gi mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Sems*), though it obviously signifies the impure distorted minds operative within each living beings (i.e. the mind as a complex conventionally self-sustaining system in itself, with its own particular characteristic range of operations and actuality). I first thought it simply meant "the mind which apprehends (phenomena's) own characteristics as being intrinsically so", interpreting it as referring to the ordinary mind which subjectively grasps (*'Dzin Pa*) individual objects' own particular characteristics (*Rang Gi mTshan Nyid*) as experienced by it as being inherently (*Rang*) and concretely established as such. However, this term *mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa* also occurs as an adjective of the standard fivefold classification of primordial gnoses, where it seems to mean "operates with characteristics", or "sustains (*'Dzin Pa*) characteristics", and VLDC 228,4-5's interpretation seems to indicate that it means something along those lines ("our own particular ordinary mind operating in its characteristic (distorted patterns)" that are a superficially self-sustaining system quite distinct from the dynamics of pure awareness in itself, which in the Tantra is thus opposed to pure "awareness", and "mind-as-such which emerges from awareness, the latter signifying how pristine awareness is present as our own mind's underlying source-reality at all times). VLDC's explanation: this "grasping ordinary mind" (*'Dzin Pa'i Sems*) whose "own being" (*Rang Gi*) is the psyche's flickering movements and memory while "characterized" (*mTshan Nyid*) as empty beyond any concrete pinpointable characteristics, nevertheless "seems to conceptualize and grasp at objects in dependence on its flickering movements in leaps and bounds". While VLDC's commentary doesn't necessarily directly indicate how the original root verses should be read as a matter of course, Vimalamitra's comments here implicitly indicate reading this as "the mind which operates with its own particular characteristics", which superficially indicates the typical distorted mind as we know it with its various facets and operations, while Vimalamitra's explication thus reveals a more creative, original reading of the term (as he usually does). Finally, LYT2 29,4 defines the mind as "awareness which apprehends characteristics" (*mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Rig Pa*), since "it discursively processes a variety of characteristics". Thus this remains a matter for further thought.

VLDC's full commentary:

"...*Rang Gi mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Sems Ni Zhes Pa La Sogs Pas bsTan Te, Rang Gi Ni 'Gyu Ba Dang Dran Pa, mTshan Nyid gZhi Dang, rTsa Ba Med Pa, mTshan Nyid gZhan Du Ma Grub Pa Dang, rGyu bsTan La dBab Du Ma sNyed Pa Dang, De Yang mTshan Nyid sTong Pa Ngo Bo Ngos Zung Las 'Das Pa'o. 'Dzin Pa'i Sems Ni De lTar Yin Yang, 'Gyu Ba Thod rGal Ba La brTen Nas Yul La rTog Cing 'Dzin Pa lTar sNang Ba sTe...*

De Yang Las 'Jug Pa Yan Lag Dang bCas Pa Las mDor Na 'Khor Ba'i Chos Thams Cad Ni 'Khor Ba, Rang Gi mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Sems Te Ni De'i Las Kyis 'Khor Ba'i 'Brel Ba sNa Tshogs Pa sNang Zhing 'Byung Ba Yin No. De Nyid So Mar Gyur Pa Las 'Gro Ba Lha Dang, Lha Min Dang, Mi Dang, Byol Song Dang, Yi Dwags Dang, dMyal Ba Dang, Rigs Drug Gi bDen Pa Rang rGyud Du sNang Ba, Rang Ga'i sNang Ba Thams Cad Kyang So So La sNang Lugs Mi 'Dra Nyid Do. Ces Rang Gi mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Sems Kyis Dris Lan rGyas Par bsTan pa sTe..."

477. Longchenpa's point is that the "phenomena" of cyclic existence (the distorted worlds of "things" and "selves" that we construct for ourselves in our experience) are the mind, but the appearances or "lighting-up" itself is transcendent of any particular mind, since they are the universe's own primordial self-organizing luminosity (which we unconsciously "interpret" down into solidified matter via our karmically conditioned physical and mental processing of experience, i.e. the universal psychic ground). In YZD 94,4-96,5, Longchenpa gives a thorough critique of identifying "the entire exterior and interior material environment and animate life forms in cyclic existence and transcendence" with "one's own mind", a mistake which he attributes to people's frequent misunderstanding of the theory involving threefold karmic propensities (relating to objects, body, and consciousness) being deposited upon the mind, and giving rise to the corresponding three types of manifestations or "appearances" (see Lipman's *Primordial Experience* 20-29 for an account of this passage and others in his discussion of Longchenpa's position on this issue). In this context (95,7) Longchenpa differentiates between "the appearance" (*sNang Ba*) and "that which is apparent" (*sNang Yul*) to make sense of the canonical statements that "appearances are the mind", interpreting such statements as referring to our own mind as being that which apprehends something appearing or not appearing in a given way (in the exact words used here in TDD - he is obviously thinking of this discussion in YZD with this brief comment in TDD). This literally reads, "your own mind apprehends (something) as apparent or not apparent", which thus not only indicates that our mind (i.e. our entire conscious and unconscious perceptual-conceptual structures as well as karmic repository) determines how everything external appears to us and is experienced by us, but also implies how the whole notion of an "appearance" (which includes non-appearance) is utterly dependent upon a perceiver who is the organizing orientational point to which these appearances "appear", as their filtered sensory data is actively constructed into the perceived appearance, and retroactively invested with emotional energy and/or interpreted analytically. These statements thus point out the fallacy of naive realism, which somehow believes "appearances" to truly exist in the external world in direct correspondence to how we experience them, which totally ignores that "appearances" are relative to a given perceiver to whom they appear thus, such that what conventional truth status they have merely pertains in species-specific, cultural-specific, and even individual-specific "games" or shared karmic structures (analogous to Wittgenstein's "language games"), and not in any ultimate exteriorized self-validating ontological matter (despite our inherent tendency to multi-dimensional "fascism"). To a stone devoid of awareness' illumination, there can be no question of "appearing or not appearing", or "appearing in this way or another", as "appearance" is by definition part of a noetic discourse, and not an independent ontological reference. Yet once we introduce the perceiver to whom "appearances" are experienced, the nature and particular character of his/her appearances will correlate to his/her own karmically determined perceptual apparatus and mind-set, with the wild diversity between individual perceivers allowing for no independent "truth" (think, for instance, of the vast distance between our own perception, and that of a one called

microorganism) - the reoccurring aphorism which expresses this describes all appearances as being "vividly apparent to us yet simultaneously nonexistent" (*Med bZhin gSal sNang*).

Despite this, it is not being claimed that "that which presences" ("that which is apparent" or "the objective sphere that presences" - *sNang Yul*), such as a mountain, can be reduced to our mind, though the moment we attempt to think "mountain" or enframe it perceptually, linguistically and conceptually, we have entered the relativity of "appearances", or, as Lipman renders it, "how something appears". Nevertheless, "that which presences to us" is transcendent of our own individual mind-ego, and ultimately can be "evoked" (not captured) as the self-organizing five-hued light of the intelligent Universe's spontaneous dynamics, which is in coevolution with our own awareness as the simultaneous primordial knowing of the Universe, such that its particular gestalt of "appearances" is in constant flux with our localized self-interpretation, though its ultimate essence as "that which presences" pertains to the macrocosm, not the limited microcosm of our individual ego ("that which presences" can be said to be the "playfulness" of mind as such, yet the difference between the "mind" and "mind as such" is a yawning abyss in which the mystery of life stares back at us from its formless depths, an abyss which can only be spanned by the bridge of recognition). In summation, Longchenpa's intention is to indicate that the Universe is intelligent, and its resonating intelligence is the creative matrix in which everything arises (including the material environment), and to deny ludicrous views that our limited individual minds are somehow responsible for the entire material environment in which it finds itself.

It must also be pointed out that this expression "that which appears" (*sNang Yul*) is a common term in Buddhist epistemological texts, where (in short) it refers to "appearing objects" (signifying that which is directly experienced or perceived by a given mode of consciousness), which includes "appearing objects" to direct non-conceptual sensory perception (i.e. the sensually perceived forms, etc. which form relatively unmediated sense data), and "appearing objects" to our conceptualizing thought (i.e. the generic images and so on that we abstract and fabricate out of this sense data - see Klein's *Knowledge and Liberation* for a thorough discussion). It is obviously primarily the former sense (that which non-conceptually appears to our direct sense perception) which Longchenpa is here playing off - in STCP1 83b 6-84b 3 he defines "apparent object" (*sNang Yul*) as that which our five modes of sensory consciousness are aware of in a non-conceptual manner (i.e. sensory data of shapes, colors, sounds, etc.); KGYT2 88,2ff specifies that the "apparent object" is this mere bare presence which we have not converted into the "apprehended object" (*Dzin Yul*) or "enframed object" (*Shar Yul - Shar* ("arises")) connotes the object as conceptually processed). TCD2 12,2, however, emphasizes that "appearances" (*sNang Ba*) are that which has previously appeared to us as objects, such as mountains, while "that which appears" (*sNang Yul*) refers to the self-characterized things (*Don Rang mTshan*) such as the material rocks (which make up that mountain) - "self-characterized" refers to the material "reality" transcendent of our own particular minds, and which our own experience reveals have their "own characteristic" functioning independent of our perceptions of them. In this same passage, Longchenpa goes on to define "appearances" as the "aspects (experienced by) non-conceptual cognition and (in) linguistic symbols" (*sNang Ba Shes Pa rTog Bral Dang brDa'i Ming Gi rNam Pa Yin*), while "that which appears" are the self-characterized things, such as inert material objects and so on" (*sNang Yul Don Rang mTshan Bems Por gNas Pa La Sogs Pa'o*). This passage seems to suggest that "appearances" refers to any possible phenomenological content or noematic object of a given experience we have of or relating to the external world (whether non-conceptual sensory cognition or the different linguistic frameworks we build around and via that sense data), while "that which appears" signifies



that which exceeds our experience as discursively formulated and conceptually delimited, and is transcendent of any particular noetic act. In overly simplistic terms we could say Longchenpa is making a very easy to understand point: "that which appears" is the thing itself, while "appearances" are our experiences and images of that thing (his use of *sNang Yul* here is in this sense more simplistic than Klein's "appearing objects", though, as we shall see below, ultimately it points to a much more sophisticated perspective than the reductionist, analytically oriented discourses that Klein is dealing with). In some contexts we can then speak of "that which appears" as being experienced by our non-conceptual sensory modes of consciousness, which are in immediate contact with "that which appears", while our conceptualizing psychic processing deals in abstracted images highly charged with unconscious libidinal cathexis, and as such are termed "appearances". Yet TCD here relates "appearances" to "non-conceptual cognition", indicating that even in our non-conceptual perceptual acts the corresponding objects are to a degree conditioned, and cannot be straightforwardly identified with "that which presences", i.e. that which is independent of our perception or non-perception of it (and which escapes or eludes any attempt to conceptually enframe and "capture" it) - after all, the average human's visual experience of "blue" cannot be said to have any status outside of a phenomenological one, since we can imagine many life forms that would encounter the same object without perceiving "blue" (whether it has the capacity to name and conceptualize it as such, or not - think of a microorganism, or a bat's highly developed sonar capacity, etc.). Indeed, when we reflect on what this common sense "thing" independent of our perception might be (and which every attempt to analyze on our part will automatically fail, as that very analysis is inevitably limited to its own perceptual data and interpretative frames), we might well "feel at a loss", despite the seeming obviousness of such a distinction (the "rock", and "my experiences of the rock"). While it cannot be denied that in perceptual experience we "contact" that which transcends us ("that which appears"), every aspect of our ordinary perceptual and conceptual experience is dependent on our particular physical sensory apparatus *in conjunction with* that which presents itself: in the first instant there is a pure presence that is as yet unfragmented into solid, discrete "things" in accordance with our limited schemata and psycho-physical experience, yet "we" (i.e. our present ego-mind) can only "know" what we have synthesized and processed through our own particular body and mind. Despite this "dilemma" we are not left with the assertion of some type of unknowable Kantian noumena, since "what appears" continually presents itself in our perceptual experience as the "playfulness" (*Rol Pa*) deriving from the dynamics (*rTsal*) of the Universe's resonating intelligence (*Thugs rJe'i Rig Pa*), which we have the capacity to self-recognize at any given instant due to our own psyche's deriving from the fundamentally concordant dimension of pristine awareness within our heart (which is at sharp odds with a dualistic "dead universe" view of adventitiously aware living beings unable to penetrate to the essential reality of dull inert constellations of matter). In that we have karmically constructed species- and individual-specific worlds of things and discrete solidified entities from a fluid reality of open light-energy as we constantly manipulate that which is no-thing into our own particular gestalts of "appearances" (which thus stem from our own karmic propensities, a term including our inherited perceptual and conceptual apparatus as well as the particular insanities of our own individual life tracks), we can also "deconstruct" this world of appearances to return to the seamless primordially of "that which presents itself as an objective sphere" (*sNang Yul* - see TCD2 47,6), superficially understood as "those real things out there" yet ultimately no more, or less, than the spontaneous dynamics of the universe's enlightened mind (*Byang Chub Sems*). This also points to the tremendous power of the Direct Contemplation visions, wherein we experience the Ground-presencing's pure luminous display of five-colored lights in direct sensual immediacy with our own eyes during this very lifetime, accompanied by a thorough sense of

their primordial emptiness (derived from our sustained practice of Breakthrough contemplation), such that we resist all inclinations towards cathexis and the conversion/framing of this luminosity into tightly restricted "things". In these visions, "that which presences" manifests from within rather than without, and thus in re-experiencing this primordial mystery of light and intelligence simultaneously emerging from the single undifferentiated unity of our own heart, we are able to penetrate to the true meaning of "self", and the intimate interrelation of the macrocosmic Universe and the microcosmic experience, as well as the interlinking coevolution of matter and spirit. A discussion of how this differs from standard Gelukpa views describing the deconstruction of our sedimented conscious and unconscious intellectual structures as resulting in the visionary direct perception of exclusively "emptiness" as the final "ultimate" mode of being of all is outside the parameter of this current note.

478. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,7; At1 129,4). The second and the third line give four separate "etymologies" for "mind" in a rather circular explanation which basically intends to evoke the pervasiveness of the ordinary distorted dualistic mind in our experience of all types of objects: (i) the site of mental activity is the mind (mental activity taking place within its parameters - "where it occurs"); (ii) the active agent is the mind itself ("the agent by which it takes place"); (iii) the essence or functions of mental activity is the mind (we only entertain "images" of objects, which are essentially mental - "that which it is in itself"); (iv) and the "reason" or "impetus" of mental activity is the mind itself, which is attached to or loathes the various objects, and so forth (including deeper impulses, such as the Freudian subconscious and unconsciousness, as well as the mind in its connection to the universal ground's depository of karmic propensities - "the reason for which it takes place"). While I have translated these lines to bring out the etymological rationale here, they could also be translated as "(i) that which is the object of thought; (ii) that which is the agent of thought; (iii) that which is the content or function of thought; and (iv) that which motivates thought". These four would thus refer to (i) the external objects of visual form, scents, and so on which are the references around which thought revolves around; (ii) the conceptual and non-conceptual mind itself which is the active agent of thought; (iii) that which is thought (with the external objects as references) such as pleasant, unpleasant, and so forth, or the mind's functioning such as apprehending subtly and coarsely; and (iv) finally the reason or impetus for thinking about something, i.e. you're attached to it and so forth, which ultimately stems from the mind underlying the appearance of the environment, body and consciousness by power of the various karmic imprints and propensities.

479. TCD2's corresponding discussion on how the mind may be classified is much more extensive (46,2-52,6), while CBD 234,5 provides a very succinct definition: the pure mind is oriented towards liberation, and is non-conceptual; the impure mind is conceptualizing in cyclic existence.

*The "pure mind" is non-conceptual primordial gnosis (which isn't engendered by gross distorting conceptions) remaining still within itself:* Longchenpa's description here of the "pure mind" as being "non-conceptual primordial gnosis" clashes with his strict differentiation of "mind" and "primordial gnosis", as well as TDD 239,3's rejection of claims that primordial gnosis should be identified with the ordinary mind's "non-conceptual dimension". Evidently he here terms these purified, contemplative dimensions of our ordinary mind as "primordial gnosis" in that these optimized functions of the mind are correspondingly much less distorted than usual, and hence closer to their source (i.e. primordial gnosis); additionally, as the coarser dimensions of the mind subside, one approaches ever nearer to the revelation of

primordial gnosis from within, like the sun beginning to peak through the clouds ("pure mind" in the sense of "the-mind-as-it-begins-to-be-purified-away"). TCD2 46,4 makes quite clear that this doesn't refer to an Awakened One's primordial gnosis, but rather to our ordinary mind operating positively within the framework of a spiritual journey or "path", such that it is capable of acting as the catalyst impelling us to eventual liberation: in its non-conceptual modes it gives rise to contemplation, while in its positive conceptual modes it is the driving force behind our spiritual practices of compassion, altruism, prayer, and so on. However, since this "pure mind" isn't capable of directly perceiving self-emergent ultimate reality (aside from an indistinct intellectualized image of it), this pure mind is still classified as part of cyclic existence (TCD2 46,6). "Remaining still within itself" is literally "remains within its own-place", and connotes the mind as highly concentrated and serene, in contrast to its usual frenetic dissipation obsessed with the past and future as it projects its energy outwards in symbolic cathexis.

*There are nine manifestations: the four meditative states (in the form realm), the four formless meditative absorptions (in the formless realm), and single pointed inner calm (in the desire realm):* these nine aspects of the "pure mind" refer to the traditional Buddhist typology of nine meditative states involving increasingly intense concentration of the mind, such that conceptuality gradually subsides and our sense of our physical limitations decrease (see mini-encyclopedia for details of each). These tie into the standard analysis of cyclic existence into "three realms" (which can be understood as different "realms" into which one may be reborn, as well as different "spheres" of consciousness (altered states of consciousness) which a meditator can access with contemplative techniques): "single pointed inner calm" is the preliminary concentration of our mental energies here in the sensual realm (the term for the ordinary states of consciousness in humans and other animals); the "four meditative states" are the four main levels or altered states of consciousness in the form realm (which reflect an increasingly subtle and non-conceptual state of mind); and the "four formless meditative absorptions" are the four main levels of the formless realm (which are extremely rarefied states of pure consciousness with very attenuated existence). These nine states are relatively "pure" in that they involve the mind as highly concentrated in opposition to our normal distracted, dissipative mental states, though they themselves can become "dead ends" if the meditator becomes attached to the sensations of these states and simply takes refuge in a more subtle fixation with "self" (the "formless absorptions" are especially problematic in that one can simply get stuck in a type of non-thinking vacuity that leaves our fundamental neurosis untouched). Thus these nine meditative states can either become a potent force for optimizing our mental energies and contemplation on the path towards liberation, or simply provide additional fuel for our delusion as we become egotistically infatuated with our sensations of "bliss", "clarity", and "non-conceptuality" ("spiritual materialism").

*The "impure mind" is (i) the diverse proliferating conceptual activity (of ordinary individuals in the desire realm), (ii) the mind as involved in relishing meditative experiences (with attachment), and (iii) all the subjective activity you engage in subsequent to these formal yoga-sessions of the meditative states and formless absorptions:* the first aspect of the impure mind is the coarse impurity of ordinary individuals, while the latter two aspects are more subtle impurities that apply only to those engaged in contemplative techniques and purification: (i) Longchenpa first refers to ordinary sentient beings who are involved in an unceasing stream of emotionally distorted dualistic thought, and then (ii-iii) in particular indicates the situation with regard to those who have made some progress on the meditative path, and thus oscillate back and forth between "pure" and "impure" states of mind (referring

respectively to the absence and presence of distorting conceptuality, or, in broader terms, mental activity that is positive or negative in terms of advancement along the spiritual path to liberation). In this way, I have interpreted the second item (literally "the relishing of flavors") as referring primarily to how in an actual meditative session your concentration wanes, and your mind is overcome with attachment to the phenomenological experiences that occurred during meditation, and then taken the third item as having a distinct reference as signifying all your mental activity following meditative sessions as you reflect upon the meditation, or engage in other dualistic thinking as you go about the day's activities. While there is no particle indicating a separation between (ii) and (iii), and in fact it seems they could be read together as a single item, "relishing the flavor" is a technical term usually indicating the negative feelings that arise with regard to one's contemplative experiences, and thus seems to me too narrow a term to embrace "all the subjective activity" of the meditator, since most of that will be not be exclusively centered upon meditative experience (i.e. interacting with other people, doing one's work, eating, etc.). Thus I have instead translated it as indicating that following a given meditative session's end, the average meditator is unable to maintain the purity of his/her contemplative state in the face of the swelter of distractions, and thus lapses into dualistic thought pervaded with the attachment of emotional distortions as s/he carries out his/her ordinary activities. Thus rather than the seamless flow of realization characterizing an Awakened One, there remains a strict demarcation between the contemplative non-dualism experienced within the confines of one's meditation, and one's emotional and mental life while working, eating, loving, and so on.

As for this term "relishing the flavor", it refers to impure meditative states where attachment is still an all too frequent occurrence. While in general your psyche becomes more and more refined as it is divested of conceptuality through deepening meditation, in certain contexts you will lapse out of your concentration and discursively process the various meditative experiences of bliss, clarity and so forth which have occurred, thinking "What an intense bliss! What a great meditator I am!" and so forth, as you recollect them and relate them to your individual ego ("spiritual materialism"). Thus rather than being non-dually immersed in the experience of pure pleasure, you flicker out of the meditative absorption and become aware of yourself as a distinct subject and the experiences as separate objects, which become this become a source of attachment, pride, and other negative emotions. To simplify its presentation (i.e. giving a general account that doesn't take into account a number of details irrelevant in our current discussion), the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* (see Poussin's translation 1227) says that the four meditative states and four contemplative absorptions can be "uncontaminated" or "involved with relishing (the meditative experiences therein)", the latter on the whole indicating impure meditation. "Relishing" or "enjoyment" basically refers to "craving" or "attachment", and is directed towards one's mundane meditative experiences (the "transmundane" or "uncontaminated" meditative states entail that the meditator is beyond the possibility of such distorted attachment cropping up, and hence such stable, optimal meditative states cannot become the object of "relishing"). Once the meditator begins to discursively reflect on and emotionally react to his/her contemplative experiences in this manner, s/he lapses out of the pure concentration of mind that is labeled the "meditative state as his/her psychic energy becomes focused on these feelings of attachment. According to 789-800, these negative distortions of meditative experience can involve the predominance of three factors, which are all based on ignorance: craving, wrong views, and pride (also see 878-879, 771). Thus while the state of meditative absorption itself is said to be virtuous, this only refers to when you are truly immersed within the contemplative state, while when your mind wanders (though your body may continue to sit quietly) such that it conceptually and emotionally processes the meditative experiences with ignorant craving, arrogance (thinking

your view is superior to others), or pride in your meditative skills, these are impure mental states which cloud and obscure the meditative state's natural clarity. In this way, "savoring the flavors" essentially refers to attachment in meditation, the defect of fixation on your meditative experiences, which in the context of the Great Perfection is often summed up in term of experiences of bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality (which are desirable as provisional markers of a deepening contemplation, yet are potential pitfalls because of our tendency to become attached and infatuated with them).

480. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,7; Ati1 129,4).

481. "Plurality of notions and (fabricated) images" translates *Chos*, which in other contexts I have usually rendered as "phenomena". In this context, *Chos* ("mental images" or "notions") refers to the psyche's own particular type of object that it perceives, just as visual consciousness perceives "forms" (colors and shapes), auditory consciousness perceives "sounds", and so forth. Whereas the sensory modes of consciousness have directly manifest non-conceptual sense data as their objects (colors, shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, etc.), the psyche processes that sensory data at once remove, synthesizing it into the familiar, deadening world we live in, which it further conceptually fabricates, organizes, and enframes, as well as investing these objects with various patterns of psychic energy, ranging from such basic emotions such as hate and desire to the more complex psychic schemes haunting the unconscious which Freud so brilliantly analyzed (this latter function then is given a special name, "the emotionally distorted psyche". In our current context, Longchenpa indicates that first the senses register their respective forms of sensory data in a non-conceptual manner ("directly manifest" indicates this sensory data is in direct contact with the sensual external presences, whereas the psyche only indirectly accesses these presences through its conceptual images - STCP1 83b 6-84b 3), which the psyche then conceptually processes "in a fixating process of apprehension" (*Dzin sTangs*), which connotes that instead of the "passive" senses, the psyche is now actively manipulating and distorting the non-conceptual sensory data. The psyche thus identifies "things" from the swelter of sensory data, abstracts out generic images, labels things linguistically, discerns emotional reactions to them, and so forth - it involves "generic images" (*Don sPyi*) that are not as vivid or complete as the corresponding sensory data with its wealth of particulars, but does allow us to perform a wide variety of conceptual operations and analyses that the "dumb" senses could not. These generic images or notions we have are thus termed "clearly appearing but non-existent", since despite our clear conceptual perception of them within our mind, they have no independently existing ontological correlate as such - for example, when we think of our hometown we have a clear image in our mind's eye, but that image has not concrete status outside of our mind's perception of it (whereas a given sensory consciousness at least is in direct contact with that which presences to it - see ZMYT2 288,1ff).

482. The "Adamantine Seat" refers to the site under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, India, where the historical Buddha first attained enlightenment over two thousand years ago, and here is used. In the first instant of our reflecting on this place, we have a conceptual image of "Bodhgaya" which pops up in our head, which is termed the operation of our "psychic consciousness". Immediately following that apprehension of a conceptual image, we begin to feel our personal emotional reaction to Bodhgaya as our memories flood in, and this neutral conceptual image of Bodhgaya now becomes a highly charged emotional image as all our emotional distortions and particular cathexis in relation to Bodhgaya now emerge from dormancy - this is the operation of the emotionally distorted psyche. Thus the former is termed "apprehension (*bZung Ba*) which connotes more of the noematic correlate which is

neutrally synthesized and processed, while the latter is "fixating" (*Dzin Pa*), which signifies the psyche's subjective appropriation of that object with detailed discursive and emotional processing that is especially karmic producing (see STCP1 83b 6-84b 3). STCP1 83b 6-84b 3 says that the first instant of the psychic consciousness operates very rapidly without any detailed fine conceptual processing, and hence is termed "non-conceptual" (or "conceptuality of the apprehension (i.e. still more focused on the object itself as reflected in sense data") - *gZung Ba'i rTog Pa*), which is followed by detailed, comprehensive conceptual discursive processing termed "conceptuality of the subjectively grasping" (i.e. now more focused on the mind's own processing of the images deriving from sense data - *'Dzin Pa'i rTog Pa*). TCD2 51,3-6 also gives a brief account of these perceptual processes, saying the eye consciousness non-conceptually apprehends (*Dzin Pa*) visible form, and so on. It analyzes the psychic consciousness into the "psychic consciousness" which initially apprehends a generic image of the object, and the "emotionally distorted psyche" which subsequently apprehends the object in detailed particulars (thus emphasizing the cognitive rather than emotive role here). Longchenpa says that both of these can be virtuous, nonvirtuous, or morally neutral, as well as conceptual or non-conceptual (while the five sensory modes of consciousness and universal ground consciousness are exclusively non-conceptual - other passages indicate the emotionally distorted psyche is exclusively conceptual, and that only the psychic consciousness itself can be either).

483. This section involves interpretations which are in the main unique to the Great Perfection tradition, and because of these teachings' esoteric nature, at this point traditionally anyone who may have accidentally happened to be within earshot of an exegesis might very well be asked to leave. TCD2 52,6-5,1 is the corresponding section there.

484. Longchenpa here analyzes our three aspects of the "mind", such that the "mind" is both the broader term for our entire psychic structure, as well as one of the particular terms signifying a partial aspect of that structure (such as "Russia" may signify the entire country of millions of people, or simply denote a group of four athletes participating in the Olympics as representatives of Russia). It would appear that these three aspects of the mind can be directly correlated to the three realms of cyclic existence: the universal ground consciousness to the formless realm, the psychic consciousness to the form realm, and the five modes of sensory consciousness to the sensual realm. Thus our sensory consciousness is especially active in the sensual realm where our gross physical embodiment dominates our experience, the psyche then begins to assume more importance in the form realm as we begin to develop deep meditative concentration that to some extent penetrates beyond our gross corporeality to our inner luminosity, and finally the universal ground consciousness with its utter non-conceptuality and non-apprehension of objects is primary in the rarefied, non-conceptual states of the formless realm, where our contemplation deepens to the extent that we barely have a sense of our physical existence, and remain in a state of deep concentration barely aware of the world around us. STCP 86a 5-86b 3 gives a somewhat different explanation (see Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 224 for an English translation), saying that the first seven modes of consciousness are in the ascendancy within the sensual realm (the five sensory modes, psyche, and emotionally distorted psyche), the consciousness of the universal ground then accompanies those modes as the predominant factors operative in the realm, and finally the universal ground alone is dominant in the formless realm as the other modes of consciousness all go into dormancy.

"The psyche", which experiences and processes objects of all types: this literally reads "as the psyche goes everywhere, it "enjoys" objects. "Enjoys" however would be an

inappropriate translation, as the term actually signifies the psyche's "experiencing and processing" of objects rather than its "delight" in them. "Goes everywhere" indicates its omnipresent character as it accompanies the sensory consciousness modes, processing and synthesizing their data into mental images of various types, while each sensory mode of consciousness is itself limited to its specific object only (i.e. visual consciousness can only perceive visual forms, and not sounds, etc.).

*Thus the mind) is the cognitive energy that is the single essence of these three, i.e. our lack of self-awareness which is the root of the five emotional poisons:* this could also be interpreted as the mind's foundation being lack of self-awareness and the five emotional poisons, but I have translated it as above to bring out the sense that the fundamental reason for "universal neurosis" is our lack of self-awareness or self-recognition, the non-awareness in and of our own selves which then is the foundation of the five emotional poisons (desire, hatred, etc.), and infinite diversity of emotional and conceptual distortions.

485. The ensuing discussion of the mind and primordial gnosis' respective "channels" within our body's interior leads directly into Chapter Five's analysis of tantric physiology, which must be understood as a complex and provocative reinterpretation of the fluid structure of our psycho-physical existence. As such, it can neither be reduced to the supposed physical "facts" of our body as revealed by anatomical research ("blood", "nerves", etc.), nor simply classified as "imaginal" realities divorced from physical realities. These accounts are offered as evocative interpretations of our body and mind's subtle energetics intimately linked to the body's coarse "physical" nature (just as science offers its own "interpretation" of these, though it deceptively presents itself as the simple unadorned "truth"), and have a hermetic character in which each term becomes self-referential within the account, drawing on the "normal" significance of the terms and physical structures yet simultaneously expanding these meanings outward in a thorough symbolic reinterpretation which might be termed the "poetics" of our body. Thus this hermetic symbolism is inclusive rather than exclusive, and is above all soteriologically motivated, imaginatively creating an internal drama that interiorizes and mirrors the cosmic drama (detailed in the first two chapters) within our own bodies, with the end purpose of revealing to us in words and images the inner mechanism of our ongoing neurosis and the possibility of freedom, the way in which despite our seeming corporeality we are fundamentally beings of light. This interiorized symbolic landscape with its interlocking lines of energy-flow is also creatively energized through a complex system of contemplative exercises utilizing visualization, sound, and imagination, such that in reliance upon our own physical and mental energies we re-engage the primordial imagination that created the Universe, thereby engendering a creative destruction of sedimented interpretations that allows us to actively participate in the Universe's fundamental self-organizing intelligence that lays at the heart of material and psychic phenomena, forsaking our ordinary passive acceptance of the dualistic, solidified "self-evident" interpretations disguised as the physical "facts" of life bequeathed to us by the karmic conditions of endless lifetimes laboring under the heavy burden of non-recognition.

In this way, hermeneutical pitfalls abound in our attempting to understand the nature and motivation behind these mystic "physiologies". We must continually keep in mind that these are not fixed descriptions of material "facts" set in stone as with physical anatomy, but rather highly charged "poems" of the body, which as such vary widely in detail from text to text (even in Longchenpa's own corpus we find a diversity of descriptions of the same channels in terms of locations, branches, functions, and so on, although there is a basic structural similarity). These "poems" utilize a wide range of "materials" to create the overall evocation

they aim at, including our normal physiological processes, the vast Tantric pantheon of deities and their iconographical representations, basic tenets of Buddhist philosophy, and the proverbial "kitchen sink", yet ultimately must be experientially tuned into within meditation as the poetic inclusively self-referential whole they become, which is not reducible to any of its component parts or sources (being simultaneously a "poem", a creative contemplation, and a radical reinterpretation of our psycho-physical existence as such). This can prove to be an extremely difficult balancing act interpretatively, as the interpenetration of symbolism and psycho-physical processes is seamless, with the most basic physical processes reinterpreted to reveal the profoundest aspects of the Buddhist path, and the seemingly furthest out flights of "fancy" suddenly shown to have very real connections to our "ordinary" physical being. This complexity is also indicated in descriptions of advanced meditators' control over psycho-physical processes, such as sustaining themselves on one breath a day, altering bodily temperatures in a specific part of the body, levitation, leaving footprints in rocks, and so on, all of which also can be interpreted symbolically, as well as reflecting spiritual progress along the path (penning up our mind's frenetic activities ("one breath"), burning up the neurotic mind with gnosis' high-energy fire ("temperature"), gaining freedom from material corporeality and fixation on matter as solidified otherness ("levitation" and "footprints"), etc.). In this way, these intricate "tales" of colored lines of energy permeating our body with "wheels" or "lotuses" at their main intersections, and through which "winds" flow carrying small spheres ("nuclei") of light, not only have empirically verifiable results as their contemplative utilization allows us to actually gain conscious control over interior physical processes, they also enable us to retrace our steps back to the early history of the Universe, confront the beginning of the Universe in full self-consciousness, and realize the fundamental triune dynamics of all evolution, whereby we reinterpret our psycho-physical existence and material environment in a radical new way of being. Thus this unsettling mix of the public physical-material and private spiritual-imaginative faintly shadows the fundamental mystery to which it is designed to lead us, leaving conceptual analysis on extremely treacherous ground.

What I would theoretically like to do in interpreting these materials for a wider audience, is to attempt to imaginatively re-experience these poems in their genesis, and partially reveal the conscious and unconscious motivations of the original creators of these systems (as Heidegger has clearly discussed, we need not limit ourselves to the conscious intention of those unknown creators, or how they themselves may or may not have understood their own creations), as well as indicate the experiences which they phenomenologically "report" and the intricate flows of symbolism that they evoke (the latter being just as we would attempt to interpret any great poetic work). To put this in practical terms, we must ask ourselves why is the "heart" specified as the residence of awareness? What are the physical attributes of the "heart" that are being played off? What is the cross-cultural archetypal imagery that "heart" unconsciously evokes in us which is significant here? How does the common sense or folk wisdom images of the "heart" enter into this? In traditional Buddhist texts how is "heart" typically imaged or referred to? In Tibetan culture and language how does the term for "heart" and its usage come into play here? What possible subtle facts concerning the "heart" have been discovered through sophisticated introspective techniques? What function in visualization and contemplation does the "heart" have? In the overall Great Perfection discourse, what does the "heart" symbolize and evoke for us? How does this use of "heart" relate and interconnect to the other aspects of this poem of our body? In short, we must realize the term "heart" does not merely denote a physical organ pumping blood, but instead is an ongoing multivalent symbolic nexus present in our psyche that we must reinterpret in such a way that we include the "physical" organ without being limited to it, so that we avoid



the twin pitfalls of material reductionism and spiritual materialism (both which insist on limiting the radical inclusivity of this reinterpretation, which reveals the physical body as a spiritual body in an utterly fundamental way). In similar fashion, we must explore the connection of our breath to mental activity, the linkage of our blood circulation to psychic activity, and so on, such that we can begin to experience the full force of Longchenpa's presentation (an example of the inadequacy of other approaches can be seen in his reference to the "vitality channel" as the pathway of the mind - if we are simply told this is an "immaterial" channel (even along with the detailing of its overall symbolic force), then we have no idea of the resonances and implications that the term's normal meaning as the main blood trunk of our body suggest (or spinal cord), while if we are told this is the aorta or main blood vessel-trunk that our mind somehow inhabits, then we are left interpretatively stranded with a collection of odd "facts" that have little resonance for our life or engagement of the spiritual journey which Longchenpa traces for us). I concur with Henry Corbin's penetrating critique of the degradation of "imagination" and "creativity" into the mere unreality of fantasy (*Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabi* 179-183; also revealed in the absurd criticisms of Heidegger's later work as being "mysticism" or "poetry", but certainly not rigorously intersubjectively verifiable "philosophy"), and it would appear he is thinking along similar line where he says, "the world in which spirits are materialized and bodies spiritualized"; that is the world over which the Imagination holds sway; that in it the Imagination produces effects so real that they can "mold" the imagining subject, and that the Imagination "casts" man in the form (the mental body) that he has imagined..." (182). In fact, Corbin also points out that in Sufism as well the heart is the center of true gnosis (*ma'rifa*), in which context he points to the difficult nature of this "heart's" relationship to the physical organ (221): "this "heart" is not the conical organ of flesh, situated on the left side of the chest, although there is a certain connection, the modality of which, however, is essentially unknown..."

This issue may be clarified by considering Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, which can only be understood by knowing a wide variety of "facts" concerning Dublin geography, history, landmarks and so on (including a bewildering range of facts extending throughout the world's linguistic, cultural, and physical history), while the overall world of *Finnegan's Wake* is an inclusively self-referential "universe" that, though connected to these facts (no matter how hermetic a view of poetics one might have, it is undeniable that we must bring to the poem a knowledge of the relevant language(s) and a variety of other pertinent information), cannot be reduced to them as if it were some dry "travel guide" to Dublin, Europe, or even "world culture" (i.e. our common non-participatory thing-based thought and language), although in another sense that is precisely what it is. In the same way, we first must understand the range of "facts" which are being relied on in the presentation of tantric physiology, yet this only enables us to penetrate to its hermetic, imaginal energy field, which, while it cannot be "reduced" to the "facts" utilized to evoke it, ultimately leads us back to a radical interpretation of the physical body these "facts" were originally appropriated from, and attributed to - not only is biology itself a story of our physical processes, but the physical corporeality of our bodies, in Longchenpa's view, is itself an unconscious "story" or "interpretation" that our karmic memory weaves over the course of our many lifetimes of wandering through cyclic existence. Thus the key is emphasizing the inclusivity at work here (rather than the exclusivity of reifying the psychic away from the physical) while at the same time avoid reductionism (literalism and materialism, which insists on one "meaning" to words and one "mode" of being) - it is precisely this inclusivity, and the insistence on the "imaginative" nature of physical reality that ultimately links up to its evocation of subtle "bodies" that is so striking about these mystic physiologies, and which pushes us to confront

the hitherto unquestioned status of sedimented layers of physical and mental being that we had assumed were "facts", thereby nearing the fundamental intelligence at work throughout (as opposed to our usual passive acceptance of long buried "interpretations"). In particular, science is one way to approach the world, but we must not grant it exclusive "truth status" in our understanding of the aorta, brain, heart, spinal cord, and so forth, not only because of its insensitivity to more subtle aspects of our body's energetics, but also because its very methodology limits its capacity to reveal existential significance - its material-correspondence functional "truth" is put forward as "the truth", but in fact it generally lacks the "truth" Longchenpa is concerned to bring forth. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that Tibetan medicine, though in many ways quite sophisticated and apparently sensitive to some subtle dimensions of our body which Western medicine has yet to penetrate to, is relatively simplistic compared to the West in terms of physical anatomy, and so forth. We thus must be open to the possibility of certain vague or even erroneous concepts in these matters that may have been in wide circulation in Tibet in the 8th-14th centuries, "facts" which were then drawn upon in detailing the subtle body and various yogic techniques. Examples in the West would be the early belief that arteries contained blood and veins "wind", while in fact both carry blood (the difference being in the oxygenation). While such mistakes would not vitiate the tantric physiology in the slightest (just as Joyce's use of erroneous bits of history or geography would be irrelevant to the force of *Finnegan's Wake*), it is still important for our overall comprehension to be sensitive to such issues. In this area, the present state of our research into Tibetan medicine severely handicaps us. An additional point to note is that many of these contemplative practices involve detailed physical actions that blend in a quite complex way with the symbolic drama that is the contemplation's heart, which thus requires a flexible multi-layered hermeneutic to fully comprehend the significance of these actions. An example is the tantric image that the "white" seminal nuclei reside in our head, and descend to the sexual organ in intercourse, from which it must then be reversed back upwards - in sexual yogas, there are detailed instructions on how to achieve this with a partner that include seeking out a channel in the vagina, inserting it into the male's penis and so on (see Eliade's *Yoga* 232-3 for notes on vesicle suction); in the Great Perfection tradition itself, the use of external light contemplation and pressing the neck (see Chapter Six) are relevant here.

To sum up, this notion of tantric physiology or a "subtle body" must be understood as accounting for a dimension of our experience that, although usually inaccessible to our ordinary coarse ways of knowing, is actually primordial, i.e. it antedates and is ontologically prior to our coarse physical body, such that the latter is a reflection of the former (just as Longchenpa consistently identifies primordial gnosis as primary and the ordinary mind as derivative), despite the perhaps "natural" feeling (in the context of our modern age) that the subtle body is a "mere" fantasy or image based on the physical body, which is the primary fact of our existence. If one acknowledges an after-death mode of existence for living beings, then my point becomes readily apparent: at "death", one's gross physical body drops away (one after another over the course of endless lifetimes), while the essentials of the subtle body's energetics continues onwards as an "image" of the psyche (which then redevelops a new solidified physical body as an extension of itself through its attachment to sensual embodiment deriving from its ultimate need to somehow resolve the inherent tension of its false belief in its alienated self-identity), though as long as life continues in this current embodiment, the two are in intimate correlation with each other since it must be understood that this physical body is ultimately a solidified projection of the mind itself. In fact, TCD1 363,6 says that these channels are present as soon as our body is present, while they are not formed if no body is formed (indicating the complete interpenetration of our subtle and

coarse bodies - in post-death experience we are only a type of immaterial "memory-image" of them, while they only become truly functional as incarnated in an actual physical existence (this applies only to non-enlightened ordinary living beings)). One may object to this by pointing to the diverse and conflicting descriptions of the subtle body in different sources, which would seem to conflict with its "reality" as a dimension beyond the physical, and in particular for it as serving as the archetype or direct source of the physical body with its specific organs, veins, arteries, nerves, blood, and so on. However, the subtle body and its system of energetics (which, as mentioned above, can also be analyzed further into relatively coarse dimensions of nervous energy and even subtler dimensions of pure light, etc. - it is a fundamental belief of the Great Perfection tradition that "light" is the inner essence and source of all material elements) are lines of force radiating out from our core nucleus of pure light energy, and while closely linked to their solidified projection as a physical body, are themselves a fluid seamless reality that defies precise description when utilizing language developed on the experience of its solidified derivatives, i.e. the physical, material stratum. These various systems of tantric physiology thus serve as "maps" that we can overlay on this system to tap into it, or "poems" that stir our psychic energy to resonance, with the ultimate goal not being dogmatic assertion of the "facts" but rather to provide us, the neurotic, with provisional expedient means to contemplatively tap into this ordinarily unconscious dimension, and thereby optimize and concentrate the flows of this energy. By doing this, the distortions in our energy-flows gradually dissipate and its pure energy begins to flow unimpededly throughout the structures of our existence (Tibetan scholar-yogis will often point out that these descriptions cannot be said strictly speaking to apply to the subtle body of ordinary individuals, since the subtle body takes specific mandalic vivid form only as energized by powerful and sustained contemplation on it in accordance with particular descriptions - a related issue is harmonizing the specific visual descriptions of the mandalas appearing in the Direct Transcendence and intermediate state visions with their spontaneous, unmediated inherence within all living beings). In a sense to speak of "reflections" is itself misleading, because the unity of our being entails that our entire psycho-physical existence is a complex multi-dimensional network that is the evolving interlocked hierarchical structuring of our fundamental awareness' radiating energy, such that in its primary symmetric manifestation of flows of light energy, it can only be indicated by symbolic, poetic modes of thought, while its progressively coarser aspects tend to become solidified into discrete, material forms relatively immune to flux, and as such are particularly amenable to analytical description (which however can only discern the obvious coarse features, and itself remains an interpretation inherently distorted by our overall psychic state of dimmed awareness). Thus just as the Universe itself can be understood as "imaginative", "creative", and "interpretative" at every level, this tantric physiology can be understood as an attempt to participate in this primordial creativity such that we can undo sedimented unconscious layers of interpretation that extend into our body itself ("this body of karmic propensities), and thus tap into the subtle energetics of our existence, such that the ultimate "proof" of tantric physiology systems is experiential realization, not correspondence with some presumed analytically verifiable structure existing materially as such. This evolving hierarchy can be traced further back to include the Universe's own dynamics, which explains why the subtle body is a perfect microcosm of the macrocosm, an attribute which by extension also accrues to the physical body, though distortion is correspondingly greater therein. Again we come back to the consistent theme of the pervasiveness of intelligence and the fundamentally interlocking hierarchical unity of all that is (our physical existence reflects our psychic existence, which in turn reflects the intelligent self-organizing Universe itself - beings are always already imprinted with Being), with the primordially prior constantly imagistically described in terms of its subsequent derivatives, since our psyche in its current state only

knows the language of the latter. Just as we might image the Universe as a "cosmic man", we thus evoke this subtle body in terms of the external material environment (with its rivers, mountains, and so on) or our ordinary physical body ("aorta", "heart", "lungs", "veins", etc.) which are so familiar to us, whereby they gain their potency to symbolically direct our psychic energy to the realm of the "invisible and immaterial", though it also simultaneously leads us succumb to the temptation to conclude that the physical is thus the primary, and hence nearly reverse the true relationship's polarization. In the end, these are not conceptual analyses, but rather images that convey experiences in poetic forms that must be sung in contemplation, not dissected by "literary critics" in dry analysis. It should also be noted that the physical nature of human existence is said to be optimal for spiritual realization (while the purely psychic existence in the formless realm entails stagnation), and that while the enlightened nucleus of radiant awareness is universal in all life forms (even a tiny insect), the more detailed subtle body of the three channels, conventional seminal nuclei and so on are a variable projection or semi-materialization of that nucleus of light, such that these structures are not said to be common for all life forms (which indicates the importance of corporeal being - see my annotations below to the section on primordial gnosis' "support"). For further discussions of tantric physiology see Eliade's *Yoga* (233-4, etc.), Varenne's *Yoga* (153ff, etc.), and Guenther's *The Life and Teaching of Nārōpa*; in addition, Freudian theory can be understood as detailing some aspects of a subtle body, as forcefully presented by Brown in his *Life Against Death*.

The following is only a preliminary partial attempt to begin engaging the interpretative program I have outlined above, and certainly has no pretensions of anything beyond that. TCD2 52,6 and ZMYT2 287,3 specify the mind's "support" or "basis" as the physical body's upper torso, which is the home to our brain, spinal cord, lungs and heart, while the legs and arms can be amputated without irreparably damaging the mind's activities. See my annotations below to the section on primordial gnosis' "support" for further comments, which have important implications for our understanding of tantric physiology. The "heart" in general is the center of gnostic awareness, and thus awareness' radiation which fuels the ordinary mind originally is emitted outwards from the heart. This radiation of awareness is imaged as a "seeing cripple" (see LYT1 462,2, TCD2 52,7), since it has the capacity to know ("see") but lacks the ability to circulate throughout our body/mind ("to walk"). It is the inner winds, then, that must provide this capacity for motion, and hence they are termed the "blind horse" - they have the capacity for movement and circulation ("horse"), but are themselves devoid of any ability to know and sense ("blind"). These inner winds are intimately connected with our breath, and thus are thought of as originating from the lungs (though in fact "winds" is a very broad term that encompasses the entire range of our coarse and subtle vitality or dynamism, and in essence signifies the dynamic quality of energy-flow throughout our physical and subtle body). There is a thin narrow channel connecting the lungs and heart, which awareness' radiation enters from the heart and the wind-currents enter from the lungs, such that the "seeing cripple" and "blind horse" link up with each other herein to become the "mind" (the seeing cripple mounted upon the blind horse), which has the capacity to know as well as circulate throughout our body, and engage the external world through our sensory gateways. Thus this slender channel between the heart and lungs is thought of as the "residence" of the mind, since it is from here that the mind moves outwards to permeate our entire interior and exterior environment (just as we talk of our own house as our "residence" when in fact we constantly move throughout the city, or we think of the physical heart as the "residence" of blood when in actuality blood is circulated throughout the body via the heart's network of channels). In this way the mind can be analyzed into two aspects - its "movement dimension" which is the winds, and its "aware dimension" which is awareness' radiation - and

its relationship to awareness is imaged as that of water ("the true awareness" in the heart) and water-bubbles ("the mind"), with the latter resulting from the former's radiation being "stirred up" by the winds (such that the mind is utterly dependent on awareness, just as "waves" can't possibly come about unless the water is stirred up - TCD2 53). This heart-lung channel's material reflection may be related to the pulmonary loop whereby blood from the heart is oxygenated from the lungs' inhalation, and then flows back to the heart, from which it is pumped throughout the body. However, the channel itself must be understood as part of our immaterial subtle body rather than simply reduced to a physical nerve or blood vessel.

This heart-lung channel itself is merely the natural derivative of the basic theory locating awareness within the heart and the inner winds within the lungs, while the most problematic and interesting aspect is the explicit identification of the mind's wind-carrier waves with our actual breath (passages describing breath being inhaled via the mouth and nose, and thus becoming interior mounts of our mental activity, are very numerous). In part, the breath is an evocative symbol in that it is the single dimension of our existence where we can directly observe a constant interchange with the surrounding environment, both moving outwards (exhalation) and inwards (inhalation), just as the mind moves outwards to engage the world, as well as roaming over its interior landscape of images, fantasies, and dreams; it is also the one obvious contact we have with that which is insubstantial and invisible (just as the psyche itself is immaterial), suggesting it is the mediator between the visible and invisible; breath as ordinarily conceived involves the intake of "air", which in motion is termed "wind" (leading to terming breath "wind" since it is air in motion), and is thus thought of as the source of our internal psycho-physical motion or dynamism (in tantric theory "winds" above all else indicate the source of motion at every level of our existence), while air's connection with space-energy corresponds to the mind's correlation with space energy (since space is the one element that even in its coarse form is perfectly insubstantial and non-material); breath as inhalation and exhalation of "winds" (air-in-motion) also relates to the cosmic winds of the universe, which are here interiorized within the microcosmic reality. It also appears that Buddhist meditators have utilized introspection phenomenologically to observe direct relationships of our normal breathing patterns with psychic activity (the coarser aspects of which are familiar knowledge to us - anxiety causes ragged breathing, we take deep breaths to attempt to calm ourselves, and so on), as well as the powerful effect meditative control of our breath can have upon the state of our psyche (ranging from basic use of the breath as a natural interior phenomenon whose observable regular occurrence can serve as a support for the development of mental concentration, to more sophisticated manipulations of our breathing pattern and internal vitality), such that in part we can understand these as "theories" guided by psycho-physical experimentation with breath (an example is discovering that various states of consciousness (deep sleep, dreaming, etc.) have characteristic modes of breathing, whereby through regulating one's breath it could be possible to consciously enter these states of consciousness while maintaining lucid self-awareness, enabling one to tap latent potentials of these states - see Eliade's *Yoga* 56). In particular, they observed how breath is closely connected to sensory engagement and distraction: as we inhale, we grasp the world into us, while as we exhale, we project outwards into the world in patterns of attachment. In addition "breath" is connected with the voice, one of the chief means through which the mind expresses itself, and communicates with others. Yet the true significance of "breath's" relationship to psychic activity can only be encountered by reference to tantric physiology, such that the "lungs", "heart" and "breath" must be radically interpreted to include their correspondences in our subtle body of energy-flows, the primary reality which the physical organs of "lungs", "heart" and ordinary "breath" mirror in a distorted fashion. Thus "breath" cannot be reduced to our simply physical inhalation and exhalation of air, as

simultaneous with that physical act our subtle body also interacts with the Universe's subtle energies, such that it "breathes in" subtle currents of energy ("winds") and "breathes out" the subtle wastes, with a pause in between during which our subtle bio-mental energy is nourished. Since this subtle "breath" is the primary reality (which itself can be sub-analyzed into "pure" primary and impure derivative dimensions) relative to coarse respiration as tied into our current coarse, materialized embodiment, the pair's attributes, functions enumeration, pathways and so on closely resemble each other, though one moves on the subtle immaterial level, and the other on the coarse, material level. In this manner, "breath" in its subtle aspects sustains our psyche's capacity to move as we intake the necessary energy from the Universe, just as ingestion of material food and "air" is necessary to sustain our body's internal process of growth and regeneration. Since this subtle or "spiritual" breath is ordinarily beyond our capacities for perception, we initially must approach it via the coarse breath it is in tandem with, which accounts for the frequent references to breathing patterns in contemplative practices - as physical, embodied beings, this is only natural. This identification of "breath" with the psyche, life or "soul" is a cross-cultural concept, and it would prove fruitful to study Longchenpa's tantric physiology in relation to the significance of "breath" in other traditions

Once Longchenpa has described the origination and primary "residence" of the mind, he turns to a discussion of the principle "pathways" via which the mind moves out from that heart-lung channel as it "goes to work" (such as we depart from our house, and enter the appropriate highways to travel to our principal place of work, or blood is pumped out from the heart into the aorta to permeate the body via its branching network of arteries). While the mind operates throughout the body (via an intricate network of channels), it is above all focused in the head, which is the exclusive site of four of our five senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue), the site of our brain which is the center of the nervous system and all forms of mental activity, and the site of our inhalation and exhalation of breath (the "wind-currents" which impel the mind, as well as the means for our verbal communicatory activities), such that the head is our principle site of mental activity and experience of the external world (the winds impel the mind through the senses to contact external objects, which relates to the senses be termed "gateways"). For this reason, Longchenpa's account of the mind's pathway describes how it travels from near the heart up into the cranial region, which TCD2 53,4 clearly indicates is via the "vitality channel" since "the vitality wind-currents flow through it, and those winds operate as the "horses" of the mind". In general, Khanpo Jikphun identified the "vitality" channel as the "aorta", or the main blood vessel trunk in the center of our body, which is termed the "vitality channel" since if it should be cut we would die (and thus it is said to serve as the main basis for our "vitality" or "life force" (*Srog*)), an assertion supported by remarks in KGNT by Padmasambhava, though other sources identify it as the spinal cord (the network of nervous energy which plays a key role in mental activity) - see my discussion in annotations at the beginning of Chapter Five for further details. In our present context, the term "vitality channel" has an imaginal quality that is not reducible to its physical reference in medical usages, though it is related to its material correspondence (in particular, the arteries' pulsation with "winds" links up to the wind-currents acting as the horse-mount for the mind). It would seem possible to summarize the vitality winds' coarser dimensions in terms of the flows or currents of nervous energy via the nervous system, and the circulation of oxygenated, nutrient-rich blood via the circulatory system. The so-called "vitality wind" has both impure and pure dimensions (see end of Chapter Two for a detailed account), and in its coarser aspects is said to govern exhalation and inhalation (see Hopkins' *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* 14 - see my annotations to TDD 208,5 for comments on Longchenpa attributing the function of respiration to the upward-flowing winds), which again links up to the important role that breath plays in mental activity. This

operation of the subtle breath-fueled psychic activity is thus mirrored by the coarse breath-fueled circulation of the blood (which is why the home of our fundamental psychic strata ("the universal ground") is located in the "vitality channel", which on the coarse physical level refers to the "aorta" (the main blood vessel trunk) or spinal cord). Longchenpa refers to these subtle dimensions related to tantric physiology by using the term "quintessence" or "vibrancy" (*Dangs Ma*) - see STCP2 13a 4 for references to the "quintessence of blood" and the "quintessence of breath" in the luminous channel. Thus "breath" in its spiritual and coarse dimensions is identified with our "life" (physical, psychic, and spiritual) as that which enlivens/animates us, enabling us to "move" both physically and psychically - without breath we are left with an inanimate corpse incapable of physical movement or psychic activity (the former pertains as the coarse breath departs the body (referred to in the West as "clinical death"), while the latter pertains only after the subsequent departure of the subtle breath from the body). In breathing we inhale energy from the intelligent Universe that sustains our physical and psychic life-vitality, indicating that contrary to our alienated intuition, our very psyche derives from the Universe's own vibrant intelligence, that we as individual beings remain in the nurturing embrace of Being in every aspect of our existence. This "breath" (keeping in mind that empirically observable "breath" is only its coarsest dimension) then is termed the "vitality wind" (or "life-force wind"), which is inhaled within us from the Universe without, and then fragments into a variety of discernible modes and functions within our psycho-physical internal processes, which Longchenpa thus classifies into his typology of five types of wind-currents (all of which, however, are consistently said to be branches of the root vitality wind - again, the respiration function of the upward-flowing winds is somewhat problematic here). This vitality wind itself has coarse and subtle dimensions, with its primary reality being the pure gnostic radiation, which then is subtly reflected in the imaginal presence of psychic activity, and is coarsely reflected in the physical spinal cord and aorta, where it fuels nervous energy and blood circulation respectively. Thus the "vitality channel" also has this three fold quality, each aspect of which shares the attributes of presence at the center of our body and the functional character of sustaining our life-vitality, whether on physical, mental or spiritual levels (all of which are interlocking): (i) the primary pure flow of gnostic energy that is the essence of our spirit is termed the "crystal tube" luminous channel (discussed below as the "pathway" for primordial gnosis within human existence), which is often said to be located within the "vitality channel"; (ii) the "central channel" that is the non-material conduit for our distorted psychic activity, and as such can either be referred to as the "vitality channel" or located within the vitality channels' larger/coarser sheath; and (iii) the aorta and/or spinal cord, the coarse vitality channel that is the "sheath" and solidified reflection of the prior two's energy-flows. Just as the subtle breath is the primary energy in breath, it is the luminous channel that is our primary "vitality" or "life" (and secondarily the immaterial psychic channel), while the coarse breath, vitality channel and "life-force" are their coarsened reflections, that, in our current state of being, we tend to perceive as the primary, or even sole reality. In this way, "breath" is absolutely critical to our entire existence, as the interiorization of these cosmic winds animates the psyche, which in turn animates our physical being with meaningful structure and dynamism, giving it "life" (which conventionally is psychic, and fuels all physical movement in terms of muscular movement, blood circulation, nervous energy, coarse breathing, defecation, digestion, and so on); this psychic energy inhaled as "vitality wind" ultimately derives from the Universe itself (just as our physical body is made up of the external environment via the food, liquid, and air we intake), thus revealing not only the means via which we may tune into its abiding reality, but also the basic intelligence operative in the Universe (overcoming the "common sense" split in the West of a physical body deriving from the material Universe,



and a accidentally evolved "mind" which is a mere epiphenomena of the body's nervous energy, or evolutionary adaptation).

In summation, breath (in its expanded sense of the coarse and subtle currents of energy that embody all dynamism or vibratory capacity) is life itself, at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels (recalling that the Ground-presencing itself initially manifested out of the Ground's formless depths by virtue of the cosmic "vitality wind" stirring for obscure reasons): with every breath this psychic spark of vitality is inhaled into our bodies, and from the lungs mixes with our own inherent intelligence's radiation, whereupon it enters the central axis of our body ("vitality channel"), and branches off throughout the body via the subtle network of channels. This is reflected on the coarse level by air coming into the lungs, oxygenating blood in the pulmonary loop, which is then pumped into the central aorta ("vitality channel"), and circulated throughout the body via its web of arteries and capillaries so that each and every cell gains the oxygen and nutrients it needs for continued sustenance (as well as relating the spinal cord, with its key role in regard to sensory activity, and psycho-physical coordination in general). The key to "winds", thus, is movement, and therefore life on all dimensions - life is essentially dynamism, whether physical or psychic; what is inert is dead. These winds as operating to sustain psychic activity are thus labeled as "vitality winds" (which is also the term labeling the wind-energy as such that we inhale from the Universe), since in terms of conventional processes this is their most subtle aspect, as well as the constituting the inner vitality that enlivens the body, and differentiates it from inert matter. In understanding the relation between the terms "vitality" (*Srog; Prāna*) and "winds" (*rLung; Vāyu*) in the context of these texts, the term "vitality" itself appears rarely, and instead its significance derives from the phrase "vitality wind" (*Srog rLung*), of which the other four main winds are its branches (*Yan Lag*) in the context of both the gnostic winds and the karmic winds (it is said that the gnostic "vitality wind" stirs up the Ground in its primordiality, and thus acts as the impulse for the Ground-presencing's initial manifestation). While in part this notion of the "vitality wind" relates to Wilber's correlation of the "Hindu prana" to Bergson's *élan vital*, Lowen's bioenergy, Freud's libido, and in general emotional-sexual energy or organic vitality (*Up From Eden* 213), this only tells part of the story, as the "vitality wind" with its four auxiliary currents of energy have karmic and gnostic multi-dimensional functions which embody the interlinked evolving hierarchy of reality's seamless unity, and indicate the fundamental link between material reality, our physical structures, psychic structures, and the Universe itself, all characterized by the inner unity of light-energy and intelligence (see Jantsch's *The Self-Organizing Universe* 307).

486. *The mind resides within the channel connecting the lungs to the heart, which resembles the hollow tube of a straw: what could be described as like its "movement dimension" (i.e. the winds) moves in from the lungs towards the heart, and in this channel mixes with its awareness dimension, the natural radiation that could be described as like its eyes:* "the movement dimension" (see above) refers to the wind-currents coming from the lungs' breath into this heart-lung channel, where they mix with awareness' radiation that has entered the same channel from the heart, such that the "mind" takes form in-between - LYT1 462,1 says this heart-lung channel is "full of winds", and thus can be referred to as "the windy city". KGYT2 164,2ff thus describes the "mind" as resulting from the integration of "primordial gnosis' radiation" and "moving winds", such that these two components become an inseparable complex (with these winds being "karmic" rather than "gnostic"). Awareness' radiation as emitted from the heart is referred to as "eye-like", since while the wind-breaths provide the mind's "movement" (or raw momentum without intelligence directing it), it provides the mind's capacity for vision, or intelligence (imaged respectively as the "blind



horse who can gallop", and the "cripple who can see"). An additional connotation of imaging awareness' radiation as "eye-like" could be that it usually takes the form of seminal nuclei, which are normally visually represented as a series of concentric circles. These nuclei can at times be referred to as "eyes" not only in that there is a visual resemblance (with an eye's iris and pupil), but also in that these nuclei are sensitive, intelligent dimensions rather than simple raw energy or movement sources, just as a eye can "see", providing us with the visual perceptions and information upon which we can base our continuing response to the world around us. In general the nuclei's concentric circles signify energy radiating outwards from a central creative source since these nuclei function as organizing generatrix of high intensity energy, as well as remaining organized and integrated in circles of activity (circles being symbolic of infinity and holism) around a center point (as in a mandala). These nuclei are said to be "carried" around by the energy-winds, and thus represent the "intelligence" or enfolded information present in these currents of vital energy, such as information is enfolded within radio wave (also see my discussion of "super nuclei", or "Eyes").

*Our so-called "mind of wild diversity":* TCD2 53,1 indicates that "wild diversity" (*Mi bKra dGu bKra*) refers to the resultant hyper-variety of conceptuality activity that ensues from the inner winds and awareness' radiation mixing in this manner. This four syllable form is used in Tibetan to form a wide variety of terms, all of which signify the particular verb done "to excess", such that a certain instability and vacillation is implied (Goldstein's TEDM 821 also indicates there is a negative connotation to this form). The form is "*Mi+verb+dGu+same verb*": in the case of *Mi 'Gyu dGu 'Gyu*, it literally means "no-moving all-moving", evidently in the sense of "even the non-mobile is mobile", such that there is no sense of measure or proportion. Thus the usage here indicates the negative diversity of the mind, which is constantly changing and shifting with its highly unstable neurotic chain of thoughts, fantasies, and conceptuality. *bKra* literally can mean "bright", "shining", or "multi-colored", and I have rendered it as "diversity" on the basis of its meaning of "multi-colored" since TCD2 attributes it to the conceptuality resulting from the mind's formation. However, ZMYT2 288,3 applies this term to awareness' radiation, while terming the winds as "wildly mobile" (*Mi 'Gyu dGu Gyu*), the two of which then mix together to form the "mind". This would indicate that *Mi bKra dGu bKra* refers more to the "clarity" factor (*bKra* in the sense of shining, or lustrous) which awareness' radiation contributes to the mind ("the seeing cripple"), while the winds supply the full range of capacities for its propulsion ("the blind horse").

*Emerges due to these adventitious conditions:* Longchenpa's specification here that the mind emerges due to "adventitious conditions" indicates that the mind is not primordial or primary, but rather manifests via the specific dynamics of the breath and awareness' radiation mixing in this channel under the general conditions of ignorance, such that it adventitiously (not permanently) "clouds" or obscures primordial gnosis, which is its primordial source (always already existent beyond any particular conditions, since it is the inherent intelligence of the Universe itself). As such, the mind is not inherent to our own being, but rather can be dispelled without entailing that our own existence comes to an end (i.e. enlightenment is a dynamic continuance, not a sterile "going out" like an extinguished candle's flame). TCD2 54,5 indicates this clearly: "...via its abiding on the winds' horse, the dualistic emotionally distorted conceptual flow called "cyclic existence" sets in. If you realize this, it is easy to destroy since it is adventitious; if you don't realize it, you will be hard pressed to divest yourself of it since from beginningless time it has been powerfully ingrained in you. As for its being adventitious, the *Hevajra Tantra* says:

*All sentient beings are actually Buddhas,  
And yet it has been obscured by adventitious stains;  
If they are cleared away, there is only Buddhahood's expansive awakening.*

*The Exposition of Valid Cognition* puts it like this:

*The nature of the mind is radiant light,  
While its stains are adventitious..."*

487. The movement "upwards" (also specified on 246,1) mainly refers to the mind's "origin" (more accurately "the ongoing origin of mental activity") being within the lungs, heart, and the intervening space between, while the brain, and majority of sensory faculties, as well as the breath's movement (all key factors associated with the mind's functions) are then all vertically located "upwards" from this in the human body. Also it generally specifies "from" the lungs to the heart, as that which spurs movement and acts as the "carrier" is the winds, which originate within the lungs. The mind's gateway then is said to be the "mouth and nose" (TCD2 53,4-5), since they are the gateway through which this "wind/breath" emerges, and thus are the openings through which the mind's dynamism (its "horses") interact with the external world, and is sustained by the Universe as such. KGNT3 128,5 gives a similar account, specifying the "gateways" as the "five sensory gateways" instead (emphasizing that the mental activity processes all five types of sensory input). ZMYT2 288,1 says that as these winds move externally back and forth through the mouth and nose, the psyche apprehends sensory objects in their five aspects, while as they flow internally through the network of channels they engage in discursive processes relating to mental ideas and general images. LYT1 462,3 says: "As for the mind's pathway, by your inner winds going from the lungs to the individual channel-petals you cognize the objects of the five sensory gateways - thus its pathway is the channel-paths for these winds' movements to your mouth, nose, and individual sensory faculties". It also specifies the mind's "gateway" as "the individual sensory faculties, and mouth/nose". ZMYT2 287,1 gives the "residence" as the lungs, and pathway as the "throat", saying that the "breath" (*dBugs*) flows through this hollow channel from the lungs to the throat (which would appear to be the trachea, or windpipe). TLKS 446,1 as well specifies the pathway of the mind as the throat (*mGrin*), since that is the location of respiration ("breath" (*dBugs*)) and speech. Related to this, rTse Le sNa Tshogs Rang Grol describes the mind's pathway as the white and black respiratory tracts (*Mid Pa dKar Nag*) in his *Nucleus of the Sun* (34b 3), which Longchenpa also mentions as the mind's pathway in the context of death (ZMYT2 125,5; LYT2 255,4; KGNT2 189,5). While *Mid Pa* ordinarily refers to the esophagus (the passageway for food and drink to go from the throat to stomach), it here obviously signifies trachea or respiratory tracts which function as the passageway for breath from our throat to the lungs. Ordinarily the windpipe or trachea is termed '*Ol Khrong* or *gLo Yu*, and I am unsure why in this case it is referred to by the term ordinarily meaning "esophagus". I have yet to determine the meaning of "white and black" in this context, nor find any passages in which Longchenpa specifies this as the mind's ordinary pathway (outside of the special context mentioned above, and ZMYT's general reference to the "throat").

As discussed above, TCD2 53,4 simply specifies "the vitality channel" as the mind's path, since that is the pathway where the mind's wind-horse flows (the "vitality channel"). As I discuss in further detail in Chapter Five, the "vitality channel" in its coarse form seems primarily to signify the aorta, or main blood vessel trunk (the "black" vitality channel in medical texts), while possibly also connoting the spinal cord (the "white" vitality channel in

medical texts). TDD's specification here of the "little tip channel" (*rTse Chung*) is rather problematic despite Longchenpa's frequent reference to it elsewhere in this same context as well as in the context of describing the luminous channels' pathway, but would appear to be related to the "sleep channel" (*Nyid Log rTsa*); additionally, both usually signify blood vessels, which links them to the vitality channel/aorta since all blood vessels branch off it. In general, medical texts appear to identify the "little tip channel" with the jugular vein, while the "sleep channel" signifies the carotid artery (which carries blood from the aorta to the head, and is present in two branches on either side of the neck). It is said that rubbing or pressing on the sleep channel will cause one to fall asleep, or faint away, and this plays a role in meditation techniques, as well as in a method to help a dying person - interesting, the name "carotid" derives the Greek *karoun*, to plunge into sleep or stupor, since compression of these arteries causes unconsciousness (by virtue of blocking off the blood flow to our head). Given Longchenpa's other identifications of the mind's pathway as the "throat", one might be tempted to interpret "little tip channel" merely as a general indicator of the throat area (as the passageway of breath) without any specific significance beyond that, but the matter is definitely more complex than that (Longchenpa in TCD clearly indicates the "small tip channel" is literally like a "sheath" of psychic activity, and not simply a "locator" term). For details on these two channels, see my annotations to 271,1; for a discussion of the problematic mentions of "right" and "left" with respect to the little tip channel, see my annotations to 251,1. In the present context, I merely want to point out that this presentation involves a mix of the physical and psychic that is quite difficult to resolve, with TCD2 19,7 even indicating that physical pressure on the luminous channels (!) will result in a temporary vision of lights. In that context, some Tibetan scholars suggested to me that the introductory technique of pressing on the neck (to gain a brief glimpse into these contemplative states) functions by choking off the carotid artery, whereby we briefly access non-conceptual states (*rTog Med*) that allow the gnostic light to manifest for an instant (since the mind's obscuring envelope is temporarily rent). This suggests a direct connection between blood circulation and internal psychic activity's circulation, that indicates we must not underestimate the interconnection of the subtle and physical body (a point equally borne out by the importance of physical posture in many contemplative techniques). However, Longchenpa indicates that such pressure is excessive and involves fainting via its forcing blood drops back into the vitality channel (aorta), though he apparently indicates that the point of pressing the neck is to affect the luminous channel located there, which seems to suggest that he interprets statements indicating we must press the "strongly pulsating" neck artery as merely indicating the location of these luminous channels rather than that the arteries themselves are relevant here. While these passages and issues certainly require further thought, on preliminary analysis they indicate a very close link between our physical structures and the subtle body articulated here, such that viewing the latter as purely "imaginal" divorced from the former's material presence would be erroneous. Instead, the former is a projection of the latter over the course of a limited period of time, and hence its overall state is closely linked to the subtle body, so that manipulation and pressure on the "outer" material projection can have powerful effects on the "inner" subtle source-essence. This is also indicated by Tibetan medical texts, which clearly link the material vitality channel ("aorta") and its pulsating blood circulation to the universal psychic ground (as well as linking the universal ground to the spinal cord in other contexts), so that the two are intimately interwoven (see the medical dictionary SR's account of *'Phar rTsa* for example). To deny such intimate linkage would be ludicrous, since the effects of physical damage to the brain and spinal cord have on our consciousness are obvious. Again one must keep in mind that everything about Longchenpa's discourse is subordinate to soteriological ends (i.e. psychological transformation rather than abstract theory and its strictly physical empirical verification),

with its provocative mix of physical fact, meditatively observed flows of energy, image provoking metaphor, and soteriologically-motivated "means" to enable you to get in touch with your body's flow of physical and psychic energy. To this end, there is a certain disregard for physical facts, and evocation of blood vessels can become seamlessly intertwined with that of sensory nerves, which, along with its analysis of more subtle flows of energy-currently inaccessible to Western science, results in a complex "overlay" and "underlay" of tantric physiology to our material physiology that defines precise analysis of correspondences. I would suggest that ultimately many pertinent issues were a matter of controversy within the tradition itself historically, while failure to precisely clarify these matters analytically relates to the Buddhist tradition's overriding concern for practical efficacy rather than theoretical precision and coherence (a tendency that is not without its problematic aspects). In summation, in lines with ZMYT2 294,4's indication that the main consideration in terms of the mind's passageway being within the throat is the location of the "passageway for the movement of breath" (which on 6 i indicates is the key difference between the mind's gateways (where breath flows through - the mouth and nose) and primordial gnosis' gateways (where breath does not flow through - the ears and eyes), I would provisionally suggest that both the windpipe and carotid are indicated here as the main conduits for "breath" (actual breath in its coarse and subtle dimensions, as well as oxygenated blood "pulsing" with "winds"), though the matter requires further research. A connected but somewhat different presentation is to emphasize the mind's pathways from its formation in the heart-lung channel as the individual channels leading to the sensory gateways (LYT2 248,2), since sensation is the key to our psyche's operations in the external world (in which case it would seem the emphasis is on the nervous system, referred to in Tibetan as "white channels"). Along these lines, the "gateways" of the mind is both identified as the nostrils and mouth (focusing on breath), and the five sensory gateways (focusing on sensory activity) - see LYT2 248,6 for the latter identification.

488. LYT1 462,5 defines the ordinary mind's functions are "to amass our multi-dimensional karma, emotional distortions, and karmic propensities". TCD2 53,5 says it is "to cause all the various joys and sorrows of cyclic existence".

489. LYT1 462,5 simply says "its fruit is its engendering of all the sufferings of cyclic existence". TCD2 53,5 defines it as "cyclic existence and its limitless negative rebirths (fraught with suffering)".

490. This tripartite analysis of our psychic activity into dimmed awareness, the mind, and the psyche relates to the vertically ordered pure triad discussed in Chapter One (which characterizes our own fundamental pristine awareness, as well as the Ground itself): the triune primordial gnosis of empty essence, radiant nature, and all-pervasive compassionate resonance. The significance of "vertically ordered" (literally "triune stack") is to indicate their hierarchical interrelation with each other: (i) "dimmed awareness" signifies the fundamental non-recognition that underlies all our present distorted experience; (ii) "mind" indicates the characteristic "system" of neurotic mental activity stemming from that non-recognition or ignorance, with a particular emphasis on our constantly changing karmic memory of "propensity-traces" as determined by mental volition (dimmed awareness is thus the latent foundation, whereas "mind" describes how its unfolding operations "look" or our experienced to our own self-perception), and (iii) the "psyche" then denotes a particular aspect of the mind, namely that involved with discursively processing, and reifying objects. TCD2 54,4 describes it thus: "...from the lungs, the wind-horses enter that channel between the heart and lungs, while awareness' radiation enters it from the heart, such that the two

converge. By wind and awareness thus integrating, the following vertically ordered triad abides upon the wind-horses (the three elements are merely conceptual isolates with a single essence): the "mind" which retains, synthesizes, and gathers-in the karmic propensities, the "psyche" which conceptually processes objects, and "dimmed awareness" which is dependent upon awareness (i.e. the non-recognition of awareness that results in an overall dimming of awareness). Thus the flow of dualistic emotionally distorted conceptuality called "cyclic existence" comes to pass..."

Guenther offers an evocative translation of these lines in *From Reductionism to Creativity* 227 (though I disagree with his rendering of *rTsa 'Dab* as "network of chreods" here, since it would appear to me to indicate the singular heart-lung channel discussed above; also see his *The Creative Vision* 44-5):

"...the effulgence of (the whole's) ec-static intensity as it rides on its horse, (the organism's) breathing, galloping along the network of chreods between the heart and the brain, the (semi-material) facticity of which is a low level ec-static intensity, the general "look" of which is mind, and the divisiveness (leading to further conceptual divisions) of which is subjectivity..."

491. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 433,6; Ati1 528,4; also cited by TCD2 53,6). This passage is in response to a question asking for an explanation of the impure appearances or experiences of sentient beings in cyclic existence, and implicitly it is awareness' indirect presence that is being accounted for, i.e. how can it function (even if indirectly) in an impure manner within sentient beings). Thus in its pure intensity it is present within our hearts as the vertically ordered triune primordial gnosis, while its impure "stepped down intensity" (i.e. dimmed awareness) is present within the heart-lung channel in a corresponding triune structuration.

*It emerges into its pathway via the vitality channel:* "emerges into its pathway" (*Lam 'Byung*) is literally "path emerges", and connotes active functioning and engagement, as well as a movement from interiority to exteriority. TCD2 53,4 makes quite clear that this indicates the vitality channel itself as the mind's pathway upwards from its residence in the heart-lung channel (in particular it indicates reading *Nas* as "through" rather than "from"), since the mind's "wind-horse" is the vitality wind which runs through this channel (see above for my comments on the "vitality wind"). It would appear then that Longchenpa's above mention of the "little tip channel" indicates a particular portion of the vitality channel, and in fact as a blood vessel (whether the jugular or carotid), it would be a branch of the vitality channel (when identified as the main blood vessel trunk stemming from the heart). In addition, below the heart-lung channel itself is named the "red vitality channel", indicating that the mind's residence and pathway are part of a connected network of channels named the "vitality channel" (see annotation below).

492. *rDo rJe Sems dPa' sNying Gi Me Long* (NGB1 208,5; Ati1 335,6; also cited on TCD2 53,7).

*This so-called "emotionally distorted dimmed awareness" predominates in all sentient beings (who are epitomized by their dynamic life-vitality). It resides in the space between the heart and lungs, in dependence upon the support of their physical component of form:* the reference to sentient beings as "epitomized by their dynamic life-vitality" (*sKye 'Gro Srog Gis bsDus Pa'i*) literally reads "epitomized by the vitality of living beings", with "living beings" (*sKye 'Gro*) etymologically meaning "those who are born and move/transmigrate".

This would appear simply to be emphasizing that a "sentient being" refers to this quality of dynamic "life-vitality", which is what distinguishes them from inanimate matter.

In our current embodied modes of being, psychic activity is dependent upon our body's physical structures, which provide the site for its activity. Since our awareness is currently in a non-optimal latency, it requires the support of these coarse, materialized structures to operate in this world, with the lungs providing the breath-winds necessary for psychic activity, the brain and nervous system with its crucial role in memory and sensation, the muscles in their role of enabling us to move within the external environment and so forth. As mentioned repeatedly above in my annotations, the body is the mind's coarse projection (utterly vital within our present deluded states), and as such functions in intimate correlation with it in a type of coordinated hierarchy. In particular, TCD2 53,6 indicates that it is the upper torso above all that serves as the support for the mind, since it contains the lungs, heart, other vital organs, brain, spinal cord, and sensory faculties which are crucial to our normal mental activity.

...the "psyche" refers to its being present in conjunction with the conceptualization of objects: I have added "objects" on the basis of TCD2, NGB, and Ati.

The five emotional poisons, and the sixth (i.e. anger) emerge from it; [246] the eighty thousand emotionally distorted states emerge from it: The five emotional poisons include "hatred" (*Zhe sDang*), which must be differentiated from "anger" (*Khong Khro*) as a separate item. ZMYT2 251,6 relates hatred to "agitation, quarrel, conflict, or fights" (*Khrugs Pa*) and anger to "cruelty or malice" (*mNar Sems Pa*). "Hatred" is one of the three root emotional distortions along with desire and ignorance, and thus signifies divisiveness or aversion in general (as compared to the indifferent torpor of ignorance, and lusting attachment of desire); "anger" refers more specifically to malice or hate directed towards actively harming others. I have corrected "sixty" to "eighty" on the basis of TCD, NGB, and Ati.

If one wanders through what pathway they emerge, they move upwards within the so-called "red vitality channel" located in-between the lungs and heart, and resembling the hollow tube of a straw: the exact wording of this line is used on TCD2 52,7 to describe the heart-lung channel termed the "residence" of this line of the mind, indicating that the "red vitality channel" here refers in particular to that channel. It would then seem that this heart-lung channel is being referred to as "red" to indicate it is a particular branch of the vitality channel, while "vitality channel" then indicates the main trunk that is the mind's "pathway". However the wording both here and in TCD's quotation is "within" (*Nang Na*; TCD has *Nang Du*) rather than Ati's "from within" (*Nang Nas*), suggesting that the "red vitality channel" may also refer to the "pathway" of the mind, which runs up from the heart-lung channel to the throat, and then into our head (both the heart-lung channel and the lung-throat channel are in this context referred to as "resembling the hollow tube of a straw" - see ZMYT2, 287,1). KGNT1 60,3 does describe the vitality channel in general as "red", and it would seem "red" signifies the color of blood, as well as having a general connotation of the mind's "passions" or emotional distortions. Medical texts frequently speak of both the "black vitality channel" (the main blood vessel trunk), and the "white vitality channel" (the spinal cord), while Khanpo Tsenam (a well known Nyingma scholar-physician now residing in Lhasa) indicated to me that the term "black vitality channel" included two intertwined channels running up the body's torso, one which is red, and one which is black. While he talked about this to me at length, there were certain seeming contradictions in the information he gave me (which more than likely was a fault accruing to my own understanding), and I have yet to follow this issue

up with either another scholar or research in the medical texts (it seemed to relate to the arterial and venial trunks, but I was unable to correlate such an interpretation with the details Khanpo Tsenam gave). SRNY 16 clearly identifies the "red vitality channel" as the trunk of all the body's arteries and says the trunk of all the body's veins (*sDod rTsa*) runs upwards in tandem with it up the body's torso.

493. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 107,7; Ati1 129,5; also cited by TCD2 55,1). Longchenpa obviously interprets "naturally radiant essence" as "luminously radiant awareness", and "nucleus" as referring to the enlightened nucleus. In addition, we could read this second line as referring to primordial gnosis' standard triune identity: empty essence, radiant nature, and all-pervading compassionate resonance, which is generally said to have "a nucleus of awareness" (LYT1 463,1-2 defines it in this manner, saying its compassionate resonance is blazing with lights and Spiritual Bodies, like "the nucleus of a butter lamp"). TCD2 55,3 says "primordial gnosis' essence is that each (being's) self-awareness primordially abides as the dimension of enlightened knowing", as well as "via realizing its characteristics, you will no longer remain within either cyclic existence or transcendence".

494. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 108,1; Ati1 129,6; also cited by TCD2 55,2). There is an ambiguity to "primordial" in the term "primordial gnosis", since it can either be an adjective describing gnosis itself ("the gnosis which is primordial"), or describe the object of gnosis as an act of knowing ("the gnosis of what is primordial"), i.e. "primordial knowing" or "knowing the primordial". Since in fact the "primordial" is no other than primordial gnosis' own dynamic light-energy, "knowing the primordial" is a "self-knowing", while the "primordial knowing" as primordial can only know the primordial, there is an inner unity to these two interpretations. I have translated this quote on the basis of TCD2 55,3-4, which gives its etymology thus: "its primordially (*Ye*) present dimension is realized and understood (*Shes*): primordially (*Ye*) spontaneously present, its realization subsequently comes to the fore (i.e. enlightenment) - the etymology of "primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*) is like that". Thus this etymology brings out primordial gnosis' interlinked macrocosmic and microcosmic dimensions: it signifies the inherent intelligence of the Universe as its self-organizing dynamism ("the primordial knowing", i.e. the intelligence which has been operative from the start), as well as the pure knowing of the Ground's primordially which we can tap into via contemplation ("gnosis" is our realization of this "primordially" in and as us, which is primordially present yet only "now" cognized as such). In this reading, "primordial" emphasizes that this pure intensity of awareness has always been spontaneously present, while "gnosis" signifies how we only come to fully recognize the true meaning of "self-awareness" subsequently in enlightenment-experience, after our detour through cyclic existence. Though Longchenpa's preface could be translated as "the knowing of what is primordially present" in conjunction with TCD, I have rendered it as "the primordially present cognitive capacity" to emphasize that this inherent intelligence is always already present prior to, and within, all that may come to be. "In the present" then could also connote that right in this very instant it is the ultimate source of our own psychic capacities for knowing, as well as continuing to operate as the Universe's pervasive intelligence, though TCD clearly indicates interpreting it as referring to enlightenment, where our own realization of its primordial spontaneous presence comes to the fore. Paradoxically, in the enlightenment-experience primordial gnosis is both the agent of knowing (as our ordinary "mind" fades away, and its primordial intelligence goes into the ascendancy from its present latency) and that which is known (as we now know our own inner nucleus of enlightened gnostic energy, as well as recognize the external world as gnosis' self-presencing light radiation), such that we both "know the primordial" and our knowing "becomes the

primordial", a mystery foreshadowed in the visions of Direct Contemplation as the light forms we perceive in the sky flow forth from within our own hearts. Finally, both TCD and Ati read "thus" for "in the present", though NGB agrees with TDD.

495. See TCD1 55,4-67,4 for an extensive discussion of this triune classification of primordial gnosis into a triad, quintet, and dyad, which relates directly to the coordinated hierarchy referred to as the "vertically organized triad of primordial gnosis": (i) its empty essence, (ii) radiant nature, and (iii) all-pervading compassionate resonance (this triad also constitutes the three aspects of the first, which reflects the interlocking multi-dimensionality of the process). (i) Its empty essence corresponds to the triune "grounding primordial gnosis" (*gZhi gNas Pa'i*), which literally reads "primordial understanding which is present in, and as, the Ground", and focuses on the Universe as inherently intelligent in its pure potential state. Thus this triad is associated with the Reality Body as its noetic aspect, as well as with the Ground's pure virtual reality prior to any rupture or evolution. Its three internal divisions are the primordial gnosis of empty essence, of spontaneously present nature, and of all-pervading compassionate resonance (see Chapter One for its explication)

(ii) Its radiant nature corresponds to the fivefold "characteristics-endowed primordial gnosis" (*mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i*), which literally can be interpreted both as "the primordial understanding which apprehends characteristics", or "the primordial understanding which functions with characteristics", and focuses on primordial gnosis as operative in actualized, exteriorized modes within the Ground-presencing. Not only does its own fivefold operations (which directly correspond to the five lights of the Ground-presencing) have distinct characteristics now as it undergoes the transition from virtual to actual reality, it also enables the "apprehension" of characteristics (i.e. experience of itself via its own exteriorized display) whereas the epoch of the Ground is a totally self-contained, interiorized phase that lacks any kind of self-consciousness of itself as itself. It can be correlated to the Enjoyment Body as its characteristic noetic aspect. Its five internal divisions are "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis, mirror-like primordial gnosis, discerning primordial gnosis, sameness primordial gnosis, and efficacious primordial gnosis (see Chapter Three for a brief analysis, and Chapter Eleven for extensive details).

(iii) Finally, its all-pervading compassionate resonance corresponds to the dual "objects-pervading primordial gnosis", which literally reads "the primordial understanding which pervades objects", and refers specifically to the phenomenal objects that characterize the Universe as we now know it. This can be correlated to the Emanational Body, and refers to how the Awakened One's enlightened knowing "pervades" or embraces all possible objects (including our own distorted psychological states and distorted appearances), such that not only does s/he constantly have direct awareness of their ultimate reality, s/he also is incisively aware of their superficial or conventional aspects in their full range of diversity (see Chapter One for a brief analysis, and Chapter Eleven for extensive details).

496. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1108,1; Ati1 129,5).

497. *Mu Thig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 380,3; Ati2 518,3; also cited by TCD2 55,5).

498. TCD2 67,4-69,3 has the corresponding section.

499. *The basis of primordial gnosis*: in general, "support" or "basis" (*rTen*) refers to the physical or pseudo-physical support for psychic activity, i.e. awareness. TCD2 67,5 further



specifies primordial gnosis' support or basis as our body's "upper torso", the same basis specified for the mind. As I pointed out in this context, the upper torso contains the heart as the main center of psychic energy, as well as the lungs, senses, and nervous system's center. While in one sense the physical body is seen as a materialized impure consequence of our straying neurosis, in another sense it is absolutely central as the home for primordial gnosis' self-expression, and provides the site for Being's self-recognition in-and-as-us. Those beings in the etherialized form and formless realm lack a proper support for primordial gnosis due to their lack of any coarse physical form, and thus are unable to utilize these contemplative techniques to gain spiritual realization and freedom, for which reason human existence with its corporeal body is said to be optimal for liberating meditation (see Geshe Gyatso's *Clear Light of Bliss* 28, 217). This is extremely important for our understanding of tantric physiology and subtle body theory, since it indicates that our coarse corporeality and conceptuality play a vital role in enabling primordial gnosis to evolve into an awakened state of self-recognition, as well as that even the basic network of luminous channels branching out from the nucleus of pristine awareness are a projection dependent upon our entire psycho-physical being (pointing out the mutual relationship between our gross physical structures and subtle body). It would seem this is related to our corporeality and conceptuality as embodying our energy's dynamism and differentiation (which provides structures to articulate and recognize awareness' pristine dynamics, which are otherwise too intangible to gain consciousness of), whereas these etherialized states' static and highly concentrated energy is devoid of the dynamism necessary for our inner nucleus of radiant awareness to unfold in its full potentialities (just as the Ground's pure virtuality imaged as the Youthful Body within a Vase is devoid of any fragmentation, yet also is devoid of self-recognition and the full actualized optimization of its own capacities). It also must be kept in mind that this issue primarily relates to our experiences with contemplation in this very lifetime (despite how KGYT below casts it in terms of different states of existence), and indicates we must be on guard against getting trapped in dead ends such as thinking we must aim to a static state of "no-thought", or that we must "refine away" our physical existence. While this requires further interpretation, for the moment I will confine myself to a summarization of Longchenpa's own thoughts on this matter.

Longchenpa's discussion on KGYT2 140,1 begins with the standard distinction between the three realms' types of "bodies": the formless realm involves a psychic body devoid of materiality; the form realm involves a light body of five hues (as mentioned below, TCD indicates it is actually composed of very lucent material atoms); and the desire realm involves a flesh and blood corporeal body. As for the psychic activity "based" on these bodily supports, the beings in the formless realm have non-conceptual one-pointed "inner calm" (here signifying a concentrated serene state devoid of particular contents of thought); the form realm beings are absorbed in meditative states where "incisive vision" predominates (which signifies clear perception or vision relating more to analytic modes of meditation), though it is not linked to the purest type of insight (i.e. insight into the ultimate emptiness of all phenomena); and beings in the desire realm are characterized by the ordinary mind with its diverse unstable conceptuality. Longchenpa then goes on to point out that although these realms are the same in terms of being enmeshed in cyclic existence, they are distinct in terms of their dissimilar "supports", i.e. their bodily structures. Since beings in the upper two realms lack any corporeal body, they are without any coarse channels, winds, and seminal nuclei, and due to their absence awareness' radiation can't emanate outwards into conceptuality apart from a state of internal radiance. In the formless realm, there are no external referential objects perceived apart from their one-pointed non-conceptual internally radiant cognition; in the form realm, cognition is coarser than that, yet still there is no

manifest conceptuality such as found in the desire realm, since its "support" is a luminous body (without the coarse structures that would could serve as a basis for conceptuality). In the desire realm, however, we possess corporeal bodies, and thus have the coarse channels, winds, and seminal nuclei: awareness' glow is impelled by the horse of the moving winds via these coarse structures, resulting in coarse conceptuality which dualistically conceptualizes a variety of external and internal objects.

A natural misunderstanding would be to think that the relatively "subtle" existence of the higher realms would be particularly conducive to meditation, and in particular, that since those beings in the form realm have a "light body", they would be effortlessly free as such, since the Great Perfection tradition describes becoming free via the attainment of a "body of light". Longchenpa firmly rejects this line of thought, saying that the form realm's light body lacks the perfected dynamism of the essence, nature and compassionate resonance, and thus cannot be free. In contrast to this, if we attain a light body by perfecting that dynamism during our straying within this desire realm, we will be free (i.e. enlightened or liberated). Furthermore, those beings in the form realm lack the channels for the manifestation of primordial gnosis' luminously radiant lighting-up, and thus are unable to see the pure lands of the three Spiritual Bodies, while we beings in the desire realm possess this luminous channel linking the heart to the far ranging water lamp via the crystal tube, and thus have the capacity to see gnosis' radiant light. Additionally, this light body of the form realm is a body obtained from ripened karmic propensities, and thus obscures our inner light, while the light body being referred to in the Great Perfection is devoid of ripened karmic propensities, since it derives from our experiential attunement to primordial gnosis' radiant light. In a similar context, TCD2 329,5-7 says that the bodies of the meditation deities are composed of extremely lucent atomic particles of the four elements as generated from ripened karmic propensities, and as such can be seen by sentient beings, while the Great Perfection's light body is awareness' own stainless light, which is perceptible only to an Awakened One, and not to ordinary sentient beings.

500. *Primordial gnosis' location*: the essence of our pristine self-awareness resides in the palace of our own heart as primordial gnosis, as discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. TCD2 67,5 describes it thus: "Awareness is present as the mustard seed-sized Peaceful Spiritual Bodies in the middle of rainbow-colored light within the luminous channels' brightness at the center of the eight cornered precious heart". LYT1 462,6 describes it thus: "Primordial gnosis is based upon the mustard seed-sized quintessence of quintessences at the center of the four channel-petals of radiant light, which are in the middle of the precious Tsitta that resembles a pitched offering tent" ("offering tent" evidently refers to the white tents used for rituals, with the monks inside corresponding to the mandala of spiritual deities within our hearts). KGNT1 62,4-6 says that though in fact this gnostic energy freely pervades the entire body in that it is transparently indivisible with the catalytic seminal nuclei, and in particular is concentrated within the heart. As an analogy, Padmasambhava offers that of a sandalwood tree - though in fact its pleasing fragrance pervades the entire trunk, it is particularly fragrant in its core.

501. *Primordial gnosis' palace*: other texts don't refer to the "palace" of primordial gnosis as separate section, and simply provides a further description of the nature of its presence within our hearts (see the beginning of this chapter for details). The five lights are its own radiation, which form a protecting aura or "palace" around it, just as a King has a magnificent palace constructed around him. It thus images primordial gnosis' precious and authoritative identity, as well as connoting the presence of the mandalas of the royal Buddhas therein.

TLKS 446,65-447,4 has a beautiful allegory about the relationship between the "mind" and "primordial gnosis", which in its typically masterful way depicts the entire movement of awareness from the Ground to the Ground-presencing, through straying and finally to enlightenment with a one page "fairy tale" about a King and a minister. "A long time ago", a King of the serpent spirits named "Luminous Jewel" dwelt amidst the "ocean and sun" at the peak of the cosmic mountain (Mount Meru). Having felt "restless" (literally "depressed" or "sad", but here perhaps more in the sense of feeling "uneasy", or even "lonesome"), he cast his gaze up and down the mountain, and thus spotted a precious mansion called "Adorned with Sun and Moon" in the midst of a garden of pure lotuses. Having gone up there, he made a palace for his residence. Subsequently he again began to feel restless, and cast his gaze upwards, where he spotted a minister named "All Accomplishing" in the "City of Winds"... (see there for details).

502. Primordial gnosis' pathways: see Chapter Five for extensive details on these four channels. The "crystal tube" or "white silk channel" is termed the "luminous channel", and is an unique aspect of tantric physiology in the Great Perfection tradition (whereas the flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channels are standard triad found in most Buddhist subtle body theory). "Manifest in the objective sphere" refers to this luminous channel running from the heart to our eyes, such that in the Direct Transcendence or post-death visions, our inner gnostic radiance can be impelled via this light channel so that it shines out of our eyes into the sky, where we can then directly perceive it visually. KGYT2 158,5 indicates from the heart its pathway is via the throat's "windpipe" (*Gre Ba*), just as the mind's pathway was alternatively specified as via the respiratory tracts or trachea. (*Mid Pa*).

503. Primordial gnosis' lighting-up: while TDD refers to this as primordial gnosis' "lighting-up" or "appearance", TCD2 67,6 describes it as gnosis' "radiation". The radiation of primordial gnosis is classified into four characteristic forms, which are imagistically termed "lamps" (see Chapter Six for a detailed discussion). Since the "far ranging water lamp" primarily signifies our internal lines of luminosity that run from the heart to the eyes, thereby acting as the conduit-source for these visions to shine forth from our heart into the sky, and the "self-emergent insight lamp" mainly denotes one's self-awareness as that which experiences these visions (it has additional references as well), primordial gnosis' actual manifest presence as perceived in the Direct Transcendence visions is often summarized by referring to the other two lamps, which both play a prominent visual role throughout these visions in varying rainbow-colored forms that appear against the sky's backdrop: the "empty seminal nuclei lamp" and the "thoroughly pure expanse lamp". The visual presences of these two lamps here specified in terms of images (a "Naro" letter and the "eye" on a peacock's feather) both refer to their initial visual forms as experienced in the Direct Contemplation visions - see Chapter Six for details on these preliminary presences, and the more complex (and vaster) light displays that evolve out of these. Since this luminosity shines out into the sky via our eyes, the quote below specifies the eyes as the "gateways" for primordial gnosis.

504. Primordial gnosis' functions: while all living beings have pristine awareness as their latent nucleus, only the Awakened One have ripened that awareness into its fully actualized optimal intensity, which is here expressed as the "Spiritual Bodies, or, less literally, the "spiritual gestalts". In particular, "awareness ripening into the Spiritual Bodies" is a technical term describing how in the Direct Contemplation visions awareness' radiation in "linked chains" of light is "ripened" into the bodily images of the peaceful and wrathful deities appearing in mandalas within the sky during the third vision. See Chapter Six for details. LYT1 467,5 says the primordial gnosis' function is "to divest one of all the distorted

appearances and distorted fixations of cyclic existence, and link one up to the primeval expanse".

505. *Primordial gnosis' fruit*: LYT1 467,6 defines primordial gnosis' "fruit" thus: "it purifies away stains obscuring our enlightened dimension, including those factors based upon the universal ground with its diverse karmic propensities, and thus is like the sun divested of clouds. Having arrived at the ultimate limit in self-awareness' enlightenment via the insight of awareness' stainless primordial gnosis, you take up permanent residence within the wisdom-energy of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses".

506. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 439,6; At1 536,5; also cited by TCD2 67,7). TCD's preface gives a direct explication of this quotation, which I cite in the annotations below.

*The wisdom energy of the genuinely and perfectly awakened Buddhas is dependent upon your physical body as its supporting basis, analogically like a hawk resting in its nest*: the hawk sleeping in its nest is an image for subtle internally radiant primordial gnosis within our own bodies, since at present this gnostic energy is latent and inactive, just as the hawk (primordial gnosis) is lying in its nest (our body) rather than flying through the expanse (enlightenment). One scholar said that hawks were not visible when in their nest, since they deliberately hide so as to not scare away other birds that they prey upon (this actually is only a characteristic of small sharp-shinner or Cooper's hawks, which "lie in wait among hedgerows and trees to capture songbirds and game birds"). The main point is that Buddhahood now lies "at sleep" within our body (i.e. latency or "internal radiance"), yet at any point can "wake up" and reveal its impressive power. Thus the hawk concealed in its nest is an image of its current motionless but vibrant potent energy in our heart-nest, not currently aloft in the sky as the Direct Transcendence visions just as the hawk is not aloft in the sky. Though the hawk remains present in its nest despite not being visible, it would be a great mistake to not recognize its majesty and strength which can at any instant spring into manifest action (especially for the poor songbird). In the same way, though awareness is now inactive within our body, it is a majestic presence that can at any point spring into dynamic, soaring flight within the empty sky, its true home (i.e. the Direct Transcendence visions). The body/nest serves as the hawk/awareness' temporary lodge/support, as well as its "launching pad".

*As for its location, it resides in the heart, analogically like a Body in a Vase*: as I have discussed repeatedly in previous annotations, the "body within a vase" is an image for its being fully present with all its capabilities within our hearts despite not being perceptible, just as a body contained within a vase is fully manifest, but not visible as such from the outside.

*As for its pathway, it emerges through the four channels, analogically like the stringing of a garland of pearls*: see directly above for my discussion of the four channels, which here refers in particular to the luminous channels. These luminous channels are essentially slender lines of light within our body, and hence are imaged as "white silk thread", or in this context as "garlands of pearls". Garlands of pearls connotes the spherical seminal nuclei of light contained herein, as well as the "linked chains", and are quite evocative with their white translucency, precious nature, and continuity (this image is elsewhere specifically applied to the "linked chains", which visually are quite similar to a chain of pearls).

*As for its spiraling, it spirals and swirls within the white Conch Shell House, analogically like lighting a butter lamp in a vase*: see my annotations to 231,6 for a discussion of the

significance of this term "spiraling" (*'Khyil*) here, which basically refers to the heart-awareness' dynamism or radiation as present within our skull as the mandala of wrathful deities (LYT1 463,3 identifies it as the "dynamism" of primordial gnosis"), which are often referred to as the "light rays" of primordial gnosis. The skull's equivalent in tantric physiology is referred to as the "white Conch Shell House", which is related to the heart being termed a "precious palace". One of the most striking characteristics of a conch shell is its spiraling pattern, and in fact TDD 259,6 and 261,2 use this term to describe the luminous channels that project towards the eyes within our skull (see annotations there for interpretation). As a "heading" here, it refers to the dynamic nature of primordial gnosis in general, without connoting any sense of exteriorization - the "wrathful" deities related to the furious, seething nature of the brain as opposed to the calm enduring stability of the peaceful deities within the heart-palace. In addition, it would seem to play off the meaning of *'Khyil* as to "gather-in" or "remain": in lighting a lamp placed within a vase, the lamp's light (i.e. primordial gnosis' dynamism) swirls around within the vase (i.e. our skull, or limited individuality) without going outside (this gnostic energy swirls around within our "brain" without transgressing the confines of our skull). Thus the vase's interior is lit up with this "penned-up" self-contained swirling dynamism (like a damned river), just as awareness' radiation lights up the skull's interior, burning away the gloom of ignorance with its fiery dance. In addition, the lighting of the lamp connotes the wrathful deities as ignited and sustained by the heart's radiation, just as the lamp's light is sparked from, and continues out of, a match's flame. In addition, *'Khyil* is a near homonym for the first syllable of the Tibetan translation of "mandala" (*dKyil 'Khor*), with the latter term signifying energy radiating outwards from a center (centrifugal), and this term connoting energy going inwards in a spiral (centripetal). Finally, the term "spiral" is often used in Longchenpa's writings to describe the moment of enlightenment, as you wrap yourself up into the swirling expanse (*dByings Su 'Khyil*), returning to the Universe's vibrant essence like a snake re-coiling. In summation, the term is used here instead of a more standard term such as "dynamism" or "radiation" to refer specifically to gnosis' inherent dynamism as present within our bodies, and to play off the "Conch Shell House" imagery.

*Its objective sphere is the empty sky:* TCD2 67,6 defines the "objective sphere of primordial gnosis" as "the sky divested of any clouds, i.e. empty reality divested of any mental perspectives". This primarily indicates the cloudless sky serving as the objective sphere for primordial gnosis' luminous manifestation within the Direct Transcendence visions, such that "reality" here can also refer to the luminous light presences that manifest against the sky's backdrop (the first vision is named "the vision of reality's immediacy", though I have translated TCD such that the sky as an image for reality itself is emphasized). There is also a secondary connotation that empty reality is the "object" of primordial gnosis' knowing, while our ordinary psychic activity is obsessed with solidified forms and reified "selves". LYT1 466,6 defines it thus: "As for the objective sphere where it shines forth, it shines forth in the sky ("the external expanse") within the rainbow-colored manifestation of the thoroughly pure internal expanse lamp". This issue of the "external expanse" and "internal expanse is explained in Chapter Seven.

*Its "time" is the lighting-up of the post-death intermediate state, analogically like a mirror disc:* I have corrected TDD's "empty" to "lighting-up" or "vision" (*sNang Ba*) on the basis of NGB, Ati and TCD. "Time" refers to the time at which this radiation of primordial gnosis becomes manifestly present to us, which with the exception of the enlightened few will only happen for a brief period in post-death experiences, when by virtue of being temporarily divested of a coarse physical body we are able to perceive these shimmering mandalas of

light (as detailed in the so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and discussed in detail in TDD's Chapter Ten). TCD2 67,6 glosses it as "when its lighting-up manifests in this very life or the post-death intermediate state", thereby indicating that for the few (i.e. spiritually advanced visionaries) it will be experienced in contemplation-visions during this very life time, while for most (the rest of living beings still mired in delusion) it will only appear in post-death experience (the "time" of primordial gnosis being when it emerges in manifest presence rather than its usual latent existence concealed within our hearts). These visions of transcendent reality are identical in the context of the Ground-presencing's initial emergence, the Direct Transcendence visions, and the post-death experiences. In this post-death state referred to as "the intermediate state of reality", the gnostic visions of the peaceful and wrathful mandalas manifest to as the self-presencing of our own awareness, such that their appearance is analogous to the reflection of our face as we gaze into a mirror's bright surface (i.e. there is no otherness involved). Additional aspects of the mirror imagery are that these appearances are plays of light that are radiantly present, yet as empty as the images reflected in a mirror, and it is impossible to separate them from awareness itself, just as the reflections of a mirror can't be either separated with or reductionistically identified with the mirror's surface. The Tantra itself (Ati 536,3) explicates the image as signifying how the four lamps are vividly present in the awareness of the empty sky, just like whatever is displayed to a mirror disc will be reflected therein.

*Its destination is the precious body, analogically like a path that splits into two:* TCD2 67,7 explains primordial gnosis' "destination" (literally, "the place it goes") thus: "As for its destination, those who recognize the eight gateways of spontaneous presence shining forth are freed within the expanse, while those who fail to recognize them wander in cyclic existence, such that this resembles a path that splits into two." Thus "destination", or "where primordial gnosis goes" indicates this initial site of its manifest exteriorization, from where it can either proceed to freedom or cyclic existence. The "precious body" thus indicates this eightfold spontaneous presence, which plays off Chapter One's reference to the "sheath of spontaneous presence", since "sheath" and "body" are often used synonymously in that context.

*Its site of freedom is the lighting-up of original purity, analogically like the Body in a vase:* the site of freedom is the center of the evolutionary spiral, the pure possibilizing virtual reality of original purity. In enlightenment, we return back to our internally radiant source as the Universe coils back into its expanse, such that there is a return to the original "unmanifestness" of sheer empty intensity, like a Body within a vase. However, the Awakened One's self-recognition marks a critical difference between his/her return to original purity and the Ground's undifferentiated state of nameless original purity, a difference which I have discussed at great length in my annotations to Chapter One (in particular, see TDD 182).

· 507. *rDo rJe Sems dPa' sNying Gi Me Long* (NGB1 207,1; Ati1 334,1; also cited by TCD2 68,4; partially cited by LYT1 463-4). I have read the feminine "mistresses" in accordance with NGB, Ati, and TCD. This discourse is spoken by the "wrathful King in terrifying form" in response to a host of Sky Dancers who in a single voice ask him to explain how the Ground, i.e. the enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy, is present within sentient beings.

*As to its residence, in the mandalic center of their heart is "the wisdom of the closed amulet of the Totally Positive One", which is analogically like a closed amulet of red-gold enamel. Within it is five-colored light, in the center of which the mustard seed-sized Peaceful*

*Spiritual Bodies reside, with the lights resembling their luminous home. That is the residence of awareness, analogically like a Body in a vase:* awareness' presence within our heart is here imaged as a "closed amulet", which signifies how its latency which is not accessible to ordinary perception, such that the heart "closes in" encasing the enlightened nucleus, just as an amulet or locket hides away its contents in its interior. Amulets are quite common among Tibetans (especially nomads), and are often made of precious materials (signifying the preciousness of pristine awareness, worn around the neck (such that hang just in front of our heart), and contain a small statue or other sacred object inside. In our current context, it is termed the "amulet of the Totally Positive One" since this heart-amulet contains the mandala of forty two peaceful deities, of which the principal is the Totally Positive One (which thus correspond to the small statues ordinarily contained within an amulet in Tibet). The imagery is similar to Body in Vase, with the sense of connoting pure potential devoid of dispersion or actualization, with its precious contents locked up away inside away from prying eyes. "Red-gold enamel" translates *bSe'u*, a term which I have not yet definitively resolved. A number of scholars identified it as a sparkling yellow or gold-red type of paint made of precious materials and applied to cups, armor, and so forth. TDCM defines it as leather, cloth and so on which has been varnished or lacquered, while VLDC 259,6 clearly indicates that in the context of a cup it refers to a red color.

*As for the primordial gnosis which emerges from that (i.e. its radiation shining out from the heart), it resides in the site of the brain, the Conch Shell House. To expand on this, it is present as the mustard seed-sized wrathful Bodies, with proportionately sized eyes. They are also present in the manner of light rays. The light emerging from that is radiant and lucent like the center of a mirror-disc, or it can be said that it is present amidst light rays, analogically like a fish's eyes:* the first three lines refer to the fifty eight deities of the wrathful mandala, which are present in our head as the gnostic radiation of our enlightened nucleus within the heart (which can be referred to as "light rays"). It would seem the final line here then refers in general to the luminosity that emerges from the heart in the network of luminous channels, which are above all concentrated in the head (LYT1's citation of this quote begins with this line, and reads "emerging from the pathway"). I have read "center of a mirror-disc" by combining TCD, NGB and Ati's reading of "disc" (*dKyil 'Khor*) with TDD and LYT's reading of "center" (*dKyil*). These two analogies of the "fish's eye" and a "mirror disc" both connote the spherical seminal nuclei as the forms this light takes (a few pages down, NGB 211,2 says the seminal nuclei are "like fishes' eyes"), while "mirror disc" in particular connotes the light's radiance and brightness, and "fish's eye" connotes the luminosity's radiating outwards with rays of light.

*The connection-site between this and awareness is a channel up from the heart's tip that runs as a mere thread of white silk up in the proximity of the vertebrae. (Awareness' radiation) having emerged on its pathway through this, it enters into the head: this channel proceeds upwards from the left "little tip" (channels in the throat), and thus links up with the brain. Having then proceeded onwards from the right and left areas near the ears, it links up with the eye:* I have followed NGB, Ati, TCD and LYT in reading *De Dang* for *De Yang* (thus translating it as "the connection-site between this and awareness"), which also read "connection" for TDD's "connection-site" (LYT specifies "connecting channel", but the other texts don't). This paragraph details the pathway of the luminous channel network from the heart up to our eyes, and thus connects our fundamental awareness (in the heart) to the head region, above all to the eyes. This luminous channel is referred to by various names, all of which are imagistic terms for these slender lines of light energy running through the center of our body - the "crystal tube", "white silk thread", and so on (see Chapter Five for details).

TCD, NGB and LYT all read "right and left" little tip channels, while TDD reads "left", and Ati reads "right". On this confusion between "right" and "left" in mentioning the little tip channels, see my annotation to 251,1. For the time being, I have left TDD's reading unaltered, since on line six below this specification of "left" is repeated. On the question of identifying the little tip channel, as well as the luminous channel's precise relationship to it, see that annotation and my annotation to 271,1.

After entering the lower part of the head via the neck, this luminous channel splits into two prongs which run by the ears on their respective sides, arch up into the top of the skull, and then come downwards to the eyes' pupils. TCD2 12,7 and 13,2 make quite clear that this luminous channel is a single channel below in proximity to the vertebrae and spinal cord, and then as it enters the skull at the upper part of the neck, it splits into two branches which proceed to either side of the head and run upwards to the top of the brain's membrane, and then down to the eyes on their respective sides. NGB's reading appears corrupt, as TDD, TCD, LYT and Ati are all in basic agreement.

Via this (channel), having upturned your eyes towards the sky and applied pressure to this channel, when you look the sky will be filled with the luminous presences of primordial gnosis: "upturning" your eyes refers to applying the Reality Body gaze in Direct Transcendence meditation, i.e. looking upwards. One Tibetan scholar interpreted this reference to "applying pressure" as meaning that by the slight squinting of your eyes as you look up, pressure is applied to the luminous channels at the eyes (which are very susceptible to pressure due to their subtle nature). However, Longchenpa's follow-up remarks indicate physical pressure on your neck is indicated, which effects the luminous channel located there such that a temporary manifestation of light visions is experienced. In addition, Ati glosses this as "the technique for applying pressure to this channel should be learned from the commentary", indicating clearly this refers to the neck-pressing technique subsequently mentioned again by Longchenpa on 284,7 (VNT1 373,1 uses the same term *gCun* (literally "control") to refer to "pressing" the visual channel at your eye to initially ignite the visionary appearance of the empty seminal nuclei lamp). Khanpo Jikphun indicated that such a technique was merely a forceful way to help someone who experiences difficulties initially in Direct Transcendence contemplation, and is not utilized as a technique for sustained contemplation. Thus it would appear that the mention here is simply to this technique as a way of "introducing" someone to the presence of the luminous channel within them, and its direct relationship to these luminous visions of rainbow-colored light and tiny spheres (seminal nuclei) that "fill the space" around you. The line below then further specifies you should stimulate or press the luminous channel in its location near the left little tip channel (i.e. the neck) while using the standard triune "gazes" and "looks" of Direct Contemplation practice (see Chapter Eight), which will result in a temporary vision of these gnostic light presences (see 284,7 for further details on this technique). However, VNT1 373,1 and TCD1 407,6 both clearly specify that beginners in meditation on the seminal nuclei lamp need to "press" (*gTems*; *gCun*; *mNan*) the eye's channel as a forceful technique to ignite the seminal nuclei's appearance initially, though obviously such a technique is eventually discarded. It may be that when "meditation on the empty seminal nuclei lamp" is mentioned that the Dark House retreat is generally being referred to (where the pressing of the eyes does constitute an important initial technique), or it may be that such pressing of the eyes was used for beginners even in doing ordinary Direct Transcendence contemplation, but over the centuries was gradually discarded as superfluous (and likewise for the "neck pressing" technique (see



Chapter Seven), though as Khanpo Jikphun pointed out, the inherent danger in applying sustained pressure to one's neck makes it seem less likely).

508. The following four lines would seem to be a quote from *The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* since Longchenpa doesn't here attribute them to a separate text, but I have been unable to locate them there as yet.

509. See my annotations to Longchenpa's earlier mention of this issue on 232,5. The present line indicates these people evidently believed that the deities' eyes telescope outwards from their bodies, so that from a narrow base within their body the eyes widen in diameter as they project outwards, such that ultimately their "tips" are quite wide (like an inverted cone).

510. "The eye of reality" (*Chos; Dharma*) could also be rendered as "the eye of the spiritual precepts" or simply "spiritual vision", and essentially refers to Longchenpa's realization of spiritual awakening as the inner vision which realizes the deeper import of the Buddhist teachings (*Chos*), thereby revealing the nature of reality itself (*Chos Nyid*).

### ANNOTATION-COMMENTARY TO CHAPTER FIVE

511. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 92,7; Ati1 111,6; also cited by TCD2 70,2). TCD2 quotes the entire page-long passage on the three channels from *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra*, whereas TDD divides this passage up in a number of shorter citations over the course of this chapter. TCD introduces the passage thus: "...As for the specific key points (relating to the contemplation of primordial gnosis), you insert your wind-mind (complex) into the web of primordial gnosis by controlling the key points of the four energy wheels and three principle channels (of your subtle body)...", and cites it in a section dealing with the inner channels as the support for primordial gnosis' presence. This clearly indicates that all these passages from *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* cited in this chapter revolve around contemplation techniques working with these main energy centers in our subtle body to "neutralize" our ordinary distorted psychic activity, and thus "dissolve" it within the primordial gnosis at our being's core (here imaged as like a "net" or "web" from which ultimately nothing can escape).

*As for the pathways of awareness' primordial gnosis, the three Spiritual Bodies are present inherently and perfectly complete within the energy wheels of your own inner channels, and thus these three channels sustain the body: the flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channels:*

In LYT2 241,4-6, Longchenpa explains that these four energy wheels act as the basis for the four Spiritual Bodies and five primordial gnosises by force of the purifying gnostic letters being located in their centers: Om Aḥ Hūṃ Svā Hā (Om Aḥ Hūṃ are also correlated to the three channels). By adding the genital wheel to make a list of five, he correlates the crown wheel to Om, the throat wheel to Aḥ, the heart wheel to Hūṃ, the navel wheel to Svā, and the genital wheel to Hā. These gnostic "letters" are actually syllables of perhaps the most basic of Buddhist mantras - Om Aḥ Hūṃ invokes/symbolizes the energy of the Buddha's Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind, while Svāhā means something like "Hail" or "Amen" (functionally) at the end of a mantra, and its two syllables then make this mantra amenable to

a series of fivefold correlations. In the present context, these mantric syllables indicate the subtle gnostic energy lying in latent form at the heart of our body's main energy wheels, such that the three Spiritual Bodies' energy is already completely present therein.

I have followed NGB, Ati and TCD in translating the fourth line as "and thus...", since they read *gNas Pa Las* for *gNas Pa sTe*. This indicates the presence of the Spiritual Bodies' energy within the inner wheels is directly related to the three channels "sustaining" our body. Ati and TCD2 read "three mothers" (*Ma gSum*) instead of TDD and NGB's "three channels", an alternative name for these three channels since the final syllable in each one's name is "Ma" ("mother"), which is often explained as relating to their functioning as the mother-foundation (*gZhi Ma*) for all physical and psychic processes in humans. These three channels run through the body's center like pillars, supporting, sustaining and taking hold of our body (imaged as a house) as well as our mind via acting as the key energy conductors or lines of force for both biological processes and psychic processes (the inner winds, seminal nuclei, and so forth). All of these processes are initiated, maintained, and regulated from within these three energy conductors, and the four principal energy nexuses ("wheels") that they act as the basis for (the "wheels" are merely vital points of energy convergence at these three channels, with the many subsidiary channels that intersect here being imaged as "wheels", "lotuses", or "umbrellas").

*The central channel acts as support for the four energy wheels, while the divisions of conventional and ultimate energies flowing via these three channels being present in your upper torso's right, left and center respectively, develop your body and limbs as well as bring the lamps themselves into maturity:*

All these directional indicators specified here ("right" and "left") are in terms of a male, while for a female they are reversed (see KGYT2 159,6): in males, the central channel is the all-encompassing channel, the right channel is the flavor channel, and the left channel is the solitary channel; for females, the left is the flavor channel, and the right is the solitary channel, while the central channel remains the same. These three channels provide separate pathways and sites for the conventional and ultimate nuclei/winds within our body (as well as the corresponding conventional/ultimate energies they embody and organize), via which those nuclei flow through our body and function in their respective spheres of influence (the conventional mainly flowing through the right channel, and the ultimate through the left, while the central channel's energy is so intensely pure that it "transcends" this opposition of conventional/ultimate). That both seminal nuclei and elemental energies in their dyadic dimensions are indicated here by this reference to "conventional and ultimate" is supported by LYT1 460,7 and TDD 211,4, which have identical passages with the exception that the former mentions "ultimate elemental energies", and the latter specifies "ultimate seminal nuclei". These three channels' functions, as well as our own psycho-physical existence is thus encapsulated by this reference to "conventional and ultimate energies", and it should be kept in mind that the essential significance of these "channels" is the energy-flows they constitute (like "lines of force"). The conventional energies' above all relate to our body's biological processes, which is here indicated by referring to the conventional nuclei's role in embryogeny, as well as subsequent physical development. The ultimate nuclei then play the critical role in spiritual "embryogeny" as they ripen the gnostic lamps (which are present in latency within all living beings, but not activated or optimally operative) in the visionary experiences of Direct Transcendence contemplation (see Chapter Six for an extensive discussion of these four "lamps", and TDD 207,4ff for a one-to-one correlation between the four ultimate elemental energies and the four lamps they act as catalyst for). In this chapter,

Longchenpa clearly indicates that the flavor channel is primarily related to our body's bioenergetic processes, while the solitary channel principally governs the contemplative maturation of the gnostic lamps, though such correlations are not exclusive (i.e. they indicate primary functions).

512. Currently primordial gnosis' solar luminosity is obscured within our vase-heart, yet its natural radiance still partially emerges out of the heart's "top", just the light of a butter lamp within a vase will partially shine from the vase's top, though its full radiance is invisible from the outside. This partial luminosity shining out of the heart is present in slender lines of light running up the center of our body (and in particular from our heart to our eyes), which thus operate as the principal "channels" of gnostic radiation within our body-mind. These conduits for gnostic radiation are generally classified into four "great channels" (or "four channels of primordial gnosis' radiation"), though Longchenpa's exact enumeration of these four oscillates between two standardized sets of channels: (i) the standard triad of subtle channels (flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channels) along with the entire luminous channel network referred to as the "kati crystal tube channel"; or (ii) a fourfold internal classification of the luminous channel network itself as consisting of the great kati golden channel, the crystal tube channel, white silk thread channel, and the slender coil channel (see below for Longchenpa's discussion of how this can be expanded to five by including the "naturally free empty channel", which can also be substituted for the slender coil channel to form an alternative listing of the basic four, with the slender coil channel then classified together with the white silk channel as the luminous channel proceeding to the two eyes). While the triad of flavor, solitary and all-encompassing channels are common to other Buddhist tantric systems, and in general have both impure distorted and pure optimal modes of bio-mental energy-flow within them, the description of a "luminous channel" network is unique to the Great Perfection tradition and, though operating as the ultimate source of our entire psycho-physical energy via its "brightness" diffusing outwards, itself involves exclusively pure non-materialized pure light energy devoid of any distortion or dilution of its intensity. Thus the former enumeration of these four "great channels" within our body emphasizes the connection with standard Buddhist subtle body theory, while the latter enumeration delves into the specifics of the Great Perfection's own innovative reformulation of subtle body theory which emphasizes the core of primordial ongoing enlightened purity that exists within all living beings, and remains untouched by distortion and neurosis. In the current context, the quotation of course details these four channels as the flavor, solitary, all-encompassing and kati crystal tube channel, yet immediately following the quote, Longchenpa's discussion instead turns to the four aspects of the luminous channel network (it must also be pointed out that these luminous channels are generally described as *within* the standard triad of our body's main channels, just as our inner heart of pure gnosis exists within this impure materialized body's "shell", although the precise identification of the three channels' relationship with the luminous channels varies in Longchenpa's corpus, with KGYT in particular giving a somewhat idiosyncratic account not borne out by TDD and TCD - it is the "central" or "all-encompassing" channel above all that is specified as the "sheath" for the main luminous channel, with the latter then considered the former's inner esoteric reality). TDD 256,1, TCD2 65-66 and elsewhere explicitly refer to the "four great channels" as the four luminous channels, though often then quoting passages such as this that identify the four as the standard triad plus the luminous channels considered together as a single network. Longchenpa thus at times strictly differentiates between the standard triad of channels as "the channels of cyclic existence" and the luminous channels as "the channels of transcendent reality", while elsewhere (such as our present context) treating the two together as the primary conduits for primordial gnosis' radiation. An additional possible distinction is that

the quartet of the flavor, solitary, all-encompassing and kati crystal channel emphasize the ordinary latent presence of gnostic radiation as indirectly fueling our normal psycho-physical processes, while the quartet of the great kati golden, crystal tube, white silk thread, and slender coil luminous channels especially emphasize the pathways for this light radiation in its activated state as shining out into the sky via our eyes, and fueling the dynamic visionary sequences that unfold therein. A final thought is that at times the coarser triad of channels is used in shorthand to refer to the pure dynamics of the subtle luminous channels present within them, while when analyzing the matter in detail, Longchenpa deals with the luminous channels themselves rather than their external "sheaths" (i.e. we can refer to the main luminous channel in general by specifying the central channel since the former is located within the latter's center, though any detailed discussion must strictly differentiate between the two - for example, the dissolution of the wind-currents within the central channel has its own characteristic phenomenological correlates, and does not entail their dissolution within the luminous channel at the central channel's center, while those wind-currents' *further* dissolution within that luminous channel then has distinctly different phenomenological correlates and overall significance). It is also important to note that the quartet of luminous channels are the ultimate source of the standard triad of subtle channels' energy, though the latter's conventional impure functions analytically lay out of the jurisdiction of the former, which remain utterly pure throughout everything (the karmic winds impelling impure experiences flow through these three channels in their impure modes, while the crystal tube luminous channel is utterly devoid of any karmic winds or their impurities). Thus while one may be tempted to interpret the luminous channels as a refinement of the standard triad of subtle channels to point out their functions in terms of pure gnostic light energy (especially in the context of Direct Transcendence contemplation), such a tendency must be rejected, since ultimately the former is the primordial source of the latter, just as primordial gnosis is the ultimate ontologically prior source of our ordinary mind, and it is essential not to invert their relationship.

Thus the heart's inner core of luminosity ("the enlightened nucleus of realized-energy", or "Buddha-nature" discussed at length in Chapter Three) radiates dynamism outwards in these slender bands of light energy which are termed the four major "channels", while the energy-flowing within/as these lines of force are intelligent spherical generatrixes of light energy termed "seminal nuclei". The reference here to "secondary channels" indicates the innumerable derivative channels branching of these main four channels (in particular at the four energy "wheels" in our body's center), which this light energy also permeates in less intense fashion, such that our entire body is pervaded by this gnostic radiation, and we are indeed luminous beings. KGYT3 128,2 clearly indicates that this radiation is present within all our body's "channel-petals" in general, while in particular it is present within the major luminous channels in a totally pure and intense concentration - in the context of spiritual realization, these slender lines of pure gnostic light intensity are freed from the ordinarily pervasive obscuration of our corporeality and materialization, and thus are able to radiate outwards in their high intensity without any dilution, such that our entire psycho-physical existence "dematerializes" as our inner core of gnostic light now goes into a phase of activated fully manifest ascendancy (the crystal tube is not ordinarily clearly present in us, but in this context becomes vividly radiant). However, even in our current existence this gnostic light energy is subtly present throughout our body in the form of these luminous seminal nuclei referred to here, which in GTD 378,1 Longchenpa explains thus:

"...In dependence upon the luminous channels with their radiant light that are themselves based upon the vibrant quintessence of quintessences within our heart's center, it lights up

like radiating rays in all (our body's) secondary channels, and thus is termed "(our psycho-physical existence) pervaded by the enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy..."

These luminous seminal nuclei flowing throughout these channels then act as the "bases" or "supports" of primordial gnosis' dynamism in our body (their secret essences are said to be none other than the standard fivefold gnostic energies themselves) not only as the ultimate ongoing source of our vitality in general, but in particular as activated by Direct Transcendence contemplation. In that latter context, they sustain the dynamic visions of gnostic light radiation that we experience during these contemplations, whereby the dynamism of our internal latent fivefold primordial gnosis is "perfected" and brought to its climaxing unfoldment in enlightenment. Thus Longchenpa discusses the nature of these seminal nuclei subsequently in this chapter from 256,2-259,4, and in particular, on 257,5-258,1 he discusses how the luminous "ultimate" nuclei function in Direct Transcendence contemplation as the support for the visionary experiences whereby we optimize our fivefold gnostic energy and attain enlightenment. In this way, both the luminous channels and the luminous nuclei operate as the "support" of primordial gnosis within our existence, since these two terms are merely analytic divisions of a unitary dimension (just as we might speak of the pathway of a current of water beneath the ocean, when in fact the "water" and "pathway" are indivisible).

513. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 105,5; Ati1 126,6; also cited by TCD2 67,2). See TDD 232,2 for the lines in this Tantra immediately preceding our present quotation, which are part of a single section in the Tantra responding to the question "What are the key points of primordial gnosis?" This present quotation can be understood clearly when considered in the context of Longchenpa's preface and my explication of it above, though the second line's mention of "moving and non-moving" seminal nuclei is somewhat ambiguous (see below). As I discussed above, in general the luminous channels and the luminous nuclei function as the supports for primordial gnosis' dynamic radiation diffusing outwards from our heart to permeate the structure of our existence both in our ordinary distorted experience (their brightness eventually becomes our ordinary distorted psychic activity and consciousness), and in particular within the visionary experiences of Direct Transcendence contemplation (as it shines outwards via our eyes in its pure intensity): the channels are this gnostic radiation's pathways as potent slender lines of force, while the seminal nuclei function as the concentrated self-organizing spherical centers that this radiation forms itself into as it flows "through" these channels. In TCD2 66,7-67,1's preface to this quotation, Longchenpa explains that primordial gnosis' own chief location is within the heart, while its radiation is present as radiant luminosity within the heart's great channel(s); in dependence upon the five primordial gnos'es' natural radiation within those channels, the four gnostic lamps ripen within the eyes (i.e. in Direct Transcendence contemplation). Though in essence these channels are merely primordial gnosis' own luminous radiation in the form of these nuclei of radiant light, it is via them that the latent primordial gnosis within our hearts can exteriorize itself in visionary presences, and thus climax its intensity into the optimization of enlightenment, which is why we make these analytic divisions of the "luminous channels", "luminous nuclei", "linked chains of light", and so on. While in this way it is possible to read this as fivefold primordial gnosis being the support on which these seminal nuclei mature into the gnostic lamps (since they are mere light emanations of gnosis' essence in the heart - TCD clearly indicates this reading), it seems to me that the main point is that while gnosis' essence of pure potential is present within the heart, it is within these four channels branching out of the heart that its radiation-nuclei are present, and it is those which are the basis for gnosis' self-realization and self-actualization into its inherent destiny of fully enlightened

Buddhahood. For this reason I have read these lines as indicating that these seminal nuclei are present as the support *of* the optimization of primordial gnosis' dynamism, rather than they themselves being present *on* the basis of the five primordial gnosés. Alternatively, we could read this as indicating that the fivefold primordial gnosés are present within these channels *as* the seminal nuclei and thus *as* the basis for the perfection of the gnostic singular essence within our hearts. Another implication is that these channels themselves act as the "support" for fivefold primordial gnosis with its moving and non-moving seminal nuclei - TDD 250,7 correlates the five luminous channels with the five primordial gnosés, while TDD 255,5 discusses in detail how these luminous channels function as the "support" or "basis" for primordial gnosis in terms of the visionary unfolding of our heart's radiant light in the Direct Transcendence contemplations. Ultimately, all three styles of interpretation are interlinked and mutually self-sustaining - primordial gnosis is the "support" in that all luminosity is the radiation of its heart-essence, and it is the "supported" in that this dynamism allows its own self-expression and optimization.

As for the significance of "moving and non-moving", Longchenpa does not specifically interpret these two terms either here or in TCD, and given the detailed unpacking we would expect from this Tantra's now lost commentaries, we can only offer likely interpretations. One possibility is that "moving" refers to the wind-currents impelling the nuclei along the "non-moving" stationary channel-structures, which would then signify the entire subtle energy system in its triune identity of channels, winds, and nuclei (remembering the image of these as water (nuclei) flowing down an irrigation canal (channels) by the force of winds - see TDD 208,2 for a reference to the standard description of them as the "stationary" channels, "impelling" winds" and "arrayed" seminal nuclei). Another version of this interpretation would be to read "moving" as referring to the winds, and "non-moving" as signifying the nuclei, which are carried along by the winds but themselves have no capacity for such movement. However, it is much more likely that "moving and non-moving" both modify the nuclei themselves (as on TCD1 381,2-3, where the context is unclear), which I initially thought might signify that these nuclei of radiant light are the support of primordial gnosis whether in "active movement or not", i.e. they are already present within ourselves as energetic potencies, while whether become manifestly activated into the fivefold gnostic visions of Direct Transcendence depend on certain conditions sparking that. "Non-moving" would refer to their state of pure latent potential energy as inactive in ordinary states of consciousness, while "moving" would then indicate their yogic activation such that they shine forth via the channels' pathways into exteriorized visionary presences, thus acting as the basis for the dynamics of the gnostic fivefold energy moving into exteriorized manifestation from its pure source-potential within the heart. Khanpo Jikphun suggested that "moving" nuclei refer to the minute linked chains of light, since they are initially highly unstable vacillating presences that must be gradually calmed down and stabilized via our concentration (we visually experience them as rapidly flickering across our field of vision), while the "non-moving" nuclei refer to the larger initially unlinked spheres of the empty seminal nuclei lamp, which once manifest to us in the sky, are not subject to significant movement (though in the initial phases of contemplation there is some alternation between their absence and presence, when present, they remain fairly stable in terms of location). The linked chains are visible to most people once their attention is directed to them (the minute spherical portions of these linked chains of light are often termed "nuclei", though the term "nuclei" is more often used to signify the latter presence), while the larger seminal nuclei only manifest after a few days of Direct Transcendence contemplation. Khanpo also indicated that this was a very profound precept, i.e. that the linked chains were a vacillating dimension, while the empty seminal nuclei were a non-vacillating dimension. These two

types of "nuclei" then are normally present latently within our inner channels, but as exteriorized in these visions, they act as the basis for the complete perfection of our fivefold gnostic energy as the empty seminal nuclei gradually ripen into divine palaces in a pure land, while the linked chains ripen into peaceful and wrathful mandalas of Buddhas inhabiting those palaces. They thus not only pervade the internal channels of our body, but also come to pervade the sky around us such that they become directly visible to our own eyes. While it is true that the empty seminal nuclei are often said to "come and go" in the initial phases of the visions (see KGYT1 303,3, etc.), this generally indicates that as you focus on them they will periodically disappear ("go" or depart), and then reappear to you ("come" hither), or it could indicate very slight movements within a tightly delimited area, though nothing like the wild scattering hither and thither of the linked chains.

514. These luminous channels of our subtle body are a unique feature of the Great Perfection tradition, and are intimately tied up in its overall philosophical outlook as well as its particular brand of contemplation (i.e. the Direct Transcendence). The most basic description of them involves a main "trunk" running up our body's center, which branches into two within the head and proceeds to our right and left eyes respectively. The most general name of this network of channels is "the channel of primordial gnosis", while its other particularized names are all based imagistically upon its qualities of being slender lines of light energy running through our body (resembling "crystal", "white silk", etc.). As I discuss further below, the most common term to refer to the entire network of luminous channels as a whole is the "kati crystal tube channel", though at times the terms "great kati golden channel", "white silk thread channel", or "smooth white channel" (*dKar 'Jam rTsa*) may be used instead. Since these various names are all general images for this channel's luminosity, none of them are semantically limited to any particular portion or function of the entire network of luminous channels (unlike a name such as "the visual luminous channel" would be), and it is important to keep in mind that the entire network is a unitary emission of radiance from our heart, such that its various aspects denoted by these terms shouldn't be reified into independent isolated channels - they are merely conceptual isolates focused on different portions and functions of a single network. While the network is often discussed as fourfold, and these various names all occur in the canonical *Seventeen Tantras* of the Great Perfection (for instance see the quotation on TDD 256,1), the particular references of each name in terms of location and function appears to have been a matter of controversy by (?) Longchenpa's time. Longchenpa thus begins his discussion of the "luminous channels" here in Chapter Five by attempting to sort out their various names, and give precise definitions to each term: the three basic descriptions in this chapter of the individual luminous channels' functions are 250,2-251,1 in explication of the quotation on 251,1-5); 255,5-7 in explication of the quotation on 255,7-256,2, and 257,5-7 in explication of the quotation on 257,7-258,1. In Chapter Six he deals in particular with this heart-to-eyes luminous channel's role in Direct Transcendence contemplation - of the four gnostic lamps, "the far ranging water lamp" basically signifies this network of luminous channels, particularly in its running from our heart to our eyes. However, although TDD and TCD present a fairly coherent presentation of these five names of the luminous channels, in Longchenpa's overall corpus there are many texts that don't articulate out these different sets of names (other than referring to a "luminous" or "gnostic" channel), while at least one text (GTD - see below) which does mention all five names, gives quite different interpretations of each name in terms of the particular functions and locations it signifies. This indicates that while the names themselves were fairly standardized by Longchenpa's times, the particular definition corresponding to each name was not at all set by canonical sources (or had already been obscured by the passage of time), and hence was very fluid, with the only constancy being the great kati

golden channel located at the heart's center, or within the central channel's center. While our current lack of knowledge of the Great Perfection tradition's early history hampers our abilities to clearly understand this possible evolution (in particular further study is required of Great Perfection literature which can be definitively dated as preceding Longchenpa's period), Longchenpa's varying identification of these four or five names' referents indicates that either such an evolution did take place, or that by Longchenpa's time a substantial portion of the literary corpus had already been lost (which would account for the variability in interpreting obscure references in the canonical verses remaining). I have yet to ascertain the sources Longchenpa's draws upon in his separate identifications of these terms in TDD and GTD (if any literary sources did, or still do, exist), though the marked difference between his two accounts clearly indicates the matter was already controversial or unclear within his lifetime. It would also seem quite likely that this theory began with a special channel referred to as "the channel of primordial gnosis" or "luminous channel" that was exclusively pure, and which was then described in various ways based upon the properties of the luminous radiation flowing within it: "crystal tube", "golden", "white silk", "slender coil", "naturally free empty". These descriptions then gradually came to be identified with particular functions and aspects of the luminous channel in various ways (which could then be correspondingly considered as a "network" of channels), with sometimes striking differences in a single author's corpus (of particular note is the difference between Longchenpa's GTD and TDD), with the consistent "fourfold" classification probably originally stemming from the heart's luminosity moving outwards in the "four" directions, as well as representing a very elemental mandalic structure with the heart's center surrounded by four cardinal points. It could well be that these terms originated with *The Seventeen Tantras'* ambiguous references to them as the four gateways of the Tsitta (see TDD 251,3-4 for *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness'* explicit mention of all five names), and Longchenpa himself then either created the specific references, or set down oral commentary he received from other teachers (he may have also had access to now lost commentaries on these Tantras, though his failure to ever cite such texts makes this doubtful - we currently possess only one such commentary (VLDC), and I have only found one passing mention to such a text in Longchenpa's writings despite his frequent citation of the root Tantras themselves (in GTD he does provide a detailed list of names of these commentaries, but those texts may have already been lost at that point). At any rate, further analysis of the literature beyond Longchenpa's corpus is necessary to draw any definitive conclusions on this matter.

In the following paragraphs, I attempt to provide a systematic overview of Longchenpa's various discussions of the luminous channel, though the main point of interest (and ambiguity) are in its relationship to the all-encompassing channel normally discussed as the central channel of human existence. In general, the luminous channels are located within the outer sheath of the exoteric triad of channels in line with Longchenpa's typical emphasis on multi-level interlocking hierarchies: its main trunk in the body's center is often said to be within the center of the central channel (interestingly, in this context the term "central channel" (*dBu Ma*) is used instead of "all-encompassing channel" (*Kun 'Dar Ma*)), while of its three main branches within the head, its central branch running to the top of our head ("Brahma's aperture) is usually said to be within the central channel (TDD 253,5, while its right and left branches running to our two eyes are said to be within the outer sheath of the visual sensory channels (KGYT specifies these as both being branches of the solitary channel, while TDD 253,5 implies the right one is within the flavor channel, and the left one within the solitary channel). Both the all-encompassing channel and the luminous channel appear to be closely linked with the two main channels of our gross material body, i.e. the spinal cord (located within our vertebrae) and our aorta (i.e. the main blood trunk stemming



from our heart and located to the front of the spinal cord). In medical treatises, these two are referred to as the "white" and "black" vitality channels, since our body's psycho-physical vitality is above all encapsulated within these two as the roots of the nervous and circulatory system respectively, and they are thus critical to the continued sustenance and functioning of our entire body and mind (the blood providing oxygen and nutrients to cells throughout our body, and the nervous system providing the conduits for all sensation and psychic activity - if either should be damaged, the consequences will be severe for our continued life or "vitality" in this particular embodied form). In Longchenpa's corpus, the primary reference of "vitality channel" is clearly to the "black" vitality channel, i.e. the main blood trunk, though it is closely linked to the spinal cord. As I discussed at length in my annotations to Chapter Four, these references to features of our coarse material body cannot be reduced to those material structures, but rather include immaterial energy-flows with corresponding properties in our subtle body. For this reason, it is permissible for the spinal cord and blood trunk line (which materially are quite distinct from each other) to be closely linked in Longchenpa's description of energy-flows in the subtle body, which, as I show below, they clearly are. This connection is also indicated in the two primary mandalas of gnosis in our body being located within the Tsitta (i.e. heart) and Conch Shell House (i.e. brain), the former's coarse correlate being the source of the aorta and blood flow, and the latter's coarse correlate being the source of the spinal cord and nerve impulses (though the former references as part of the imagined or subtle body cannot be reduced to the latter structures, they are closely linked to a far greater degree than some Western interpretations would have one believe). While at times the central channel is strictly differentiated from the luminous channel, at other times Longchenpa obviously refers to the latter with the former's name (just as we might refer to the blood's function as if it were attributed to the aorta itself, since the latter is the sheath for the former), and according to Khanpo Chodrak at Dzokchen monastery in Eastern Tibet it was common to identify the "coarse" central channel with the vitality channel (i.e. blood trunk), and the "subtle" central channel with the luminous channel within its center (again it must be kept in mind that even the former cannot be reduced to the material "aorta"). This is related to the identification of the "vitality channel" as the location of the universal psychic ground as well as the mind's "pathway" (see Chapter Four), since this distorted psychic activity derives from the "brightness" of the luminous channel radiating outwards into larger (and coarser) sheath of the vitality channel which surrounds it. While the "vitality channel" undoubtedly correlates to the main blood trunk, descriptions of psychic energy radiating outwards from the vitality channel to the five sensory channels (and especially Chapter Six's account of the luminous channels running to the eyes being within the outer sheath of the "visual channels"), undeniably suggests the so-called "white channels", i.e. sensory nerves, and in fact some medical accounts clearly identify the spinal cord or "white" vitality channel as the residence for the universal psychic ground. This ambiguity is also present here in TDD's account, which on 250,5 specifies the "vitality channel" as the location of the crystal tube luminous channel, while in describing the luminous channels running to the eyes Longchenpa speaks of the "vertebrae" (TDD 251,1) and elsewhere of the "spinal cord" (*rGyungs Pa*). It would thus seem he emphasizes the vitality channel when discussing its presence within our torso's center in general, while the spinal cord or vertebrae then are only mentioned in the context of discussing how this slender line of light moves up into the head where its three branches play a vital role in visionary experience. A certain seeming conflict in terms of the various descriptions of all these pathways can be resolved by keeping in mind that these accounts are all on the level of the subtle body, which is a highly charged contemplative "poem" reporting/evoking our experience of the lived body rather than an analytically precise description of objective structures preexisting our experiences of them. At the same time, though these luminous channels are pure light intensity devoid of

materialization, they are also closely linked to our physical bodies such that they are absent for beings in the form and formless realms due to their etherealized existence devoid of coarse corporeality, which entails that they lack the internal pathways for primordial gnosis to shine forth externally and thus are "unable to see the pure lands of the three Spiritual Bodies" (KGYT2 141,5-6). Related to this issue of the spinal cord, aorta, vitality channel, central channel and luminous channel is three terms that are often described as synonyms, yet which are strictly differentiated between by Padmasambhava (see below): the "Avadhūti", "all-encompassing" and central channel. The upshot of this is that in Longchenpa's corpus the "vitality channel" primarily signifies the blood trunk or aorta (in its coarse and subtle dimensions), the subtle central channel (as well as the luminous channel within it) is related to both the spinal cord and aorta as the dual source/location of our coarser bio-mental energy or vitality (such that the term "vitality channel" denotes the latter but is closely linked to the former), and the luminous channel is the ultimate source of all three channels' energy-flow as their subtle quintessence. In addition, it must be kept in mind that in other Buddhist Tantric systems the all-encompassing central channel is "ultimate", and hence a key aspect of their contemplative techniques is to imaginatively insert the right and left channel's wind-currents into it such that the "knots" in the central channel (where the right and left channels wrap around it and constrict it) are gradually undone, whereby they become gnostic winds that give rise to our experiences of bliss, radiance and non-conceptuality. These winds also dissolve within the central channel in liminal phases of our existence such as sleep and death, with the dissolution marked by characteristic internal experiences usually closely tied up with light visions. However, in the Great Perfection tradition, the central channel is considered as a coarser dimension than the luminous channel within it, and hence during the process of sleep, death, and contemplation, the dissolution of the winds within the central channel generally corresponds to the impure universal psychic ground, and they must *further* dissolve within the luminous channel for the experience of the heart's pure radiant light to dawn within us. In addition, there is no forceful insertion of the inner winds into either the central channel or the luminous channel in Great Perfection contemplation, but rather the karmic winds usually circulating around our body naturally die away by force of our steady application of the "looks" and "gazes" of Direct Transcendence meditation, and the slender luminous channel at our body's center thus expands outwards without dilution in the absence of their obscuration, such that these "knots" are simply dematerialized or fade away in their high intensity vibrant light energy (see GTD 382,6ff).

According to a number of my Tibetan teachers, as well as my own preliminary review of it, Longchenpa's main commentary on *The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra* (entitled *Dispelling all Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions*) only mentions the "kati crystal tube channel" as a generic reference to the luminous channels of primordial gnosis' shining forth. Obviously TDD's own account could be easily considered as a single channel, with the great kati golden channel becoming the crystal tube channel running up the center of the body's five main energy wheels, and in particular branching into three within the head (the white silk thread, slender coil, and naturally free empty channels), and the fluidity of these analyses into "separate" channels is clearly shown in how he oscillates back and forth between articulating "four" or "five" luminous channels in this chapter (see immediately below here in TDD for the reasons Longchenpa gives for referring to "four", and at times to "five" - these are just names to help our analytical understanding, when in fact the luminous channel is a unitary process devoid of any reified "parts" (which is why each separate "name" in fact has a meaning that could apply to any portion of this process-network). While I have yet to systematically search line by line, I have not been able to locate any references to this fourfold or fivefold set of terms applying to the luminous channel in Longchenpa's *The*

*Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* (which includes Longchenpa's LYT, KGYT, and ZMYT, as well as Padmasambhava's KGNT, and Vimalamitra's VNT (which includes works by other authors)), though these texts often refer to the luminous channel as the "kati crystal tube channel" running up the center of the five main energy wheels with two branches running to the eyes, and describe it in such terms as "like white silk thread" (without, however, making such descriptions into independent terms denoting only a particular aspect or function of the luminous channel). For example, LYT1 463,5 and 465,4 uses the term "kati crystal tube channel" to refer to the entire luminous channel network, with the main emphasis on how it runs from the heart to the eyes (see my discussion below as to how "kati crystal tube channel" often refers to the entire network, while "crystal tube channel" (i.e. without the "kati") refers to one particular aspect of that network). However, there are references to the "four gateways of the heart-Tsitta" (such as TDD 251,2), whereby the heart's light shines outwards from its self-contained interiority (see my annotation to TDD 229 for a discussion of how this relates to the "eight gateways" of the Tsitta palace mentioned there). In fact, given that all these texts rely on *The Seventeen Tantras*, it seems significant that the specific names Longchenpa here in TDD draws from that collection of Tantras appear to be absent in *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts*. In this context, on LYT1 462,6 Longchenpa identifies primordial gnosis' location or residence within our body as being based upon a mustard seed-sized "quintessence of quintessence" (i.e. extremely subtle vibrant nucleus) at the center of the "four channel-petals of radiant light" that are located within the middle of the precious Tsitta. This would appear to be a direct reference to the fourfold classification of luminous channels Longchenpa articulates here in TDD (which are the four channels resultant from the heart's radiant light branching out into four gateways), though LYT doesn't give any particulars there. However, LYT1 465,6-466,2 discusses the "four channel-gateways for the manifestation of awareness' radiation", which it identifies as the two channels going to the eyes, the luminous channel within the central channel, and the channel connecting the heart and lungs where awareness' radiation manifests as the ordinary mind (Longchenpa here doesn't provide particular names for any of these other than describing them functionally and location-wise). In this account, Longchenpa thus splits the luminous channel networks into two aspects (identified as "three" by counting the two eyes separately): that of the two branches running to the eyes whereby our gnostic radiation can become manifest externally, and that of the main "trunk" running up the body's center within the central channel whereby its luminosity pervades our body's main energy centers (as well as functioning for the emergence of light from the top of our head, which refers to certain details of the Direct Contemplation visions). The first aspect includes the "white silk" and "slender coil" channels detailed here in TDD, while the second aspect includes functions attributed in TDD to the "great golden Kati", the "crystal tube", and the "naturally free empty" channels (as well as the additional function of the "slender coil" channel discussed below in TDD). LYT's discussion is rather unusual in that it classifies the heart-lung channel discussed in Chapter Four as the ordinary mind's "residence" together with these luminous channels as the "four channels of gnostic radiation", whereas Longchenpa usually identifies these four as either some version of the fourfold division of the luminous channels discussed here in TDD, or as the three main channels of our subtle body (flavor, solitary, all-encompassing) along with the luminous channels as a single network (usually referred to as the "crystal tube channel"), which in either case involves primordial gnosis' pure radiation as opposed to its tainted or adulterated presence as ordinary psychic activity. Longchenpa's account here in LYT is as follows:

"...There are the following four channel-gateways for the shining forth of our fundamental awareness' radiation. (i-ii) Its luminous presences shine forth in direct immediacy through

the two eyes. (iii) Within the center of the central channel from the heart there is the channel of the enlightened nucleus' radiant light, via which the Conch Shell House's wrathful (deities shine forth), while its radiation (shines forth) as the seminal nuclei in our inner channels. Via this luminous channel within the central channel, the great seminal nuclei of radiant light shine at the center of our four energy wheels, and from our crown the non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies (i.e. the linked chains) shine forth at the "Brahma's aperture" (i.e. the center of our head where hair swirls out). That is also the sacred channel of "transference" (i.e. consciousness transference) which acts as the basis for the shining forth of stacks of five or nine seminal nuclei that occur during the third of the Direct Contemplation visions, that of "awareness' optimization". (iv) (In the channel running) from the heart to the lungs, awareness' radiation manifests as the ordinary mind. Thus (these four) are the (two channels running to) the two eyes and the luminous channel with the central channel, together with the radiation channel of the lungs. *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* describes them thus:

*(Primordial gnosis') pathway is your four main channels, and that which propels it is your inner winds;  
The gateway of its shining forth is your eyes and so forth...*

As for the identification of the two channels of the ordinary eyes as its pathway, this is mere reductionism, and instead it should be identified as the four channels for the shining forth of its fourfold radiation. When we engage in sustained contemplative practice, our awareness emerges through our eyes. To expand on that, the radiation of awareness' luminous nature shines forth from the two eyes; the radiation of its empty essence shines forth from the luminous channel within the central channel; and the radiation of its compassionate resonance's aware-ing shines forth from the lung-channel..."

GTD 376,1-2 in prefacing this quote says that our subtle body ("adamantine body") develops in embryogeny with the three channels, four wheels and so on as described in other sources, with the key distinction being that in Great Perfection accounts there is also the "channel of self-emergent primordial gnosis and its seminal nuclei", which are not discussed in other Buddhist sources. STCP2 13a,3ff, one of Longchenpa's primary exoterically oriented works, describes the luminous channel thus (STCP's account is evidently drawn from *gSang Thig Gi 'Grel Pa* by Vimalamitra (see 11a 6), which evidently refers to VNT1 345-438, though I have yet to locate these descriptions therein): "...in the center of the heart's principal eight channels is the quintessence of the channels resembling a thread of white silk, which is the width of a fiftieth of a horse tail hair. Inside it is a mixture of the quintessence of blood and the quintessence of wind with an extremely subtle five-colored light, in which the enlightened mind, the Reality Body of mind-as-such's radiant light, dwells..." While it is often said the luminous channel is non-material, and in particular is devoid of the flow of "blood and lymph", the reference here to the "quintessence" of blood refers to the subtle energetic non-material essence of blood just as the "quintessence" of wind refers to the subtle dimension of breath (see my discussion in annotations to Chapter Four), and further indicates its connection with the aorta as its reflection on the gross material level (just as the "heart" as home to our inner awareness is related to the physical heart as the "way station" for blood circulation within our body). STCP2 13b 3-5 explicitly identifies this as "the luminous channel of primordial gnosis located within the central channel", saying that when all the "quintessential vibrancy of your mind/wind complex is concentrated there by yogic efforts", you will become enlightened with the luminous visions of the rainbow-colored gnostic lamps. STCP's phrasing of "blood's quintessence", "yogic efforts", "the wind and mind's quintessence", the apparent connection to the lower order approach of actively

"concentrating" wind-currents in the central channel and so on betray its exoteric orientation in approaching these topics unique to the Great Perfection, and as such are rather different from Longchenpa's approach to these issues in TDD and TCD, which are both totally and uncompromisingly oriented towards the esoteric tradition of the Great Perfection - the lower order wind and mind complex simply fade away or dissipate like clouds in the sky, whereupon the always already light intensity of the luminous channel naturally shines outwards, like the warmth and light giving rays of the sun. This distinction is clearly presented by Longchenpa in GTD 382,5-383,2:

"...(these lower tantric practices) advocate inserting your inner winds and seed-constituents (i.e. seminal nuclei) into the central channel from (their ordinary locations within) the flavor and solitary channels, which they claim (successively) liberates each of that channel's "knots", by force of which the corresponding enlightened qualities manifest (i.e. the liberation or untying of each knot liberates a certain degree of enlightened energy which enables our attainment of the corresponding spiritual level, culminating in the eleventh level, i.e. that of Buddhahood). However, (in actuality such practices result) in many obstructions, since they involve your own wind-currents entering into the channel-petals corresponding to the six types of living beings (see my note below), and thus give rise to a variety of distorted experiences and appearances. This is thus a key point pertaining to how (such tantric systems) deviate (into one of the many dead ends of the contemplative path).

(In contrast to this), here (in Direct Transcendence contemplation) we simply leave those winds to calm down of their own accord, and thus there is no question of having to insert them within the central channel. When the wind-currents of each (of the body's critical) channel-petals have thus become naturally purified away (not simply "purified), the luminous channel's gnostic winds naturally shine right where they are, and thus the pure visions of primordial gnosis light-up (such as the Spiritual Bodies, lights, and pure lands) while distorted appearances no longer manifest. As this luminous channel within the central channel intensifies and increases, those channel-knots gradually fade away within its luminosity and become liberated, whereby the spiritual levels' enlightened qualities naturally manifest...."

Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One* 340-341 is basically his rewording of Longchenpa's text, and Kapstein and Dorje's annotations (volume 2, 22-23) explain the "channel-petals corresponding to the six types of living beings" as the following six "centers" where our psychic energy concentrates: our forehead center corresponds to the god realms, our throat center corresponds to the demigods, our heart center to human beings, our navel center to animals, our secret center to starving spirits, and our feet's soles to inhabitants of hell. KGYT3 202,2-203,3 further describes how this results from our heart's gnostic essence's radiation ("the Ground-presencing") mixing with the lungs' wind-breath, and thus being filtered through "the impure gateway of cyclic existence" (an interiorization of the cosmic drama outlined in Chapter One) - depending on which of the subtle body's six main channel-petals (i.e. center of energy-flows) our psychic energy ("wind/mind") concentrate in, we experience the distorted appearances and experiences of its corresponding life form. In the case of we humans, that psychic energy concentrates in the human channel center, such that we experience human emotions, perceive human objects, environments and so on. It is said to be possible to shift this concentration of psychic energy into other centers via one's yogic manipulation of these internal energies, whereupon you will then experience the overall gestalt of sensations, perceptions, and so on of the class of living beings corresponding to that center.

On STCP2 14a,2ff, Longchenpa further points out how in dying our energies first concentrate within the central channel, and then subsequently concentrate within the luminous channel: "...when you die, all your vibrant energies and inner winds gather in the central channel, (and then) the exceedingly vibrant quintessence of the central channel's winds and vibrant energies gather within (this luminous channel), via which the radiant light (of death) manifests..." STCP2 14a,5 again identifies the vibrant quintessences of blood and breath within this luminous channel, i.e. their "subtle dimensions" which on the lower order material level we refer to as "breath" and "blood". He says the enlightened mind is within the space of their five lights, like a Ke Ke Ru gem (a white precious gem) put within a golden tube.

As mentioned above, GTD 377,5-378,1 gives a quite different identification of these luminous channels' five names than TDD and TCD. It describes the great kati golden channel as in the center of the central channel, and thus linked to the heart's center. The white silk thread channel then signifies that channel branching off from this luminous channel to run upwards to the Brahma's aperture (i.e. hair swirl on the crown of our head), where it acts as support for the manifestation of awareness' non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies and the pathway for training on "transference of consciousness". The slender coil channel then acts as support for radiant light at the center of the four energy wheels. The crystal channel connects the heart to the eyes, and acts as support for the innumerable manifestations of adamantine linked chains. To correlate this to TDD's account, GTD's great golden channel embraces the functions of TDD's great golden and crystal tube channels. GTD's crystal channel can be identified with TDD's white silk and slender coil channels. GTD's slender coil channel corresponds to the secondary function of the slender coil that TDD details below, while GTD's "white silk channel" then signifies TDD's "naturally free empty channel" (a term which GTD's account omits). In general the "linked chains" and "non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies of awareness" are identified (often we find the expression "the Spiritual Bodies of the adamantine linked chains"), while in GTD the former term ("adamantine linked chains") signifies the linked chains as the luminous channels' radiation in general, which gives rise to all the various light presences of the Direct Transcendence visions, and the latter expression ("non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies of awareness") then refers to the linked chains proper (which we visually experience as resembling garlands of pearls) as transforming into the Buddha-images which manifest in the third vision. This is made quite clear on TDD 378,2-3, which says that the "real" linked chains are the "radiation of the luminous channels", while its "parts" are explained as all the seminal nuclei and rainbow-colored lights. Thus the term "linked chains" has both a general and technical reference, the latter which is specifically connected to the "Spiritual Bodies".

TCD2 66,5 cites a passage from *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* which gives quite different names for these four luminous channels, despite TDD's present account being based on that same Tantra (see TDD 251,3-4):

"...It manifests in the heart as the Spiritual Bodies; in the conch shell house as primordial gnosis (\*"primordial gnosis" denotes the wrathful deities, gnosis here in the sense of awareness' dynamics); in the Briguta (\*i.e. eyes) as awareness (\*referring to the linked chains as awareness' radiation); and in the four channels as the light of the expanse's lighting-up and the seminal nuclei. *The Tantra of Self Arisen Awareness* explains these four channels thus:

*From the smooth white empty channel,*

*The precious radiating channel,  
The great liberating channel,  
And the white crystal channel of movement,  
Consciousness mounts upon the winds,  
And via the great gateway of the Briguta ("eyes")  
Emerges on the path, and dissolves into the range of emptiness.*

*Without dissolving and vividly clear,  
Primordial gnosis is completely present in mandalic fivefold clusters..."*

This obviously refers to the four luminous channels Longchenpa is discussed here in TDD, though the names differ from the standard terms give here, and elsewhere in TCD. Generally the "smooth white channel" indicates the "white silk thread channel" (see ZMYT2 140,1), and thus may refer to the two branches running to the eyes (including the "slender coil channel"); the "great liberating channel" would seem to be synonymous with the "naturally free empty channel"; the "white crystal channel" would seem to be identical to the "crystal tube channel"; and by default, it would seem the "precious radiating channel" refers to "the great kati golden channel", with "precious" indicating it located within the "precious" Tsitta heart, from which the other channels "radiate" outwards. However, until a further reference to these is located, these identifications must be regarded as probably at best, as alternative explanations and correlations can be easily thought of. In his follow-up comments there, he mentions the four channels from the great heart channel, and then cites the above passage from *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* referring to the flavor, solitary, all-encompassing, and kati crystal tube channels.

KGNT1 60,3ff has a very important and unusually detailed analysis which classifies the body's channels into five principal channels. The key importance of this passage is its extremely clear analysis of the "central channel" and its relation to the "light channel", along with the significance of the alternative terms for "central channel", i.e. the "Avadhūti channel" and the "all-encompassing channel". In short, it details three aspects of the central channel: (i) the "Avadhūti channel" which in the vernacular is the spinal cord, (ii) the "all-encompassing channel" which in the vernacular is the "vitality channel" (i.e. the main blood vessel trunk), and (iii) the "luminous channel" which refers to a slender thread of pure light energy running up the center of our body between (i) the spinal cord (towards the back of the body) and (ii) the main blood vessel trunk (towards the front of the body). This simple analysis is all the more remarkable when considered in contrast to the current confusion that appears to exist among many modern Tibetan Nyingma scholars on this issue. However, his mention of these "vernacular" equivalents is not necessarily entirely straightforward, as it may also indicate a certain ambiguity here in terms of references to mystic physiology being superimposed upon physical medical physiology (i.e. the "central channel of efficacious means" cannot be reduced to the material spinal cord, though the two are closely linked - for instance, at death the spinal cord remains in our corpse, yet it is not clear if this aspect of the central channel would then also be totally absent in the person's post-death subtle body:

"...(i) The central channel of "efficacious means" runs to the brain with its upper tip and to the genitals ("secret place") with its lower tip. It is termed the "Avadhūti", is a radiant white in color, and about the width of a bamboo arrow; in the vernacular, it is referred to as the "spinal cord" (*rGyungs Pa*).

(ii) The central channel of "insight" is termed "Kundharma" ("all-encompassing"), and runs to the crown with its upper tip and to the genitals with its lower tips. It is a radiant red in color, and about the width of a bamboo arrow; in the vernacular, it is referred to as the "vitality channel" (*Srog rTsa*; i.e. the "aorta", though the reference is actually more vague, such as the "main arterial and venial trunks").

(iii) The central channel of "efficacious means and insight's indivisible union" is located up in front of the vertebrae and in back of the vitality channel ("aorta"), with its upper tip running to the "Brahma's aperture" (referring to the top spot on the head where all hair spirals outwards) and its lower tip running to the genitals. Its external color is white and its internal color is red, while it is the mere width of a thread of white silk; devoid of blood and lymph, its interior is empty like the hollow tube of a wheat straw. This is the central channel of the ultimate indivisibility of efficacious means and insight.

(iv) To the right of those three "central channels" is the red "flavor" channel, with its upper tip running up to the brain, and then curving down to the two nostrils, while its lower tip runs to the genitals.

(v) To the left of those three central channels is the yellow "solitary" channel, which is the width of a bamboo arrow..."

Padmasambhava then goes on to say that these five channels exist straight up the body's center, like lines or pillars, with their innumerable "secondary channels" radiating out as/at the five "wheels". This very clearly indicates that these "wheels" are images for the branching out of nerves, arteries, and more subtle energy conduits from the body's center to pervade the rest of the body (here specified as equal in number to the hairs on our body). He goes on image the 60 secondary channel-petals at the crown wheel as resembling an "umbrella", the 16 secondary channels at the throat wheel as resembling a "*Khri'u*" (TDCM defines as a "small seat" (?)), the 8 channels of the heart wheel as resembling a lotus flower, the 64 channels of the navels as resembling stands of hair tangled together every which way, and the 28 channels of the genitals wheel as resembling a tree trunk (in that they are all gathered into a single root). He also compares them to the appearance of a "five tipped vajra", which he gives as a rationale for terming the body's subtle energy system the "vajra body".

Longchenpa may be referring to this passage (or one like it) on STCP2 13b 6-14b6, where he describes the luminous channel as being "an extremely slender luminous pathway (about one fiftieth of a horse tail's hair in width) at the center of the heart (running) through the central channel". He then says that one master criticizes such a description with these words: "Since the authentic central channel is precisely this (luminous channel), there is no need for it to be related to the interior of the central of the three (main) channels (in the body)". This seems to relate to Khanpo Chodrak's terming the "coarse" central channel as the vitality channel, and the "subtle" central channel as the luminous channel, while above Padmasambhava implicitly terms the spinal cord and vitality channel as the twofold "coarse" central channel, and the luminous channel as the "subtle" central channel. In STCP, Longchenpa responds to such criticism by saying that when all the inner winds enter the central channel (i.e. in the dissolution process of death, sleep, or deep contemplation), it is still necessary for the vibrant quintessence of the central channel's winds to *further* enter within this gnostic channel, and thus it makes sense to talk of the central channel and gnostic



channel being "related" to each other. Thus he points out a functional distinction which necessitates that we differentiate between the "central channel" and the "luminous channel", which appears to be related to his need to differentiate the Great Perfection system from lower tantric systems (which simply emphasize the central channel as being ultimate), as well as being in line with his general articulation of everything as coordinated hierarchies with inner primordial pure energies surrounded by adventitious, coarser impure "sheaths". Just as in Chapter Four he strictly differentiated between primordial gnosis and the ordinary mind, or the Reality Body and the universal psychic ground (though each dyad is internally linked as coordinated hierarchies), here too he must make a corresponding differentiation between the coarser central channel which is the primary location for the universal psychic ground, and the subtler luminous channel within it which is the primary location of primordial gnosis' own pure radiation. If these two were not mutually "linked" or "related" to each other, then it would be hard to envision how this inner core of light could function as the source of our impure psycho-physical existence, or how we can recontact this enlightened nucleus of radiant light within our depths via contemplation - the whole point of such hierarchical linkages is to explain how primordially pure gnosis can uninterruptedly operate within us as the source of our undeniably dualistic and distorted experience, yet remain itself undistorted, such that in enlightenment its capacities unfold from within us to form the gestalt of Buddhahood. In short, the absence of such a link results in no mechanism to account for the simultaneity primordial purity and distorted experience.

As for Padmasambhava's identification of the term "Avadhūti" with the spinal cord, "all-encompassing channel" with the vitality channel, and the "true" central channel with luminous channel, it is unclear to what extent (if any) such distinctions apply to Longchenpa's own Great Perfection writings. At times it appears he clearly uses the term *Avadhūti* as a synonym with the all-encompassing channel, yet his tendency to use the term only in certain contexts would seem to indicate the term has a special connotation (an example is the term is often used in accounts of sexual yoga where the semen is reversed from the penis back to the head through the *Avadhūti* channel (see ZMYT1 383,1), suggesting the spinal cord). He mentions every one of those terms within at various points in TDD and TCD, yet I have been unable to locate any discussion of these terms interrelation corresponding to Padmasambhava's clear presentation. While Padmasambhava places the luminous channel *between* the spinal cord and blood trunk ("vitality channel"), here in TDD's fifth chapter, Longchenpa places the luminous channel *within* both the blood trunk ("vitality channel") and *Avadhūti*, and in general consistently locates the luminous channel *within* the "central channel", a term usually signifying the "all-encompassing channel" in his writings (Gyatso, writing in a different tantric tradition, locates the "thick" vitality channel in front of the spine, and the central channel in front of the vitality channel (*Clear Light of Bliss* 20)). Although both terms "central channel" and "all-encompassing channel" can at times loosely imply or connote the luminous channel located within their sheath, strictly speaking Longchenpa is always careful to differentiate between them - he never terms the luminous channel as the "central channel", but rather is always careful to say the luminous channel "within the center of the central channel" (unlike Padmasambhava's identification of the luminous channel as the third aspect of the central channel). Furthermore, it appears to me that Longchenpa in general considers the "vitality channel" to be the outer sheath of the central channel/all-encompassing channel (rather than simply identifying the two), while itself in turn then is the outer sheath of the luminous channel (see below for the KGYT3 passage that clearly indicates these three as distinct). Certainly the coarse vitality channel (i.e. as the main blood trunk) cannot be identified with the central channel, since the latter is often said to be devoid of coarse material blood (TDD 255,5) Longchenpa uses the term

"Avadhūti" relatively sparingly, and it may have a certain connotation of the spinal cord (especially here on TDD 251,1 where it is referred to in close conjunction with the vertebrae in describing the luminous channel's pathway from the heart to the eyes), though passages such as TCD2 84,1 suggest it simply a less common term synonymous with the all-encompassing channel (it there refers to the nuclei within the Avadhūti, as well as the nuclei within the vertebrae, which could only refer to the spinal cord itself - also see TDD 204,7 for an unclear reference in the context of the embryo). As I mentioned above, it seems to me that there is a certain ambiguity here as regards to the spinal cord in relation to the "vitality channel", central channel, and luminous channel which perhaps simply wasn't consciously resolved by Longchenpa, and thus can be understood as related to all three in a subtle way.

On TDD 251,1 in this chapter, Longchenpa places the luminous channel within the "Avadhūti" channel, following which it goes "from the right of the spine" up into the head), while on the prior page he identifies it as present within the "vitality channel" (250,5). Following the passage from *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* which Longchenpa is here prefacing, the Tantra identifies the vitality channel as the pathway for the ordinary mind (Ati 528,2). TDD 248,4 and elsewhere refer to the luminous channel as "in the area of the spine" (*sGal Tshigs*), which would suggest it being associated with the spinal cord, though in fact the aorta is not far distant from the spine. TCD2 13,2 explicitly says the luminous channel is "in the area" of the spinal cord", but both say "in the area of" rather than "within", though TCD2 69,2 says the luminous channel enters the head "via" the vertebrae. TDD 251,4 describes the luminous channel as emerging "from the right of the vertebrae", though I have yet to determine the precise significance of "right" in that context. TCD2 39 in describing the Enjoyment Body-energy within our body, says its location is the "Avadhūti" and its pathway is the "right little tip channel" (which would seem to connect it to the central and vitality channels, while the Reality Body-energy's location is given as the Tsitta-heart, and its pathway as the crystal tube channel. While in the process of dying Longchenpa will describe all the blood as collecting within the "vitality channel" and then within the heart (which obviously indicates the "aorta"), it must also be pointed out that at least some medical texts explicitly specify that the "vitality channel" as home of the universal psychic ground should be understood as referring to the "white" vitality channel, i.e. the spinal cord (see the medical dictionary SR 591). This problem ties in with Chapter Six's description of the luminous channels in the head as "within" the outer sheath of the optical sensory channels, which is usually understood as referring to "white channels" (*rTsa dKar*), i.e. optic nerves rather than blood vessels. An interesting passage in *The Doctrinal Cycles of Cetsun's Seminal Heart-Essence Teachings* (134,1ff) which David Christensen first mentioned to me explicitly denies identifying the luminous channel as either the "vitality channel" (evidently the blood trunk) or the "blood vessel within the spinal cord" (the author understands the luminous channel as an aspect of the central channel - see 108,2):

"...Though there are some who identify the central channel as the vitality channel and the blood vessel (literally "black channel") within the spinal cord, (such descriptions must be rejected): when the wind-currents enter the former (i.e. become overly concentrated there), insanity ensues; while the latter is present even in the corpse of a dead person. Thus the real central channel should be understood as the luminous channel of primordial gnosis which exists within the vitality channel.... such that the latter is the "support" and the former the "supported": when the wind-currents enter it, radiant light manifests, while when you die, they dissolve within the expanse of reality..."

We could also interpret this as meaning the vitality channel is the central channel's "support", while it in turn acts as the support or basis for the luminous channel, which is thus its "supported". This passage clearly indicates that the exact location of the luminous channel with respect to the spinal cord and vitality channel was controversial, and reductionist tendencies to simply identify it with one or the other were rampant. Finally, a learned Master of the Bonpo Great Perfection tradition (Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche) verbally explained the path of the kati crystal channel to me as follows (any errors here are my own fault, as the notes I took from our conversation were rather hurriedly written down). He said it was located neither within the vitality channel (as blood trunk) nor the spinal cord, and explained that the vitality and luminous channels both stem from the heart and thus are located next to each other rather than as "container" and "contained". He further described the luminous channel as proceeding from the heart towards the back of the body, where it enters the spine's sheath at the seventh vertebrae down from the head, and from there proceeds upwards to the skull in tandem with the spinal cord, though it doesn't actually enter into the spinal cord (which accords perfectly with Longchenpa's remarks). However, he kept saying it went inside the spinal cord's "skin", which he gave as *kLad Pa'i Shun* when pressed for clarification. The channel then passed through the bottom opening at the base of the skull, and proceeds up along the backside of the skull. When it reaches the skull's apex, it is at this point that it splits into the two branches running to the center of the eyes (whereas Longchenpa usually seems to indicate this fissuring takes place lower in the skull, such that the two branches pass by the two ears), i.e. the pupils. He said that while this crystal tube channel is itself immaterial, it is closely related to our material corporeality. Perhaps related to this, Dr. Dolma in a medical context says that the sixth vertebrae is the "seat of the vein of life" (evidently referring to the "vitality channel"), which is thus especially important in treating insanity (*Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* 193).

GTD 376,6 places the "great channel of unchanging supreme radiant light" within the center of the central channel, terming it the "kati golden channel". KGYT1 470,2 says that the "luminous crystal tube channel" is "in the middle of the central channel" of the triad of the flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channel which are present like pillars in the middle of the body's main energy wheels. On KGYT2 154,2, Longchenpa identifies the "all-encompassing channel" and the "central channel" as synonymous, which along with the flavor channel and solitary channel form the three principal channels of the human body. He also makes standard correlation of the white flavor channel with "efficacious means" and the red solitary channel with "insight" (159,4), which Padmasambhava instead correlated to the Avadhūti (i.e. white spinal cord) and "all encompassing channel" (i.e. red vitality channel) respectively. In GTD 377,3, Longchenpa explains the flavor channel's branches all have white quintessences flowing through them; the solitary channel's branches all have red quintessences and blood flowing through them (which explains the "white" and "red" colors); the central channel's branches all have winds flowing through them; and the luminous channel has luminous seminal nuclei and light rays within them. This suggests connecting the flavor channel to the spinal cord and the solitary channel to the vitality channel, though such a correlation would fly in the face of Longchenpa's consistent relation of the central channel with the vitality channel (the fluidity of subtle body descriptions, however, does not make this an utter impossibility). In the discussion that ensues in KGYT2, Longchenpa consistently refers to the third channel as the "all-encompassing channel", while placing the crystal tube luminous channel within the "central channel". He also specifies that the "vitality channel" is the basis for the "consciousness of the universal ground", and implicitly seems to be clearly identifying the "vitality channel" with the all-encompassing channel,

though he is not totally explicit. KGYT3 119,4 says the luminous channel termed "kati crystal tube channel" is "connected" within the "vitality channel" of the heart's precious eight corned palace "at the center of the central channel". Subsequently (120-121) in an analysis of how our modes of consciousness dissolve as we fall asleep, Longchenpa indicates that our psychic energy ("wind-mind" complex) dissolves from the flavor and solitary channels into the "central channel" such that we enter dreamless sleep devoid of either ordinary experience or dreams (corresponding to the "universal ground", with the eight modes of consciousness all dormant). He then says that at this point two things can happen, depending on whether one has deep contemplative experience or is merely an ordinary individual: for the former, "the wind-currents of the central channel" *further* dissolve into the "crystal tube channel", whereby s/he experiences pure luminous visions of the Ground-presencing; for the latter, "a wind-current impels" his/her psychic energy from the "central channel" to the "vitality channel", whereby his/her karmic propensity-permeated universal ground activates, from which the psychic consciousness and emotionally distorted psychic consciousness re-activate as s/he begins to dream. These two passages together clearly indicate that there is a triad of channels located within each other (related to each other in terms of decreasing size and increasing subtlety): the "vitality channel" as the largest, and as such, the outer sheath; the "central channel" as within the vitality channel; and the luminous channel, located within the sheath of the central channel, as well as being within the larger vitality channel's overall sheath. In this interpretation, "central channel" would then refer to an immaterial conduit of psychic energy (here correlated to the basic substratum of the "universal ground") which is located within the semi-material vitality channel (precisely speaking, the location of a slightly coarser dimension of the universal ground as it tends towards specific modes of consciousness and acts as the repository of karmic propensities), and contains within itself the more subtle purely immaterial "luminous channel" (which is the location exclusively of pure gnostic radiation, and as such, is not the location of the universal ground in any sense). Thus, despite KGNT's comments above, I believe the reference of "vitality channel" has shifting significance, and at times connotes one of these more subtle channels located within it rather than the functions proper to it as the main blood vessel trunk, as well as being a "symbolic" subtle body term in relation to acting as residence of the universal psychic ground, and a certain link to the spinal cord. This ties in with TDD's description here of the "crystal tube" channel as the gnostic radiation as present within the "vitality channel", placing the luminous channel at the core of the vitality channel. STCP1 87a 6ff also places the "channel of supreme unchanging radiant light" within the middle of the central channel in its description of sleep and dreams, locating the "universal ground" within the central channel, and the "expanse of reality" within this gnostic light channel. It also supports KGYT in describing the activation of the universal ground and psychic consciousness within sleep (i.e. dreaming) as indicating the wind-currents of energy spreading outwards into the vitality channel, which is the support of our psyche's self-consciousness.

515. Longchenpa here interprets the following five obscure lines from *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness*, which he cites on the following page (TDD 251,3):

*The Tsitta's four gateways are unobstructedly radiant:  
They bring about the ongoing shining forth,  
The ongoing dissolving,  
The instantaneous shining forth,  
And the instantaneous dissolving (of radiant light)*

Longchenpa interprets the final four lines as referring to the "shining forth" and "subsiding" of the heart's gnostic radiant light, and correlates these directly to the four luminous channels in this fashion: (i) the great golden channel brings about its "ongoing shining forth", (ii) the crystal tube channel brings about its "ongoing dissolving", (iii) the white silk slender coil channels bring about its "instantaneous shining forth", and (iv) the naturally free empty channel brings about its "instantaneous dissolving". The two references to "shining forth" are quite clear: the great golden channel is the root luminosity issuing forth directly from its heart-source, and thus is the crucial conduit via which light radiates outwards from our enlightened nucleus of gnostic awareness located within the heart; the white silk and slender coil channels, then, run from the heart to the eyes, and function as the passageways for our internal gnostic luminosity to shine out from our hearts into the sky (where we then visually perceive it as rainbow-colored light forms), which happens in special contexts such as the Direct Transcendence meditation or post-death visions. The contrast between "ongoing" (*rNam Pa*) and "instantaneous" (*sKad Cig*) apparently connotes how the former is an "ongoing" process as gnostic luminosity is constantly being emitted from the heart as our source of vitality and vibrancy, while the latter manifestation of gnostic light only takes place in certain special contexts ("instantaneous" or "instant"). *rNam Pa* literally means "aspect", "type", "situation", "appearance", or "manner", and here is evidently being used in the sense of an ongoing process or manifestation as opposed to a specialized temporary manifestation. *sKad Cig* means "an instant", "instantly" or "momentary", and here connotes the special context of visionary experiences where in an "instant" this gnostic luminosity "suddenly" shines out via our eyes, so that we have the extraordinary opportunity to directly perceive it with our own eyes (as opposed to its normal latent operation within our body/mind, which is imperceptible to us).

The two references to the "dissolving" of radiant light are not as clear, but evidently Longchenpa interprets these as signifying that the radiant light "dissolves" into a given sphere or space such that the light is present there (i.e. it is "absorbed" therein), rather than the light simply "dissipating" or disappearing. The crystal tube channel refers to the radiant gnostic light as it moves outwards from the heart to permeate the vitality channel (our main blood vessel trunk), such that it "dissolves" down within to permeate our body internally in the constant "ongoing" process of this light serving as the ultimate source-vibrancy of all our psycho-physical energy ("dissolves" means "permeate", and not "disappear"). "Inside" contrasts with radiant light's "external" manifestation via the white silk channel, while "down" indicates its movement "down" into the body rather than "up" through the eyes (*Mar* could be interpreted as *sBug Mar*, but I think the context indicates reading *sBug* and *Mar* separately). The naturally free empty channel, on the other hand, acts as the pathway for our linked chains of light to shine out from the top of our head into the sky during the Direct Transcendence visions, such that they "dissolve" into the sky's expanse in this special "instance" (they "dissolve" by becoming seamlessly integrated with the expanse in their radiant presence, not by "disappearing" therein - see Longchenpa's further elaboration below on line 7). Dissolving" (*Nub*) literally means the "setting" of the sun, while '*Char* means the "shining" or "rising" (*Shar*) of the sun, but I have translated *Nub* as "dissolve" rather than "subside" to clarify Longchenpa's interpretation here. These lines are rather tricky since "dissolve" in opposition to "shining forth" usually refers to the "dissolution" or "subsiding" of the mandalic light forms back into one's heart during the fourth vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation (YZD uses this exact wording "dissolve within the expanse" to describe the fading away of impure psychic activity), but in our context is in the less common sense of how paints "dissolve" into the canvas without thereby becoming invisible. For this

reason, at first glance it seems that these two mentions of "dissolution" or "subsiding" may refer to the fourth vision, where the visionary presences "dissolve into the expanse", and thus also "dissolve within our own interiority". TCD2 64,7 supports this interpretation with another quote from *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* which indicates that these presences "dissolve" (*Thim*, which literally means "dissolve" or "absorb", and is also the term used below in TDD on line 7) within the empty sky in the sense that their presence is seamlessly exteriorized into it, and not in the sense that their luminous presences "dissipate" (the quote on TDD 251 also uses *Thim* to describe how the luminosity moves upwards from our heart). That passage says that the light emerges onto its path via our eyes, and "dissolves" (*Thim*) into the empty range, where they are "vividly clear without any dissolution (*Thim Byed Med Pa*)", which provides a clear contrast to "dissolve" and "dissipate" despite using the same term for both (*Thim*). This use of *Thim* is also made extremely clear elsewhere in the same Tantra (Ati 536), where in describing how the lamps "dissolve" into the sky, it compares it to the way in which the sun's orb "dissolves" into the center of the empty sky, as well as to how all streams merge into a single great ocean or river (to make the sense of "dissolve" as "absorb" clear, Guenther in *Matrix of Mystery*<sup>59</sup> renders *Thim* as "embedded", which is a quite nice solution in that context, though in the present context the verbal form "embed" would be necessary).

Additional possible connotations are that with the crystal tube, "dissolve" may connote this luminosity's "latency" as usually present within our bodies, while with the naturally free empty channel it could connote how these linked chains are "dissolvable" (*Thim Rung*), i.e. they are pure light-images that can be subsequently dissolved back within the expanse in the fourth vision, and are not concrete, material things. One final possibility indicated by TDD 251,4's use of "dissolve" to refer to the heart's light entering the channel on the way to the eyes as it shines outwards, could be that this sequence indicates (i) the "emergence" of this luminosity from the heart, (ii) whereby it "dissolves" into the luminous channel, (iii) which in contemplation then suddenly "shines out" from the eyes via the luminous channel's branches, and (iv) suddenly "dissolves" into the sky as a consequence of its shining forth, such that this radiant light is seamlessly present within the sky above us.

516. This could also be translated as "the great golden channel signifies the luminous radiation of the essential channel which is self-emergent from the heart", since it basically indicates the heart's luminosity as it emerges from within the heart's infinite interiority, and thus acts as the source for the other luminous channels which all branch off from it (such that the radiant light of awareness within our heart naturally radiates out from its seat via this root channel into a network of luminous channels running throughout our body). Though Longchenpa here describes these four channels as all being "gateways" facing outwards from the heart's radiant light, elsewhere he indicates that the other channels branch off from the great kati golden channel itself (TCD2 69,1-3):

"...The upper tip splitting off from the great kati golden channel (the luminous channel at our heart's center) is the white silk thread channel, which runs up the vertebrae from the heart's tip, and from the (region near) the ears itself splits into three branches: two (branches) run to the gateways of the (right and left) eyes (respectively), while the central (branch) runs to our Brahma's aperture (i.e. the top center of our head). The slender coil channel links up (that luminosity) to each of the four energy wheels (within our body) from the heart. The crystal tube channel is present together with radiation of the luminously radiant five (gnostic) winds within the vitality channel..."

Thus when Longchenpa refers to the "heart's luminous channel" (an especially prevalent term in TCD), this signifies the great kati golden channel which the entire luminous channel network branches off from. For this reason, Longchenpa at times uses the term "great kati golden channel" to signify in short hand the entire network of luminous channels, or its trunk within the central channel - see TCD1 374,7ff for a reference to the "great kati golden channel" as forming the root of the navel wheel's many channel-branches along with the standard triad of flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channels, while GTD 376,6 and 377,5 identify the great kati golden channel as the channel of "unchanging supreme radiant light" that is present within the "center of the central channel".

More frequently, however, Longchenpa uses the term "kati crystal tube channel" to refer to the entire luminous channel network with one term (LYT1 465-466, etc.), and it is in fact this term alone which he refers to in discussing the luminous channels in his commentary to *The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra (Guhyagarbha Tantra), Dispelling all Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions* (as mentioned above, I have not yet checked through the commentary page by page, but am basing myself on several scholars' verbal information). It would appear that "kati crystal tube channel" was perhaps the original term for this luminous channel network, which was subsequently (?) elaborated into the fourfold or fivefold set of terms discussed by Longchenpa here, while the "great kati golden channel" later (?) came to also be used at times to indicate the entire luminous channel network in brief by virtue of its status as the "root" at the heart's center from which the other aspects of this network branch out from. In fact, VNT2 86,4ff refers to the "four great channels" (see above) as the flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channels along with the "great kati golden channel", which he also refers to as the "crystal tube channel" (see my discussion above for other ways to refer to the luminous channel network at large, and the implications of this variation in terminology). However, both names include the term *kati*, and Longchenpa is fairly consistent in using the term "kati crystal tube channel" to signify the entire luminous channel network, while referring to the "crystal tube channel" (without the "*kati*" as a prefix) as one of the *divisions* of that network, which in TDD is specified as involving its presence within the vitality channel. Thus in this context *kati* appears to be the crucial term indicating a phrase refers to the entire network of luminous channels. *Kati* would seem to almost definitively be a foreign word import from an Indic or Central Asian language, but, unlike most of the other foreign word imports used in these Great Perfection texts (*Tsitta/Citta*, *Tsakshu/Cakṣu*, *Bhanda*), I have been unable to locate any Sanskrit term relating to *Kati*. By examining its use as "kati crystal" and "kati gold", it would seem it may indicate the "finest" or most excellent quality of something from among sundry things ("the finest crystal" or the "finest gold", just as the luminous channels are the "finest" of the intricate network of channels existing within our body - Dr. Guenther first pointed this out to me, though it is a fairly obvious conclusion to draw). A Tibetan scholar identified *Kati* as a term meaning "channel" (Sanskrit *Nādi*; Tibetan *rTsa*) in Oḍḍiyāna language. Oḍḍiyāna is said to be the birthplace of the great Indian saint Padmasambhava, who traditionally is described as playing a crucial role in the transmission of the Great Perfection teachings to Tibet (KGNT is ascribed to him). While Oḍḍiyāna was certainly a historical country or minor kingdom in ancient India associated with Buddhist tantric traditions (its exact location remains controversial), it also became a mythic location in tantric or mystic geography that assumed a special importance for the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism to which Longchenpa belonged (such as the Kingdom of Shambhala in the *Kālacakra Tantra* tradition - see NSTB for many references to Oḍḍiyāna). As such, the "language of Oḍḍiyāna" often crops up in certain "treasure texts" (*gTer Ma*) that are said to be psychically transmitted by Padmasambhava across time and space to rebirths of his

Tibetan disciples, and which are sometimes in the forms of "yellow scrolls" written in non-Tibetan scripts and language which must be then "translated" into Tibetan. The language of these texts is at times referred to as the secret codes of the Sky Dancers, or even the language of Oddiyāna. In the present context, presumably the idea is that when the basic Tantras of the Great Perfection were translated into Tibetan from other language(s?), the term for inner channel in Oddiyāna language (*Kati*) was then kept to refer to these luminous channels, since the luminous channels' purity is evoked by this term's numinous nature. Its evocative quality derives from the Oddiyāna Kingdom having a special connection to the Great Perfection teachings, Oddiyāna in general being said to be a country of Sky Dancers, and in particular being the homeland of Padmasambhava, who played such a crucial role in first bringing these teachings to Tibet. In addition, "ti" is evidently a common second syllable suffix in the ancient Zhang-zhung language of Western Tibet (see Haahr's *The Zhang-Zhung Language*, p. 15). However, I have yet to locate any discussions of the etymology of this term *Kati* in Longchenpa's corpus or elsewhere.

517. While "kati crystal tube channel" is generally a term signifying the entire luminous channel network (see above), Longchenpa here indicates that the term "crystal tube channel" refers to just one aspect of that network, which he describes as being the slender column of radiant present within the vitality channel at our body's center, such that this pure radiance is enclosed by the larger and coarser "sheath" of the vitality channel, which usually refers in its coarser form to the "aorta" or main blood trunk in our body's center (see my discussion in annotation to TDD 245,1). In fact, Khanpo Chograk informed me that at *rDzogs Chen* monastery they generally spoke of the "coarse" central channel as the vitality channel, and the "subtle" central channel as the luminous crystal tube channel, which is present within it like butter inside milk (the butter naturally emerges under the right conditions, but is not directly visible within the milk at the start). As I discuss above, this mention of the "vitality channel" also seems to be linked to the spinal cord. TDD's following page discusses the pathway of these luminous channels from the heart to our eyes via the "Avadhūti", which in that context would seem to possibly signify the "spinal cord" (in line with Padmasambhava's remarks in KGNT - see TCD2 13,2 for an explicit reference to the "spinal cord" in this context). It would seem that Longchenpa is here specifying the "crystal tube channel" as indicating the presence of this luminosity within our central channel running up our upper torso's center from the navel to the brain (while the following mention of the "Avadhūti" is accounting for its presence in our eyes, through which it can shine out into the sky to form visionary appearances), which accounts for how it pervades our entire body (thus in our present account the significance of the luminosity within the vitality channel itself is being emphasized as distinct from its flowing upwards towards the eyes, while in other accounts this central luminosity could conceivably be seen as the "trunk" from which the eyes' luminous channels branch off). This is borne out by his specification above that the crystal tube channel brings about the "dissolution down inside" of the heart's radiant light, which indicates the primary function being defined here as the "crystal tube channel" is the ongoing permeation of our body by the heart's inner light, and not as the special radiation of that light outwards into the sky via the eyes in visionary contemplation. In particular, this is thus related to "coarse" circulatory system and its flow of life-sustaining oxygenated blood (again see my comments on the "vitality channel" in annotation to TDD 245,1), as well as the nervous system stemming from the spinal cord, both of which are coarse derivatives of this internal slender line of pure light intensity. In addition, this directly relates to the location of our "universal (psychic) ground" and "universal ground consciousness" within the vitality channel, which I discussed in detail in my annotations to Chapter Four. This fundamental substratum of our current impure psychic activity is the "brightness" of the luminous



channels' radiation under the conditions of our general neurosis, which then itself fissures out into the various modalities of sensory consciousness and other mental activity (thus TCD specifies the vitality channel as our ordinary mind's characteristic pathway). In this way, the crystal tube is present as the slender core of pristine ever-pure luminosity within the vitality channel's center, while in the vitality channel's wider sheath its secondary diluted radiation takes shape as our "universal ground", and thereby indirectly operates as the source for all our psychic activity. As mentioned above, TCD2 69 1-3 specifies that the crystal tube channel "is present together with radiation of the luminously radiant five (gnostic) winds within the vitality channel". Also as discussed above, GTD 376,5-7's quite different account lumps this functional dimension of being present within the central channel/vitality channel along with its emergent from the heart as the "great kati golden channel", and instead defines the crystal tube channel as being the luminous channel linking the heart and eyes. See above for my discussion of the relation of the "vitality channel" and the "central channel" - Longchenpa usually clearly indicates this central aspect of the luminous channel network is located within the central all-encompassing channel of the standard triad of subtle channels discussed subsequently in this chapter.

518. In short, the "white silk thread" and "slender coil" are the two channels running to our two eyes from the heart, which are critical in Direct Transcendence visions as our "stimulated" or activated inner luminosity flows through them out of our eyes and into the space around us, where we there visually perceive it as exteriorized visionary forms of light in direct perception (TDD here correlates the white silk thread channel with the right eye, and the slender coil channel with the left eye). See TCD 69,1-3 translated above for an alternative account where the white silk channel indicates the channel running from our heart to our head, which there splits into three branches near the ears: the right and left branches run to the right and left eye, and the central branch runs to the Brahma's aperture at our head's crown (here specified as "naturally free empty channel"). In that account, "slender coil channel" indicates the separate function (see TDD below) of linking the heart's luminosity to the center of each of the four main energy wheels within our body, whereby that luminosity permeates out entire psycho-physical existence. In fact the term "white silk thread" is often used as a general term to signify the entire channel running from the heart to the two eyes (as on TDD 248,4), while the term "slender coil" at times is simply defined in terms of the presence of this light at the center of the body's main energy wheels.

The name "white silk thread" (*Dar Kar sNal Ma*) indicates many facets of this light channel, which is both the size and quality of a thread of white silk: "white" signifies that it is a conduit exclusively for positive pure light energy ("white" as "stainless") as well as its not being a channel for material elements like blood (which is red, and so on); "silk" indicates that the energy-flow within this channel is experienced as of supreme value to our lives, just as silk is valued as the finest or most precious of cloths, as well as sheer silk connoting the "translucency" of this light; "thread" indicates not only that this is "subtle" energy (as a thread is "fine"), but also that it is a "slender" (thread-like) channel in comparison to the relatively thick channels of the aorta, spinal cord, and so on (which KGNT describes as "the width of a bamboo"). In short, these channels themselves visually resemble a very fine white silk thread running from our heart to our eyes, and interestingly (as Dr. Guenther first pointed out to me), in many near death experiences a similar shape resembling a subtle silk cord of light has been reported. ZMYT1 371,3-4 in describing an internal visualization, says the flavor channel is "like a white silk thread" (*Dar sKud*), and solitary channel is like a "red silk thread". As for the term "slender coil" (*Phra La 'Khril Ba*), this would also appear to indicate a similar type of appearance, with "slender" indicating its

"subtle" (*Phra Mo*) character as well as width, while "coil" (*Khril Ba*) usually indicates a snake "coiled" around a tree, or a plant like ivy "coiling" or "snaking" its way around a tree (it can thus mean "embrace", "hug", or "coil up"). In the current context, it may indicate how this channel runs upward from the heart "in conjunction" with the spinal cord or central channel, like any ivy plant "coils upwards" around a tree or wall: LYT1 463,6 describes the luminous channel as "'coiling" (up) to the area of the vertebrae from the heart's tip, and then via the area of the throat's right and left little tip channels "coiling" (up towards) to the two ears" (other texts generally say "running" (*Zug Pa*) here instead of "coiling up" (*Khril Ba*)). ZMYT2 285,6-286,1 describes this luminous channel as being "smooth/soft (*mNyen Pa*) and coiling (*Khril Ba*) like a white silk thread between our heart and eyes", which suggests either that its appearance is like a twisted thread, or how a thread usually won't stay straight but rather falls into haphazard "coils". This description may be based upon visions of curling white light in contemplation, similar to the near death experience mentioned in Western literature. STCP2 14b 1 describes the white silk thread-like channel's "shape" as like a *Thag Khug Pa*, which apparently indicates a "coiled rope", or "entwined thread" (see DAS). Finally, it seems to me certain this issue is related to TDD 259,6 and 261,2's description of this channel as "spiraling to the right" (*gYas Su 'Khyil Ba*). It may very well be that this thread of light is being described as like a slender cord formed of several strands spiraling upwards, which both possibly evokes a visionary appearance as well as indicating how the heart's luminosity "spirals upwards" towards the eyes, and connoting how the luminosity eventually will "spiral back into the expanse" in enlightenment as it "coils back up" within its state of pure potential. I must note that several Tibetan scholars I questioned about this were uncomfortable with these lines, as they felt the luminous channels should be "perfectly straight" devoid of the distortions in other channels referred to as "knots" (*mDud*) and "twisting" (*'Chus Pa*), though I think this explanation of "spiraling" can be differentiated from the distortions Longchenpa refers to as "twisted".

519. Longchenpa here points out that the "slender coil channel" can also refer that aspect of the luminous channel network which runs to the centers of the four energy wheels from our heart, thereby permeating the four major energy centers of our body (navel, heart, throat, and crown) with the heart's luminous radiation. "Arc-shaped" literally refers to the Tibetan vowel "e" (*Greng Bu*), which visually resembles a slightly curved slash. KGYT2 158,3 describes the kati crystal tube in the same manner as an "arc" of light within the central channel, which is the heart's radiation emanating to the crown such that the wrathful deities are radiant in the brain, and with two tips proceeding to the eyes. While the wording here is rather odd ("a single arc-shaped channel *within* the slender coil"), it appears that what is intended is that the single arc of light runs through all four wheels' respective centers such that each is linked directly to the heart, while at each wheel's center this arc then gives rise to secondary luminous channels radiating outwards from within the sheath of the central channel such that each "wheel" is pervaded by light, as well as possibly permeating the body. In interpreting this as referring to secondary channels of light radiating outwards from the primary arc-shaped channel (TCD2 69,2 merely indicates the center of each wheel is thus linked to the heart), I am basing myself mainly on GTD 377,4, which mentions all the subsidiary channels that branch off the flavor, solitary and all-encompassing channels, and then describes the kati golden luminous channel thus: "...As for those splitting off from this (channel) of radiant light, there are luminous nuclei and rays present in minute luminous channels within the four wheels' respective centers..." However, given the consistent emphasis on "the four wheels' respective centers" and the absence of any unequivocal reference to minute luminous channels permeating the body, I am unsure as to whether Longchenpa merely means that this slender line of light penetrates each energy wheel's center, or that he is also implying that

smaller channels emanate outwards from those wheels to every part of the body. Accordingly, I continue to have doubts as to whether "splits up at the four wheels" indicates simply that a single unbroken arc of light runs through their centers (which we can thus analytically "split up" into four segments), or whether "splits up" signifies it fissuring into many lesser luminous channels radiating out from each wheel's center, or finally whether there might be four distinct lines of light each emanating out from the heart and running directly to their respective wheel's center. The final reading seems unlikely, though, since in that the four wheels are described as being arranged on a vertical axis directly above or below one another, it wouldn't make any sense to talk about four distinct lines running from the heart to each center, since all four centers are part of a single vertical axis. Locating further descriptions of this in Longchenpa's corpus could prove helpful here.

As mentioned above, in line with this distinct function of the slender coil channel, TCD2 69, 2 says "as for the slender coil, it links (the luminosity) to each of the four wheels' center from the heart", and explains the two prongs running to the eyes as branches of the white silk thread channel; GTD 377,6-7 also says that this channel "acts as the support of radiant light from the center of the four wheels". Thus whereas here in the TDD this pervading of the wheels with the heart's luminosity (whereby the body's main energy centers are linked up with awareness' essence within the heart, making the entire body a body permeated with light and awareness) is referred to as an additional function of the slender coil channel in addition to its running to the eye, in TCD Longchenpa collapses its running to the eye (and the naturally free empty channel running to the cranium) within the term "white silk channel", thus making the slender coil's sole function the pervasion of the four wheels; GTD defines the "white silk thread" in terms of TDD's "naturally free empty channel", and attributes the two eye-luminous channels as being the "crystal tube channel". LYT1 466,1 (see above for translation) refers to this function in general as attributed to the "luminous channel within the central channel", and specifies it as involving the shining of the "great seminal nuclei of radiant light within the center of the four energy wheels", and also notes that the luminous channel's radiation shines as the "seminal nuclei within our inner channels (in general)".

520. TCD2 69,2 clearly indicates the "naturally free empty channel" described in TDD as the middle branch of the white silk channel (the right and left branches running to the eyes, while this goes to the crown where the hair swirls outwards), which is itself the upper tip of the great kati golden channel, while KGYT2 158,3-159,2 specifies it as the middle branch of the central channel and implies the white silk channel (as the two branches running to the eyes) is located within the outer sheath of the two upper branches of the solitary channel (which function as optical nerves - TDD 253,5 implies that instead the right eye's branch is within the flavor channel's sheath, and the left eye's branch is within the solitary channel's sheath. While these are differing presentations, it must be recalled that three main channels are very close to each other, and not being coarse physical substances are amenable to more fluid descriptions of the patterns of energy-flow within them. Thus one could think of the crystal tube as within the central channel which then (as it enters the head) branches off into the two prongs of the white silk channel running to the eyes (in conjunction with the solitary channels' dual branches accounting for ordinary vision), while the central branch runs to the cranium (the naturally free empty channel). Once it enters the head and prior to its branching, the crystal tube could then be thought of as the white silk thread channel so that the three branches are attributed to it. Alternatively, the entire network is often merely labeled with the single name ("kati crystal tube" as opposed to "crystal tube"), indicating these names are merely artificial divisions with symbolic or yogic rationales, and thus with accordingly variable terms of reference.

The naturally free empty channel in particular operates as the pathway for the linked chains of light to shine forth in the sky (see above for my discussion of the meaning of "dissolve" within this context), here termed as "the Spiritual Bodies of non-conceptual awareness" since these linked chains are the awareness of radiation, and as such contain the seed-potency of the Buddhas' Spiritual Bodies within them, which within Direct Transcendence contemplation are "ripened" into radiant images of the peaceful and wrathful deities. As discussed above, GTD 377,5-378,1 names the naturally free empty channel as the "white silk thread channel", and specifies it also acts as the passageway for contemplative training on consciousness transfer (where one learns how to "shoot" one's psychic essence out of the top of the head to a pure land, which is a technique relied upon especially in the case of sudden death). Another point of interest in GTD's account is that Longchenpa also specifies this channel as acting as support for the manifestation of "Spiritual Bodies of non-conceptual awareness", yet subsequently says the crystal tube channel (which it identifies as running to the eyes) acts as support for the "innumerable manifestations of the adamantine linked chains", thereby making a distinction between these two. However, TDD 257,7 and elsewhere make explicit the connection between the linked chains and naturally free empty channel - see above for my distinction between the term "linked chains" as indicating the luminous channels' radiation in general, and as indicating specific visual presences which transform into Buddha-images during the third vision (and which the naturally free empty channel acts as the specific internal conduit for). See TDD 395,2 for a reference to this channel in the context of the third vision of Direct Transcendence, where Longchenpa relates this channel running to the Brahma's aperture with the appearances of the wrathful mandalas of deities appearing at that time (obviously relating to the wrathful mandala's normal location being within the skull).

521. There are "five" luminous channels if we count the slender coil channel separately from the white silk thread channel while still including the naturally free empty channel, while "four" luminous channels would be either considering both the slender coil and white silk thread channels as one channel, or excluding the naturally free empty channel and considering the slender coil and white thread channels separately. While these two correlations (the five luminous channels to the five primordial gnoses, and the four luminous channels to the four lamps) don't necessarily indicate any particular one-to-one correspondences, it seems possible to present a viable set of correspondences by analyzing other passages without denying other possibilities. The following table correlates the five primordial gnoses, the four gnostic lamps, the five luminous channels, and the four Direct Transcendence visions.

i) *White silk thread channel*: discerning primordial gnosis, the far ranging water lamp, and the first vision. The white silk thread channel is in what the term "water lamp" signifies (the luminous channel projecting to the eye), and plays the key role in the initial vision where primordial gnosis' self-presencing visions are "discerned" without subjective bias and attachment interfering.

From TDD 257,5-7 it can be inferred that the white silk thread channel is correlated with the first vision, while TDD 207,6, TCD2 92,6 and TCD2 9,1 correlate the far ranging lamp with the first vision as well. In correlating these channels with the five primordial gnoses, I have based myself on CBD's correlation of the five primordial gnoses with the four visions plus Breakthrough contemplation (see below), and simply matched up items on the basis of their mutual correlation with the same vision.

ii) Great kati golden channel: "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis, the insight lamp, and the fourth vision. The insight lamp's discernment penetrates through all illusions, and thus causes the dissolution of all external displays within the expanse in the fourth vision, which could possibly be understood as their light subsiding within one's heart via the great kati golden channel.

From TDD 257,5-7 it would seem one could correlate the great kati golden channel with the fourth vision in that it is the ground whereby luminosity first shines forth and whereby it ultimately redissolves within as all the visions ultimately dissolve back within one's own heart in the fourth and culminating vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation.

iii) Crystal tube channel: mirroring primordial gnosis, the empty seminal nuclei lamp, and the third vision. In the third vision, via the impetus of the crystal tube's luminosity the seminal nuclei mature into the mandalic visions of deities, such that the complete mandalas of awareness normally latently present within our body are now "mirrored" in the external sky.

TDD 257,7 correlates the crystal tube channel to the third vision, while TDD 207,7 and TCD2 9,2 correlate the expanse lamp with the third vision. An anomaly is TCD2 92,7's association of the expanse lamp with the fourth vision (evidently considering "expanse" in the sense of the empty expanse of reality within which all dissolves in the fourth vision), rather than the rainbow-colored light displays playing the major role in the second and third visions), though in that context no other lamp is correlated to the third vision.

iv) Slender coil channel: sameness primordial gnosis, the expanse lamp, and second vision. In the second vision ("contemplative experience's intensification), the expanse's rainbow displays predominate via the impetus provided by the slender coil channel kicking into full operation, and their expansion outwards begins to overcome our ordinary distinction between our own perception and the transcendent spiritual reality as the visions completely pervade our field of vision ("sameness"). In addition, "sameness" (*mNyam*) and "contemplative experience" (*Nyams*) are homonyms in Central Tibetan dialect.

TDD 257,6 correlates the slender coil channel with the second vision, while TDD 207,6, TCD2 92,6 and TCD2 9,2 correlate the empty seminal nuclei lamp with the second vision.

v) The naturally free empty channel: efficacious primordial gnosis, no lamp, and no vision (there are only four lamps and visions, and this is the fifth luminous channel - however, following CBD we can perhaps correlate it to Breakthrough contemplation). Here admittedly the connection between efficacious gnosis and the naturally free channel is weak, though the linked chains shining forth via the latter are in fact the critical dimension in "accomplishing" the maturing of awareness into the Spiritual Bodies, the culminating event of the Direct Transcendence visions. When considering the possible connection to Breakthrough contemplation indicated by CBD, "efficacious" indicates freeing phenomena within the range of naked pristine awareness, and, though in general the luminous channels don't play a role in Breakthrough contemplation, the name "naturally free empty" accords well with the nature of Breakthrough meditation.

CBD 275,4ff correlates the "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis with the fourth vision ("reality's exhaustion"), mirroring primordial gnosis with the third vision ("awareness'

optimization"), sameness primordial gnosis within the second vision ("contemplative experience's intensification"), discerning primordial gnosis with the first vision ("reality's irremediacy"), and efficacious primordial gnosis with Breakthrough contemplation, which is the necessary prerequisite for the stable self-awareness needed in Direct Transcendence meditation. While I have utilized CBD's account to correlate these channels to the five primordial gnoses, obviously alternative correlations between the two quintets are equally viable. On the whole I have correlated these channels, lamps, and primordial gnoses on the basis of each one's separate correlations with the four visions, and while often these correlations are interlinked with each to a high degree, just as often one will find that by interconnecting different sets of correlations many conflicts ensue (since each set of correlations has a specific context-related motive, and can be easily reversed in a different context).

Additional passages relating to these correlations are as follows.

(i) YZD 698,5-6 correlates the mirror, discerning and efficacious primordial gnoses with the primordial gnosis of phenomena in all their plurality, and correlates the "reality's expanse" and sameness primordial gnosis with the primordial gnosis of phenomena in their final reality. TDD then correlates water and insight lamps with the former, and the seminal nuclei and expanse lamps with the latter. Combining these two passages, the mirroring, efficacious and discerning primordial gnoses would be grouped with the water and insight lamps, and the expanse and sameness primordial gnoses with the seminal nuclei and expanse lamp. This doesn't accord with my correlations above.

ii) TDD 207,4ff correlates the water lamp with white, empty seminal nuclei lamp with red, expanse lamp with yellow, and insight lamp with green, while generally the following associations of the five colors, five primordial gnoses and five elements pertain: expanse gnosis, blue, space; mirror gnosis, white, water; sameness gnosis, yellow, earth; discerning gnosis, red, fire; and efficacious gnosis, green, wind. This would result in correlating the water lamp with mirror gnosis, the seminal nuclei lamp with discerning gnosis, the expanse lamp with sameness gnosis, and the insight lamp with efficacious gnosis. This doesn't accord with my correlations above either.

iii) TCD2 40,6-7 correlates the far ranging water lamp with first vision, the expanse lamp with the second vision, the empty seminal lamp with the third vision, and the insight lamp with the fourth vision, which would seem the most natural correlation of the four lamps with the four visions: the initial visions shine forth via the far ranging water lamp; the rainbow-colored shifting patterns of the expanse's lighting-up play the critical role in the second vision; the mandalas appearing within the large nuclei's spheres are the principal feature of the third vision; and insight's resolute recognition and realization drive one onto the original purity of reality within the fourth vision as all visions dissolve back into their source. TDD 207,6 and TCD2 9,3 also correlate the insight lamp with the fourth vision.

522. Here the distinction between "brightness" (*Dangs*) and "radiation" (*gDangs*) may indicate a subtle distinction between the inner lucency of the luminous channels ("brightness") and its exteriorized presence in light forms within the sky's expanse ("radiation"). The pathway here described is a general summary of the luminous channels' pathway concentrating on the heart-to-eyes portion which plays the vital role in the Direct Transcendence visions as the heart's inner luminosity shines outwards via this channel. While "Avadhūti" here could simply refer to the central channel within which this luminous

channel is located, it may also imply the spinal cord given the reference to the vertebrae and Padmasambhava's identification of this term with the spinal cord (see my annotation to TDD 250,3 - there is, of course, no question of identifying it with the spinal cord or anything else, as these luminous channels are the vibrant immaterial source of all else, not the imaginary epiphenomenon of material structures). TCD2 12,6-13,4 gives a more detailed account, which starts from the "super-nuclei" in the navel region, then runs up to the heart, and from the heart is a single root channel in the area of the vertebrae, i.e. the spinal cord (both are specified). The luminous channel then enters the enclosure of the skull at the base of the head within the upper part of the neck, at which point it splits into three branches. The middle branch runs on up to the top of our head at the "Brahma's aperture", while the right and left branches run to the right and left side of the head respectively (near the two ears), and then arc up to "cerebral membrane" (*kLad rGya'i sPris*) at the top of the brain, from which they curve down to the two eyes' respective centers.

TDD's account here, however, is problematic in its mention of from the "right side of the vertebrae", and "the right little tip channel", as I am unsure as to the significance of "right" here (NGB and Ati both support TDD's reading of "right"), as well as the relationship of "right" to "little tip channel". This problem is compounded by the fact that in the Chapter Four Longchenpa cites a passage saying the luminous channel's pathway as via the "left" little tip channel, though in other citations of that passage by Longchenpa it reads "right and left" little tip channels. While the identification of the "little tip channel" itself is not entirely unproblematic (see my annotation to TDD 271,1), it would appear clear that in general this refers to two blood vessels (or sets of blood vessels) running vertically up either side of the neck - KGYT2 158,5 and KGNT1 367,1 merely indicate the luminous channel's pathway is via the throat's "windpipe" or gullet (*Gre Ba*). Thus the main significance here is that the luminous channel runs upwards from the vertebrae through the neck, via which it enters the head and fissures into the above described set of three branches. However, it is unclear whether this luminous channel merely passes near by the little tip channel within the neck, or actually passes through its sheath, as well as what is involved in this confusion between "right" and "left". TDD 246,2 has a quotation specifying that the ordinary mind's pathway in the neck is via the "left" little tip channel (NGB, Ati, and TCD2 54,3 all agree with this reading of "left"), which contrasts nicely with Longchenpa specification here of the "right" little tip channel - these two pathways run in tandem up our neck, with the higher order channel (primordial gnosis) to the right, and the lower order channel (ordinary mind) to the left (the left/impure and right/pure correlations appear elsewhere). TCD2 39 gives the pathway of the Enjoyment Body as the "right little tip channel" and its location as the Avadhūti, while the pathway of the Reality Body is the crystal tube channel and its location is the Tsitta-heart (the exact meaning of this passage is not entirely clear, though it seems to suggest correlating the Enjoyment Body here with ordinary psychic activity). This mention of "right" may also be connected to the term "spiraling to the right" (*gYas Su 'Khyil Ba*) found in the beginning of Chapter Six. However, TDD 248,4 and 248,6 specifies that the luminous channel runs via the "left" little tip channel, with the first mention being a quotation from *The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* that in NGB as well as TCD2 68,7 and LYT1 464,3's citations read "via the right and left little tip channel" instead of just "left" (Ati's reading is "from the right via the little tip channel"). LYT1's preface says "it runs to the two ears from the area (*Dabs*) of the neck's right and left little tip channels", indicating that the luminous channel merely runs nearby the little tip channels in the throat rather than through their "sheath" or interior; TDD 248,6 also says "the luminous channel in the area of the left little tip (channel)", which also indicates the little tip channel is just a way to physically indicate the location of the luminous channel, since the latter itself as an

immaterial presence is otherwise impossible for us to pinpoint. Usually it is clearly indicated that the channel splits into two branches as it enters the lower part of the skull after passing through the neck, at which point it then runs up either side of the head in the region of the ears (usually "right and left" ears are specified), while LYT's mention of "right and left" little tip channels seemingly suggests that the split into two (or three if one considers the branch running up the head's crown) takes place in the neck while still running upwards in tandem with the neck's little tip channels. TCD 13,2 clearly indicates it is a single "root" channel at the vertebrae above heart, while it splits into three *after* it enters the head's enclosure at the upper portion of neck; KGYT2 158,5 also clearly indicates it passes through the throat's gullet, and splits into three only *after* entering the brain. Along these lines, the reading of "right" little tip channel would seem preferable if read in the sense of the single "trunk" running up the right side of the neck and thus entering the skull, at which points it splits into three branches running up the head's center, right side, and left side.

However there is an additional problem here, since in addition to the little tip channels being located on both the right and left sides of the neck, Khanpo Tsenam said that the term "little tip channel" can also signify a collection of two or three channels running in tandem with each other up either side of the neck. Along these lines, he suggested that "right" and "left" could also refer to the "inner" and "outer" members of these channels running in tandem with each other ("inner" signifying further in towards neck's internal center and "outer" signifying closer to the neck's external surface). In support of this, TCD2 19,7 apparently speaks of the "sleep channel" (i.e. the carotid artery) though it doesn't name it explicitly, saying it is "to the inside" of the little tip channel, and the luminous channels (again it doesn't name them explicitly as such) are "to the outside" of the little tip channel. The context is with regards to a technique involving pressing the side of your neck to get an initial experience of the light visions: while the Tantra seems to say you squeeze off the strongly pulsating neck artery (probably the carotid artery), Longchenpa emphasizes you must exert force gently, since if you press deeply on the "inner" channel you will interrupt the blood flow and thus faint away ( a classical attribute of the carotid artery), while by merely pressing lightly on the "outer" channels (i.e. closer to the neck's surface) where wind-currents and luminosity flow, you will experience a brief vision of lights (Longchenpa thus apparently interprets the reference to the "strongly pulsating artery" as being merely an easy way to locate the appropriate spot to apply pressure, while in fact it is not the intention of this technique to apply pressure to the artery itself). Along these lines, Khanpo Tsenam suggested reading "right" as meaning the luminous channel is located "to the outside" of the little tip channel (whereas "left" would mean it was located "to its inside" and thus further from the neck's external surface), while "left and right" indicates the luminous channel is already split into two branches, one on either side of the neck. Thus he interpreted the luminous channel as two branches running near the right *and* left little tip channels, though in both cases it is located "to the right" of that side's little tip channel, i.e. to its outer side (the mind's channel would then be located to each channel's left", i.e. to its inner side). This also raises a somewhat less likely possibility, which is that it runs near the "right little tip channel", while "right and left" (*gYas gYon*) signifies "to the left of the right little tip channel", with "to the left" interpreted as meaning "to the outside" (*gYas gYon* usually means "right and left", but it is conceivable that it could be interpreted as "to the left of the right (of something)"). Or one could interpret this as meaning the luminous channel is on either side of the neck "to the outside" of the little tip channel, while the mind's impure channel is on either side of the neck "to the inside" of the little tip channel (or if the term "little tip" is taken to indicate a set of two to three channels on either side of the neck, the luminous channel is located within the "outer" little tip channel, and the mind's channel is located within the



"inner" little tip channel). Alternatively, we might say that "right and left little tip channels" is just a vague reference indicating it goes up the neck, and thus in the proximity of the little tip channels on either side of the neck, while "right" simply is a more specific description indicating that the channel is more on the right side of the neck. Although LYT clearly says "in the area" of the little tip channel rather than "within its sheath", some Tibetan scholars verbally located both the mind and primordial gnosis' channels within the sheath of the little tip channels. One scholar also suggested that in males "the mind" principally moves through the left little tip channel, for females it would be the right little tip channel. Finally, TCD1 385,2 mentions the "right" and "left" little tip channels in the context of discussing the channels of the throat energy wheel, which includes an ambiguous reference to "gnostic light and blood quintessence" re these two channels here, though I haven't yet figured out the reference precisely. This passage does clearly say that the "left" little tip channel is the channel through which emotional distortions flow, thereby clearly identifying it as the pathway for the mind, which accords with TDD's fourth chapter's description. In this same section, TCD2 386,3 mentions that "letting blood" from the right little tip channel or left little tip channels can act as medical therapy for certain illnesses (like neck stiffness), thereby clearly indicating the little tip channels are blood vessels (it seems their particular reference is to the jugular veins, while they can also include the carotid arteries that run up the neck in tandem with those veins).

In summation, it seems to me that two interpretations suggest themselves as the most likely. Firstly, the mind's channel is a single channel running within the sheath of the little tip channel on the left side of the neck, while primordial gnosis' channel is a single channel running in the proximity of the little tip channel on the right side of the neck (TDD's reference to "left" would then have to be considered mistaken, and references to "right and left" evidently be a vaguer reference (?) of its location in the neck in general). Secondly, the mind's channel runs to the "left" of the little tip channel on either side of the neck, i.e. on that channel's inside closer to the neck's center, while primordial gnosis' channel runs to the "right" of the little tip channel on either side of the neck, i.e. on the channel's outside closer to the neck's surface (again Chapter Four's reference to it being to the "left" would have to be considered mistaken). LYT ("in the proximity of") and TCD2's ("to the outside of") description clearly indicate that the primordial gnosis' channel is only in the proximity of the little tip channel rather than within its interior (specifically, "to its outside" closer to the neck's surface), while TCD1's description just as clearly indicates the mind's channel is actually *within* the little tip channel's interior rather than simply nearby it. It will perhaps be necessary to further research medical presentations of the "little tip channels", and certainly may be helpful to further consult Tibetan scholars on this issue.

523. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 432,3; At1 526,2).

*The ongoing shining forth, the ongoing dissolving, the instantaneous shining forth, and the instantaneous dissolving (of radiant light):* see my annotation to Longchenpa's prefatory interpretation of these lines on TDD 250,3-4.

*Light then emanates from that, and the four lamps are present within the unobstructed empty sky as Spiritual Bodies of light, vividly lucent and intensely clear, in the manner of linked chains:* "Unobstructed" signifies that the empty sky itself is immaterial without any impediments to the lamps' manifestation, and also connotes that the lamps themselves are "unobstructed" in that the obscurations preventing their clear manifestation have been removed, such that they are unimpededly and unceasingly present within the empty sky. The

crucial elements in these lamps' luminous manifestation are the initially minute linked chains of light, which are termed "Spiritual Bodies or gestalts of light" since within the third vision of Direct Transcendence each individual sphere of these chains transforms or "ripens" into a Buddha-image, which together form the vast mandalas of peaceful and wrathful deities that appear at that time. However, if all the visionary presences and psychic operations occurring within Direct Transcendence contemplation are considered, they can be subsumed into the four lamps discussed at length in Chapter Six. In simplified (and somewhat erroneous) fashion, they can be identified as spheres of light (seminal nuclei), rainbow-colored lights (expanse), self-awareness (insight), and our eyes (water lamp).

524. These three channels running up our body's center are standard features in the subtle body descriptions found in most Indo-Tibetan tantric literature, unlike the "luminous channels" which are a unique feature of the Great Perfection tradition. These channels are a key element of tantric physiology and meditation (i.e. "imaginal" dimensions relating to our imagination as revealing non-material subtle aspects of our existence), yet are also intimately related to our body/mind's coarser physiological processes. While in general they are located at the center of the body with the all-encompassing channel in the center, the flavor channel to its right, and the solitary channels to its left, other details as to their color, lower and upper branches, functions and so on are described in a variety of ways even within Longchenpa's own corpus, which Longchenpa explains as being merely due to each textual/meditative system's particular "intent" or motivation (TCD1 364,3). Tibetan scholars have repeatedly informed me that these descriptions of the subtle body only apply to its highly energized vivid clarity as present in an accomplished meditator via his/her sustained concentrated visualizations, while in ordinary beings it is only indistinctly present in all its details. This suggests that these subtle body analyses pertain to a vague dimension of subtle energy associated with our coarse material structures, which these visualization techniques then concentrate and intensify in particular forms that allow our psyches to tap into ordinarily unconscious energy-flows within our body/mind. For this reason meditation on the subtle body can have striking physiological effects (conscious alteration of the body temperature and blood flow in very localized regions of the body, etc.), and it is important to understand the creative imagination underlying these descriptions as being a means to tap into "real" dimensions of a higher order than the coarsely material, rather than dismissing them as "fantasy" unrelated to "real" material universe we must live in. At the same time, it is equally important to not reify and concretize this tantric physiology in terms of materially physical physiology, and expect that every description merely "describes" some preexisting condition or state of affairs. In *Highest Yoga Tantra* (180-1), Cozort interprets some remarks by the present Dalai Lama as signifying that the different descriptions of the subtle body's channels in various Tantric systems simply corresponds to preexisting different structures in people's individual subtle bodies, such that "one needs to find a tantric practice for which one is physiologically suitable". This initially strikes me as a highly reductionist position to take, which has a number of ludicrous consequences, since most people seriously engaged in these meditative practices will at different times perform visualizations based on different descriptions of these three basic channels - should we now say that if a text mentions this deity as being in the right shoulder, that it must then be describing the this-deity-in-the-right-shoulder type of person, a concrete type of individual existing out in the world? While certainly it makes sense to speak of these subtle energies as varying in different individuals just as in Freudian thought we unconsciously alter our libidinal energy in complex symbolic patterns that have very real physical effects, the discussion below of the three channels "crookedness", thickness and so on directly corresponding to our current psycho-physical states doesn't indicate that independent of our contemplative visualizations these three

channels have such concrete forms, but rather is to symbolically account for observed individual variance: to understand these descriptions of the channels as merely corresponding to actual structures precisely existing in various individuals is to misunderstand the very nature of these descriptions, since their primary significance lies in their hermetic symbolic coherence which draws upon (but cannot be reduced to) referential qualities connected to our coarse physical structures. At the same time, these tantric texts interlink our material physiology with this contemplative-subtle physiology to a very high degree, and the current poverty of Western research on the nature of these subtle body theories/praxis requires us to confront the most basic questions concerning them. Thus the articulation of various possibilities (such as Cozort's comment) rather than merely literally translating canonical texts and re-mouthing what Tibetan scholars have said to us is extremely desirable, as it is only via daring to say something (as opposed to nothing) that we will eventually come to more precise and profound understanding of the realm of tantric physiology (i.e. the body of our imagination, which ultimately enables us to "dematerialize" the physical body itself).

In general, Longchenpa specifies the flavor channel on the body's right side as white, the solitary channel on the left side as red, and the central channel in the body's middle as blue, while other Buddhist tantric systems often (if not usually) appear to specify the flavor channel as red and the solitary channel as white (in his *Clear Light of Bliss* (20), Geshe Gyatso specifies the central channel pale blue with an internal "oil red color", while the right channel is red and the left channel is white). In accordance with most Tantric systems, the right and left channels are switched in females (see STCP2 10b,6 and TCD1 364,3), such that the "flavor channel" is located on the left side and the "solitary channel" is located on the right side. ZMYT2 110,4-5 implies that the correlations of ultimate nuclei with the solitary channel and conventional nuclei with the flavor channel should also be reversed in women, though more likely this simply means that the conventional nuclei flow on their left side and the ultimate nuclei flow in their right side, such that is merely an issue of whether the terms "flavor" and "solitary" should continue to apply to the "right" and "left" sides, or to the energy-flows characteristic of them in males, i.e. the conventional and ultimate. Since Longchenpa etymologizes the names "flavor" and "solitary" to link them to the conventional and ultimate nuclei respectively, it is clear that the general tendency is to apply the name "flavor" to the left channel in women (with the conventional nuclei) and the name "solitary" to the right channel in women (with the ultimate nuclei). The basic relationship between these two channels is that the right-sided flavor channel governs "conventional" processes, the left-sided solitary channel governs "ultimate" processes, and the central channel integrates this polarization of "conventional and ultimate" as the transcendent centering force (while the luminous channel within it is a type of primordial super-unity which is totally beyond any question of "integration" or "coalescence"). Thus this triad of channels is correlated to all the other triads running through Great Perfection thought, and represent the most basic mandalic structure of the polarized duality and transcendent centering third (the flavor and solitary channel are often discussed as representing "solar" and "lunar" energies, which the central channel then integrates). In TCD1 360,2-370,4, Longchenpa treats these three channels more extensively (see below for extensive summaries of these passages). On TCD1 363,6, he says that these channels are present as soon as our body is present, while they are not formed if no body is formed (indicating the complete interpenetration of our subtle and coarse bodies). With these channels, the wind-currents, primordial gnosis, and so on are present, while via contemplation relying on their key points we can become free, which is why it is important to understand these details on subtle body's internal channels. The three main channels (which subsume all the other subsidiary channels in the body) run

straight up the four energy wheel's centers in the body's center, without any bends or crookedness, such that "externally" they operate as the bases for our ordinary body, speech and mind; "internally" they operate to link us to Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind; and "esoterically" they serve as the pure source-potential for the three Spiritual Bodies (each triad's three elements should be correlated individually to these three channels in the order of the flavor, solitary, and all-encompassing channels respectively). The seed-syllables Om Ah Hūm are present with these three as well, such that these channels in their pure modes act as the foundation for those syllables' maturation into the triad of Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind; in their impure modes act as the foundation for those syllables maturing into the triad of our ordinary body, speech, and mind; and in their distorted mode create the space for their manifestation as the three emotional poisons (ignorance, attachment, and aversion). In a similar passage in LYT2 241,2-6, Longchenpa makes quite clear this refers to "in a impure context" and "in a pure context" (i.e. as sentient beings and as Buddhas), and spells out the correlations thus: (i) the flavor channel is related to hatred, radiant clarity, efficacious means, and the generation phase of tantric meditation; (ii) the solitary channel is related to desire, bliss, insight, and the perfecting phase of tantric meditation; and (iii) the all-encompassing channel is related to ignorance, non-conceptuality, the integration (of insight and efficacious means), and non-duality (of the generating and perfecting phases of tantric meditation). This passage correlates the three channels to three basic emotional poisons (hatred, desire and ignorance), the three main contemplative experiences (clarity, bliss, and non-conceptuality), the traditional Buddhist dyad of "efficacious means" and "insight" along with their integration, and the standard tantric meditative dyad of "generating" and "perfecting" phases, along with their climaxing non-duality. TCD2 357,5 adds that within the central channel the Om syllable is present along with luminosity, the Spiritual Bodies of the Totally Positive One and his consort, and the three Spiritual Bodies; within the flavor channel, the syllable Ah, along with luminosity and the three Spiritual Bodies are present; and within the solitary channel, the syllable Hūm is present along with luminosity and the three Spiritual Bodies.

STCP2 9a 3ff gives a standard exoteric (i.e. not specifically Great Perfection) account of these three saying these three channels like pillars in our body's center have the visual aspect of the three letters Om, Ah, Hum. Externally, they act as the basis for our ordinary body, speech and mind; internally, they act as the basis for our desire, hatred and ignorance; and esoterically, they operate as the basis for our Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind. The pale blue central channel's upper tip runs to the Brahma's aperture (where our "hair swirl" is centered on the crown of our head), and its lower tip runs to the "secret place" (genitals); to its right is the white flavor channel, and to its left is the red solitary channel. In the ordinary individual with his/her distorted energy, the right and left channels wrap around the central channel at certain spots to form twenty one "knots", which indicate blockages in our energy-flow reflected in our non-optimal physical, verbal, and mental levels of operation. These are also four major centers of energy-flow where many channels converge to the body's center where these three channels are located, and which are imagistically referred to as the "wheels": the navel, the throat, the heart, and the crown. There is also at times a fifth wheel described which is located at the genitals, which plays an especially important role in terms of the descent of the "quintessences" (semen and seminal energy) in sexual intercourse and yoga. GTD 376,6ff agrees in characterizing the flavor channel as white, the solitary channel as red, and the central channel as pale blue, and places them in the vicinity of our vertebrae, i.e. our spine. GTD explains each channel's respective color by saying that the white quintessence flows through the flavor channel, the red quintessence flows through the solitary channel, and winds flow through the central channel. Though all three types of winds (masculine, feminine, and neuter) flow through all the channels, the non-conceptual

neutral winds only flow partially through the flavor and solitary channel, and hence it is said that winds flow through the central channel. See KGNT1 366,5 for a different account, which says the "ultimate nuclei" flow through the central channel, "winds" flow through the right channel, and "nuclei" flow through the left channel, though KGNT1 426,6ff then agrees by saying the conventional nuclei flow through the flavor channel and the ultimate nuclei through the solitary channel. Related to this, KGYT3 118,3ff says that "strong, fierce winds" (*Drag rLung*) flow through the right channel, "gentle winds" (*'Jam rLung*) flow through the left channel, and "neutral winds" (*Ma Ning Gi rLung*) flow through the central channel. GTD also says that all channels branching off from the flavor channel have the white quintessence flowing within them, all branches from the solitary channel have the red quintessence and blood flowing through them, and all branches from the central channel have winds flowing through them (this suggests a correlation of the flavor channel and solitary channel to material reflections in terms of the nervous and vascular systems respectively, since in general "white channels" refer to nerves and "black channels" to blood vessels in Tibetan medical texts). The frames of references for these channels and their functions is not completely stable, as often channels within them and their particular functions are referred to by the name of the larger channel which encloses them, even though strictly speaking this a rough manner of speaking. A clear example of this is KGYT3 118,3's description of the three channels as "the channels of cyclic existence" (i.e. Samsara), which Longchenpa contrasts to the "kati crystal tube channel" as the "channel of the great transcendence" (i.e. Nirvana), whereas often in describing the solitary and all-encompassing channels he clearly talks about their transcendent dimension. In this context, he also mentions the types of correlations STCP makes above (the three channels acting as support for the three Spiritual Bodies, three emotional poisons, etc.) as belonging to "exoteric Tantras", and says "since such explanations are not ultimate, they are termed "the channel-petals of cyclic existence"...", at which point he turns his attention to the transcendent purity of the luminous channel network. This is of course in line with the general emphasis in the Great Perfection Tradition on the presence of an utterly undistorted, high intensity primordial dimension continuously located in everything as both their quintessence and their source (i.e. primordial gnosis within the mind, the light hues within material elements, the Buddha within sentient beings...).

525. See TCD1 360,5-6 for very similar lines to the first half of this passage which Guenther translates in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* II 21, while he also translates TDD's reading of these lines in *Creative Vision* 154. The term *Ro Ma* literally reads "the flavor one" with a feminine connotation (*Ma* is conventionally considered the feminine marker corresponding to the original "ā" in the Sanskrit term, but Longchenpa plays off its meanings as "mother" (*Ma*), "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*), and negation (*Ma*)). The corresponding Sanskrit term is the feminine form *Rasanā*, which MW defines as "the tongue as organ of taste", deriving from a root meaning of "juice", flavor, "taste". The Tibetan has an alternative etymology of "corpse" (*Ro*) and "residue" (*Ro Ma*), the former which Longchenpa explicitly plays off here in his creative unpacking of this term. Longchenpa's explication of the functional significance of all three channels is closely linked to his creative etymologizing of each one's name.

TCD1 363,5-370,4) discusses these three channels in terms of these eight categories: (i) their names (363,6-366,4); (ii) what they purify when yogically activated (366,4); (iii) what they symbolize (366,4-7); (iv) how they give rise to or engender (366,7-368,3); (v) what functions they perform (368,3-369,1); (vi) their respective essences (369,1-2); (vii) each channel's conventional reality (369,2-6); (viii) the esoteric precepts on how you these

channels "link-up". For clarity's sake, I will here present a summary of each section as it applies to the flavor channel (see my annotations to this chapter's discussion of the solitary and all-encompassing channels for a summary of these sections with regards to them).

(i) The flavor channel's name (Ro Ma): its name *Ro Ma* unpacks like this - "its yogic stimulation enables you to savor the flavor (Ro) which resembles the supreme of foods; leaving it in its ordinary state results in its being unable to perform its true function, like the corpse (Ro) of a dead person".

Longchenpa's etymologizing of *Ro* as both "flavor" and "corpse" enables him to point out operations of the flavor channel both in an contemplation-activated state of high-energy, and our ordinary diluted state of low intensity energy. While the precise reference of "stimulate" (*gTems Pa*) here is not clear, it clearly refers to utilizing yogic techniques to manipulate the energy-flowing within the flavor channel, which result in our experiencing intense sensations of bliss that are here imaged as like a "flavor" of some type of heavenly ambrosial food (a key element of Longchenpa's account of this channel is reading "flavor" (*Ro*) as referring to the emotions and nuclei, and in particular entering "vibrant quintessence", just as a flavor is the "quintessence" of a food). TDD's account indicates that the flavor channel in particular relates to the manipulation of conventional nuclei within it during sex yoga, and the consequent intense feelings of bliss. However, if this channel is simply "left to its own devices" in its ordinary distorted state without any contemplation-induced intensification of its energy, then it is like a "corpse" since its low energy operations leave us "deadened" and listless. Rather than the intense whole-body orgiastic bliss experienced in yoga, our experience of intense energy is usually limited to brief spasms of genitally organized sexuality and reactive sexually centered orgasm, while the conventional nuclei in general within this channel are "half-dead" compared to their optimized activities that contemplation can induce.

Longchenpa also adds that the flavor channel's location on the right side of male's body relates to its "engendering of the enlightened minds (i.e. seminal nuclei)", while its location on the left side of female's body entails those nuclei's being "obscured or blocked" (*Thums*), which is why "their desires are insatiable". This would apparently relate to the movements of the white conventional nuclei (the material form being semen) through the flavor channel, which is thus involved in ejaculation, and the consequent "satiation" of desire or sexual intensity. Women, however, are not capable of such ejaculation (which of course is not true in general, except in the coarse sense of the ejaculation of semen - see Hopkins' *Tibetan Arts of Love* for comments on this issue in Indo-Tibetan sources), and hence are capable of sustained sexual intercourse or intensity of feeling without this "satiation" experienced in release. Longchenpa's comment here is certainly open to criticism, although it must be considered in the context of his elaborate discussion of sexual yoga to understand any possible deeper significance (which, I must admit, escapes me). However, this does reinforce the connection of the flavor channel with sexual yogic practices and the conventional nuclei - KGNT2 48,6 says the lower tip of the flavor channel goes to the penis, through which the nuclei (i.e. semen) descend.

(ii) What the flavor channel purifies when yogically activated: with contemplative skill in the key points of the flavor channel, you can purify all your physical activities.

(iii) The flavor channel's symbolic meaning: the flavor channel symbolizes non-conceptual bliss, and thus in reliance upon it your memory is exhausted, and you come to resemble a

corpse (*Ro*). In this context, Longchenpa utilizes the etymology "corpse" to indicate the non-conceptual states of consciousness attained through yogically working on your flavor channel's energy-flows, since from our current distorted perspective we are unable to understand such vibrant non-conceptuality except in terms of "dying" or becoming "inert".

In addition, Longchenpa specifies the flavor channel symbolizes "efficacious means" (the solitary channel symbolizes "insight", and the all-encompassing channel symbolizes the indivisibility of efficacious means and insight - see below for further comments on this classification).

(iv) *How the flavor channel gives rise to or engenders the body:* on TCD1 368,2, Longchenpa explains "engenders" by saying "the body engenders the channels, the channels engender speech, speech engenders the mind, the mind engenders reality, and reality engenders yoga..."

In particular, the flavor channel engenders and develops our physical body with the conventional nuclei that flow through it, and thus plays the crucial role in embryogeny's physical development, which takes place via the conventional nuclei of the father's semen and mother's blood drop/ovum. These conventional red and white nuclei are present at the centers of each of the body's four main wheels, and during our current lifetime impel the activities relating to our body's origination, endurance and eventual disintegration, as well as performing functions relating to conventional psychic activity. Since it governs our physical existence, its state is closely linked to our physical state: if it is crooked or twisted, the body also will become twisted and distorted, and so on (see Longchenpa's description of the solitary channel for a more expansive accounts of how distortions in the channel result in corresponding distortions in the activity it governs, which in that case is speech). However, if your flavor channel is perfectly straight without any such kinks and distortions, then your body will be attractive, healthy, and full of youthful vigor - an excellent flavor channel directly entails a magnificent body.

(v) *The functions performed by the flavor channel:* "it displays the glow of our inner vibrant quintessence-energies, i.e. the lamps, while its solidified wastes impel the elimination of urine".

(vi) *The flavor channel's essence:* "its essence is bliss, and with its special "efficacious means" (such as sex yoga) it can free dualistically perceived objects (i.e. the "objective") within thoroughly pure reality".

(vii) *The flavor channel's conventional reality:* its reality is ingesting food, separating food's vibrant nutritious energy and toxic solidified wastes, and cleansing (the system). If the channel's interior is wide, that person's appetite is large; if it narrow, their appetite is slight; and if it is twisted, they perpetually feel nauseous, can't take food, and suffer a variety of illnesses. In addition, if you are skilled in yogically applying the key points of the flavor channel, you can eliminate attachment to food, such that meditative states become your food or nourishment.

(viii) *The esoteric precepts on how the flavor channel links-up:* by virtue of the body being joined with the flavor channel, the body's origination is freed as the Enjoyment Body, its endurance is freed as Emanational Body, and its destruction is freed as the Reality Body, such that the ordinary body is the mandala of the three Spiritual Bodies.

From this account we should note in particular the connection of the flavor channel to the body and sexuality (and thus to the contemplative technique of "sexual yoga"), which is linked to the conventional nuclei flowing within it. In addition, TDD notes a special connection between the flavor channel and the throat wheel, which is named "the flavors storage wheel". In this context, it is the throat's connection to eating food rather than speech that is being emphasized, since the solitary channel (rather than the flavor channel) is said to be especially linked to verbal processes. Longchenpa's ensuing discussion in TDD of the flavor channel's significance revolves around the flow of conventional nuclei (which embody the conventional vibrant energies that expand our body and mind) within it: its role in sexual yoga's (practiced via solitary visualization or with a consort) manipulation of these nuclei's movements with the accompanying internal sensation of the four joys; and its role in relation to the throat wheel's separating out the vibrant nutrients of ingested food from the solidified wastes, and then circulating the former throughout the body. It must be kept in mind that these channels in themselves are nothing other than simple conduits, and derive their meaningfulness and function from the dynamics of the energies (winds and nuclei) that characteristically flow through them.

526. Longchenpa's opening lines should be understood in the context of the following commentary:

*The etymology of "Ro Ma": this channel is similar to salt in that it functions to extract (or "taste") the flavor (Ro) in everything, and it engenders an uncommon experiential savoring in dependence upon the blissful nature of the seminal nuclei (within it), which is what is meant by terming it "flavor" or "taste" (Ro):* Longchenpa first offers a twofold creative etymology for the first syllable of the "flavor" channel (*Ro Ma*), which literally means "flavor" (*Ro*). The first aspect of this etymology of "flavor" relates to salt, which when added to all sorts of food, gives each food "flavor". In fact, in many South Asian languages it is common to ask "Is the salt right?" as a way of asking if the food is tasty. This relates to the key role of the flavor channel in our emotional mood at large (the "flavor" or "tasting" of life-experience in terms of pleasure, pain or neutrality), its particular role in the intensely delicious flavor of sexuality and orgasm (and its pure "whole body" non-genitally organized energizing orgasm experienced in sexual yoga), and its connection to the throat wheel's extraction of the nutrient "flavor" and vibrant energy from ingested foods. In general, the conventional seminal nuclei (which predominantly flow through the flavor channel) can be thought of as the "flavor" of our subtle energy system and experience, since these are the organizing intelligent "genetic" centers which are the heart or "spice" of the bland inner channels and winds. In particular, these conventional nuclei (including the hormones) are connected with the fluctuations of our emotional states ("rushes of adrenaline", and so on) and the body's overall physical state (see TDD 254,1), such that all our internal and external psycho-physical experience's "tones" or "flavors" are related directly to the flavor channel in which they flow. This imaging of our experience in terms of the eating process ("emotions" as "flavors", "sexual intercourse as "eating", the Eucharist, etc.) is cross-cultural (see Brown's *Love's Body* 162-175), since "eating" is a primeval mode for our emerging understanding of how we encounter the world without and incorporate it within - perception is a type of immaterial "eating", whereby we taste the wild variety of "flavors" or "tones" of things in the external world, just as our emotional reactions to people and things can be understood as our affectively "tasting" their "flavors" or overall energy/being ("eating" also figures prominently in the multidimensional symbolic dramas operative in our unconscious, such as our



unconscious attempt to resolve our alienation by figuratively "consuming" the other). The most intense of these emotions of course is sexual bliss, which is directly tied to the movement of nuclei within the flavor channel enabling us to "taste" the conventionally supreme bliss of our physical embodiment. Finally, the flavor channel is closed linked to the throat and its role in our ingestion and digestion of food, whereby food's subtle vibrant nutritious energy (its "flavor") is extracted and its possibly toxic dross or solidified energy is discarded.

The second aspect of Longchenpa's etymology of "flavor" refers in particular to the role of the conventional nuclei's movements in the flavor channel, which in sexual intercourse result in an intense experience or "savoring" blissful orgasm totally unlike our ordinary dulled feelings. When accompanied by the practice of sexual yogic techniques involving the visualization of these nuclei moving up and down the channel along with the resultant experiences of the four joys and so forth (see the end of Chapter Five), we are able to contemplatively "savor" an "uncommon" or "extraordinary" experience of intense bliss totally beyond ordinary genital orgasm and its "common" experience of bliss. Thus in these experiences we "taste" the flavor channels' ordinarily latent "flavor" in terms of the blissful emotion that correlates to the optimal nature of the nuclei's movements as "greased" by our skilled visualizations.

Furthermore, (its second syllable) Ma ("female" or "mother") derives from its developing out of desire, and also relates to its impelling the expansive awakening of Buddhahood in dependence upon desire for those dominated by desire: Longchenpa here offers a twofold etymology of the second syllable in *Ro Ma*, which usually means "mother", but can also signify the feminine (*Ma* - Guenther's gloss of "bottom" in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us II* is very unlikely, and in fact he corrects it to "motherly" in *Creative Vision*). In fact, all three channels have *Ma* as their final syllable (*Ro Ma*, *rKyang Ma*, *Kun 'Dar Ma*), and TCD1 364,4 explains that this syllable *Ma* can be etymologically explained as these three channels being the "mother-foundation" (*gZhi Ma*) of all other channels within our body. In the current context, this channel develops out of desire since the embryo results from the parents' act of desire-motivated sexual intercourse, which produces the sperm and egg from which the flavor channel's conventional nuclei derive. Thus we can understand *Ma* as "mother" here (in the sense that a mother is "attached" to her children, who have been conceived out of her "desire"), but in addition we can interpret *Ma* as indicating "feminine" in the sense that desire is associated with the feminine in contrast to hatred/anger being associated with the masculine. The fact that all three channels' names are in the feminine form would seem to be based on sexual imagery, with the masculine "winds" carrying the "semen" within the feminine conduits or receptacles.

The second aspect of Longchenpa's etymology of *Ma* refers to desire-dominated people using sexual yogic techniques focusing on the flavor channel with its conventional nuclei in order to progress along the spiritual path and ultimately gain Buddhahood, such that the "desirous" achieve enlightenment "in dependence upon desire". In this way, the flavor channel acts as the "mother" or "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*) of Buddhahood.

Alternatively, "Ro" etymologized as "corpse" refers to there being little activity (within the flavor channel), while "Ma" relates to how its experiences savored on the basis of the seminal nuclei's dynamics (within it) are difficult to express in words ("Ma" as the negative particle meaning "no" or "non-"): in this line Longchenpa gives an alternate etymology of *Ro Ma*, with *Ro* in the sense of "corpse", and *Ma* as the negative particle meaning "no" or

"non-". "Little activity" relates to how a corpse is inert matter no longer capable of animated movement or activity, but its precise significance in terms of the flavor channel is ambiguous here. I have come up with two plausible interpretations of Longchenpa's intention here. (i) The first interpretation is based on Longchenpa's comment on TCD1 364,3: "by yogically stimulating the flavor channel (i.e. in sex yoga), it enables you to savor the flavor resembling that of a supreme food; leaving it in its ordinary state, the flavor channel is like the corpse of a dead person since it can't fulfill its true function". The basic sense of this is that when stimulated via yogic techniques such that its conventional nuclei become highly energized and optimized, affectively you experience intense feelings of bliss that resemble the flavor of some heavenly ambrosial food; yet if you simply leave it in its ordinary dulled, diluted state, these nuclei just "limp" along at low levels of energy with the corresponding "deadened" feelings that mark our experience most of the time, such that it resembles a "corpse" (unable to perform its optimal functions). Along these lines, we could interpret TDD's comment as meaning "corpse" indicates that usually in our ordinary states there is little optimal activity or energy-flow in the flavor channel such that we only have fleeting experiences of genitally concentrated bliss in sexual intercourse (apart from which we are like unfeeling corpses), yet when we experientially savor its flavor by engaging in sexual yoga that relies on the dynamics of the nuclei within the flavor channel, the flavor channel is activated and we have corresponding sensations of intense bliss that are difficult to express in words (*Ma* as the negative indicator), since our language is geared to ordinary dulled sensations of pain and pleasure. In short, "corpse" indicates its ordinary inert state devoid of optimal activity (the body's true function is to move just as the flavor channel's true function is to generate bliss), while "*Ma*" as the negative indicates the inexpressible nature of the intensely blissful feeling resulting from our yogically activating the flavor channel's energy-flow. Thus unless you penetrate to its key points in yoga, the flavor channel's gnostic energy remains largely inert and devoid of feeling like a corpse, while when relying on esoteric precepts you penetrate to the conventional nuclei's key points and realize the ineffable presence of blissful radiant light via their dynamics, the flavor channel "revives" and begins to function properly, as if the corpse suddenly regained life and its formerly inert matter reassumed its true function as a living, breathing, moving body.

(ii) The second interpretation of "little activity" is based on TCD1 366,5, where Longchenpa appears to indicate that by engaging in sexual yoga in reliance upon the flavor channel's key points and its "non-conceptual bliss", we "exhaust our ordinary ego-memory", such that we "become like a corpse", i.e. from the ordinary perspective this non-conceptual state seems the same as a corpse's lack of consciousness (though in fact they are utterly different). Along these lines, we can interpret "little activity" in a number of ways, all related to contemplative practice of sex yoga. It can indicate that in our yogically savoring these blissful experiences in reliance upon the nuclei's dynamics, there should be no egocentric "activity" motivated by unconscious or semi-conscious reactionary emotions (such as aggression, or alienated desires for possession of your partner), or "activity" organized exclusively around genital release (as usually dominates our ordinary sexual activity). Rather than this, we should be engaged in sexual intercourse for spiritual reasons of realization without our ego-fantasies dominating, nor should we conceive of sexual intercourse as "activities" geared and directed towards our momentary experience of genital orgasm. Sexual yoga is often termed "the path of skillful means or techniques" (*Thabs Lam*), which contrasts to normal ego-centered activity - here the sexual intercourse (visualized or actual) is beyond normal actions of egological sexual intercourse (*Bya Bral*) aiming at phallogocentric orgasm and culminating in the elimination of sexual fluids (TCD1 360,6 says the movements of the conventional nuclei herein have the nature of "efficacious means"). With little of such

"activity", we instead direct ourselves to the interior contemplation of the visualized nuclei's movements, whereupon we gradually experience intense interior bliss that is "ineffable". Additionally, we can interpret this as meaning that in our internal experiences of joy and the unfolding of radiant light, there is a corresponding lessening of external activity, as well as that this experience of "great bliss" is accomplished by turning your attention inwards to the nuclei's internal dynamics and away from external activity, such that you become as still as death.

Finally, TCD1 380,6 reads 'Khrul for 'Phrul here, which Dr. Guenther based himself on in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us II* by translating it as the nuclei "having gone wrong". However I think we must either read correct TCD's 'Khrul ("err", "go wrong") to TDD's 'Phrul ("dynamics" or "transformations"), or read it as an abbreviation for 'Khrul 'Khor/'Phrul 'Khor in the sense of these conventional nuclei being utilized as "devices" for the yogic manipulation of one's energy-flows. In essence, it refers to the movements of the nuclei up and down the center of our body in the practice of sexual yoga, and their phenomenological correlates experienced as "four joys" - see LYT1 337,2 which refers to nuclei's "descent", "retention", "reversal", and "dispersal" in sexual yoga as 'Khrul 'Khor.

The flavor channel is thus filled by the supreme bliss of the seminal nuclei's flavor by virtue of the conventional nuclei's movements through it: this line simply reiterates that the flavor channel is filled with the optimal movements of the conventional nuclei, which we experience affectively as its being "filled with bliss". This relates to the four joys that we experience in engaging in sexual yoga as the nuclei descend and ascend through the four main energy wheels at the center of our body.

Furthermore, it brings about the psychic attainment of food via inner winds spurring on (its vibrant flavors) in the flavor channel's petals at the place where "flavors are gathered and stored" (i.e. the throat energy wheel). The bliss of this channel's vibrant quintessential "flavors" (Ro) expands our body and mind, while "Ma" ("mother" or "foundation") indicates its bringing about the pervasion, serving as the ongoing site for, and serving as the basis (for the vibrant energies or "flavors" of the conventional seminal nuclei): in these final two lines, Longchenpa turns his attention away from sexual yoga to discuss the connection of the flavor channel with the throat energy wheel, and its function of extracting the vibrant energy out of ingested food, which then is distributed throughout our internal structures to "expand" the body and mind with its vitalizing energy (and thus relates to alchemical "food yoga" practices - see below). In this way, it acts as the "mother", "source" or "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*) for these vibrant energies to pervade, be present, and be supported within our body. "Petals" refers to the subsidiary branches of the flavor channel radiating out as the throat wheel, such that it resembles a wheel with its spokes, or a lotus with its petals (with regards to the entire structure, the three channels are like the stem, and the four wheels of their main branches like those stems' petals). This throat wheel is ordinarily termed "the flavors storage wheel", which TCD1 357,6 explains relates to it "functioning to verbalize our savoring of cognitive processes' flavors", thus linking it to the throat's verbal role that articulates the flavor of our psychic processes by expressing their particular "tone" or inner meaning in language (since the solitary channel is primarily associated with speech, it would seem we can infer that the throat wheel as stemming from the solitary channel's branches is what plays a key role in speech). However, in our current context Longchenpa is speaking of the throat wheel in relation to its role in eating, which on TDD 254,4 he specifies is to "differentiate between food's vibrant and solidified energy", the former giving rise to our body's luster and glow, while the latter is eliminated as excrement and urine. TCD1 353,5-354,1 provides further

details, saying that the "vibrant energy" of these flavors (which derive from food and so on) engender or sustain our body, bodily elements, sensory capacity, and so forth. Longchenpa also there explains "flavors" in terms of the classic list of six types of flavor: sweet flavors give rise to our blood, bitter flavors give rise to our glow, astringent flavors give rise to our radiance, sour flavors give rise to our strength, hot flavors give rise to our power, and salty flavors give rise to our seminal nuclei (Longchenpa reads *kLeg Pa* instead of the standard *Tsha Ba* ("hot"), but this word is unknown to me). In general, the term "flavor" of course relates to our mouth/throat's capacity to "taste" certain qualities in food, while Longchenpa here interprets these flavors as corresponding to certain subtle energetic qualities of food which nourish or feed into corresponding aspects of our psycho-physical state (this also suggests the food's flavors as experienced via our tongue is linked to the flavor channel's operations). The mouth/throat also plays a key role in "digesting" food by breaking it up and processing it with enzymes on its way to the stomach, and Longchenpa combines these two qualities in his account here: the throat wheel represents a subtle digestive center (the intestines are the coarse center for the digestion of food) where these subtle energies or "flavors" are extracted from food, and then impelled by our inner winds into the flavor channel and its branches, which thus distribute these nutritious vibrant energies throughout the body (as well as acting as conduit for the elimination of the food's "wastes" or possibly toxic aspects in the form of urine and excrement). Thus while the intestines perform the coarser work of digestion, there are more subtle influences in food which the throat wheel (a nexus of particular energy-flows within the human body) is sensitive to as food passes through the throat, such that it acts to extract nutrients and pass on waste (the throat's channels are like the "stomach", and the winds are its "digestive juices", which stir the food's potency into actualized motion within our body). TCD1 369,2 points out this function of separating ingested food's "vibrancy" and "solidified aspects", and says that if the flavor channel's interior is "wide", your appetite will be correspondingly great; if it is slender, your appetite will be correspondingly slight. If the channel is crooked, you will be perpetually nauseous and unable to take food, as well as be subject to a constant variety of illnesses. TCD1 368,3 points out that this "vibrancy" is not limited to merely physical processes, as Longchenpa says the flavor channel thus functions to "display the gnostic lamps' glow" via its vibrant energies, and causes urination via its solidified energies. It must also be pointed out that Longchenpa's description of the throat wheel here ties into the frequent attempt to correlate the wheels with the endocrine glands, which in the case of the throat is the thyroid gland. Hormones from this gland in particular control the rate at which the body changes food into energy, thereby regulating the growth of the body.

Thus this term "flavor" reveals a very interesting concept or image linking our verbal capacities to our extraction of energy from food taken from the external environment: via its processing of food, the body is nourished as the inner winds drive its flavors across the body, and thus in a sense gives it the voice to sing its own song. Just as our voice in itself is essentially vibrations of energy (the mantric sounds or rhythms of life) connected to our winds/breath and affected by our nuclei-determined emotional state (our voice "trembles" with emotion), all food derives from vegetative and animal life, and is thus permeated by the tones of the physical and mental life from which it derives, which affect the "body's song" (which has direct implications for the whole notion of vegetarianism). If we consider the corresponding Sanskrit term *Rasa*, this also relates to the "sentiments" in aesthetic theory (which Tibetan translates as *Nyams* rather than *Ro*), and certain alchemical practices (*Rasāyana*, *bCud Len*) which attempt to overcome the need for gross food to sustain oneself on meditation and mineral/herbs (see below). Again we return to the primordially of "eating" or "tasting" the world in our unconscious understanding of our relation to the

world without: the world is full of "flavors" which we want to consume (eat) and express (verbalize), and it is the throat ("the flavors storage center") which combines both functions. Different people, places, and things in the world give off "vibrations" which we experience in feeling tones as particular "flavors", the ultimate of which of course is the Ground's luminous emptiness (the "single flavor" of all phenomena). Speech itself is sound vibrations which somehow capture, re-present, or re-create our experience of the world, putting each phenomena's unique "taste" or "flavor" into tones that our throat gives voice to. In addition to the throat being the center for speech, it is also the central passageway for ingested food, and as such operates as a main processing point for the separation of food's vibrant flavors (nutrients) and solidified flavors (wastes). These two processes are thus inextricably linked as primal ways by which we literally and symbolically attempt to ingest the world and recreate it in our own image.

Since the throat is such an important center for our processing of food (one of the most vital aspects of our continuing existence), it is natural that this throat wheel and its flavor channel play an important role in certain yogic practices revolving around "food" (obtaining its "psychic attainment"). TCD1 369,5 says that if we are skilled in contemplatively working with the key points of the flavor channel, we will be able to eliminate all attachment to (and obsession with) gross food stuffs, such that meditative states themselves will become food. This indicates alchemical practices whereby we not only overcome our typical fixations on food (ranging from overeating to self-starvation, as well as our need for delicious foods), but also begin to be able to directly derive nourishing sustenance in subtle forms via our meditation, thus partially bypassing the ordinary need to constantly take in coarse food to sustain our body/mind (which includes the practice of sacrificing other living beings so that we may tear into their bloody flesh). These "food yogas" are explained in detail on TDD 319,1-320,1, and basically involve using herbs and minerals in conjunction with meditation, as well as "eating your winds", where by manipulation of your breath and internal wind-currents you directly derive sustenance from them. TCD1 353,7 explains that we accomplish "food yoga" by virtue of these six flavors being "stored" within the throat channel, and that it also operates as the key point in our accomplishing alchemy (literally "extracting the quintessence) through "training on it for three years". Thus these yogas operate by intensifying and optimizing the ordinarily unconscious processes of the throat wheel and flavor channel, such that we get at the deeper dimensions of "food" and "eating". In doing so, we are able to achieve temporary psychic benefits and lasting spiritual benefits in our mastery of those dimensions, whereas usually we thoughtlessly and helplessly indulge ourselves in these activities without any thought or awareness of their true significance (just as the flavor channel enables us to optimize sexuality by getting at its ordinarily unconscious dynamics, and thereby transforms an often destructive life-sapping dimension of our lives into a positive, energizing force). TCD2 164,4-165,2 provides specific details on this food yoga practice under the heading of "meditative states eliminating attachment to food" (which TDD 319 2-5 merely tersely refers to as "eating winds as food") and clearly explains its connection to the throat channel and flavor wheel. Its account instructs the practitioner to join the upper and lower winds in the body, then pull them into the flavor channel (with inhalation via the nostrils), and imagine that the throat wheel is filled with the flavor of ambrosia. S/he then must imagine all external appearances as becoming "food", which dissolves within his/her throat and flavor channel. Through meditating on them (and your body) as thus pervaded by the bliss of meditative states, s/he will then accomplish the yoga of food. The basic logic of this practice is that you are "ingesting" energy at a subtle level via your visualization-enhanced breath, such that you derive nourishing energy from these external appearances without needing to physically "eat" them via your mouth and coarse

digestive system. With inhalation you visualize that you are inhaling the quintessential energies of appearances via the nostrils into the flavor channel, such that this energy overflows the throat wheel of channels. In this way your body is revitalized and nourished with these pure energies, which affectively you experience as "bliss". Thus "eating winds as food" refers to consuming external energy via visualization-energized breathing operating internally within the flavor channel and throat wheel, such that it is the subtle analog to the coarse digestion of food, where this same channel and "wheel" operate to extract vibrant energy from food and distribute it throughout the body to replenish bio-mental energy levels. As you gradually gain familiarity with this practice, you begin to actually gain the ability to directly intake high intensity energy from the space without, and thus no longer need to exclusively rely on the ingestion and digestion of coarse vegetative and animal life for your life force - you literally "live off" meditation, divesting yourself of food itself, as well as all the obsessive unconscious imagery we invest in food. The "joining" and holding of winds also indicates the conversation of our internal wind-currents of energy, rather than their usual frenetic state of dissipation.

Longchenpa thus indicates here in TDD that the flavor's channels "vibrant energies" expand our body and mind, which includes its ordinary unconscious role in monitoring the elimination of wastes and circulation of nutrients, as well as the specialized yogically enhanced operation of the flavor channel which optimally circulates highly charged energy "flavors" derived from meditative practice, and which can act as a substitute for coarse food's energy. In both its conventional and optimal modes, this processing center with its network of channels (through which the wind-currents and seminal nuclei flow) process "food" (material and spiritual) to filter out their vibrant energy, and circulate it to various parts of our body, such that our body and mind "expand" with the glow of health, nutrition, and intelligence. The solidified "flavors" are eliminated, and the vibrant "flavors" utilized, with the latter becoming the conventional seminal nuclei that pervade our body via the network of channels, and as impelled by our inner wind-currents. Along these lines, Longchenpa etymologizes *Ma* as relating to how the flavor channel thus operates as the "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*) for these vibrant energies since it is their chief conduit, as well being like their "mother" in its acting as their residence, support, and impetus for pervasion in our body (just as a real mother supports her offspring by pervading and providing every aspect of their world, and thereby enabling them to survive). Finally, it should be kept in mind that "bliss" is how we emotionally experience the "optimization" of energy-flows within our body, and thus it should be understood as connoting optimal smooth internal energy devoid of the kinks, distortions and dilutions that result in our ordinary distorted, frustrated experience.

527. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 93,2; Ati1 112,2; also cited by TCD2 70,4). As I mentioned in my annotation to TDD 249,4, TCD2 cites this passage in the context of contemplative techniques utilizing these energy channels to penetrate to our internal nucleus of gnostic energy, indicating that the passage should throughout be understood as emphasizing yogic rather than ordinary processes.

(Energy) is spurred on by your inner winds and propelled by your seminal nuclei within the throat's "flavors wheel" via the flavor channel (Ro Ma): these lines should primarily be understood as referring to the "food yoga" practices I detailed above (though it also connotes the ordinary functions of the flavor channel and throat wheel in eating, which is a pale image of the high intensity processes sparked by these yogas), with our inner winds "carrying" these vibrant quintessences of "flavors" in the sense of providing their raw impetus for movement, and our seminal nuclei "propelling" the flavors in the sense of providing the specific

organizing "intelligence" that directs them with a sense of the greater whole they in-form. As TCD's account provided in the annotations above clearly indicates, "flavors" refers to the energetic qualities of "food" which we inhale through our visualization-enhanced breathing, and these vibrant energies are impelled throughout our body via this channel, while the seminal nuclei "direct" these energies as they permeate the body so their vibrancy contributes to the complex, self-organizing gestalt of our existence in a completely in-formed manner (the wind provides the action and gets things moving, and the nuclei provide the organization in specific projective forms that propels the energy to specific, meaningful sites - this is why generally Longchenpa refers to the winds as "impelling" and the nuclei as "array-ing"). While flavors are here said to be "propelled" by the nuclei, the term "flavors" is also being used interchangeably with the term "seminal nuclei", since both indicate the body's "quintessences" or "vibrant energies". This yogically mirrors the ordinary process, whereby the vibrant energies or "flavors" of ingested food are directed throughout the body, while their solidified aspects are eliminated as urine and excrement - since the flavor channel plays this key role in ordinary eating, it is natural that the yogic manipulation of its key points enables to attain mastery over "food" and "eating". Since in general the flavor channel governs our conventional nuclei which direct all our ordinary psycho-physical processes, it is also quite natural that the two main forms of contemplation based upon this channel deal with the two main aspects of ordinary existence: food (eating and excreting) and sex (enjoyment and reproduction).

"Ro" ("flavors") indicates the bliss thus based in this channel: NGB, TCD and Ati all read *brTen Pa Yis* for TDD's *brTen Pa Yi*, which would indicate translating this as "via reliance upon this channel, bliss expands the body and mind". Since the meaning is substantially identical, and TDD's preface appears to support its reading, I have chose to translate TDD as is.

While "Ma" ("Mother") indicates its gathering-in or storage of these vibrant energies, and it acting as the mother-foundation of their upper and lower sites: as discussed above, *Ma* is being etymologized as referring to the flavor channel acting as the source, receptacle and support for these vibrant quintessential energies. I have corrected TDD's reading of *gNad* to *gNas* on the basis of TCD2, NGB, and Ati. The flavor channel acts as the principal conduit for the flow of the conventional nuclei of vibrant energy in their functioning within the lower and upper parts of the body, and thus functions as the foundation for their spreading throughout the body. Additionally, in sexual yogic practices the white male element is located at the upper crown wheel, and the red female element at the lower navel wheel, with the nuclei moving up and down between the crown wheel and genitals as you experience sexual bliss.

Here is the key point in the yogic practices of "damming up" and "stimulating": I have corrected *brTen* ("based") to *gTems* ("stimulate") on the basis of TCD2 and Ati, though NGB agrees with TDD, and there is a possible link to Longchenpa's prefatory mention of the flavor channel acting as the "support" or "base" (*rTen*) for these vibrant energies. The basic sense of this line appears to be that the yogic techniques of "damming up" (*bsKyiI*) and "stimulating" (*gTems*) rely on the flavor channel (or we could render it as these two techniques "are the key point" to yogically working with the flavor channel), though the precise references of each term is unclear (these two terms are used in a variety of contexts in describing contemplative techniques). It does appear to indicate a simple sequence where first energy is "concentrated" or "dammed up" in the flavor channel, following which that pent-up energy is "stimulated" therein, or is intensified to the point of "overflow", and

certainly relates to "lower" subtle body meditative techniques rather than Great Perfection contemplation proper. One possibility is that it refers to the food yoga practice detailed in TCD (see above), where we must "dam up" the upper and lower winds (which ties into the above mention of "upper and lower sites") of our body and insert them into the flavor channel (thereby concentrating our bio-mental energy into a high intensity point), following which we "stimulate" our internal energy by visualization-enhanced breathing in of energy from the Universe's external space. An alternative possibility would be to relate these two verbs to the key role the flavor channel plays in sex yoga, where we must "dam up" the conventional nuclei within the flavor channel (preventing ejaculation at all costs), and "stimulate" them via visualization to spur intensifying experiences of "joy" or "bliss" as they descend and ascend through our four main energy centers, or "wheels". Longchenpa frequently uses this term "damming up" for the "retention" phase in sex yoga where the semen is held within the penis without ejaculation (KGYT2 277,5; LYT1 339,3; ZMYT1 384,4). Finally, it should be noted that *gTems Pa* often means "press" in certain contemplative techniques that involve physically "pressing" the eyes or a channel near your skin's surface, and is closely linked to the term (*b*)*Tems Pa* ("stimulate", "cause to overflow", "activate"). The term does occur in descriptions of sexual yoga in the sense of "pressing" the bliss channel in the woman's vagina, or the man's bliss channel (see KGYT3 57,1).

*While if any of its six branches are "bled" or "burnt" (i.e. moxa or cauterization), primordial gnosis will be blocked (within you):* see TDD 211 and my annotations for a discussion of how medical practices of "burning" and "letting blood" can disrupt the flow of conventional nuclei within our body, which is there discussed in the context of the conventional nuclei's monthly circulation within our body. While these conventional nuclei are present throughout our body, they are especially concentrated in the flavor channel and its main six branches, such that it is especially important not to "let blood" or "apply moxa" to those areas of the body. Since these conventional nuclei are the support of gnostic energy within our body (their inner "esoteric" essence is primordial gnosis' fivefold radiation), any damage to them will "block" or "impede" primordial gnosis, such that we will be impaired in our contemplative efforts to activate this latent gnostic energy (see my discussion mentioned above for a more extensive discussion).

While this reference to "six branches" appears to indicate six principal channels branching off from the flavor channel, I have been unable to find any clear description of them in Longchenpa's corpus (they may be six branches which play important roles in certain yogic techniques). The only additional details to TDD's account on 253,4-5 (which merely says the flavor channel runs up to the right eye) I have located occur in the KGNT and KGYT cycles of texts, which don't generally agree with TDD and TCD's presentations of the channels. KGNT2 49-50 says that the solitary channel has two upper branches running to the right and left eye respectively, while the all-encompassing channel has three upper branches, one running to the Brahma's aperture at the top of the head, and the right and left branches running to the right and left ears respectively. Combined with KGNT1 50,1ff's account, this indicates the flavor channel's upper tips run to the tongue and two nostrils (KGYT2 157,1-2 confirms this), such that the three channel's upper tips account for the four senses located in the head - KTY52 157,3 says that the solitary channel has a third upper branch located in the middle of the two visual branches, and it has innumerable sub-branches running all over the body, and thus acts as support for our tactile consciousness. As for these channels' lower branches, KGYT2 156,6 and KGNT1 504,2 indicate they run to the genitals and anus, but doesn't provide particulars; KGNT2 49,4 specifies the flavor channel's lower tip runs to the "adamantine scepter" (i.e. the penis).



When you desire to attain "warmth", with the key points of massage, you must pull the winds and seminal nuclei (into the flavor channel): the exact references of these final two lines are also unclear. In general "warmth" indicates bodily warmth as well as meditative progress, the latter meaning relating to the gnosis being imaged as "fire", and "heat" being associated with high-energy processes. There is also a particular connection to the Tibetan practice of "mystic fire" (*gTum Mo*), where visualization of an inner fire enables the practitioner to generate changes in his/her bodily temperature. Since TCD associated the flavor channel above all with the body and its conventional nuclei, it makes sense that the flavor channel would play an important role in massage and the generation of bodily heat (VNT2 504,4ff associates the flavor wheel in particular with fire energy, which thus naturally relates to bodily heat). This mention of "massage" may refer to the practice of "yantras" in Tibetan tantric systems of meditation, which involve using physical postures and breathing patterns as contemplative techniques (including massage). By using massage, these conventional energies flowing through the flavor channel are stimulated, and hence their potential for meditative use "heats up", which we affectively experience as a warm inner sensation. It is not clear that "massage" is intrinsically connected to the final line (and if so how), or if it is a separate instance of meditative practices where the flavor channel is the key.

As for "pulling in" the winds and seminal nuclei into the flavor channel, this again must refer to ordinary "perfecting phase" practices of tantric meditation focused on the conventional nuclei (that flow within the flavor channel), and clearly apply in a general way to both "sex" and "food" yoga as discussed above. In both yogas, it is necessary to utilize visualization and other techniques to concentrate the winds and nuclei within the flavor channel, where they must be "bound" - see above for how in food yoga we pull in these energies from outside with inhalation, and insert them into the flavor channel. This contrasts sharply to the previous line's mention of "bleeding" and "burning" of the body, which both involve the loss and dispersion of these nuclei's energy, while in these yogas it is essential to instead "retain" and concentrate these energies within the flavor channel as potent forces to be harnessed for contemplation. Such concentration is connected to "warmth", as well as enabling on to "warm up" to mediation's goal.

528. See TCD1 360,6-361,1 for very similar lines to the first part of this passage on the solitary channel, which Guenther translates in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* II 22 and *Creative Vision* 154. The term *rKyang Ma* literally reads "the solitary one" with a feminine connotation (*Ma* is the feminine marker corresponding to the original "ā" in the Sanskrit term, but Longchenpa plays off its meanings as "mother" (*Ma*), "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*), and negation (*Ma*)). The corresponding Sanskrit term is *Lalanā*, which MW defines as "a wanton woman, any woman, wife", evidently deriving from the root meaning of "sport, play, behave loosely". This would suggest the original Tibetan term may have connoted a "single woman", i.e. a "bachlorette" who is not confined to any one sexual partner. However, Longchenpa chiefly bases his creative unpacking of this term on its sense of "solitary unity" (*rKyang*) and being the mother-source (*Ma*) or "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*) of our experience.

TCD1 363,5-370,4) discusses these three channels in terms of these eight categories: (i) their names (363,6-366,4); (ii) what they purify when yogically activated (366,4); (iii) what they symbolize (366,4-7); (iv) how they give rise to or engender (366,7-368,3); (v) what functions they perform (368,3-369,1); (vi) their respective essences (369,1-2); (vii) each channel's conventional reality (369,2-6); (viii) the esoteric precepts on how you these

channels "link-up". For clarity's sake, I will here present a summary of each section as it applies to the solitary channel (see my annotations to this chapter's discussion of the flavor and all-encompassing channels for a summary of these sections with regards to them).

(i) The solitary channel's name (rKyang Ma): its name *rKyang Ma* unpacks like this - "since its yogic control gives birth to a contemplative experience of non-conceptual reality, it is "solitary" (*rKyang Ma*); leaving it in its ordinary state results in it remaining alone without being related to anything else".

Longchenpa indicates that by activating and optimizing the energy-flowing within this channel via contemplative techniques, we will experience reality itself divested of our ordinary diverse thought activity. The term "solitary" thus relates to the "unity" of reality, and how this contemplative experience is "isolated" from the usual teeming diversity of neurotic conceptuality. It is unclear if the term "control" (*gCud Pa*) has any specific reference in terms of meditative practices, and in fact the term itself is somewhat ambiguous. While Longchenpa at times seems to use it in the sense of "twist" or "turn" (thus relating to *gCu Ba*), he elsewhere appears to use it synonymously with *gCun Pa* ("to control"), or as an abbreviation for *gCud Bor* ("to zero in" on something, and set about accomplishing it). The second part of this statement then apparently indicates that if the solitary channel is left in its current diluted, largely latent state, it will remain itself as a solitary, untapped dimension of high-intensity energy unintegrated into our waking life ("not related to anything else" in our life).

Longchenpa also makes extensive comments on the solitary channel's location on the right side of woman, which involves a branch running to the vagina called the "bliss channel", which has a physically visible "protuberance" in the vagina that plays a crucial role in the practice of sex yoga. He discusses the standard fivefold classification of females in the context of their being partners in the practice of the sexual yoga, with each classification relating in particular to the physical characteristics of this vaginal channel.

(ii) What the solitary channel purifies when yogically activated: with contemplative skill in the key points of the solitary channel, you can purify all your verbal activities and energy.

(iii) The solitary channel's symbolic meaning: the solitary channel symbolizes the single flavor of plurality in radiant clarity, and thus is named "the solitary one" by virtue of remaining within the dimension of the singular seminal nucleus (i.e. the singularity of self-emergent primordial gnosis totally devoid of any otherness).

In addition, Longchenpa specifies the solitary channel symbolizes "insight" (the flavor channel symbolizes "efficacious means", and the all-encompassing channel symbolizes the indivisibility of efficacious means and insight - see below for further details on this classification).

(iv) How the solitary channel gives rise to or engenders speech: on TCD1 368,2, Longchenpa explains "engenders" by saying "the body engenders the channels, the channels engender speech, speech engenders the mind, the mind engenders reality, and reality engenders yoga..."

In particular, the solitary channel engenders and develops our verbal capacities, and thus the condition of this channel directly corresponds to the nature of our speech: if it is straight

and devoid of crookedness or kinks, your speech is correspondingly melodious and clear in meaning; if the channel has minute branches, your voice is hoarse and abrupt, or your speech will be unclear in meaning such as with a stammer - the channel's natural state lacks any branches or crookedness; if the channel is crooked, you will lose your voice with laryngitis (this actually refers to a type of disease where the throat and tongue become constricted); if the channel has "folds" in it, your voice will stammer and tremble; and if this channel is an unimpeded openness (i.e. totally clear), your voice will be loud and irritating to others. Longchenpa ends this discussion by saying that meditative practitioners can correct these problems by resorting to the esoteric precepts on these channels, and thus "transform", "revitalize" (*gSeng*), and "press" it (he doesn't explain each verb's particular meaning).

(v) *The functions performed by the solitary channel*: it displays the lamps in self-presencing via its impelling the vibrant quintessences upwards and impels our experience of (of these visions) as well as their intensification; by separating its solidified waste downwards, it eliminates them as excrement.

(vi) *The solitary channel's essence*: "its essence is emptiness, and its thoroughly pure insight can free our dualistically perceiving mind's notions (i.e. the "subjective") within reality".

(vii) *The solitary channel's conventional reality*: its reality is to increase the body's heat or warmth - if it is narrow, your body naturally has a lot of heat; if it is wide, you are perpetually cold since physical warmth is slight; and if it is crooked, unstable, and so on, similar corresponding problems related to your body's warmth ensue. In addition, if you are skilled in yogically applying the key points of the solitary channel, you can eliminate attachment to clothes, and thus possess perpetual "warmth". This last mention of "warmth" refers to the contemplative practices discussed in TDD 320,1-321,3, which revolve around the contemplation of "mystic fire" (*gTum Mo*), whereby visualization of an internal fire enables the mediator to generate physical warmth, as well as "heat up" his/her spiritual realization. TCD2 165,3ff explicitly relates the solitary channel to these practices, saying they involve holding the wind-currents within the solitary channel.

(viii) *The esoteric precepts on how the solitary channel links-up*: via the solitary channel, your speech's stabilization manifests as meditative states, your speech's articulation manifests as depth contemplation, and the exhaustion of your speech manifests as their reality, such that all our language is the secret mantra's own sounds.

From this account, we should note in particular the connection of the solitary channel to our capacity for speech, to our body's warmth, and the related connection to the meditative practices of "mystic fire" (*gTum Mo*) and "clothes yoga", which also points to its special connection to the navel energy wheel (from which the fire blazes upwards in visualization). TDD 252,6 also deals with the special connection of the solitary channel's energy-flows with the navel wheel, which is referred to as "the wheel of generativity".

529. Longchenpa's opening lines should be understood in the context of the following commentary:

*Since it has no bends or branches it is called "solitary" (rKyang)*: Longchenpa here indicates that the solitary channel is a single "pillar" running up to the left eye (see TDD 253,4) devoid of any branches or "bends", which is quite different from the KGNT/KGYT's

account. The latter describes the solitary channel as having two upper branches running to right and left eye respectively, as well as a central upper branch from which many subsidiary channels emanate throughout the body, thereby acting as support for our tactile consciousness (see my discussion above in the annotations). Finally, TDD 254,6ff points out an intimate link between the solitary channel and the four gnostic lamps.

*In naturally operating as the causal impetus or catalyst of both the ultimate seminal nuclei and conventional seminal nuclei, this channel brings the ultimate and conventional elemental energies to maturity, as well as differentiating between them:* while TDD 254,1 and elsewhere correlates the flavor channel with conventional nuclei and the solitary channel with "natural" or "ultimate" nuclei, these are simply indications of these nuclei's relative preponderance in each channel motivated by the desire to pointing out each channel's overall dynamics, as well as create symbolic tensions and contrasts. Thus Longchenpa at times indicates that the "ultimate" nuclei flow forth from all three channels, and in the current context places both the conventional and ultimate nuclei within the solitary channel. In light of this, perhaps TDD 254,7's mention of two "nuclei" within the solitary channel at the navel wheel should be understood as referring to the two "Eyes", the super-nuclei discussed in Chapter Two's annotations as the "Eye of the Elemental Energies" and "Eye of the Lamps". The former is the main organizing center for the body's physical processes and emotions as well as lower order mental processes, while the latter performs a comparable function in regard to the gnostic luminosity that comes to the fore in visionary experience. While the conventional elements have both "vibrant" (*Dwangs Ma*) and "solidified" (*sNyigs Ma*) aspects, the ultimate elements are exclusively intensely vibrant and lucent, and indicate the rainbow-colored light-essence that has become congealed and obscured in ordinary matter. Thus the "ripening" or "bringing to maturity" of these elemental energies via the solitary channel indicates its critical role in transformative processes as opposed to mere status-quo psycho-physical maintenance operations, which above all is embodied in its role in fueling the gnostic visions of the four lamps where it acts to ripen our higher-order vibrant energies, and separate them out from the lower-order materialized energies that usually encrust and obscure them. However, as clearly indicated by TCD, it also has ordinary physiological functions related to our verbal capacities, the elimination of waste products from our system, our "warmth", and women's sexuality, so that it must be understood as playing crucial roles in our lower order energies' proper functioning and organization ("differentiation"). TDD 255,1-2 says that the "natural nuclei" present within the solitary channel operate as the "four lamps" in a pure context, and as the "four elements" in an impure context (i.e. dependent upon our overall being through which their energy is filtered or "interpreted"). The key is that this channel's energy-flows play a key role in transformation at all levels, and even in its lower order aspects tend towards high-intensity non-material functions (thus it governs speech and warmth, whereas the flavor channel governs the body and digestion).

*Because it is "solitary" (rKyang), (these functions) come about via its simply abiding in its own natural dynamics; since it is thus the ground of everything, it is termed "mother/foundation" (Ma):* in the same context TCD1 360,7 reads "because it is "solitary", it is unchanging", suggesting that TDD's reading of 'Gyur Ba should be changed to Mi 'Gyur Ba: "it is unchanging apart from simply abiding in terms of its own natural (dynamics)". However, I have chosen to interpret TDD's reading as showing that these dynamics occurring within the solitary channel "occur" ('Gyur Ba) without the channel itself undergoing any fundamental transformations or operating in conjunction with forces external to it - they stem directly from its natural and unaltered character. This would seem to primarily indicate its function with respect to the luminous nuclei and gnostic lamps, which are always latently

present within us, which naturally and spontaneously manifest when the obscuring distortions of our subtle and coarse body-system has been cleared away (rather than being the product of some strenuous unprecedented transmutation in which they are created anew). This thus connotes primordial gnosis' own simultaneous emptiness and luminosity, which naturally self-expresses itself as dynamic self-organizing compassionate resonance like the sun and its rays, and thus doesn't involve any "otherness" or "transformation" of its own basic character.

This channel is the "mother" (*Ma*) or "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*) of everything in that it is the locale of both physical and spiritual energies' ripening, thus acting as the fertile origin and sustaining support of all interior processes, physical and spiritual. It is the pathway for both types of seminal nuclei (conventional and ultimate), and thus for the dyadic processes they fuel which encapsulate our experience - the conventional nuclei are the foundation for cyclic existence, while the ultimate nuclei are the foundation of transcendence. In particular, this refers to its concentration of high-intensity gnostic light energy, since the high order vibrancy is the ultimate source of all lower order materialized dimensions (gnosis is the source of the ordinary mind, light is the source of the material elements, and so on) - the fundamental mystery is that it is always the singular and solitary (*rKyang*) which acts as ground (*Ma*) for the emergence of all plurality, and which has an innate tendency to express itself in this fashion (as well as remaining invariant in its own enduring unity that is present within the ensuring plurality as an unconscious driving urge to return to unity from plurality, to harmony from fragmentation). Thus this line of vibrant unmaterialized force within our body is termed "solitary" to indicate its continuing uncontamination with plurality and differentiation, while its presence on those levels is termed the "flavor" lines of force, which account for the "flavors" of differentiation pervading its unitary singularity.

*Through reliance upon it, you will be effortlessly expansively awakened into Buddhahood, and it thus operates as the condition (leading to the manifestation of) singular ultimate primordial gnosis' essence:* TDD 255,1 clearly indicates that Longchenpa is here referring to the solitary channel's role in Direct Transcendence contemplation, since the four lamps' nuclei or seed-potencies are present within the solitary channel at the four main energy wheels within our body, and when activated are the basis for those four lamps' dynamic manifestations in the Direct Transcendence visions. Whereas practicing yogic techniques focused on the conventional nuclei's manipulation (such as sex yoga and alchemical processes) involves sustained hardship and strenuous effort as we attempt to go through the materialized lower order "conventional" aspects of our embodied existence to penetrate back to otherwise inaccessible higher order gnostic essence they obscure (which holds true for those completely immersed in the world of materiality and sensual desires), if we instead attempt to direct tune into that luminous gnostic essence via Great Perfection meditation we can be "effortlessly" enlightened, as the lower order obscurations of our coarse material physicality and neurotic mind fade away, like clouds burned away by the sun's intense rays. While certainly Great Perfection meditation is far from "effortless" for the vast majority of people, it relies on techniques to "release" ourselves into our own primordial luminosity, such that via "letting be", this inner nucleus of inherently enlightened energy will spontaneously emerge. Thus the Great Perfection tradition defines itself in opposition to tantric methods emphasizing "transformation" or transmutation of our coarse energies, complex visualizations requiring years of training, and forceful techniques of "binding" our inner winds and inserting them into the central channel. In this way, this channel's "solitary" nature is our internal dimension operative as the condition for our ability to contemplatively contact our singular essence of primordial gnosis, which is present as the unconditioned empty radiant awareness existent within the hearts of all living beings (KGYT2 211,4-212,5).

However, it must be kept in mind that it is the all-encompassing channel above all that incarnates this transcendent unity remaining present at our body/mind's center, while the flavor and solitary channels can be understood as its dyadic expression on both lower order and higher order levels within our psycho-physical existence. This corresponds to our initial dualistic understanding of "cyclic existence" as the impure and material, and "transcendent reality" as the pure and immaterial, which ultimately we must transcend to realize their inner unity and non-duality; it also relates to our intuitive split between "matter" and "life" (or "body" and "mind"), which we must transcend to realize the inherent singular intelligence of the Universe that is operative in both. This inner centering light energy ("all-encompassing channel") expresses itself both as bioenergetic processes that sustain our physical existence in empirically observable material and semi-material ways ("the flavor channel"), and as more subtle energetic processes that can lead us back to our source via "imaginative" introspection ("the solitary channel"). Its triadic structure ultimately stems from primordial gnosis' own triune identity of a centering empty essence of vast openness, which inherently contains enfolded within it a luminous nature and actively structuring and self-organizing compassionate resonance. This triune identity of the Universe's gnostic essence expresses itself as such at every level, and since our subtle body system derives from gnosis' own dynamism under the conditions of our neurosis, it incarnates this triune identity in both optimal and distorted manners that continually fluctuate in conjunction with our own evolutionary development and realization. On its "right" side primordial gnosis expresses itself as "efficacious means" in its continual dynamic activity and self-structuring, which in our own existence materializes as our bioenergetic processes of physical-emotional growth; on its "left" side primordial gnosis expresses itself as "insight" in its constant intelligence that in-forms this activity, and its "sensitivity to" or "appreciation of" the enduring reality of all phenomena, which in our own existence is found as our psychic capacities able to reinterpret itself and instantaneously adjust to changing situations; and in its "center" primordial gnosis remains an integrated unity of its dynamism and intelligence, which in our own existence is found in the inner connections between our physical and mental processes, as well as the core of vibrant intelligence which gives rise to both (indicating that "intelligence" or "awareness" (*Rig Pa*) is active in both our "body" and "mind", undercutting the false split between these two that we seem to "intuit"). In a fully Awakened One, this triad is found in the way his/her non-dual gnostic realization is a perfect blend of penetrating omniscient insight into the way things are and dynamic action expressing that insight so as to bring other living beings to the heights of enlightenment. KGYT2 154,5-3 sums up these three channels' triune significance in different phases of our personal evolution:

"...Conventionally (in their present obscured state) these three channels derive from dimmed awareness, with the right channel serving as basis for desire, the left channel for hatred, and the central channel for ignorance (the crystal tube channel, on the other hand, isn't the basis for anything impure at all). In the ultimate time (i.e. their optimal dimensions, as well as if you consider their ultimate origins), generally speaking everything takes form via primordial gnosis' dynamism, while in particular the right channel forms from its nature as efficacious means, the left channel from its nature as insight, and the central channel from its nature of their non-duality. On the spiritual path, the left channel serves as basis for (contemplative experiences) of bliss, the right channel for (contemplative experiences) of clarity or radiance, and the central channel for (contemplative experiences) of non-conceptuality. In the fruit or climax (of enlightenment), the central channel serves as support for the Reality Body, the right channel for the Enjoyment Body and Emanational Body, and the left channel for the great bliss of radiant light pervading the ends of space..."

The key points of planting the seminal nuclei, revitalization and massage pertain to this channel: while the preceding lines, as well as TDD 254,6-255,2's discussion of the solitary channel's four "wheels" involving the gnostic lamps' seed-potencies, indicate this channel's role in Great Perfection completion, this line seems to refer to lower yogic practices involving "planting seminal nuclei", "revitalization" (*gSeng*), and massage. As I mention above, TCD1 369,6 connects the solitary channel to the "yoga of clothes" (explained on TDD 320,1-321,3) in relation to its governing our physical and spiritual "warmth". TCD2 165,3-4 explains this role of the solitary channel in its account of the meditation on "mystic fire" (*gTum Mo*), which involves concentrating the upper and lower winds of the body within the solitary channel, and visualizing a blazing fire rising from the navel wheel to the crown wheel, such that intense warmth is generated. This also connects with TDD's mention directly below that the solitary channel concentrates the winds and nuclei at the "generativity wheel", i.e. the navel energy wheel. It may also relate to the meditative technique outlined on TDD 230,4-321,3, though Longchenpa doesn't specifically mention the solitary channel there. In addition, TCD1 367 5-6 says that one can yogically "correct" speech problems relating to the state of one's solitary channel through "transformation" (*bsGyur Ba*), "revitalization" (*gSeng Ba*), and "suppression" (*mNan Pa*), though Longchenpa doesn't provide any further details. TCD1 364,6ff has the term "revitalization" in the sense of "opening up the channel" in a women's vagina in preparation for sex yoga, which could be in the general sense of "stimulate". As for "planting the nuclei at the four maturation sites", on TDD 326,7, Longchenpa cites another passage from this same Tantra on yogic practices on the inner channels which has the similarly worded line *sMin Pa'i Sa Dang Thig Le sByar*, though Longchenpa provides no interpretation. The context in which he cites it is within a section on Secret Mantra practices, though the passage itself clearly suggests it is describing Direct Transcendence contemplation.

While these three terms undoubtedly refer to yogic techniques, it is thus unclear as to what they precisely refer to. "Planting the nuclei" could simply indicate "working with", "manipulating" or "activating" the seminal nuclei, or it could have a more specific reference to "placing" or "directing" these nuclei into specific parts of the body via visualization. In the context of sex yoga practices, TCD1 220,4 and surrounding pages uses the same term (*Thig Le gDab*) to refer to applying little dots of perfumed and or colored substances on someone's head or body. In that same passage, TCD1 222,4-5 uses the same term to say "if you plant the nuclei in the flavor channel you will be without thoughts of food; if you plant the nuclei in the solitary channel you won't need clothes and will engender warmth; and if you plant the nuclei in the all-encompassing channel, you will be able to pass through mountains and rocks without impediment". The canonical passage Longchenpa cites immediately below here in TDD says that the nuclei are planted "in the four maturation sites", since "the solitary channel has no manifest branches". This may indicate that yogic practices concerning this channel focus on its presence at the four energy wheels in the body's center (the reference to "four maturation sites" is unclear), since unlike the flavor and all-encompassing channels it has no subsidiary branches at which we can manipulate or contact the energy-flowing within it. Considering that TDD 254,6-255,2 discusses the flavor channel's four wheels exclusively in terms of nuclei that operate as the seed-potencies or bases for the four gnostic lamps and clearly points to their role in Great Perfection meditation, this reference may be to those nuclei's activation in Direct Transcendence contemplation as the source of visionary experience. As for "revitalizing" (*gSeng Ba*), KGYT3 85,2 says that if in Direct Transcendence meditation you can suffer from the standard twin defects impairing meditative concentration, becoming "drowsy" or "agitated" (both entail losing the clarity of your focus -

the former by virtue of becoming lethargic and dull, and the latter by virtue of becoming overly excited and distracted): the antidote for "drowsiness" is "revitalizing" or "invigorating" (*gSeng*), while the antidote to "distraction" is to remain in your posture and gaze without wavering. KGYT doesn't offer any further explanation of "revitalizing", but we can infer it entails a way of energizing or "picking yourself up" through a variety of techniques, such as moving to an area with more light, moving out of the warm sun, raising your gaze upwards, assuming a different posture, giving yourself a vigorous massage, singing special tantric songs, and so on. "Massage" (*mNye Ba*) would thus seem connected to "revitalizing" as involving techniques to "lift our spirits" and "wake ourselves up", which are connected to the solitary channel in that our inner vibrant energies are primarily located therein, and thus the key to such techniques lies in activating the energy-flow within the solitary channel, so that we "revive" ourselves into the fresh, alert state of psycho-physical being needed for meditation. These three may also be related to the solitary channel's role in "mystic fire" meditation, which involves a blazing inner fire that "wakes us up" and stimulates our energies, as well as generating physical warmth just as massage does, and involving the flow of seminal nuclei down from the crown through the four energy centers (which results from the blazing fire "melting" these nuclei's concentration in the crown, such that they begin to "drip" downwards). However, location of more explicit commentary on this passage in Longchenpa or other Nyingma scholars' corpus may shed a different light on these lines.

530. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 93,5; Ati1 112,4; also cited by TCD2 70,5ff).

*The inner winds' oscillating movements as they propel away and gather-in, along with the seminal nuclei, are concentrated within the navel's "generativity wheel" via the solitary channel (rKyang Ma):* TCD2, NGB and Ati read "enter" for "concentrated" in the second line. Longchenpa apparently interprets these first two lines as referring to the "clothes yoga" discussed by TDD 320,1-321,3 and TCD2 165,2-7, which together articulate three distinct contemplative techniques under this heading: "mystic fire" contemplation (TCD1 165,3-4), "the alchemy of the four elements" (TDD 320,4-321,3), and the wind-yoga (TDD 320,1-4 and TCD2 165,4-7). All three of these practices share common elements: the concentration of the inner winds via manipulation of the breath, visualizing a flame blazing up from the navel wheel, and the generation of physical and psychic "warmth". In general, the solitary channel is particularly connected with the energy wheel at the navel (just as the flavor channel has a special connection with the throat wheel, and the all-encompassing channel with the heart and crown wheels), which is revealed in its connection to bodily warmth (see TCD1 369,3-4) and its role in "differentiating" and "maturing" conventional energies in the body, since the stomach is the home of the digestive "fire", and thus the key location for the generation of physical warmth, processing of ingested food, and the elimination of waste products (TCD1 368,4 specifies the solitary channel is involved in the elimination of excrement). Thus the winds and nuclei (i.e. the body's subtle energy) tend to concentrate at this wheel within the solitary channel as they activate and impel these processes, and hence those yogas based on the generation of "warmth" through visualized "blazing" within the body naturally focus on the solitary channel and navel wheel in order to intensify these ordinary processes. By particular breathing techniques and visualizations, these yogas concentrate and intensify the energy that naturally concentrates in the solitary channel at the navel wheel, thus making this energy accessible to conscious control, as well as impelling it to optimal levels of functioning. In its explication of "mystic fire" contemplation, TCD2 165,3-4 specifically says that you must visualize the inner winds as held within the solitary channel, while both TDD and TCD's account of the wind-yoga practice involves "penning



up" the wind-breath's movements via special techniques of "propelling away and gathering-in" the winds (which refers in its coarse dimensions to the breath's exhalation ("propelling away) and inhalation (gathering-in). This concentration and control of the wind-breath energy then fuels the navel wheel's blazing fire, which incinerates all distorting dualistic conceptuality to reveal the inner gnostic singularity it obscures. This could be related to *rKyang Ma*'s etymology here, since this spiritual fire consumes everything else in its unitary blazing (leaving "no companions"), with the end result of revealing the singular wisdom-energy at our heart ordinarily obscured by the wild growth of emotional distortions; this fire "eliminates solidified wastes" with its intense fire, while its light is the "glow of gnosis". The winds' "propelling away" and "gathering-in" could also indicate the winds "propelling away" sedimented energy, and "gathering-in" gnosis' vibrant energy, or could have the nuclei as their object, i.e. the winds "propel" and "gather-in" the nuclei. Without further explication of these terse verses, it is impossible to precisely ascertain their intent.

"Solitary" ("rKyang") signifies that via its lack of companions, the singular wisdom energy (of the Universe) is displayed: I have explained these two lines above in the context of the solitary channel's role in "mystic fire" contemplation, yet in accordance with Longchenpa's preface, and his comment on TDD 254,6-7 that the far ranging water lamp's seed potency is present within the solitary channel's navel wheel, we could also interpret these opening lines as referring to the energetic activation of this gnostic potency within the navel wheel. These luminous nuclei within the solitary channel remain high-intensity points of light energy that have not dissipated or materialized into a fissured plurality of biological structures that the flavor channel is involved with ("no companions" indicates the solitary channel's lack of any fissuring branches and thus lack of energy dissipation), and thus have the potency to reveal to us the inner "wisdom" or "intelligence" (*dGongs Pa*) at work within all life, which itself a singular unity. The conventional nuclei lack this capacity because their energy is engaged in constant materialization and diffusion throughout the body, as well as being dispersed and obsessed with exteriority as ordinary psychic activity. These ultimate nuclei within the solitary channel remain as our inner link to the latent gnosis within our hearts, and thus must be energized contemplatively so that via their external visionary manifestation we can begin to trace our way back to our source. As we engage in this contemplation, this reviving energy eliminates the accumulated dregs, toxins, and sedimented structures that have accumulated over endless lifetimes, and gradually enables our inner luminosity to pervade our existence, ultimately dissolving our very corporeality into its light-essence.

"Ma" ("negate"/"mother") indicates its clearing away of solidified toxic energies, and its engendering the lustrous glow of (gnosis') essence: TCD2 reads "old" (*brNyings Ma* as old spelling of *rNying Ma*) for "solidified toxic energies" (*sNyigs Ma*), which may be a "Freudian" slip, since the "solidified" or "waste" aspects of our energy (*sNyigs Ma*) are the outdated frozen structures which are no longer "alive", but merely the passive inheritance of what "worked" in the past, yet doesn't necessarily have any relevance in our constantly changing dynamic worlds. Longchenpa here gives a dual etymology of *Ma*, with "clearing away" indicating *Ma* as the negative form (as well as the *Ma* in *sNyigs Ma*), and "engendering" indicating the solitary channel as the "mother" (*Ma*) or source giving birth to this glow. As pointed out above, this "glow" and "solidified energies" have multivalent significance, which TCD1 368,3 details one aspect of: the solitary channel impels the vibrant quintessence upwards so as to reveal the lamps, and it eliminates the solidified waste downwards as excrement (physical excrement as well as the excrement of emotionally distorted frozen patterns of being).

Here is the key point of revitalization and massage, and because no branches are manifest in it, the seminal nuclei are planted in the four maturation sites: NGB and Ati both have "nuclei" in the instrumental ("plant/apply with the nuclei"), though TCD agrees with TDD. See my annotations to Longchenpa's preface for my understanding of these three lines.

Those who desire to attain mastery over food should dissolve the inner winds (within here), not let go of "water", and properly focus your attention (on this practice) with (these) rules: Ati reads *gTems* for *bsTim*, but NGB and TCD agree with TDD. TCD reads "examine the channel" (*rTsa brTags*) for "thoroughly examine" (*Rab brTags* - I have here translate it loosely as "focus your attention"), though NGB and Ati agree with TDD (NGB's *Nab* is obviously a mistake for *Rab*). TCD, NGB and TDD all literally read "don't discard water", while Ati reads "don't spit" and notes the reading of "water" also occurs.

While in general TCD associates the flavor channel with food yoga and the solitary channel with clothes yoga, these two practices are closely linked - see TDD 321,3 for an account of a practice which Longchenpa says enables one to accomplish the "psychic attainment pertaining to both food and clothes". In addition, the solitary channel has a special connection with the navel wheel and thus to digestion, which directly relates to food. However, without more information it is impossible to say precisely which contemplative practice is here being referred to, though the reference to "dissolve the winds" suggests the "eating winds" yoga I discussed above in reference to the flavor channel - to attain mastery over food, we must draw our nourishing energy in subtle form from the external world via visualization-enhanced breathing practiced in conjunction with a set of "rules" or "commitments" (*Dam Tshig*). The dissolution of winds within these channels is a common element in a number of practices, and indicates the concentration of our internal bio-mental energy from its usual state of dispersion, which also relates to the importance of not "letting go of water". Ati indicates "water" refers to "spit", while one scholar interpreted it as referring to urine, and Khanpo Jikphun felt it referred to the emission of seminal nuclei (i.e. ejaculation of semen - see KGYT2 279 for comparison of semen to water in sexual yoga) - the key is not waste bodily fluids and energy, but rather retain them inside in your effort to overcome the need for constant physical nourishment. Thus it would certainly seem this relates to the alchemical techniques I previously discussed, though it may also be conjoined to mystic fire contemplation such as in the technique outlined on TDD 320,4-321,3. I have translated *Dam Tshig* as "rules", since it usually refers to one's "commitments" with regard to tantric practices, i.e. the "guidelines" as to what is proper to do and not do in achieving meditative progress and spiritual realization. In the current context, it appears to refer to the previous statements (dissolve the winds, don't eliminate water) and other unspecified guidelines to follow in these alchemical techniques attempting to overcome our ordinary helpless enslavement to eating. With these rules or guidelines, you must focus your energy on this practice (literally "examine" or "keep watch on", but meaning to faithfully keep in mind), concentrating your wind-currents of energy within the solitary channel where the gnostic seed-potencies are present, and thus eventually gain the capacity to bypass the coarse digestive system in "inhaling" energy. If we simply pick and choose as to how we implement these techniques ("Yes, I'll do the visualization, but these postures are irrelevant", etc.), then it is unlikely we will derive any real benefit from them, but rather will quickly run into one of the many dead ends or pitfalls that pervade the spiritual path. It is only by faithful implementation of the entire system of guidelines and "rules" in accordance with our teacher's contextualized instructions that we can utilize these creatively imaginative techniques to actually "tune in" to our ordinarily unconscious flows of bio-mental energy,

and thus begin to experience the stunning transformations detailed in these texts. Any more specific interpretation of these lines requires further textual evidence.

531. See TCD1 361,1-2 for very similar lines to the first half of this passage, which Guenther translates in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* II 22 and *Creative Vision* 152. The term *Kun 'Dar Ma* literally reads "the all (*Kun*) vibrating (*'Dar*) one" with a feminine connotation (*Ma* is merely the feminine marker corresponding to the original "ī" in the Sanskrit term, but Longchenpa plays off its meanings as "mother" (*Ma*), "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*), and negation (*Ma*). The corresponding Sanskrit term would generally be the feminine form *Avadhūti*, which would seem to derive from *Avadhūta*, defined by MW as "shaken away", "agitated", "shaken", or "expelled". This sense of "shaking" or "agitation" would seem to correspond to the Tibetan term *'Dar* in its sense of "vibrating", "shaking", or "trembling". This channel can also be referred to simply as the "central one" (*rTsa dBu Ma*), just as the flavor channel is often referred to as the "right channel" and the solitary channel referred to as the "left channel". On TDD 255,2, Longchenpa clearly etymologizes *'Dar* as "vibrating", saying that this channel "vibrates with the winds' movements back and forth", and it is easy to envision "vibrating" signifying the high intensity energy of this channel ("vibrating" as the opposite of "inert"). However, on TDD 255,2 and here in this section Longchenpa etymologizes the term as "encompassing", "subsuming" or "inclusive", which evidently refers to *'Dar*'s homonym *Dar Ba*, which means "to become widespread", "to flourish", or "to diffuse". Guenther appears to have recognized this problem, since in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* II 22 he indicated *'Dar Ma* in this context means "vibrating", while subsequently in his retranslation of the same passage (*Creative Vision* 152) he simply gives the Tibetan *'Dar Ma* without any reference to "vibrating". Though Guenther identifies the term *Kun 'Dar Ma* as an "indigenous" Tibetan term (*Creative Vision* 152), and in fact this would seem to likely be the case, its alternative spelling of *Kun Dhar Ma* (LYT2 241,3; KGNT1 427,3, etc.) clearly indicates the syllable "Dhar" is originally the transliteration of a foreign word, likely of Indic origin (or at least was purported to be at some point). This remains a point for further research, and possibly ties into Padmasambhava's distinction between the terms *Avadhūti* and *Kun Dhar Ma* (see my discussion in the annotation to the beginning of this chapter). Finally, it should be noted that the right and left channels switch sides depending on whether a person is male or female, this central channel is within the subtle body's center in both males and females (TCD1 364,5).

TCD1 363,5-370,4) discusses these three channels in terms of these eight categories: (i) their names (363,6-366,4); (ii) what they purify when yogically activated (366,4); (iii) what they symbolize (366,4-7); (iv) how they give rise to or engender (366,7-368,3); (v) what functions they perform (368,3-369,1); (vi) their respective essences (369,1-2); (vii) each channel's conventional reality (369,2-6); (viii) the esoteric precepts on how you these channels "link-up". For clarity's sake, I will here present a summary of each section as it applies to the all-encompassing channel (see my annotations to this chapter's discussion of the flavor and solitary channels for a summary of these sections with regards to them).

(i) *The all-encompassing channel's name (Kun 'Dar Ma)*: its name *Kun 'Dar Ma* unpacks like this - "its yogic "squeezing" gives birth to an experience of radiant primordial gnosis; leaving it in its ordinary state results in its functioning to sustain the triad of our ordinary body, speech, and mind".

"Squeezing" (*bTsir*) may simply indicate yogically activating this channel without referring to any specific meditative technique, and the main point is this contrast between this

channel's ordinary functions if we just "continue as usual" and its optimal mode of functioning when contemplatively energized (see Snellgrove's *Hevajra Tantra* I 114 and volume II 85 for a reference to "press" (*bTsir*) as referring to "pressing" the two right and left channels' winds up the central channel via yogic sexual intercourse"). In the full passage pertaining to all three channels, Longchenpa implies the standard triune classification of "contemplative experience" (*Nyams*) into experiences of "bliss" (the flavor channel), "clarity or radiance" (the all-encompassing channel) and "non-conceptuality" (the solitary channel), which indicate how we internally experience the contemplative optimization of our psycho-physical energy-flows. Longchenpa adds that the all-encompassing channel's unchanging presence at the center of both males and females without any variance indicates it as the unfabricated ground or "whole" referred to as the Great Perfection.

(ii) What the all-encompassing channel purifies when yogically activated: "with contemplative skill in the key points of the all-encompassing channel, you can purify all your mental activities".

(iii) The all-encompassing channel's symbolic meaning: "the all-encompassing channel symbolizes indivisible integration, and thus integrates the bliss of "efficacious means" (i.e. the flavor channel's energy or nuclei) and the emptiness of "insight" (i.e. the solitary channel's energy or nuclei). Since it integrates these two without being either a "conventional" subject or an "ultimate" subject, it is termed "the view of their thoroughly pure indivisibility beyond all extremes and limits".

"Subject" (*Yul Can*) literally reads "possessor of an object" and indicates that both these modes represented by the right and left channels retain a dualistic flavor to them - the "efficacious means" experienced affectively as intense bliss (especially related to sex yoga) and the "insight" which perceives phenomena's emptiness still oscillate back and forth between experiencing the world as conventional material processes and as ultimately empty. This can perhaps be best understood by reference to the individual meditator, who as s/he progresses along the meditative path initially develops a dualistic mode of being that moves back and forth between his/her ordinary existence (even as these conventional modes begin to optimize and become increasingly "blissful") and his/her new experiences of emptiness that go beyond superficial appearances (and perceived of as "ultimate" relative to his/her former "conventional" preoccupations - s/he rejects cyclic existence (Samsara) with its corporeality and embrace transcendent reality (Nirvana) with its "spiritual" nature), which eventually must be integrated into a unitary realization tuned into the ongoing dynamic forms of the Universe without losing any sense of their thorough emptiness (and in which s/he no longer experiences her/himself as an isolated "subject" perceiving an object "over there" or as consciously participating in "cyclic existence" or "transcendence" - there is complete attunement to the inner unity of the Universe and the individual, Being and beings, that no longer defines itself as "ultimate" relative to its former experiences as "conventional"). Thus it is the central channel in our subtle body that points to this inner unity of "matter" and "spirit", emotional "bliss" and ontological "emptiness", the individual and the Universe, action and intelligence, dynamism and openness which transcends the polarization into "right" and "left" which initially dominates our experience. While the Great Perfection tradition then further elaborates on the "super unity" of the luminous channel located within the all-encompassing channel, the present discussion is not explicitly concerned with this distinction.

As for Longchenpa's classification of the all-encompassing channel as "the indivisibility of efficacious means and insight", while the flavor channel symbolizes "efficacious means", and the solitary channel symbolizes "insight", I have in part discussed this above in the annotations to the section on the solitary channel. In general, it must be kept in mind that "efficacious means" and "insight" are in exoteric Buddhism understood as two principal aspects of the enlightened mind, signifying the Awakened One's compassionate "skill-in-means" in acting for all living beings' liberation, and his/her penetrating and total insight into the final reality of all phenomena, i.e. emptiness. The unification of these two elements in their proto-form within a spiritual aspirant involves developing your insight into emptiness in conjunction with a variety of more conventional activities which both support, and are directed by, that insight (such as generosity, diligence, a variety of meditative concentrations, etc.), all of which is integrated with your intensely committed motivation to achieve the "enlightened mind" for the benefit of all sentient beings (i.e. your enlightenment will enable you to help those beings towards true "liberation"). Tantric physiology then imaginatively interiorizes this entire spiritual drama within our subtle body, beginning by the identification of the "enlightened mind" with our own internal seminal nuclei, which naturally then are classified into active, masculine "efficacious means" (the conventional nuclei) and the passive, feminine "insight" (the ultimate nuclei), the two aspects of the "enlightened mind". Thus the ultimate nuclei represent the inherent "intelligence" of our body-mind which directs its development and structuration, while the conventional nuclei embody the "action" which sustains and expresses that intelligent by forming the physical structures and triggering the relevant bioenergetic processes. The optimal functioning of the latter is experienced by us affectively as "bliss" ("everything went like a dream"), especially in ordinary sexual experience and its yogic counterpart, while the former in its optimal mode is thoroughly "empty" of materialization and frozen structuration, such that it remains "open" to the ongoing dynamism of life. The central all-encompassing channel with its "natural" seminal nuclei then integrates these two aspects of the "enlightened minds" into its seamless unity, which however even in its integration continues to naturally express itself as "efficacious means" and "insight" (in line with the basic triune identity of the Universe). The luminous channel within that central channel's own center symbolizes the primordial "super-unity" of the Great Perfection, which is not the result of "integration" or the fruit of forced and labored creation, but rather is the line of continuity between ourselves and the initial moments of the Universe itself, symbolizing how the intelligent self-organizing Universe thinking in, as, and through our own existence finds itself in a complex multi-dimensional evolving hierarchy, and yet remains at its core pure empty luminous awareness devoid of differentiation.

(iv) *How the all-encompassing channel gives rise to or engenders the mind:* on TCD1 368,2, Longchenpa explains "engenders" by saying "the body engenders the channels, the channels engender speech, speech engenders the mind, the mind engenders reality, and reality engenders yoga..."

In particular, the all-encompassing channel engenders and develops our psyche, which relates to its connection to the vitality channel as residence for our universal psychic ground (see Chapter Four) and to the luminous channel within its center, whose brightness radiates outwards into the vitality channel as the source of our psyche. Given that our psychic energy all radiates outwards from and within this central channel, it is natural that the overall state of this channel directly correlates to the nature and functioning of our psyche:

"...if this channel is extremely crooked or twisted, your mind will be perpetually agitated and unable to concentrate; if it has branches, you will have a sharp intellect but be quick to forget (i.e. "flighty"); if it is of (uneven) thickness, your psyche will be very fickle and mercurial without any capacity to focus - although you undertake many tasks, you won't see any of them through to the end; if this channel is an unimpeded openness (i.e. totally clear), whatever you think will automatically turn towards virtue, be filled with insight and sincere; if this channel has (variable?) thickness yet is full (?), your intellect will be stable without tending to be fickle and mercurial; if this channel slants to the right, you will be prone to conceptual processing; if it slants to the left, you will always be full of doubt, uncertainty, and hesitation; if this channel is changing, you will continually experience many sufferings such that you always feel frustrated and uneasy; if this channel pulsates, you will be broadminded (correct *Yang* to *Yangs*) and inclined towards virtue; and if that channel opens up wide at its "mouth", you will be extremely diligent and accomplish what you set out to do..."

(v) *The functions performed by the all-encompassing channel:* "by propelling our vibrant quintessence-energies upwards, it directly displays the ultimate "enlightened mind" nuclei; by dripping our solidified energies downwards, it causes the conventional "enlightened mind" nuclei to descend".

The all-encompassing channel thus acts as the conduit for the ultimate nuclei which "give birth" to spiritual visions as the "genetic material" for our awakening Buddhahood, as well as for the conventional sexual fluids that in sexual intercourse incarnate our capacity to reproduce new life and vitality. Longchenpa concludes his discussion by discussing the implications of these latter nuclei "actually descending" in males (i.e. ejaculation), as well as variations in female's menstrual patterns. He again indicates that the "actual descent" of nuclei in males mean they directly experience "bliss" (i.e. orgasm) with the result that their sexual feelings of bliss evaporate with ejaculation, while since in women this channel is "obscured" and the nuclei don't "directly descend", it is easy for their sexual feelings of bliss to expand over and over without usually becoming satiated or "content". However, he says in menstruation "blood" does "directly descend" from the tip of this channel (earlier on TCD1 364,6ff Longchenpa specified menstruation and ejaculation as relating to the solitary channel and flavor channel respectively, while in our current context he appears to be concerned to indicate that even this conventional "vibrancy" derives ultimately from the central channel), and he goes on to make some observations linking the time and nature of a female's menses with disease and pregnancy.

(vi) *The all-encompassing channel's essence:* "its essence is the non-duality of bliss and emptiness, and through this non-dual integration (of the flavor channel's conventional bioenergetic processes peaking in "efficacious activity" subjectively experienced as "bliss" and the solitary channel's ultimate psychic processes peaking in "insight" which reveals the emptiness in these processes) it reveals the unrestricted free-ranging primordial gnosis which is free from this subjective-objective dualism".

(vii) *The all-encompassing channel's conventional reality:* "its reality is tied up in our physical thirsts and lack of thirst: if the channel is narrow, you are never thirsty; if it is wide, you feel thirsty and crave liquids all the time. If this channel is crooked, it influences a variety of your actions in an indeterminate manner; if it temporarily becomes convoluted, you experience various illnesses which result in you losing control of your body, speech, and

mind (evidently various mental and nervous disorders)". In addition, if you are skilled in yogically applying the key points of the all-encompassing channel, you can eliminate attachment to thirst, and by thus interrupting the flow of karmically conditioned dreams, you experience the presence of radiant light (see TDD 323,7-325,1 for an account of these practices concerning radiant light, whereby your sleep-experience is transformed into a continuous experience of your inner radiant light rather than its usual wild oscillation of neurosis-fueled dreams). Awareness of radiant light corresponds to our psychic energy being concentrated within the luminous channel at central channel's center, and thus it is primarily the all-encompassing channel as the external sheath of the luminous channel that is here referred to.

(viii) *The esoteric precepts on how the all-encompassing channel links-up:* "the all-encompassing channel links our psyche's flickering memory-based thought activity to pure reality, and thus joins us to self-emergent primordial gnosis as our conceptual stream naturally ceases and self-dissipates. In this way, objective conditioning is freed within reality, and with the natural exhaustion of our egoic memory-based conceptuality, reality's own wisdom-energy shines (from within)..."

From the account, we should note in particular the connection of the all-encompassing channel to the mind, thirst, and "dream yoga" (see TDD 321,3-325,1), which all relate to the presence of the luminous "crystal tube" channel within it, and that channel's brightness diffusing through it. In addition, TDD notes special connections the all-encompassing channel has to the heart and crown energy wheels, which again relates to the luminous channel within it connecting these two main centers of gnostic energy within our bodies (some scholars orally identify the "all-encompassing channel" as the "coarse central channel", and the "luminous channels" as the "subtle central channel" - see above). The luminous channel's slender line of light energy radiates out psychic energy, which in its wider sheath (i.e. the vitality channel) then begins to operate as our universal psychic ground, from which all our particular modes of consciousness stream out in diluted forms of intensity.

532. Longchenpa's opening lines should be understood in the context of the following commentary (see my explanation of the quotation for an interpretation of the later half of his opening lines):

*This central all-encompassing channel includes and subsumes everything ('Dar as "encompassing"); since all bliss relating to the seminal nuclei and channels, and the bliss relating to the inner winds, are engendered in dependence upon it, it is termed "all" (Kun); and in that it is extremely pervasive in general, it is termed "Ma" (i.e. "mother"):* Longchenpa here provides creative etymologies of each syllable in the trisyllabic term "all-encompassing channel" (*Kun 'Dar Ma*). (i) 'Dar indicates how this channel "encompasses" the vast network of channels deriving from it (TDD 255,2), as well as it being the ultimate source within our body of our entire psycho-physical energy (within it the luminous channel is located, as well as that luminosity's brightness forming the universal psychic ground). In the process of dying and meditation, all our energy is dissolved within this channel as it reverses its outward emanation to return to its source, and thus "in it everything gathers". (ii) "All" (*Kun*) then indicates this channel giving rise to all optimal functioning of our subtle body's triune energetics (the seminal nuclei impelled by the wind-currents down the channels' network of pathways), which we affectively experience as "bliss" - their "ease" and "smoothness" of operation is gives rise to the blissful feeling of unimpeded energy-flow devoid of obstacles and hindrances ("frustration" means "everything's going wrong", when it

seems "the world is against me"). The key to this optimal functioning of our bio-mental energy (and subjective sensation of bliss) are ultimately the luminous channel's pure luminosity present within the all-encompassing channel's center, which is the radiation of our gnostic awareness residing within the heart. This gnostic source is the ultimate source of all our vitality and vibrancy, and initially radiates out as a slender line of light within our body's center, from which its "brightness" emanates out into the wider area of the all-encompassing channel, and then gradually flows outwards in the form of conventional and ultimate seminal nuclei to sustain, organize, and in-form our entire psycho-physical being. Keeping in mind that these channels are none other than names for characteristic flow-patterns of energy in our body, it can be seen that this central channel subsumes all other channels in its capacity as the ultimate source of our continuing physical and mental vitality. (iii) Finally, *Ma* is etymologized as "mother" or "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*), relating to how the all-encompassing channel is the pervasive "mother root" or source of all particular flows of psycho-physical energy in our body/mind (TCD1 instead gives this as the etymology of 'Dar Ma, i.e. "encompassing-mother").

533. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 93,7; Ati1 113,1; also cited by TCD2 70,7).

*(The triune Spiritual Bodies) are ripened through the concentration (of winds and nuclei) within the heart's "memory" and head's "summit" wheels via the all-encompassing channel (Kun 'Dar Ma), such that karmic winds are reversed and primordial gnosis take hold of* (also see Longchenpa's explanation in the preface): while the "flavor" channel was associated principally with the throat wheel, and the "solitary" channel with the navel wheel, the all-encompassing channel is primarily connected to the energy centers at the heart and crown. At these two wheels, it is above all the energy (i.e. the winds-impelled nuclei) of the all-encompassing channel that is of critical importance: the heart contains the high-energy concentration of our gnostic essence as the mandala of peaceful deities (the Tsitta palace), while the crown is the location that gnostic essence's radiation focused in the brain as the mandala of wrathful deities (the Conch Shell House - TDD 255,2-4 explicitly says the central channel is the "support" for these mandalas). By concentrating and activating its energy-flow to a high pitch of "excitement" within these two vital centers, it provides the spark, impetus, and carrier waves for these mandalas' radiation to manifest within the sky via our eyes' gateways as the visionary images of Direct Transcendence contemplation. Via the gnostic winds and luminous nuclei flowing within this channel, we thus come into contact with the three Spiritual Bodies as mandalic "path-presences" during our contemplation, and ultimately come to embody their triune energy as we arrive at full enlightenment, coming to face to face with the Reality Body such that the dynamic qualities of the Enjoyment and Emanational Bodies naturally flow forth. The pathway between these two centers is of course the luminous channel running from the heart (the source-potential of the visions) to the eyes (the visions' gateway), and it is here that gnosis' pure radiation is concentrated in its purest form.

*The term "all" (Kun) refers to its bestowal of the enlightened qualities of the Emanational Bodies; the term "encompassing" ('Dar) indicates the enlightened qualities of the Enjoyment Body; and "Ma" ("grounding mother") indicates the direct revelation of the Reality Body:* Longchenpa here interprets the three syllables *Kun 'Dar Ma* as symbolizing the three Spiritual Bodies, with (i) "all" (*Kun*) indicating the proliferation of Emanational Bodies adjusted to each individual context and life form; (ii) "encompassing" (*'Dar*) indicating the Enjoyment Body is a holistic and mandalic display pervading the sky (alternatively *'Dar* could indicate it "vibrating" with high intensity light energy in their vividly colored displays-



see my comments above); (iii) and "Ma" indicating the Reality Body as the mother-source of the other two Spiritual Bodies, and in fact all experience as such.

Here in its twelve branches are the key points for "revitalization" and "unification": Longchenpa's preface specifies that since gnostic radiation is present within this channel in particularly intense form, the all-encompassing channel is the key to the contemplative techniques of "revitalization" (*gSeng Ba*) and "unification" (*'Dril Ba*), which aim at activating this gnostic energy to energize our being. The Tantra itself here indicates these practices in particular focus on the "twelve branches" of the all-encompassing channel. However, I have been unable to locate any description of these twelve branches or even references to them, and any precise reference of the terms "revitalization" and "unification" is unclear. While the term "revitalization" occurs fairly frequently in Longchenpa's corpus (see my earlier discussion in this chapter), and here has a natural connection to this channel (the intense psychic energy present in the channel is the key to dissipating depression, lagging spirits, or drowsiness by arousing our innermost vibrancy - we invigorate our energy system by opening up this channel's "gateway"), I am unfamiliar with the term *'Dril Ba* in a yogic context, though it evidently indicates a "concentration" or "unification" of our energies (perhaps "focusing" the mind). One scholar tentatively suggested it may refer to massage or "rolling up" the body in yogic exercises.

To extend your life span, you must rely on the application of salves here, and do (the yoga) with your seminal nuclei, body and mind: TDD's reading of *Bug Pa* must be corrected to *Byug Pa* on the basis of TCD, NGB, and Ati, which means to apply a salve, medicine, or some other type of ointment. Evidently these substances should be massaged into the skin at the special points relating to the energy-flow within this channel, which will thus increase your vitality and life force (recalling the close association of the all-encompassing channel with the vitality channel and the vitality wind flowing within it, and its acting as the source for our triune subtle body's "bliss" or optimal modes of operation). The final line would seem to indicate that you perform these contemplations using your body (various yantras and postures), the mind (visualizations), and the seminal nuclei (which must be concentrated and activated). However, any precise explication of these two lines would require further textual elaboration, and I have as yet not located any other citations of this passage that might offer helpful framing comments.

534. See TCD1 371,2-5 for a very similar account of the location and branches of these three channels. TCD1 361,2 and KGNT1 427,1 both say that the flavor channel "spirals" or "coils" from the left of the navel, such that it runs up the right side of the body, and merely say that the solitary channel runs upwards from the left of the heart's tip. While this clearly indicates that below the navel the flavor channel is located on the left side of the body to the left even of the solitary channel, it doesn't appear to imply that the solitary channel as well begins on the opposite side of the body before crossing over at the level of the navel. Without any further passages on this, it would seem that this implies that both the flavor and solitary channels' lower portions are to the left of the central channel (with the flavor channel to the far left), while at the navel the flavor channel crosses over to the right side of the central channel, and then proceeds upwards through the torso on that side of the body. Related to this, Cozort (*Highest Yoga Tantra* 119) says that in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* system "the right and left channels run parallel to the central channel from top to bottom", while in the *Kālacakra Tantra* system "they cross over the central channel at the navel", such that the right channel is on the left part of the body below the navel, and the left channel is on the right side below the navel. These two channels' placements are reversed for females (the

flavor channel being on the left side, and the solitary on the right side). While other accounts clearly specify the solitary channel has branches (or simply its lower end) below the navel (TCD2 80,6 and elsewhere mention its lower tip in the genitals), it is perhaps significant that both TCD and TDD (KGNT1 427,1 and KGNT 49,4 as well) begin their descriptions of the solitary channel by saying "it emerges from the left of the heart's tip".

As I mentioned previously, the KGNT and KGYT series of texts provide quite different accounts of the flavor and solitary channels. For example, KGNT1 427,1ff and KGYT2 156,5ff specify the two channels running to the respective eyes as both being branches of the solitary channel. In this account, each of the three main channels has three upper branches, with the solitary channel's branches being such that the middle branch has countless secondary branches running all over the body, and acting as the basis for tactile consciousness, and the right and left branches run to the corresponding eyes. These two branches are said to be shaped like buffalo horns, and function as the support of visual consciousness via which we experience visible forms, and in particular see the manifestations of radiant primordial gnosis. Having then described the crystal tube channel's two buffalo horn-shaped branches running to the eyes (which proceed from within the central channel), KGYT2 158,6 clearly distinguishes the two sets of channels by saying the crystal tube is transcendent of normal consciousness and sensory faculties, but rather is the path for the shining forth of primordial gnosis, while the two tips of the solitary channel are the support for normal visual consciousness in its apprehension of visible forms. Thus the crystal tube operates as the means for the heart's inner luminosity to shine into the sky, while the solitary channel enables us to *see* those luminous visions, as well as conventional shapes and colors. KGYT2 157,1-2 then specifies the flavor channel's upper three tips as two channels running to our two nostrils and thereby acting as the basis for olfactory consciousness, and the third branch as running to the tongue, where it acts as the basis for gustatory consciousness. The central channel's three tips' locations are the same as specified here, but the descriptions are quite different. The central branch operates as the basis for the shining forth of the Bodies of non-conceptual primordial gnosis, and in an impure context as the basis for psychic consciousness (i.e. ordinary mental activity). The right and left branches then run to the ears, acting as the support for auditory consciousness. This central branch, issuing towards the "Brahma's aperture" (the tip of our crown, where hair swirls outwards), is thus identical to the luminous channel termed "naturally free empty", which acts as the basis or outlet for the shining forth of linked chains in Direct Transcendence visions. These linked chains are termed the "Body" of primordial gnosis in that they are the efflorescence of our inner radiant awareness, and ultimately ripen before our eyes into images of divine Buddhas. It would thus seem that, as with the central channel and the crystal tube (the former acting as sheath for the latter), often the outer form (in this case the solitary channel) can be used to refer in shorthand to the functions contained within it (in this case the luminous channels), which partially explains the frequent mention of the solitary channel as a gnostic channel, and the discussion below of its four "wheels" where the basis of the four gnostic lamps are said to be located. See below for my comments on TDD's account of the central channel's two branches running to the two ears.

535. *Mu Tig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 364,4; Ati2 497,5). "Great bliss" is an alternative name of the crown wheel, which partially relates to the white seminal nuclei that bring about sexual bliss being located here. "The gateway of Brahma" refers to the spot at the top center of our head, elsewhere referred to as "Brahma's aperture". These "linked chains" are the radiation of awareness, and hence they are here referred to as "of non-conceptual awareness". This

quote makes perfectly clear that the central upper branch of the all-encompassing channel should thus be identified with the naturally free empty luminous channel.

536. *Thal 'Gyur* (passage not located, though Ati 168,2-3 does refer to the right and left ears in the context of the Direct Transcendence visions). The relationship of the karmic winds to the two nostrils is of course linked to the mind's "mount" being breath, which is inhaled and exhaled via the nostrils and mouth (the nostrils are also the center for one of our five main senses, i.e. smelling). TCD1 361,4-5 repeats TDD's account of the central channel's three upper branches, and adds that the two branches running to the nostrils act as the support for the wind-currents entering the Avadhūti, and meditation involving contemplations on these inner winds. KGYT2 157,6-158,1 indicates both the right and left branches of the all-encompassing channel act as the support for ordinary auditory consciousness (i.e. hearing), while TDD here splits this auditory function (our capacity to hear) into two aspects, a pure mode and an impure mode (just as our capacity for vision can operate on pure and impure levels - see the beginning of Chapter Six). Objectively, our two modes of hearing (on the "left" and "right" sides of our existence) correspond to the two dimensions of sound: the ordinary sounds of reifying particularized language and the mantric sounds resonating at the gnostic depths of Being. Khanpo Jikphun said that in the LYT empowerment ritual (I have yet to locate this passage) it is also said that the karmic winds are present in the right ear and the gnostic winds in the left ear, which the disciple is introduced to by instructing him/her to press on the left ear, and then identifying the resulting humming sound as the "natural sound of reality". VNT2 93,5 in the context of discussing the gnostic visions' manifestation says this: "The winds' dimension flows through your two ears, a sign of which is that when you press down on them, you will hear (the winds') sound". An interesting side note is that "the experience of sound" (*sGra Nyams*) is defined as "tones" (*gDangs*), which is the same term I have elsewhere translated as gnosis' "radiation", indicating a possible relation between sound and light here.

The reason that our visual and hearing senses are singled out in terms of having these impure karmic and pure gnostic modes derives directly from the fact that these two senses above all are prioritized in our ordinary daily activities as well as our aesthetic creations (art, music and literature - all of which are almost exclusively visual or aural without involving the other three senses), in comparison with which the other three senses (taste, smelling, touch) have become de-emphasized in humans. It is light and sound which dominate our horizons, and provide the primary metaphors by which we image our experience, as well as combining to account for our entire capacity for language (which is originally oral, but has now in its written form become closely tied to our visual capacity, which again indicates the close relationship between light and sound in our experience). Thus when our inner gnostic light shines outwards into exteriorized mandalic forms within the Direct Transcendence visions, it is only natural that this would primarily be understood as taking place via the gateways of the eyes, which above all else are the point where we contact the external world, and the external world touches us, and secondarily as involving our ears. Along these lines, the "gateways" of primordial gnosis is often identified as our "eyes", though there are less known passages dealing more comprehensively with the notion of "gateways" in our human body in this context, and they specify the ears and Brahma's aperture (see above) in addition to our eyes. For example, KGYT2 218,1-2 says that the gateway of primordial gnosis' shining forth from our latent interiority is twofold: "the gateway for its direct manifestation is your two eyes, while the gateway for its hidden (presence) is your two ears". ZMYT2 282,6-283,2 expands on this, tying these three sets of gateways (eyes, ears, Brahma's aperture) to the triadic presence of Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind within us. However,

in this context, instead of the Brahma's aperture, Longchenpa mentions the heart-lung pathway where awareness' radiation forms our "mind" with the lungs' breath (which emphasizes our ordinary experience rather than the visionary presences emphasized elsewhere). Despite this difference, the correlation works equally well if the Brahma's aperture is considered as the third item, since the linked chains shining out via it can be considered as the "radiation of awareness' Enlightened Mind", and KGYT (see above) identifies the channel running to it as being the support of our ordinary psyche in its impure aspect:

"...(Primordial gnosis') pathway is the channel connecting the heart to the eyes which resembles a white silk thread. Its gateway is the dyad of your water lamp (i.e. the two eyes - see Chapter Six), and "humming sound of elephants" (i.e. the two ears, which when pressed reveal a humming or quiet roar like a far distant herd of elephants). The Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind are spontaneously present within awareness, and their own triune radiation (has the following gateways in the human body): the luminous radiation of Enlightened Body is present within the far ranging water lamp (i.e. the two eyes); the sound of Enlightened Speech is present within the (two) ears; and the awareness-radiation of Enlightened Mind shines as the ordinary mind when linked with the lungs' (breath)..."

Our internal "Buddha-nature" or "enlightened nucleus" has this triune identity of Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind, and thus its radiation also has a triune character, which as it shines outwards has three corresponding gateways in the human body. The luminous radiation of the Enlightened Body is present within our two eyes (we "see" these forms in the Direct Transcendence visions), the sound of Speech is within our ears (via which we "hear" the mantric sounds of those visionary presences), and the radiated awareness of Mind shines in terms of psychic activity in the (channel) linking our lungs (to our heart). In this way, though our eyes and their capacity for vision (as well as their operation as "gateways") usually preoccupies Longchenpa, our ears also play a critical role. Our ears involve sound reception ordinarily, carried by the voice/breath (i.e. "winds"), and thus have two dimensions - karmic/neurotic/coarse and nirvanic/transcendent/subtle: the right ear is correlated to the karmic (the right being associated with conventional processes), and the left ear to the transcendental (the left being associated with un-usual, subtle dimensions). In Direct Transcendence contemplation they act as gateways for the gnostic radiation of awareness (corresponding to its quality of Speech) to shine outwards from within us, and thus allow us to tap into the esoteric dimension of sound, which are the mantras of primordial gnosis (the true naked experience of sound), just as the eyes allow us to tap into the esoteric dimension of form, the empty luminosity of the Spiritual Bodies. In both cases we penetrate to the fundamental vibrant energy of gnosis which lies at the heart of all interiority and exteriority, though usually clouded over by adventitious obscurations. This also underlies the numerous yogic exercises dealing with sound that are utilized in preliminary meditations in the Great Perfection tradition (see Chapter Eight).

537. See TCD1 361,5-6 for an identical account of the nuclei present within these three channels. Longchenpa further elaborates on TDD 256,2-257,2, where he says the conventional catalytic nuclei are present in the flavor channel, ultimate gnostic nuclei are present within the solitary channel, and natural reality nuclei are present within the all-encompassing channel. In the present context, Longchenpa is simply making some brief comments in way of introducing his discussion of the energy-flow in the flavor channel as it pertains to the four main energy wheels in our body. Longchenpa links the flavor channel (i.e. the conventional nuclei flowing through/as it) to both our emotional states and our

body's material and semi-material elemental energies, which he first discussed in Chapter Two in the context of embryogeny as a intimate mutually sustaining linkage between emotions and internal physical energies (also see above for my interpretation of his discussion of "flavors" in the flavor channel). Our bodily energies "increase" and "deteriorate" in relation to the nuclei's movements in accordance with the lunar cycle (see TDD 210,7-211,5), as well as in general with sickness and health (or "peak experiences"), and overall in terms of life phases (during youth our energies are expanding and increasing, while in old age they are in permanent decline - see KGYT2 168,6-169,1, which says the disruption of the nuclei result in disease, while their expansion results in long life, pleasure, a happy life, and "glory"). All of these fluctuations involved in health and disease as well as growth and aging are governed above all by these conventional nuclei, which are the "triggering" force or catalyst behind our physical processes (see below for how they "ripen" blood, which in turn ripens flesh, and so on). They thus also govern our experiences of bodily "comfort" and "pain" which are directly related to the performance levels of our physical energies (including sickness/health and general feelings being lethargic, energized or hyperactive), as well as the full range of our emotional life (depression, exhilaration, anger, jealousy, lust, and so on), which modern science itself has increasingly shown to be linked to "chemistry" in our brain and body overall.

538. To expand on these, there are four subtle "knots" within the flavor channel: see TCD1 361,6-363,2 for its corresponding section on the four main "knots" or "wheels" in these three channels. See the mini-encyclopedia for a more extensive discussion of these "knots" as distortions or blockages in the energy systems, while in the current context the term "knots" simply signifies the four main energy wheels as resembling "knots" since many different channels come together at these points, and in ordinary beings are a tangled, non-optimal convergence of energy-flows resembling a "knot" (whereas imaging these centers as "wheels", "lotuses", or "umbrellas" emphasizes their perfectly ordered, mandalic character within the meditating visionary - it is often said that such vivid symmetry doesn't apply in ordinary living beings, where these subtle energy-flows are much vaguer and disorganized (like "knots")). In this passage, Longchenpa explains the key roles each one of our body's three primary channels plays at these four main energy nexuses at our body's center (navel, heart, throat, head) in terms of the type of seminal nuclei characteristically located there, thereby clarifying the functions of each channel as well as each energy "wheel".

(i) Since the channel of the navel's "generativity" wheel first develops via this "catalyst", the causal impetus or catalyst deriving from our current father resides within that channel as a white seminal nucleus about the size of one tenth of a mustard seed. Because our body is "generated" in an upward development in dependence upon it, it is termed a "catalyst". (ii) The catalyst deriving from our current mother resides within the heart's memory wheel as a red seminal nucleus the size of one tenth of a mustard seed, and thus exists as the support for our memory-based thought activity in its diverse flickering movements, which is why (this wheel) is called "memory": as discussed in Chapter Two, these conventional nuclei are generally classified into two types, in relation to their genesis in embryogeny: "white" seminal nuclei deriving from the father's semen, and "red" seminal nuclei deriving from the mother's blood drop, i.e. ovum (see "seminal nuclei" in the mini-encyclopedia for further details on these). However, these two types of nuclei cannot be reduced to their coarse and particularized forms as "semen" and "ovum" respectively, but rather represent a symbolic polarization that embraces immaterial as well as material aspects of the psycho-physical process. They are generally understood as the "vibrant quintessence" of the parents' original sexual fluids, and just as those parents semen and ovum originally formed the physical or

material basis for the embryo's subsequent development, these white and red nuclei (which are present in males and females, though with critical differences - see TCD2 80) are thought to form the ongoing basis of our current embodiment. They are thus term "catalysts" (*rGyu'i*), since they act as the main catalysts or causal impetuses of our physical development both initially in the embryo, as well as subsequently throughout our live in this particular physical form (when then shift location, this support of our current embodied existence is disrupted, and thus our psychic essence disassociates from the body, i.e. death - see directly below). Longchenpa here places the paternal white seminal nuclei within the navel wheel of the flavor channel and correlates it in particular with the body's physical processes, while he identifies the maternal red seminal nuclei as being present within the heart wheel of the flavor channel and correlates it in particular to our conventional psychic processes. This ties into the respective names of those wheels, since the navel center is usually referred to in the Great Perfection tradition as "the wheel of initial generativity" and the heart center as "the wheel of memory storage". The navel's network of channels is generally described as the center from which the embryo's growth initially develops outwards from, and thus Longchenpa here interprets this as meaning this wheel is "generated" or developed "initially" by the paternal white nucleus which acts as its "catalyst" or cause. Thus this white nucleus remains present in this center as the ongoing cause ("catalyst") of the body's physical growth both in embryogeny, and following birth. In this way he etymologizes the navel center's name of "the wheel of initial generativity" as referring to this center being initially generated by the paternal nucleus, as well as subsequently acting as the center for these white catalytic nuclei which "first develop" the embryo's physical basis, and continue to "generate" our physical embodiment throughout any particular life. Longchenpa explains this clearly on TCD1 366,7-367,4 in the context of explaining how the flavor channel plays the principle role in the development or generation of the physical body (whereas the solitary and all-encompassing channels are particularly associated with verbal and mental development respectively). In our present context, he then associates the red material nucleus with our psychic processes, which is thus located in the heart's "memory storage wheel", which Longchenpa here etymologizes as referring to this red nucleus operating as the basis for our varied memory-based thought activity. While in Chapter Two's account of embryogeny Longchenpa referred to the paternal white semen as the "catalyst" or "cause" in contrast to the maternal blood/ovum as the "condition" or "conditional determinant" of the embryo (which indicated that in embryogeny the semen was the main driving force), in our current context accounting for the red and white nuclei as derived from the original semen and ovum, Longchenpa terms both "catalysts" or "causal impetuses" in the sense that they both equally act as the conventional catalysts or triggering forces in our ongoing psycho-physical state.

It must be pointed out that this opposition between "white" and "red" nuclei takes many forms in Longchenpa's corpus as a key symbolic element in the presentation of the subtle body (which directly relates to "light and dark" or "white and black"), with the common link being that "white" and "red" represent the polarized nature of our current existence: "white" tends to be associated with the more materialized physical aspects of our existence, and "red" tends to be associated with the more vibrant, immaterial aspects. Thus in our current context the conventional "white" nuclei are associated with the body while the conventional "red" nuclei are associated with the mind (both in relation to the flavor channel), while in other contexts the "white vibrant energies" are associated with the conventional "white" lunar flavor channel and the "red vibrant energies" are associated with the ultimate "red" solar solitary channel (see GTD 376,6ff and LYT2 243,1ff). In relation to this, there is clearly a certain ambivalence throughout Longchenpa corpus in his treatment of the solitary channel: while at times he focuses exclusively on the presence of ultimate luminous nuclei within it so

as to contrast it clearly to the *conventional* flavor channel (such as our current passage, where all physical processes are attributed to the flavor channel and the solitary channel presence at the four wheels is discussed only in terms of the four gnostic lamps), he at other times acknowledges that in fact these conventional biological processes are the shared function of both the flavor and solitary channels, although there remains an incipient polarization of their functions along the lines of higher and lower order (which is reflected in the conventional red nuclei tending to predominate in the solitary channel, and the conventional white nuclei tending to predominate in the flavor channel - as I mentioned previously, this suggests the flavor channel in particular being associated with the nervous system, and the solitary channel with the circulatory system). In general, these two types of nuclei are said to be present throughout our body (Cozort in *Highest Yoga Tantra* 72 says they coat the inside of the channels "like frost" - see TCD2 79,7), though they tend to concentrate in particular areas. However, the descriptions of these concentrations depends on which aspect of these nuclei is being focused on, and the specific context/motivation involved in a given description (medical, meditative, subtle body theory, etc.). While in our current context Longchenpa places the white nucleus (in the singular rather than plural) in the navel wheel and the red nucleus in the heart wheel, the most common characterization is that the white seminal nuclei tend to concentrate at the crown wheel and the red seminal nuclei at the navel wheel. For example, KGYT2 168,3ff says that the white nuclei obtained from the father are principally the vibrant quintessence of water energy, and are concentrated at the upper tip of the central channel in head at the level of the spot between our eyebrows. The red nuclei attained from the mother are principally the vibrant quintessence of fire energy, and in males are concentrated within the vajra (i.e. penis) and in females within the lotus' anthers (i.e. the protuberance of the bliss channel within the vagina). In death these shift position and meet at the heart, with the red nuclei rising up from the below in the form of the syllable "A" or a sun, and the white nuclei descending down in the form of the syllable "Ham" or a moon. When they meet at the heart, there is an instant during which the heart's radiant light manifests, and then the "sun" proceeds on upwards to emerge through the nostrils, and the "moon" proceeds on downwards to emerge through the penis or vagina, which marks death. These movements are subjectively experienced as a series of "red" and "white" visions of light during dying, and as such play a crucial role in other tantric systems (not the Great Perfection) in their efforts to contemplatively "mimic" this process of dying via meditative techniques so as to gain mastery over our subtle energy system and attain enlightenment. These processes are clearly explained by Geshe Gyatso in *Clear Light of Bliss* (see 67-88 in particular), Hopkins in *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth* (29-50), and Cozort in *Highest Yoga Tantra* (see 72-76 in particular), all of which refer to the red and white nuclei as "drops" (*Thig Le*). These red and white nuclei as located in the navel and crown wheels respectively also play a vital role in sexual yoga and "mystic fire" (*gTum Mo*) contemplations, the latter which involves visualizing a red fire blazing up from the navel's red nuclei, thereby "melting" the white nuclei in the crown, which thus "drip" down through the four energy wheels with an associated fourfold series of intensely blissful sensations termed the "four joys" (the same four joys that are involved in sex yoga as the white nuclei are brought down through the four wheels, and then reversed back upwards through them). These processes are explained in clear detail in *Clear Light of Bliss* (33-66 on the practice of "inner fire", and 67-99 on the "four joys"), as well as *Highest Yoga Tantra* (71ff on the practice of "Fierce Woman" (i.e. inner fire) and 76ff on the "four joys"). LYT1 243,2 provides further details on the locations of the white nuclei in the crown and red nuclei in the navel. In that context, Longchenpa locates the white nuclei within the flavor channel as the lunar syllable "Ham" facing downwards (i.e. upside down) which engenders all our physical elements in general, and in particular gives rise to the brain, marrow, fat, and bones. The red



nuclei are located within the solitary channel as the solar syllable "A", via which flesh, blood, lymph, skin, head and bodily hair are generated. He further indicates the red "A" is located within the genitals energy wheel, and the white "Ham" at the crown energy wheel (TCD2 80,6-7 also places the white nuclei especially at the flavor channel's upper tip in the crown, and the red nuclei at the solitary channel's lower tip in the genitals). In other contexts, Longchenpa specifies that these conventional nuclei are also present in special concentrations at the respective centers of the four or five main energy wheels where they can thus influence the entire network of channels (KGYT2 170,2; TCD1 367,1-2). It should also be recalled that the inner quintessence of these conventional nuclei is said to be gnosis, such that even within these semi-material lower order nuclei the gnostic Spiritual Bodies continue to be present in latency. Finally, Khanpo Jikphun mentioned yet another description in medical texts, which specify the white nuclei as being in the right branch of the seminal vesicle (*bSe'u*) and red nuclei in its left branch.

(iii) A seminal nucleus of wind-energy the size of one tenth of a mustard seed resides within the throat's flavors wheel, where it acts to separate out the vibrant and solidified energies of food. The solidified factors then bring about the external elimination of urine, feces, and so forth, while the vibrant factors bring about the luster and radiant glow of the body, and thus this wheel is termed "flavors": see my extensive discussion of this concept of "flavors" and the throat's role in "digestion" in my annotations to the previous section on the flavor channel. "The luster and glow" of the body indicates its alive-ness and intelligence, as opposed to dead matter, and is reflected in how we talk of "auras", "majesty", "radiant" complexion, "glowing" with health, and so on. Thus food's "vibrant energies" or "quintessence" nourishes the living, vibrant elements of our body, while its "solidified energies" is simply eliminated as excrement and urine.

(iv) The mind's nature resides within the crown's summit wheel as a luminous nucleus the size of one tenth of a mustard seed, which is what the name "summit" derives from: this nucleus is the conventional center for our mental activities, and its location in the crown wheel obviously relates to the brain's presence in the head. Longchenpa here evidently etymologizes "summit" as referring to the "mind" being the "highest" ordering dimension of our conventional existence, which hierarchically organizes the physical and verbal processes that are "below" it. In addition, the "nature of the mind" connotes the vibrant inner light from which our entire existence stems (though the ultimate "nature of the mind", i.e. mind-as-such or pristine awareness, resides in the heart-Tsitta).

These (four wheels' seminal nuclei) are termed "the support of conventional processes", and when they transfer locations, the body and mind become dissociated from each other (i.e. death): these conventional nuclei act as the primary basis of our conventional psycho-physical existence both as its initial catalyst in embryogeny and ongoing support in our present moment to moment life, and thus when they begin to transfer out of their customary locations this marks the beginning of the end, i.e. death (TCD2 80,5-6). Our current physical embodiment as the expression of our inner gnostic essence and karmically conditioned psychic gestalt is directly governed and coordinated by these nuclei located in these vital centers of the body, such that any displacement or disruption in their presence results in illness and disease, while their actual transference of locations (i.e. of their main concentrations) results in death as our psyche no longer is able to coordinate or enliven its present material structures (i.e. body). Thus these nuclei's transference of locations marks the departure of the mind from its present embodiment, which is why TCD2 367,3-4 says these nuclei are the main impelling cause behind our body's origination, sustenance, and eventual



destruction. This "transference" or movement of the nuclei from their ordinary locations takes many forms in the multi-level dissolution of our psycho-physical energies that takes place in dying, and Khanpo Jikphun said the exact procedure was not uniformly determinate though with a certain "critical mass" of nuclei transferring from their normal locations it is certain you will die (since they can no longer regulate these conventional processes, and hence those processes cease)- as an example, he mentioned how in sexual yoga it is possible that the consort may become overly stimulated, such that the white nuclei are shifted out of their location in the head, and thus she dies. However, the main "transference" of these nuclei in death can be identified as the above described movement of the white nuclei from the crown and the red nuclei from the navel, such that they meet together at our heart (KGYT2 168,4-169,1 in particular makes this clear; also see TCD2 181,6; KGYT2 122,5ff). See the above mentioned passages from *Clear Light of Bliss*, *Death Intermediate State and Rebirth*, and *Highest Yoga Tantra* for extensive details on the dissolution processes involved in death, and in particular on the transference of these red and white seminal nuclei.

(The way in which they account for our physical elements is as follows:) blood is ripened via these conventional catalysts (i.e. the conventional seminal nuclei which "trigger" the entire process); flesh ripens from blood; ligaments ripen from flesh; lymph ripens from ligaments; fat ripens from lymph; bone ripens from fat; marrow ripens from bone; the spinal cord ripens from marrow; and the conventional seminal nuclei in turn ripen from the spinal cord: this passage indicates in detail how these conventional nuclei give rise to all the main elements of our material physical structures. The conventional nuclei (classifying the "white" and "red" together here) give rise to blood, which in turn produces flesh, and so on through ligaments, lymph, fat, bone, marrow, and the spinal cord, which in turn "ripens" the conventional seminal nuclei such that the entire loop forms a mutually self-sustaining "assembly line" that is in constant operation to provide for the ongoing regeneration, repair, and growth of our body's vital elements. Of particular note is the link between the spinal cord and conventional nuclei (a term including hormones, nerve impulses, etc.), which again indicates a close link between the flavor channel and spinal cord. As I mentioned above, in other texts Longchenpa splits these biological functions between the flavor and solitary channel (correlated to the white and red nuclei respectively), whereas in the current context he links the entire range of physiological processes to the flavor channel in order to clearly contrast it to the solitary channel in its role as the conduit of the gnostic lamps. For example, LYT says that the white seminal nuclei from the flavor channel engenders all our physical elements in general, and in particular gives rise to the brain, marrow, fat, and bones. The red nuclei from the solitary channel engender flesh, blood, lymph, skin, head and bodily hair. ZMYT2 110,5 says that the white nuclei gives rise to the brain, marrow, bone, fat and connective tissue, while the red nuclei gives rise to flesh, lymph, skin, and head/bodily hair (with each element arising from the former item, and engendering the latter item in a self-sustaining loop such as TDD outlines). These lists of physical constituents are related to the standard list of "six elements" (*Khams Drug*) which are necessary to engage in the highest tantric meditation, and which are said to explain why the human body is such an admirable form for such meditations. Geshe Gyatso (*Clear Light of Bliss* 28) explains this list of six can be either earth, water, fire, wind, channels and seminal nuclei, or can be enumerated as the bone, marrow and seminal fluid obtained from the father, and the flesh, blood, and skin obtained from the mother. STCP1 719,3 gives yet another account of these six elements, which it identifies as earth energy, water energy, fire energy, wind energy, space, and consciousness (usually earth and water energy are identified as flesh and blood respectively within our body; fire and wind energy as warmth and breath; space energy as the body's internal cavities or spaces; and the consciousness element as our psychic activity).

539. As for the knots of the solitary channel, (i) two extremely small seminal nuclei resides within the navel's generativity wheel as the seeds of the "far ranging water lamp": TCD1 362,3 reads "extremely lustrous nuclei" for "extremely small nuclei". Longchenpa's account of the solitary channel's presence at the four energy wheels focuses exclusively on the radiant minute nuclei which function as the supports for the corresponding four lamps of gnosis discussed in detail in Chapter Six. The nuclei are latent seed-potencies present within all humans, and within the contemplative process are activated to support the four lamps in their crucial role as the source and content of the visionary presences therein. These two small nuclei at the navel which are the "seeds" for the far ranging water lamp would seem to indicate the two "Eyes" discussed previously in the Chapter Two, which TCD2 1,1ff explains as the "Eye of the Elements" and the "Eye of the Lamps". It must be kept in mind that the far ranging water lamp in essence refers to the luminous channels running from the heart to the eyes, and which is located within the ordinary visual channel - LYT1 464,6 traces the "root" of this visual channel back to the navel. In general the embryo is said to develop from the navel wheel of channels, and TCD2 12,6-7 further specifies that the visual organ and the luminous channel's vibrancy both emerge from these two "Eyes" or "super-nuclei" located at the navel, which is directly linked up to the eyes via this channel. Thus Longchenpa's mention of two "eyes" here connotes the two material and semi-material eyes that we ordinarily see with, as well as the two luminous channels running to those eyes' respective centers. The insight lamp's support naturally is located within the heart (which is always associated with psychic processes as the chief residence of awareness within our heart), while its "fiery" nature is related to the high intensity of insight which gives of "sparks" of energy (see TDD 278,1-2 and TDD 279,1-2 in particular). The expanse lamp's support is located at the throat wheel as a five-colored nucleus with encircling rims or auras of light, which is directly related to the expanse's function in the Direct Transcendence visions, since the expanse lamp in that context is perceived as rainbow-colored light patterns that in particular form halos around the empty seminal nuclei. Finally the support for the empty seminal nuclei lamp is located within the crown wheel.

Uncontaminated primordial gnosis directly shines forth in dependence upon these (nuclei of the solitary channel's centers), such that you are naturally expansively awakened into Buddhahood in dependence upon (the solitary channel). Therefore these are referred to as the "natural seminal nuclei", which operate as the four lamps through the pure gateway, and as the four elemental energies through the impure gateways: after detailing the four gnostic lamps' supports or seeds as present within the solitary channel, Longchenpa briefly mentions the nature of Direct Transcendence contemplation as involving our internal uncontaminated primordial gnosis shining forth directly, such that we can perceive it in direct sensation in the sky around us. Since we are thus "naturally" enlightened, Longchenpa refers to the nuclei within this channel as "natural" seminal nuclei (the next page then identifies the nuclei within the all-encompassing channel as "ultimate reality" nuclei). However, TDD 256,3-4 and elsewhere say the "ultimate" gnostic nuclei are present within the solitary channel, while the "natural" reality nuclei are located within the all-encompassing channel: "ultimate" is in opposition to "conventional", whereas "natural" connotes the inner unity transcendent of such polarizations (see my discussion earlier in this chapter on the inner relationships between the three channels). However, the terms "natural" and "ultimate" are also to a degree interchangeable (as shown in how both terms are applied to the nuclei in either channel), while the terms "gnostic" and "reality" appear to be applied more strictly ("gnostic" referring to the nuclei within the solitary channel, and "reality" to the nuclei within the all-encompassing channel). In this context, "gnostic" or "primordial gnosis" indicates a certain polarization or

opposition to the conventional material forces operative in the flavor channel, while "reality" signifies the wider, transcendent expanse of reality in which both currents of force (physical and psychic, conventional and ultimate) ultimately subside in the enlightenment experience.

This vibrant energy within the solitary channel can then be "interpreted" or filtered through two "gateways", as a result of which we can experience them "purely" as the four gnostic lamps (vibrant light intensity), or "impurely" as the four elemental energies (material and semi-material). This image of two gateways (one pure and impure) refers back to the imagery of two gateways (to cyclic existence and to transcendence) detailed in Chapter One as the two possibilities or paths that open before us in the beginning of the Universe (or the Universe's own dyadic self-interpretation): freedom or straying, recognition or non-recognition, vibrant lucency or corporeality, awareness or ignorance. In the current context it thus refers to our overall psycho-physical gestalt as based on either alienation and corporeal obsessions, or realization and spiritual concerns ("gateway" also connotes our being as a "gateway" through which Being expresses itself): depending on which gateway they pass through, these nuclei are present as four luminous gnostic lamps, or the four materialized and semi-materialized elements.

540. The middle "all-encompassing channel" (Kun 'Dar Ma) includes or encapsulates the nature of "all" the channels, and furthermore "vibrates" ('Dar) with the wind-currents' oscillating movements back and forth, and is the "mother-foundation" (Ma) by virtue of thus functioning as the ground of cyclic existence and transcendent reality: Longchenpa here again gives an etymological unpacking of the "all-encompassing channel" (Kun 'Dar Ma). As for its epitomizing the potencies of all the channels since our entire energy body derives from the luminous channel running through it, see my earlier discussion annotating TDD 253,1. In this context, Longchenpa also etymologizes 'Dar as "vibrate" rather than "encompassing" (also see my previous discussion on this term), which indicates how this channel "shakes" with the dynamic movements of the winds back and forth. "Back and forth" can imply exhalation and inhalation, but also simply indicates that the main characteristic of these wind-currents as "movement", which is particularly active in the all-encompassing channel (see directly below for Longchenpa's correlation of this channel to the winds' activity, while the other two channels are correlated to the activities of the nuclei and channels). While the *Guhyasamāja* and other tantric systems generally hold that in ordinary waking life the central channel is totally empty of winds (which are present within right and left channel), the *Kālacakra* speaks of the upper portion of the central channel containing wind and the lower portion containing semen. Similar to this, although most Tibetan scholars tend to think of the central channel as empty, it appears clear that Longchenpa does consider wind-currents to be normally operative within the central channel, though he doesn't ordinarily relate it to physiological processes and the conventional nuclei (although TCD2 36,4 does relate it to the ejaculation of semen, and TCD2 369,4 associates it with feelings of thirst). TCD2 367,7-368,2 and elsewhere clearly indicate that this channel in our ordinary existence is particularly connected to our psyche, such that it "vibrates" with the movements of the karmic winds operating as "mounts" for the mind's operations (which are also directly tied to our inhalation and exhalation - see Chapter Four). This is also connected with the all-encompassing channel's close relationship with the vitality channel (as the residence of our universal psychic ground), where the vitality wind-currents operate that are the source of the other four types of winds operative in our body, and which in turn account for all our internal and external movement (blood circulation, muscular movements, metabolism, digestion, speech, breathing, and so on). In the other direction, this relates to the luminous channel present within the all-encompassing channel's outer sheath, and whose "brightness" or

radiation is the ultimate source of all our psycho-physical vitality. In this manner, the all-encompassing channel acts as the "foundation" (*gZhi Ma*) of both cyclic existence and transcendence, i.e. our entire range of pure and impure experience: the karmic winds impel our ordinary distorted and dualistic psychic activity ("cyclic existence"), while the gnostic winds propel the luminous channel's pure radiation out via the eyes as the visions of transcendent reality. The winds are often termed the "universal creators" (*Kun Byed*) since they impel all movement in the universe, from obscure wind which first impelled the primordial emergence of the Ground-presencing to our ordinary acts, speech and thought in the present moment. It is thus an important point to not misinterpret these texts on the basis of other systems, which view the central channel as ordinarily empty, except in special contexts such as the yogic insertion of the right and left channel's winds into it, where they are transformed into gnostic winds. In contradistinction to such a view, Longchenpa attributes a variety of ordinary and extraordinary functions to the all-encompassing channel, which entails that at all points in our existence it is "vibrating" with the activities of the wind-currents as they sustain our overall "world" or horizon, whether that be the materialized, distorted horizon of cyclic existence, or the shimmering luminous visions of transcendent reality.

*541. The support of all the Spiritual Bodies resides in the navel's generativity wheel as a mustard seed-sized (nucleus) shining with Faces and Hands of light:* Longchenpa's discussion of the all-encompassing channel's presence at the four main energy wheels focuses exclusively on the pure mandalas of deities within our body, and curiously omits any account of the throat wheel despite beginning the passage by mentioning this channel's "four" knots (TCD is identical to TDD on this point). The navel wheel, the root of our entire body's "generation" where the two "Eyes" are located, is accordingly the support of all these Spiritual Bodies. "Faces and Hands" (capitalized to indicate the honorific form appropriate when referring to deities) indicate the energy these deities symbolize is fully present rather than some abstract "potential", and the qualifier "of light" clearly indicates they should not be understood materially as concrete forms.

*: (ii) the support of primordial gnosis resides in the heart's memory wheel as the perfectly complete mandala of the deity which has befallen you, with its mustard seed-sized individual deities' particular bodily colors and hand-held symbols radiantly clear in a divine palace with four gateways and four porticos - by virtue of this key point, (it is easier) to contemplatively evoke and actualize your own particular spiritual "family" (from the five main spiritual affinities), which is indicated by the particular mandala on which the flower falls (in the empowerment ritual); and (iv) the support of all the lights resides in the crown's summit wheel as the mandala of wrathful deities:* the main mandalas of deities are of course located at the heart and head: in the heart, awareness' essence symbolically structures itself as the forty two deities of the peaceful mandala, while its radiation is present in the head as the fifty eight deities of the wrathful mandala. The former refers to the palace in our Tsitta previously mentioned at the beginning of Chapter Four, with the "four gateways" and "porticos" indicating the four luminous channels open outwards from the heart. At the center of this mandala of peaceful deities are the five Buddhas which incarnate the five spiritual affinities or "families", with one at the center and the other four situated at the cardinal directions. Each living being has a particular affinity with one of those five spiritual families symbolized by these five Buddhas, which indicates the particular nature of our energy's overall gestalt, symbolically indicated by that Buddha (and his entourage) inhabiting the center of this mandala within your heart, while the other four Buddhas are arrayed at the cardinal points. Because we have this special affinity with one Buddha's energy above all, it

is important to determine which spiritual affinity or "genotype" plays this centering role in our subtle energy system so that we may concentrate on its visualization and symbolism to facilitate our contemplative practice. This is most commonly done during empowerment rituals by dropping a flower onto a symbolic depiction of the five spiritual families' mandalas, with the particular mandala the flower falls on (center, east, west, south or north) indicating that Buddha to which we have a special connection. By then adjusting one's contemplation to focus in on this particular Buddha and the spiritual affinity he incarnates, we are then more readily able to achieve evocation of these deities in visualization, and thus attain meditative actualization. The reason behind this is that the characteristics of our subtle energy system centered in the heart is structured in such a way that emphasizes that particular gestalt of energy (iconographically understood as that Buddha being at the center of the overall mandala), which presumably also influences the falling flower so that it descends on its symbol. I have translated this in accordance with TCD1 362,7-363,1's reading, which has "the deity which is auspicious for you" instead of "the deity which has befallen you", reads "key point" in the instrumental, and at the end simply reads "...via this key point, the evocation of the mandala which the flower has fallen on is "nearer"..."

*542. Since there is an unimpeded open emptiness devoid of blood or lymph flowing through the central channel, it is "the wind-currents in action"; since water, blood, and "enlightened minds" (i.e. seminal nuclei) flow through the right channel, it is "the seminal nuclei in action"; since the elements' vibrant energy as well as primordial gnosis flow through the left channel, it is "the channels themselves in action": see Kindly Bent to Ease Us II 23 for Guenther's comments on this passage (I differ with his translation in that "water" (Chu) connotes lymph (Chu Ser), but is not necessarily limited to it despite the previous line mentioning "lymph" explicitly). While in fact the energy winds, channels and seminal nuclei (the triune identity of our subtle body's energetics) are operative in all three of these channels, Longchenpa here symbolically makes a one-to-one correlation between these two triads to further emphasize the three channels' individual characteristics and inner relationship: the all-encompassing channel is particularly linked to the activities of the energy winds, the flavor channel to the activities of the seminal nuclei, and the solitary channel to the activities of the channels themselves. While such correlations aren't arbitrary, there is a certain fluidity to them since they are symbolic evocations rather than sterile identifications - on KGYT2 159,5-6, Longchenpa mentions statements which instead specify the winds flow through the right channel and the nuclei flow through the left channel, which he explains as merely indicating the relative preponderance of each (presumably here "nuclei" connotes their most optimal form rather than the conventional ones TDD emphasizes). In the present context, the all-encompassing channel is particularly associated with the always immaterial winds, since it is devoid of any material elements (such as blood or lymph), and is the site of the both the vitality wind (which is the root of the other four winds operative within our body) located in the vitality channel, and the gnostic winds located within the luminous channel. Thus it is from this central channel that all vitality in the form of wind-currents originates, whether in our ordinary existence as the "mounts" of mental activity and physiological processes, or in the special context of Direct Transcendence where the gnostic winds carry our heart's inner radiation into exteriorized presence within the sky stretching out before us. These "gnostic winds" in particular can be understood as the central radiation or dynamism of primordial gnosis, whereby it indirectly gives rise to our entire psycho-physical existence.*

This all-encompassing channel's immaterial dynamism which in its vibrations can become distorted "karmic" forces or vibrant "gnostic" forces, then drives both the bioenergetic

process on the right, and the vibrant spiritual-psychic process on the left (such that lower order contemplative techniques focusing on "sex" and "food" concentrate on the right flavor channel, and the higher order techniques of the Great Perfection focusing on our inner luminosity concentrate on the left solitary channel). The flavor channel is where the nuclei's actions are primary since it is the location where our hormones, essential bodily fluids, conventional seminal nuclei, cells' genetic material and so on tend to concentrate as the regulators of our physiological processes. The term "seminal nuclei" here is emphasized in its lower order aspect within the material body, which above all is incarnated within the semen/ovum and their potent genetic capacity to trigger the creation of a new organism. Longchenpa uses the term "enlightened mind" to remind us that even in these physiological conventional processes there is a vibrant intelligent at work stemming from, and aiming towards, the "enlightened mind" of primordial gnosis, which is elsewhere expressed as the fivefold gnostic radiation being the esoteric quintessence of these conventional nuclei. The correlation of the solitary channel to the primacy of the channels' own operations in part relates to the gnostic lamps' seed potencies present within us, since in Direct Transcendence contemplation this gnostic energy runs from the heart to our eyes (and thus into the sky) via "channels" (recalling KGYT places these two luminous channels running to the eyes within the outer sheath of the solitary channel). In general, "channels" provide the pathways for information exchange between the exterior and interior, as well as structuring our internal flows of energy into a complex highly ordered and seamlessly integrated whole. Thus the solitary channel's connection with our intelligence is indicated in how these networks of channels operate as the "lines" or "patterns" that direct the winds and nuclei's flow in meaningful ways: its "vibrant energy" and "primordial gnosis" are the depth dynamic which self-organizingly structure our materialized energies, as well as ultimately "leading" us to "channel" our energies back to the source in spiritual contemplation (which would be impossible without such a "pathway from our current immersion in materialized, corporeal existence).

543. In the outline heading, I have corrected "iii" to "iv" in accordance with the outline as given previously. As discussed above, these luminous channels ("luminous" or "light" signifies their function as the primary conduits for primordial gnosis' pure light radiation - see TCD2 78,3) are a unique feature of the Great Perfection tradition, while the preceding triad of channels are a standard feature of all Indo-Tibetan Buddhist subtle body theory and praxis. Longchenpa's comments in preface to the quoted passage from *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* are an explication of the ambiguous reference in the passage quoted below to the following four verbs: "emerging, entering, naturally shining forth, and presencing". Longchenpa correlates these four verbs to the four luminous channels by explaining each verb in terms of the primary role in the visionary process (i.e. the four visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation) that the corresponding channel plays, while on TCD2 16,2 he further correlates these four verbs to the four types of seminal nuclei corresponding to these four luminous channel (which TDD subsequently discusses on 257,5ff). Thus these four verbs describe the luminous seminal nuclei flowing through this network of luminous channels in four distinct phases as their energy progressively unfolds in the four visions of Direct Transcendence.

(i) "Emerges": this is correlated to the great kati golden channel, which acts as the basis for this luminosity of the heart's radiant light initially "emerging" out of the heart's pure potential. As such, this luminosity present within the great golden channel forms the foundation for the entire range of visionary experiences, and hence is termed the "excellent Ground seminal nuclei".

(ii) "Enters": this is correlated with the white silk channel, which runs from the heart to the right eye, thereby providing the conduit for this luminosity in its activated state to cross the threshold from potential into actuality. In other words, it is the passageway for the four lamps' luminous manifestations to initially shine out from our hearts and "enter" the external space around us, where we can then directly perceive them with our own eyes in Direct Transcendence contemplation. This luminosity in its activated phase as part of the spiritual path of contemplation is termed the "excellent path seminal nuclei". While TDD here clearly interprets "enters" as "enters the external sphere", TCD2 16,2 provides an alternative explanation of it as "engaging" or "entering" the lamps.

(iii) "Naturally shines forth": this is correlated with the slender coil channel, which is the luminous channel running to the left eye, ostensibly with the same functions as the white silk channel. However, TDD 257,6 indicates that Longchenpa in this context implies that its "kicking in" takes place in the second vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation, where the initial luminosity now intensifies into more complex and vaster rainbow-colored manifestations across the sky. With both luminous channels now operating at near optimal levels as conduits for the internal luminosity to flow into the sky, the initially intermittent and confined visionary presences now expand outwards to "naturally shines forth". Thus the luminosity at this point is termed the "peak of excellences seminal nuclei", with "peak" indicating the intensification in visions that takes place at this point, and "excellent" or "positive" signifying the positive spiritual transformations these visions are engendering.

(iv) "Presences": this is correlated with the crystal tube channel, and signifies our internal luminous channels now operating at fully optimal levels such that the visions flowing from them become the vast mandalas of Buddhas filling the sky, which marks the third vision referred to as "the optimization of awareness". With the crystal tube channel now fully functional and activated, these mandalic visions naturally *presence* in the sky as we near the attainment of Buddhahood itself. This luminosity is thus referred to as the seminal nuclei "endowed with the ornaments of excellence", with "ornaments" indicating how these seminal nuclei become the "divine palaces" adorned with the mandalas of Buddhas within them (the result of contemplatively ripening the linked chains of light).

In summation, "emerging" indicates the initial movement of the heart's pristine luminosity from a latent state of inertia into a state of dynamic movement; "entering" signifies its further progression through our eyes via the light channels out into the sky's vast external expanse; "naturally shining forth" denotes the intensification in pattern and size of that rainbow-colored light; and "presencing" indicates the vast mandalas of Buddhas and their retinues that then manifest against the backdrop of rainbow-colored light. Thus the great kati golden channel is the ground of this gnostic luminosity; the white silk channel is the initial path from interiority to exterior manifestation; the slender coil channel kicks in and thus provides the impetus for the further intensification and transformation of these initial patterns of light; and finally the crystal tube provides the high-energy luminosity in specific mandalic forms which impels the final optimization of these visions into the mandala of peaceful and wrathful deities. In addition to these four, the fifth luminous channel (the "naturally free empty channel") serves as the primary conduit for the linked chains of light shining outwards, which, though they are at times classified together with the seminal nuclei, strictly speaking play a distinct role from the larger seminal nuclei referred to as the "empty seminal nuclei lamp". In the context of the third vision, the latter are revealed as vast "divine palaces" *within which* the linked chains are revealed/transformed as the actual figures or Buddhas



whose mandalic groupings "inhabit" these palaces, with the entire vision forming vast luminous displays of "pure lands" or "enlightened realms". For this reason, the fifth luminous channel and its function is delineated here.

544. These five luminous channels are termed "inner" to emphasize that they are the pathways of gnostic energy within our own body, which contrasts to their luminosity shining "outwards" via them into the sky, where are then present to our eyes.

545. *sGron Ma 'Bar Ba* (NGB1 483,1; Ati1 303,1; also cited by TCD2 16,3; GTD 376,3). In the Tantra itself, this quoted passage is followed by the passage cited on TDD 257,7, and is in a chapter explaining the empty seminal nuclei lamp. TCD2's preface explicitly links this passage with the passage cited on TDD 257,7, making it quite clear that the subject here is primordial gnosis' luminous radiation in the form of seminal nuclei as they progressively develop in the four visionary appearances experienced in Direct Transcendence contemplation (the nuclei first appear to us as minute pea-sized spheres of light, and gradually become immense spheres of light serving as auras or "palaces" for mandalas of Buddhas - the seminal nuclei are the fertile "eggs" within which spiritual dimensions are "born"). The Tantra (NGB 482) seems to specify the "unchanging empty seminal nuclei" as the subject here, which is the ultimate reality of which all the other enumerations and classifications are mere analytic divisions of.

546. See Chapters Two and Six for additional discussions of the seminal nuclei present within our body, as well as the role they play in contemplation. The seminal nuclei are discussed at length in this chapter on our internal channels since the main significance of these channels derives from the energy that flows within them, and that energy is summarized in the "intelligence" or "dynamism" of the nuclei as impelled or "carried" by the wind-currents. It must be kept in mind that the channels, winds, and seminal nuclei are artificial conceptual divisions introduced to enable us to understand the dynamics of primordial gnosis' radiation within our psycho-physical being, and as such are completely interdependent in their genesis and function. Rather than "hollow tubes" simply existent as such, the channels are more like lines of force or "chreods" (see Jantsch's *The Self-Organizing Universe* 148-9) forming an intensely coordinated, unitary, and self-organizing system ultimately oriented towards self-realization. Thus now that Longchenpa has described the channel networks within our subtle bodies, he turns his attention to the nature of the energy-flowing within those channels, the intense spheres of material and non-material light energy that constitute our bio-mental and spiritual "genetic" intelligence and capacity for creativity, i.e. the seminal nuclei. He begins his discussion by detailing the nuclei's dynamics as present within the standard three main channels of our subtle body, next gives a more expansive account of their presence throughout the body's critical organs and centers, and finally winds up with a description of the luminous channels' highly charged nuclei that function as the internal dynamic sources of the visionary experiences that manifest in Direct Transcendence contemplation.

547. Longchenpa's preface has been translated by Guenther in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us II* 26, which he interprets on 25-34 in particular. Please refer to my annotations earlier in the chapter for the basis symbolic structure of these three channels (which apply to the nuclei as representing the channels' vital energy - ultimately a given channel's dynamics are none other than the energy-flows characteristically located within/as it), which represent a transcendent central force expressing itself dyadically in terms of "conventional" and "ultimate" processes. As I discuss earlier, this triune energy is operative at many different levels, all of which tie



into the basic symbolism of the seminal nuclei as "enlightened minds" and their consequent classification into types emphasizing conventional "efficacious means" and ultimate "insight", in line with the standard exoteric analysis of the Buddha's "enlightened mind" as involving the unity of penetrating insight into the ways things are, and compassionate action ("skill-in-means") based upon that insight which interacts with living beings so as to bring them to liberation. In our ordinary psycho-physical existence, "efficacious means" relates to our ongoing activity both within the external world and internally in terms of the various bioenergetic processes that sustain our embodied existence, while "insight" then signifies these nuclei as involved in our psychic processes that guide and in-form this activity; the "non-duality" of efficacious means and insight present within the central channel then indicates the body and mind's integrated reality, as well as their common source both conventionally in our universal psychic ground located within the central vitality channel, and the gnostic radiation located within the central channel's luminous channel (which also points to the macrocosmic Universe as the transcendent source of this vibrant intelligence expressing itself in lower order biological and higher order psychic processes). In terms of contemplation (which is Longchenpa's focus here), in general, the left solitary channel's nuclei signify the newly awakening optimal intensity of our energy which begins to balance the ordinary ongoing distorted conventional functions of the nuclei located within the right flavor channel, while the middle all-encompassing channel's seminal nuclei then are the centering force which ultimately unifies both the "ordinary" and "extraordinary" dimensions into a seamless unity, as we through sustained realization we overcome our initial (false) split of our experience into our old "impure" ways of thinking/experiencing and our new "pure" spiritual ways of thinking/experiencing and enter into a non-dual mode of experience no longer defining itself in contrast to anything at all. If we focus in particular on these contemplative techniques' direct relations to the three channels, we can discern a triadic classification relating to each channel's particular type of energy which the corresponding contemplation state/technique bases itself on: (i) contemplation dealing primarily with the flavor channel tends to focus on "efficacious means" or actions dealing with our ordinary activities of sexual intercourse and eating (i.e. sex and food yogas - see previous annotations), which give rise to sensations of "bliss" that are the subjective experiences of the optimization of the flavor channels' energy-flow (and yet remain "contaminated" in the sense they remain connected to our more materialized, congealed forms of energy that have until this point been closely bound up with our emotional distortions - in its non-optimal modes, such bliss is limited to sexual orgasm and sporadic "peak experience"); (ii) contemplation dealing primarily with the solitary channel then tends to focus on "insight" rather than physical or verbal actions, and thus attempts to directly penetrate to our primordially pure core of gnostic luminosity (Direct Transcendence meditation), such that the energization of these ultimate nuclei give rise to pure sensations of bliss that are not "contaminated" with materialized corporeality or ordinary dualistic distortions; (iii) contemplation dealing primarily with the all-encompassing channel then discards with all elaborations to penetrate directly to the core luminous reality of the Universe, and thus come to directly participate in its open expanse vibrating with gnostic intelligence. While the absence of commentary here limits us, it would seem that Tantra's comments below suggest sexual yoga is primarily connoted in relation to the flavor channel, and it is possible that the solitary channel is being related to Direct Transcendence contemplation in its visionary dimension, while the all-encompassing channel is being related to Breakthrough contemplation as a necessary preliminary to Direct Transcendence contemplation in addition to its being the ultimate source of the visions' gnostic luminosity. As for this latter point, Breakthrough contemplation not only stabilizes our psyche's normally unstable fluctuations, but it also enables us to directly contact the empty luminous self-awareness within, and thus acts as the

"key point of the mind" in the practice of Direct Transcendence: it is vital that we are attuned to this empty singularity as we encounter the luminous visions, since otherwise we will inevitably shift into our typical patterns of attachment, aversion and egotism as ordinary patterns of distorted libidinal energy's cathexis begin to reassert themselves in reference to the visions, and thus are unable to proceed to their culmination, and ultimate dissolution within the empty expanse, where "primordial gnosis curls up within the expanse" (*Ye Shes dByings Su 'Khyil Ba*). In this way, it is possible that the solitary channel tends to be associated with the dynamic light visions of the earlier phases in Direct Transcendence contemplation, while the central channel then is especially associated with these visions singular empty reality, into which they dissolve within the fourth vision (being simultaneously their source and destination). Thus "natural"/"reality" contrasts with "ultimate"/"gnostic" in the sense that "natural reality" indicates the transcendence of the false opposition between ultimate and conventional or gnosis and the ordinary mind as we finally breakthrough to the completely natural unfabricated unity of all life, i.e. the adamant nucleus of radiant light hidden deep within our heart ("conventional" literally means "totally dissimulating" or "completely obscured", while "ultimate" literally means "primary significance" or "supreme significance" - reality is the final "nature" of both). Finally, TCD1 407,5-408,1 in its preface to the passage quoted below explicitly links the central channel's nucleus with the gnostic lamps (I only just located this passage, and have yet to fully understand Longchenpa's comment on the solitary channel, though they seem to suggest my comments above may be mistaken):

"...The conventional seminal nuclei reside within the (right) flavor channel, and making them into the spiritual path involves the efficacious means of sexual union between a man and woman. In the left (solitary channel), the radiation of the natural nuclei's subtle vibrant energy is present as luminous natural radiation, and involves transformation into the empty essence of intimate union's bliss (?). In the central (all-encompassing channel), the non-discursive Reality Body nucleus of pure radiant light resides as the ground of self-emergent primordial gnosis' blazing lamps...."

Other passages discussing the correlation of the three channels with different types of nuclei point out the oscillation I mentioned above, which involves the "red" solitary channel at times being exclusively described in terms of the ultimate non-material nuclei, while at other times its physiological functions are described by correlating it to the red conventional nuclei (recalling all conventional nuclei are classified into paternal "white" and maternal "red" types). LYT1 461,2ff says the white and red "vibrant energies" flow through the flavor and solitary channels, while the "five-colored natural nuclei" flow through the gnostic channel of radiant light within the central channel. KGYT2 159,5-6 specifies that the white all-pervasive nuclei (the dimension of efficacious means) flow through the right channel, the ultimate red nuclei (the dimension of insight) flow through the left channel, and the radiant gnostic nuclei flow through the crystal tube at the center of the central channel.

548. *Mu Thig Phreng Ba* (NGB1 362,7; Ati2 495,1; also cited by TCD1 408,1).

(i) *The conventional seminal nuclei in the right flavor channel*

*In the right (flavor channel) are the conventional seminal nuclei which are an auxiliary of great bliss, and as the source comprising bliss, are the great secret of all the Buddhas; their nature is symbolized by "efficacious means":* NGB and Ati's glosses of the first two lines here indicate it involves experiential realization via empty (though still contaminated)

sensations of bliss, which indicates the "four joys" that we subjectively experience in the contemplations of sexual yoga and mystic fire as the affective correlate of these conventional nuclei optimized flow through the four main energy wheels in our body ("great bliss" connotes an orgasm, but in this context primarily refers to the much more intense, though analogous, sensations deriving from these contemplative techniques). Since these contemplations can lead us to enlightenment, they are directly related to the "great secret of the Buddhas", which NGB glosses with "non-conceptual primordial gnosis is engendered in dependence upon it", in line with the usual identification of this "great secret of the Buddhas" as being our own awareness' primordial gnosis. Ati glosses "efficacious means" with "relying on the instructions of your Spiritual Master", and it should be kept in mind that sexual yoga is often termed "the path of efficacious means" (*Thabs Lam*).

(ii) *The seminal nucleus of ultimate essence in the central all-encompassing channel:* the first line is glossed by "the all-encompassing one devoid of discursive elaborations". "Empty and radiant" is glossed by "can't be taken hold of (i.e. enframed), yet its radiant dimension is unceasing". Ati glosses "beyond expansion and contraction" with "the primordial gnosis beyond striving and accomplishment", and "not abiding within the limits of permanence or nothingness" with "since it is pervaded by emptiness and radiance". NGB and Ati both read "gradually become divested of conceptuality" instead of TDD's "beyond conceptuality and its karmic propensities" (*Bag Kyis* for *Bag Chags*), i.e. as you deepen your experiential realization "in dependence upon uncontaminated bliss" (Ati). "The seminal nucleus of the ultimate essence" is glossed as "(essence) of the uncontaminated great bliss". In this context, "essence" or "stuff" (*dNgos Po*) is basically synonymous with "reality", while "ultimate" has the sense of being beyond conceptual and artificial fabrications.

(iii) *The natural seminal nuclei in the left solitary channel*

*In the left (solitary channel) the natural seminal nuclei are present, which pervade the dyadic integration (of the conventional and ultimate) with bliss and ease; without (making these nuclei) utterly still, you obtain the bliss of intimate union:* in the following paragraphs, I have based myself largely on the NGB and Ati's glosses, and the assumption that this section is in main referring to Direct Transcendence contemplation. However, certain passages in TCD1 that I noticed just prior to completing the present text indicated that instead these may refer to certain aspects of the "seminal nuclei meditations" instead (i.e. the "integration" of bliss and emptiness, with the blissful sensations mainly deriving from the flavor channel and its "efficacious means" (i.e. the nuclei's movements), and the solitary channel functioning to reveal the "emptiness" of those sensations with its "insight"). For the present I will leave the annotations below as is due to time limitations, though subsequently they may require a thorough revision (especially with respect to the term *Rab Tu gNas Pa*).

Both NGB and Ati's glosses indicate the first line refers to the various visionary appearances these nuclei give rise to in Direct Transcendence contemplation (NGB glosses as "the variegated nuclei are present as a manifold of visionary presences"). The Tantra's descriptions clearly indicate correlating the three channels' nuclei with the three types of meditative experiences: the flavor channel with bliss, the solitary channel with clarity or radiance (i.e. vision), and the central channel with non-conceptuality. I have interpreted the second line in accordance with NGB and Ati's reading of "bliss" in the instrumental, as well as glossing "integration" by "conventional and ultimate". Their full glosses read "pervading both the conventional and ultimate, these seminal nuclei are present as the bliss of diverse visionary presences". As these nuclei's high intensity presence begins to pervade our horizon

in these various rainbow-colored visions ("bliss" indicating the subjective experience of their optimal energetics moving from latency into activated states), they thus "pervade" both our conventional frames of reference (since we now actually visually perceive them in the space around us) as well as our "ultimate" frame of references (being empty luminous images that are a reflection of our inner transcendent gnosis).

"Without their being utterly still" is glossed by "including the goings and comings of the winds' force" (Ati reads "breath" for "force"). There are two possible interpretations, the first being that initially these luminous visions (especially the linked chains) aren't stable by force of the karmic winds having yet to subside, and thus must be stabilized for the intensification of the visions to take place. Once you stabilize these visions such that their transcendent presence is "intimately unified" with your conventional visual experiences (i.e. wherever you gaze, you see only luminous mandalas), you then attain the "ease" or "bliss" of the visions' optimal intensity unfolding across the sky. However, it seems more likely the meaning is that these visions do not derive from "binding up" and "confining" the nuclei as lower order tantric practices advocate such that they become paralyzed into an inert state devoid of movement, but rather, the gnostic winds must be activated such that they impel these nuclei into the sky via our eyes, and subsequently continue to impel these nuclei's ongoing transformations as they increase in size and number, until they climax as the mandalic visions of the peaceful and wrathful mandalas within the sky's expanse. Thus this emphasizes that Great Perfection contemplation is not a quietistic practice attempting to bring our energy to a halt, but rather spurs us to higher, optimized states of dynamic evolution, such that the boundaries between convention and ultimate are overcome, and one's entire field of vision becomes a pure field of spiritual presences. An additional connotation is that we must not rest complacently or egotistically in some initial vision, but rather continue to apply the key points of practice such that the visions intensify, growing ever vaster in extent and ever more complex in organization. Thus by "unifying" these unfolding visions of "ultimate" pure internal light energy with our conventional external scope of vision, our psychic, verbal and physical energy approaches optimal levels of operation, which are subjectively experienced as intense experiences of bliss and ease (the world is revealed as a self-organizing unity via these visions self-presencing from within our heart, and thus the specter of the threatening Other and personal death dissipate). Thus NGB and Ati both gloss "intimate union" (literally "face-jointed" (*Kha sByor*) as being "the bliss stemming from the non-duality of the conventional and ultimate". In the Great Perfection, you unify the conventional (the five elemental energies, ordinary appearances, personal psychic activity) with the ultimate (the five light hues, luminous mandalas, the wisdom-energy or gnosis of the intelligent Universe within/as us), and thus begin to re-contact the triune Ground of our existence, and approach the evolutionarily unprecedented epoch of enlightenment, perfectly balanced between potentiality and actuality (*Nang gSal* and *Phyir gSal*), the individual and the Universe, "expansion" and "dissipation" (*Sangs rGyas*, or "Buddha"), "purification" and "spontaneous perfection" (*Byang Chub*, or "enlightenment"), original purity and spontaneous presence.

*They are the causal impetus of the Great Seal itself, the path of the intensely blissful primordial gnosis, and the mandala which is the identity or force of all the Secret Mantras: they are the great means for protection from cyclic existence, and the blazing light of the esoteric primordial radiation; they are the essence of great bliss:* in short, these nuclei give rise to visions of vast luminous mandalas which are the aim of all tantric contemplations, and are none other than the exteriorized radiation of primordial gnosis within our heart, which is "esoteric" since it is usually obscured by our distorted psyche's constant neurotic activities. The visions are the "great seal" of our experience, since they "seal" all our perceptions and

experiences with the emptiness and luminosity of our inner gnostic light, the final authority or "royal seal" of the Universe, Being's inescapable imprint on all beings ("seal" connotes "cannot be transgressed"). This blazing light incinerates all our dualistic fantasies, and thus "protects" us from the frustrations and suffering of cyclic existence, such that emotionally we experience it as "great bliss", of which ordinary sexual orgasm only faintly prefigures.

NGB and Ati gloss "the Great Seal" by "they act as the foundation of all *sProṣ Pa*", which in this context may mean "the emanated visions" rather than the more typical sense of "discursive elaborations". The Great Seal" varies in meaning with the context - in Breakthrough contemplation, it means "leaving the mind in its unfabricated natural flow", and so on. NGB and Ati gloss "blissful primordial gnosis" by "they impel the three types of bliss", which evidently relates to the three Spiritual Bodies (TCD1 222,2-3). Ati and NGB gloss "Secret Mantras" with "it symbolizes their bliss and efficacious methods". This line could also be rendered as "are the mandalic identity of all the secret mantras", referring to how these nuclei transform into the natural mandalas of deities in Direct Transcendence contemplation: at the heart of all the Tantric systems are these mandalas epitomizing the microcosmic and macrocosmic universes, which are thus the principal reality of all Secret Mantra systems (a synonym for "Tantra"). "Protection from cyclic existence" is glossed with "it enables you to quickly attain the assurance and bliss of transcendence of all misery" (combining Ati and NGB's slightly different phrases). Ati glosses "primordial radiation" with "the vibrant quintessence of light, which is termed "unifying into the quintessential nucleus"..." NGB and Ati both gloss the final line as "the essence of indivisible bliss and emptiness".

549. *Rang Shar* (NGB2 503,1; Ati1 623,4; also cited by TCD2 83,7). This specification of different locations and names for luminous seminal nuclei is similar to Longchenpa's discussion of the four "divine palaces" within the human body in which gnostic radiation especially concentrates. In TCD2, Longchenpa follows this quotation by saying thus: "...If you analyze in fine detail how the heart's luminous radiation is present within the internal channels and external sky, (the various divisions and so on) are thus..." Thus he makes quite clear the different "seminal nuclei" described here are merely analytic divisions of our unitary heart-luminosity as it takes the form of seminal nuclei within different key energy centers of our body, and different phases in our experience, and shouldn't be interpreted entitatively as referring to distinct, separate entities. As such, Longchenpa details several different classificatory schemes of the seminal nuclei in different contexts based on the various locations and functions of this seminal light energy. The current passage provides a comprehensive overview of the ultimate luminous seminal nuclei as present throughout the bodies and experience of ordinary living beings (in particular humans), with a stress on their pure subtle dimensions rather than their conventional functions. "Seminal nuclei" here signifies our inner nucleus of gnostic energy in its dimension of being concentrated optimal intensities with innate self-organizing intelligence endowed with specific transformative capacities (just as a cell's nucleus "knows" how to generate the cell), such that each separately named nuclei refers to this unitary light-energy as operating in a particular internal conduit or energy center at a given location in our body, and/or to its level of activation at differing periods of our life track (i.e. as the latent source of our ordinary distorted psychic activity, as activated light-intensity which shines in the space around us in contemplation visions, and so on). Thus the underlying unity of this light energy must be emphasized, lest the various names lead one to become confused (just as in the exoteric context we speak of twenty types of "emptiness", when in fact emptiness is a singular dimension; or we call the Buddha the "brilliant Teacher", the "great visionary", and the "skillful Master" without

implying that there is any more than a single Buddha all these names refer back to; or we speak of the space within a vase and outside it, though in fact space is essentially undifferentiated). Thus whether to translate "seminal nuclei" as singular or plural is ultimately irrelevant, as the entire point of such passages is that this light energy in its concentrated self-organizing capacity is simultaneously at work throughout our existence, with the different names indicating how its significance and function varies in dependence upon its location within the human body/experience (just as a single substance could be termed a "medicine" or a "poison" depending on its location, and the overall condition of the person in question), as well as how they evolve with our spiritual growth - ultimately there is always only the singular seminal nuclei of awareness (*Thig Le Nyag gCig*), but superficially to our analytic perception it has a variety of guises. Along these lines, the diversity of the various names applied to the seminal nuclei within the solitary and central channels (alternatively "gnostic", "ultimate", "natural", and so on) can be understood, since this unitary light energy runs through both, and it is merely subtle functional differences and roles that are being signified.

(i) "The seminal nuclei of the thoroughly pure Spiritual Bodies reside in the Tsitta of all sentient beings": this refers to the mandala of peaceful deities present within the heart in utter purity, which are present within a spherical aura of light (i.e. a seminal nuclei).

(ii) "The seminal nuclei that signify emptiness reside in the Dhūti of all sentient beings": "Dhūti" is an abbreviation for the Avadhūti channel, which in this context would evidently refer to the central channel, since the spinal cord is mentioned below as "within the vertebrae". These nuclei signify or "mark" emptiness in that their fluid non-concrete presence in "introductions" or contemplation evokes a sense of emptiness in you, opening you up to the experience of the utter emptiness pervades all psychic and physical phenomena. Their usefulness soteriologically lies in their visibility to the naked eye and hence relative experiential accessibility, as opposed to the utter intangibility of emptiness itself, which "cannot be seen".

(iii) "The seminal nuclei of blazing empty radiance reside in the white crystal of all sentient beings": this refers to the crystal tube luminous channel, which Longchenpa earlier in the chapter defined as the luminosity within our vitality channel. This luminous channel is simultaneously "blazing" with its spontaneously radiant nature and "empty" in its originally pure essence.

(iv) "The excellent path seminal nuclei reside within the white silk of all sentient beings": this refers to the luminous channel network as it runs from the heart up to our two eyes, which acts as the conduit for the gnostic presences shining forth externally into the sky during the Direct Transcendence vision. As such, these luminous nuclei flowing through it play a crucial role in our experiences along the spiritual "path", thereby exerting an "excellent" or "positive" influence on our evolutionary development.

(v) "The seminal nuclei of non-dual radiant light reside within the empty pathway of all sentient beings/Buddhas": the "empty pathway" refers to the "naturally free empty channel", the luminous channel running straight up to the center of our head which acts as the conduit for the shining of linked chains of light in Direct Transcendence contemplation. NGB, Ati and TCD all read "sentient beings" for TDD's "Buddhas", which simply indicates this channel's presence within all sentient beings, as in the other lines. TDD's reading of "Buddhas" could indicate that this channel is the pathway for awareness' radiation in linked

chains, since in the third vision of Direct Transcendence these linked chains transform into mandalas of Buddhas against the backdrop of the sky.

(vi) "The seminal nuclei of seamless unity reside within the vertebrae of all sentient beings": this seems to refer to the spinal cord, which is of course located within the spine's vertebrae, and which earlier in the chapter was specified as the location of the conventional nuclei's maturation (the luminous channel's pathway also is closely linked to the vertebrae). "Seamless union" literally means "beyond either fusion or separation", indicating the unity of light and Being, which is not the result of artificially putting things together (a "totality" rather than a "whole"), nor does it involve distinct "things" which can be pulled apart at some future point. However, I am unsure of any special connection of "seamless unity" to the spinal cord, unless instead it refers to an aspect of the luminous channel network.

I have added vi-viii from TCD2, NGB and Ati, though TDD omits them in its citation of this passage.

(vii) "The seminal nuclei of primordial gnosis' radiation reside within the Conch Shell House of all sentient beings": this refers to the mandala of wrathful deities within the skull, which are themselves seminal light energy as the radiation of the heart's primordial gnosis, as well as being within an aura of rainbow-colored light ("seminal nuclei").

(viii) "The seminal nuclei of thoroughly pure light reside within the eyes of all sentient beings": this indicates the inner luminosity in the process of shining forth from interior to exterior as luminous spheres through our eyes' gateways (within the Direct Transcendence visions), the tips of the luminous channels being located at the respective centers of the two eyes, and also the eyes themselves as "spheres" of light that shed illumination on the world (both clarifying external forms that shine within us, and emitting internal luminosity that illuminates the external sphere of the sky in Direct Transcendence contemplation).

(ix) "The seminal nuclei of varied shining forth reside within the objective sphere of all sentient beings": this primarily signifies the various seminal nuclei that shine forth into the sky's sphere in the Direct Transcendence visions, such that they become "objects" of our direct sensory perception.

550. These final two lines indicate that these seminal nuclei are primordially present within all living beings as their essential sources of psycho-physical energy and structure, and not some extraneous imagined, adventitious or contemplatively created "new" dimension. Not only they are "inseparable" from every aspect of our being in this way, but, as I indicated above, they are themselves all facets of a singular gnostic light energy without being differentiated, discontinuous things.

551. See my discussion directly above for comments on the general nature of these different classifications and names applied to the seminal nuclei. In the present context, Longchenpa is dealing exclusively with the various parts of our network of luminous channels, indicating the nature and function of the luminous seminal nuclei flowing therein as the internal supports for the sequence of visionary presences we experience in Direct Transcendence contemplation (culminating in definitive enlightenment). This section is the "concluding summary" of Longchenpa's discussion of the seminal nuclei since it is these dynamic light-nuclei and the visionary experiences they impel (when activated from their normally latent state) that are the ultimate inner purpose and significance of the seminal

nuclei within our body, and which play the crucial role in the final culmination of our own personal evolution as well as the climaxing self-realization of the Universe-in-and-as-us. While in the current context their internal presence within our luminous channel network is being emphasized, these seminal nuclei also appear as exteriorized evolving images of light in these Direct Transcendence visions, beginning from small pea-sized spheres surrounded by rainbow-colored encircling rims of light and climaxing as the vast "divine palaces" that are home to shimmering mandalas of Buddha-images, which is discussed at length in Chapter Six in its section on the "empty seminal nuclei lamp" (one of the four gnostic "lamps" operative within our being).

GTD 376,1-2 in prefacing this quote says that our subtle body ("adamantine body") develops in embryogeny with the three channels, four energy wheels, etc. as described in other sources, while the unique aspect of Great Perfection accounts is the additional description of a "channel of self-emergent primordial gnosis and its seminal nuclei", which are not discussed in other Buddhist sources. TCD2 presents this fourfold classification of the seminal nuclei within its section on the "location of the empty seminal nuclei lamp" (16,2-5). This passage from *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* cited below follows the previous passage from that Tantra cited on TDD 255,7 (see annotations there), and essentially describes four phases of these luminous nuclei's presence and transformation in human experience which correspond directly to the first three visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation (the visions' foundation or source is considered separately as a fourth). In brief, the "ground" seminal nuclei refers to the heart's luminosity as it the inner grounding source for all the light visions; the "path" seminal nuclei signifies this luminosity as it begins to cross the threshold into manifest activation from its ordinary state of latency (i.e. the beginning of the Direct Transcendence visions as we first begin to experience these light visions of the four gnostic lamps); the "peak of excellences" seminal nuclei refer to how that light subsequently intensifies and expands in the second of the Direct Transcendence visions; and the "ornament of excellences" seminal nuclei point to the third vision where the nuclei become the divine mansions "ornamented" by the mandalas of Buddhas within them (the result of the linked chains' transformations).

For the sake of clarity, I have here included two differing accounts of these nuclei in Longchenpa's corpus (GTD and TCD2) together with my explication of TDD's account, and have indicated them by "GTD:" and "TCD2" (while the first paragraph in each section focuses on TDD's own explanation). GTD 377,5-378,1 has a rather different interpretation of these four seminal nuclei based on the same quotation. Though he correlates the four luminous channels with the four seminal nuclei in the same fashion as here in TDD, the names of the luminous channels are used quite differently than in TDD (in this context he doesn't mention correlations with the four visions of Direct Transcendence). TCD2 372,2-373,1 discusses these four types of seminal nuclei in quite different terms as well within a section on the signs or indicators of progress in our contemplatively tuning into the seminal nuclei in Direct Transcendence meditation. In that context, Longchenpa groups the seminal nuclei into these three divisions: the seminal nuclei of the channels located within the body, the natural seminal nuclei of the path (see TDD 211,6-212,1 for a detailed account of their sixfold classification), and the seminal nuclei of the ultimate fruit. The first category focuses more on the seminal nuclei's operations within our body as fueling the visionary appearances we experience in Direct Transcendence meditation, whereas the second category focuses on the seminal nuclei as forming the *content* of those visions as luminous spheres floating in the sky (the final category then indicates the seminal nuclei as the climax of enlightenment). The first category thus includes the conventional white and red seminal nuclei with their ordinary



ongoing psycho-physical processes, as well as the ultimate gnostic seminal nuclei. He then discusses the ultimate gnostic seminal nuclei in terms of our present fourfold classification, which he there gives as five by splitting the "excellent path nuclei" into two aspects: "the excellent path nuclei" and the "nuclei of excellences", the former signifying luminosity's initial movement outwards via the luminous channels, and the latter referring to the initial culmination of that movement as all four lamps appear externally in the sky's sphere as objects of our sensory perception. However, the functions of the "peak of excellences" and "ornaments of excellence" nuclei do not correlate with TDD's descriptions: while TDD is concerned to account for the progression from the foundation of the visions up until the culminating third vision (prior to the dissolution of the fourth vision), TCD doesn't support that "horizontal" progression. In fact, TCD's account suggests a possible correlation of these five with the four lamps' "vertical" operations (i.e. their simultaneous operations, rather than accounting for their temporally graduate progression): (i) the foundation of the lamps' luminosity; (ii) the water lamp as the luminous channel via which the luminosity moves outwards from within the channels; (iii) the expanse lamp as the "external sphere" of the four lamps' operations; (iv) the insight lamp as the various psychic perceptions perceiving these visions; and (v) the empty nuclei lamp as the initial object of we concentrate on, resulting in the visions' intensification in which all four lamps function together:

(i) "Excellent Ground seminal nucleus": located within the great kati golden channel at our heart, this signifies the high-concentration gnostic luminosity within our hearts, the most basic seminal nucleus into which all else dissolves, and from which all else emanates - it radiates luminosity impelled by the gnostic winds throughout our internal pathways, and in particular via our eyes to form the visionary appearances of Direct Transcendence contemplation (the other three names thus merely signify different phases of its luminosity's appearance in that context). TCD2 15,2 explains the "ground seminal nucleus" as one of the five classifications of the empty seminal nuclei lamp: "...it is present within the heart's sacred knot of primordial gnosis as the juncture from which all of cyclic existence and transcendent reality split off, their source-place (from which they emerge) or site of exhaustion (to which they return)..."

TCD2 79,4ff divides the seminal nuclei into the triad of "ground-sustaining seminal nucleus", "path-presencing seminal nuclei", and "self-ripened fruit seminal nuclei". The first refers to the ultimate pure ground of all existence, the second signifies its dynamic luminosity directly operative within our existence and which we must tune into along the spiritual path of contemplation, and the third signifies that Ground as "ripened" into its evolutionary "climax" within the state of enlightenment, wherein the pure Ground as self-recognized enters an entirely new evolutionary epoch distinguished both from the formless pure virtuality of the Ground and the distorted, neurotic worlds of cyclic existence. Longchenpa identifies two aspects to the ground seminal nucleus: "...this seminal nucleus of spontaneously present five-colored light at the heart's center is present within the luminous channels' brightness: since it appears with encircling rims of five-colored light, it is called "the naturally luminous seminal nucleus"; since it is adorned by originally pure awareness, it is called the "Totally Positive One's seminal nucleus"..." He also identifies this ground seminal nucleus with the "indestructible seminal nucleus" (*Mi Shigs Thig Le*) discussed in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and the "unchanging seminal nucleus" (*Mi 'Gyur Thig Le*) referred to in the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, both of which are Indian Buddhist Tantras that don't belong to the Great Perfection tradition (the former is discussed in detail as "indestructible drop" in Cozort's *Highest Yoga Tantra*).

GTD: the great kati golden channel signifies the luminous channel within the central channels' middle, which by virtue of being linked to the heart's center is filled with the "seminal nucleus of the Ground's spontaneously present luminosity", also referred to as the "seminal nucleus of the Totally Positive One".

TCD2: the excellent Ground seminal nucleus is unwaveringly present within the channels throughout the body as a sphere of light. Longchenpa also cites *The Direct Consequence of Sound* passage on TDD 230,1 as referring to this.

(ii) "Excellent path seminal nuclei": these are located within the white silk channel that runs from the heart to the right eye as the channel for luminosity shining forth from our hearts into the external sky in the Direct Transcendence visions (one the spiritual "path"). This correlates in particular to the first of the four visions, as the four lamps are perceived in their initial visionary forms as you begin to enter into sustained contemplation. TCD2 79,6-81,7 provides a detailed explication of the "path seminal nuclei" in terms of the dyad of "conventional nuclei" and "ultimate nuclei", of which these would be included in the latter.

GTD: the white silk channel here signifies TDD's "naturally free empty channel" running to the Brahma's aperture, where the "seminal nuclei of entering the path of unborn reality" are located. This is the support of the manifestation of the "non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies of awareness" as well as the passageway for training on consciousness-transfer.

TCD2: the excellent path seminal nuclei are propelled from within the channels by the gnostic winds, and thus initiate movement (that culminates in exiting our body through the eyes, and entering the sky's external sphere - see iii).

(iii) "Peak of excellence seminal nuclei": these are located within the slender coil channel that runs from the heart to the left eye, normally said to have functions similar to the white silk channel. However, in the present context Longchenpa indicates they play a particularly crucial role in the second vision, as their "activation" blends in with the white silk channel's operations to intensify (i.e. "peak") the visionary appearances and contemplative experiences as the seminal nuclei appearing in the sky grow larger (both channels running to the right and left eyes respectively now operating at full force).

GTD: the slender coil channel here signifies the secondary function discussed in TDD, i.e. its location at the center of the four main energy wheels in the body. The nuclei are present with five-colored light rays and secondary minute seminal nuclei.

TCD2: Longchenpa here divides this into two separate classifications. The "seminal nuclei of excellences" impel the shining forth of the four lamps into the objective sphere, while the "peak of excellences seminal nuclei" propel insight's diverse cognitive activities from within the channels (psychic activity "peaks" as it begins to operate at optimal levels).

(iv) "Ornaments of excellence seminal nuclei": while TDD doesn't explicitly say so, TCD2 16,3 clearly locates this within the crystal tube channel, with its "activation" impelling the radiant manifestation of these nuclei during the third Direct Transcendence contemplation vision. At this point, the nuclei are vast spheres of light forming divine palaces "ornamented" by the mandalas of Buddhas (which the linked chains transform into).

**GTD:** the crystal tube channel here signifies the white silk and slender thread channels running to the two eyes, and are here described as the support for the "innumerable manifestations of the adamantine linked chains" (i.e. the "ornaments"). As I discussed earlier, in general the "linked chains" and "non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies of awareness" (see ii) are identified with each other (often we find the expression "the Spiritual Bodies of the adamantine linked chains"): in the current context, the former expression ("adamantine linked chains") signifies the linked chains as the luminous channels' radiation in general, which gives rise to all the various light presences of the Direct Transcendence visions; the latter expression ("non-conceptual Spiritual Bodies of awareness") then particularly focus on the linked chains proper (which we visually experience as resembling garlands of pearls) in their capacity of transforming into the Buddha-images present in the third vision. This is made quite clear on TDD 378,2-3, which says that the "real" linked chains are the "radiation of the luminous channels", while its "parts" are explained as all the seminal nuclei and rainbow-colored lights. Thus the term "linked chains" has both a general and technical reference, the latter which is specifically connected to the "Spiritual Bodies".

**TCD:** these "ornaments of excellence nuclei" impel the display of "the vision of contemplative experience" (i.e. the second vision) in dependence upon the four lamps.

In TDD, Longchenpa then additionally specifies that the "Spiritual Bodies of the adamantine linked chains" are present within the naturally free empty channel, indicating the linked chains of awareness' luminous radiation that ultimately transform into the Buddha-images which "ornament" the vast seminal nuclei present in this third vision. While these "linked chains" are often classified together with the "empty seminal nuclei" as awareness' lighting-up (in contrast to the "expanse's lighting-up"), they are strictly differentiated from each other in terms of their distinct visual presences and functions within these visions. The linked chains are from the beginning quite small and highly unstable, while the seminal nuclei are rather larger and generally stationary. Though in fact the linked chains are the crucial element in these visions, their initial instability makes them difficult to concentrate on, and hence concentration on the larger, stationary seminal nuclei is used as an expedient means whereby gradually these linked chains' movements subside and they become fixed within the larger seminal nuclei. Then, in the context of the third vision those larger seminal nuclei are transformed into the divine palace while the linked chains are transformed into the Buddhas who inhabit those palaces within the vast pure lands that the expanse itself transforms into.

552. *sGron Ma 'Bar Ba* (NGB1 483,4; Ati1 303,4; also cited by TCD2 16,5; GTD 376,5). "It" refers to the "unchanging empty seminal energy", the unitary ultimate light intensity which these are all facets of, such that the terms merely indicate its energy's variable significance in different parts of our pure light network and contemplative experience, whereby it is phenomenologically experienced diversely despite remaining a unitary seamless continuum of light energy (see NGB 482):

*It is primordially without elaboration,  
Yet even so resides within the channels  
As the excellent ground nucleus,  
The excellent path nuclei,  
The peak of excellences nuclei  
And the nuclei endowed with the ornaments of excellence.*

*All of these reside from the very beginning  
 Within the channels located in your body...  
 And their shining forth as manifest presences  
 (Manifests) with its own light rays  
 (Like the disc of the sun)  
 Via the gateway of the Tsakshu,  
 I.e. the eyes of sentient beings unobscured by conditions..."*

553. The "ultimate seminal nuclei" are synonymous with the "luminous seminal nuclei" discussed above, and are principally located within the solitary, all-encompassing and luminous channels). These light nuclei play the key role in Direct Transcendence contemplation, and thus are the principal focus of Great Perfection meditation and theory as the internal bases or supports for the contemplative optimization and revelation of our internal latent nucleus of gnostic light. They should be understood in opposition to the "conventional nuclei" which concentrate within the flavor channel, and in general are distributed throughout the body's internal channels in their various "red" and "white" forms (the concentrations of the white seminal nuclei at the crown and the red seminal nuclei at the navel play key roles in "lower" contemplation techniques). These conventional seminal nuclei ultimately all stem from the "white and red" seminal nuclei initially inherited from our father (white) and mother (red) at conception, and their coarser forms are the material sexual fluids involving the male's white sperm and the female's red blood/ovum, such that both their subtle and coarse forms play the key role in sexual sensation, intercourse, and orgasm. Given the key significance of sexuality to human experience, and the potent energies and feelings which sexual intercourse arouses in us, it was quite natural that with the advent of Tantra, Indian Buddhists developed (or assimilated) a variety of techniques to combine visualizations of the subtle body and sexual intercourse to form a potent brand of contemplation based upon these conventional nuclei (which I refer to in this text as "sexual yoga"). The key feature of this contemplation involves the visualization of the conventional seminal nuclei descending from the head down to the genitals through the five main energy wheels, and then being reversed back upwards to the head through the same five main energy wheels, whereupon they are spread throughout one's body. The movements of these seminal nuclei through our main energy centers is affectively experienced as feelings of increasingly intense bliss, which are encapsulated in a standard classification of four "joys" (obviously the coarse analog for these nuclei's movements are the movement of semen in males down into the penis towards ejaculation, and the corresponding experience of intense joy culminating in orgasm). Rather than our usual genital organization of sexual or libidinal energy that culminates in the dissipative orgasm whereby our vitality is depleted, these practices enable one to gain control over these energies, and instead of "ejaculation" this seminal energy in its subtle aspect is distributed throughout the body such that we have a "bodily orgasm" that results in a highly energized psycho-physical state overcoming genital organization and ordinary vitality-sapping practices. Though the symbolism of these contemplations is obviously in part drawn from a male's sexual experience, both males and females possess the subtle dimensions of the white and red seminal nuclei (though woman obviously lack the white nuclei's coarser dimensions as semen), and hence contemplation can presumably be performed by male and female (a study of such practices from the viewpoint of a woman would be quite worthwhile and valuable, as most of these descriptions concentrate on a male's experiences with constant reference to the penis, referred to as the "vajra", or "adamantine scepter" - in addition, Longchenpa at times implies women can't benefit from these seminal nuclei meditations by virtue of how their subtle bodies are organized (reference lost)). Finally, these practices can

be done while engaging in actual sexual intercourse with a partner or in solitary visualization (referred to as "other" and "self" practices), both of which involve the same core visualizations of the movements of these nuclei up and down the center of the body and the accompanying experiences of intense bliss. It is not my understanding that masturbation plays any part in the latter practices, nor is it to my knowledge ever mentioned by Longchenpa in his descriptions, though I would not be surprised if such practices exist(ed) in some circles in India and Tibet. At any rate, the key here is the force of visualization accomplished by one's highly concentrated mind, though the physical contact with one's partner is a natural source of intense energy that can intensify this meditation immensely when channeled properly.

This practice of sexual yoga is discussed at great length by Longchenpa in his corpus at various places, both as practiced solitarily, and as with a partner. The latter discussions are particularly fascinating, and involve detailed discussions of the various types of "bliss channel" found in the woman's vagina (there appear to be no comparable discussion of variations in the male sexual organ, though these can be found elsewhere in this body of literature), techniques of massage, herbs and so forth to stimulate that "bliss channel", the proper educating of one's partner (including a general knowledge of Buddhism), mantras, visualizations, and so on. However, these practices do not play any role in Great Perfection contemplation proper, which in its main practices of Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence exclusively concern the ultimate luminous nuclei. Longchenpa's rationale for his frequent discussions of sexual yoga within his Great Perfection writings is that it serves as type of expedient means for guiding individuals whose sexual fixations and desire make it impossible for them to otherwise engage in Great Perfection meditation. In such cases, this practice of sexual yoga is utilized to "get their interest" and motivate them to embark on genuine spiritual practices, with the aim of eventually introducing them to true Great Perfection meditation as these "lower" practices gradually refine their minds and optimize their energies (such that their coarse lust and fixations fade away). It is for this reason that Longchenpa ends the chapter with a discussion of sexual yoga and the conventional nuclei, and his comments here should also be understood as a justification for his extensive discussions of sexual practices as found in TCD, LYT, KGYT and elsewhere in his Great Perfection writings. Hopkins' *Tibetan Arts of Love* contains many fascinating related details on sexuality, but does not include a detailed account of the sexual yogic practices indicated in the current context.

554. I have corrected *bsTan* to *bsTen*.

555. *Thal 'Gyur* (NGB1 52,4; Ati1 63,3; also cited by TCD1 406,5; ZMYT1 346,4; TDD 327,2). In the present context, I have included only brief comments explaining the various points of these sexual practices, though eventually I plan to reinstate a fuller account drawn from KGYT and TCD in particular. TCD2 407,2ff follows up this quote by saying there are two types of tantric methods for contemplation relying on the key points of our channels, winds, and seminal nuclei: sex yoga is "the strenuous method for those practitioners inclined to discursive elaboration", and Direct Transcendence is "the non-strenuous method for those divested of (obsessive need) for discursive elaboration". ZMYT1 346,2 prefaces this citation with these words:

"...The great bliss stemming from the flexibility of your energy channels, winds, and seminal nuclei is called "concealing primordial gnosis within the space of the seminal nuclei's vibrant energy". (To accomplish this), you must do the following techniques in

accordance with the practical instructions: you bring the conventional nuclei (i.e. semen) down (from the head to the genitals), you hold them within the vase of the vajra-penis (i.e. it holds the semen without ejaculation like a vase holds water), your reverse them to their natural location (i.e. up from the penis to their normal location in the crown), your disperse them within the channels, mix them with the winds, bring them to emptiness, and reverse your ordinary body and mind..."

Those who for the time being desire Buddhahood in reliance upon the conventional seminal nuclei should do as follows: the meditations on the seminal nuclei involve two methods: sex yoga concentrating on the conventional nuclei, and Direct Transcendence concentrating on the ultimate nuclei. The Tantra first outlines the former, and then the latter, with the intention that even those engaging these "lower" order practices of sexual yoga will gradually progress to the second type of "higher" order contemplation on the seminal nuclei.

Your consort should have the complete requisite characteristics - when you spot one with the perfect characteristics, whether she be a goddess, demi-goddess, Brahmin, low caste, or a heretic, you begin with the techniques for attracting her, and then you must perfect your bodies via the object of reliance (i.e. consort), the channels, and the focus of visualization (i.e. the seminal nuclei, etc.): on TCD1 47,3, Longchenpa summarizes these preliminary activities as (i) searching for an appropriate consort, (ii) attracting her, (iii) relying on her (evidently in these sense of "educating" her), (iv) searching for her bliss channel, (v) taking hold of her bliss channel, (vi) and engaging in sexual intercourse as you join the bliss channel to your penis (see annotations below for details). For our present purposes, I will simply discuss them in terms of three classifications: (i) the appropriate characteristics in a consort that you are searching for; (ii) the techniques for attracting the desired consort once you have located her; and (iii) the preliminary activities to prepare yourself and the consort for practicing sexual yoga.

I. Searching for your consort: the point of view of this description is that of a male, and thus the "consort" here mentioned is female. The appropriate characteristics of such a consort for sexual yoga forms are given by LYT1 333,4 as involving such general characteristics as faith, compassion, diligence, insight, discretion, capacity for pleasure, attractive, and peaceful in temperament. In particular, Longchenpa discusses four particular types which are imagistically referred to as the Conch Shell Woman, the Lotus Woman, the Cow Woman, and the Picture Woman (other sources detail further types - see Dorje's thesis 900ff; TCD1 364,7-366,3). These classifications focus on physical characteristics like hair color, teeth and so forth as well as personality characteristics like being talkative, liking jewelry, etc. In particular, each type has a characteristic kind of "anthers" (*Ze'i 'Bru*) in her "lotus", which refers to a woman's vagina (imaged as a "lotus" to the male's "vajra" or penis) and the protuberance of the woman's bliss channel therein (referred to as "anthers" both due to its visual resemblance to a flower's anthers, as well as tying into the vagina as a lotus imagery). These "anthers" are without doubt a physical feature of the vagina, the description of which resembles the clitoris (which in medical texts is referred to as *Bya Le*), though the difficulty in locating it makes such an identification problematic. See Hopkins' *Tibetan Arts of Love* 196ff for references to women with clitoris that are almost the size of a penis, and which can thus be used to have sexual intercourse with other women. Unfortunately, I have yet to discuss the matter in detail with Tibetan scholars, and so am unable to offer a definite resolution of this interesting question at this point. These "anthers" are described in detail to the crucial role they play in sexual yoga, and thus an important aspect of the preliminary activities involves locating these anthers and attempting to make them sexually stimulated so

that they can be easily taken hold of. Ultimately, it would appear they must be inserted within the penis' opening and kept there during these practices (in the following I assume this is the case, though again further discussion with Tibetan scholars/practitioner is necessary to clarify this element of the practice). TCD1 364,7ff clearly identifies this as the lower tip of the solitary channel, which Khanpo Tsenam reiterated.

II. Attracting the consort you desire: once you have located an appropriate consort, the next step is of course to attract her so that she will willingly participate in these sexual practices with you. LYT1 334,3-335,4 explains these rites or techniques for compelling or attracting the consort, which involve using some quite odd concoctions (including mixtures of bones, semen, eggs, and so on) applied to your body or drunk, which along with the recitations of mantras and focusing of your desire is supposed to attract the woman to you (along the lines of a love potion, or aphrodisiac). KGYT2 275,5 says it is especially important to focus your mind on the desired consort again and again when your "constituents" are expanding, evidently referring to those times of the months when your conventional nuclei are peaking (see Chapter Two). While *sByor Ba* can denote the "concoctions" of various substances which form an important magical component in these rites, the term can also be interpreted as indicating the "preparations" or "activities" involved here, which is why I have simply rendered it as "techniques".

III. Preliminary preparations for the practice of sexual yoga: once you have attracted the consort, before engaging in the main phase of sexual yoga it is necessary to prepare yourself and your consort. This preparation is classified into three aspects, via which your respective bodies will be "perfectly" prepared to engage in the practice of sexual yoga (and without which no benefit will ensue): (i) "the object of reliance" refers to the imagined or real consort whom you "rely" upon to generate sexual excitement (KGNT2 95,1; LYT1 338,3; TCD1 228,1); (ii) "the channels" refers above all to the "bliss channel" in the consort's vagina; and (iii) "visualization" refers to the creative visualizations which you must be able to sustain during the sexual act (LYT1 337,3).

(i) The object of reliance (i.e. the consort): you must teach the consort spiritual precepts to reorient her to spiritual matters so that the yoga doesn't degenerate into ordinary sexual intercourse contaminated by desire (these precepts include the basis exoteric teachings on the karmic laws of cause and effect, and the sufferings and joys inherent in cyclic existence and transcendence respectively), have her go for refuge in the Buddhist teachings, ripen her psyche with the relevant empowerments, get her to keep the commitments and vows pertaining to those empowerments, extols the virtues of sexual yoga, and explain the deity visualizations involved (KGYT2 275,6-276,1; TCD1 220,3-4; LYT1 335,4-6).

(ii) The bliss channel: the next phase is to engage in a type of "foreplay", during which the crucial element is to locate the vaginal "anthers" (also said to be shaped like a "crow's head") in the woman that are the tip of her "bliss channel" (see above). LYT1 335,6-336,3 explains this in terms of three phases: "stimulating the channel" via flirting, kissing, and massage with special ointments (which also stimulates the body's channels in general, as you feel a rush of sensuality); "searching for the channel", where a special concoction is used to get the bliss channel to "open up" so that it will be clearly evident; and "holding on to the channel" which involves putting a special ointment of that concoction just below the anthers so that it won't "slip away" (i.e. recede from clear view, as well as slip out of the penis). Other texts go into greater detail as to techniques for locating and stimulating this channel, which include eating various herbal substances, sexual stimulation, various postures such

having the woman lean on a saddle to get it to protrude, and so on (see KGYT2 281,3-282,6). This is explained in detail since it is crucial that the "needle-like tip" of the vaginal "anthers" be inserted into the penis during the actual practice of sexual yoga with a consort, and hence vital that they first be clearly identified. One Tibetan scholar joked that this is the reason why it is necessary to have a consort of "peaceful temperament", since this preliminary phase may involve a rather lengthy "search" of the vagina that is quite tedious for the woman (who may thus be tempted to let the "stupid" yogi know what she thinks about it in a variety of painful ways). It is also mentioned that manipulation and stimulation of these "anthers" is quite dangerous, as in some cases it may cause the woman's death.

(iii) *Visualization*: this refers to the various aspects of visualization which are at the heart of sexual yoga (distinguishing them from ordinary sexual intercourse), and which in part at least must be practiced by the female as well (LYT1 335,5). LYT1 336,3-338,3 explains that one must first undergo a preliminary phase of training for about a month prior to engaging in actual sexual intercourse with the consort, since it is necessary to first make your seminal nuclei "flexible" or "serviceable" via solitary meditation. During this period, you must train in the visualizations of the subtle body (i.e. the three channels and four energy wheels), as well as the sequential movements of the white and red nuclei through those four wheels and techniques for preventing the emission of semen (involving physical actions and recitations of syllables). These visualized movements are the same as those involved in the actual practice of sex yoga, i.e. the nuclei's "descent", "retention", "reversal", and so on (see below), but a visualized consort is relied on rather than an actual one. In addition to these "internal" visualizations, there are "external" visualizations commonly classified into "three considerations" that must be kept firmly in mind during sexual yoga: the male and female as the divine blue Totally Positive One consort pair, the vagina as a red four petalled lotus with sun and moon discs in its center, and the penis as a five tipped blue vajra (LYT1 338,4-5). Ultimately, the "vajra" will thus rest on the "cushion of the lotus' sun and moon" in sexual intercourse.

Via these three elements, you "perfect" the body of yourself and the consort such that you are both "completely" prepared to enter the main stage of sexual yoga: the consort is properly educated and tuned into the spiritual motivation of the contemplation, the bliss channel has been stimulated and clearly identified, and you have refined your skill in the necessary visualizations. Thus after one month (LYT1 338,2) your nuclei are "flexible" or "pliable" such that they will function properly in these difficult meditations (your body, normally over excited or lethargic, is now "completely perfect" for the practice of sexual yoga), and hence you are empowered to engage in sexual yoga with an actual physical consort.

*Then, you must bring the conventional seminal nuclei down, retain them, reverse them (back upwards), disperse them within the channels, and mix them with the winds; you then must rely upon emptiness, eradicate your intellect, and reverse your ordinary body and mind:* these lines tersely refer to the main phases of sexual yoga as you actually engage in sexual intercourse with the consort, and thus concentrate on the movements of the conventional nuclei (i.e. semen) within your subtle body. Eight distinct phases are here mentioned: (i) "bringing down" the conventional nuclei from their normal location in the crown wheel to the penis via the four energy wheels located at the body's center; (ii) "retaining" them within the penis (at its root, "waist" and tip) without allowing any emission of semen; (iii) "reversing" them back up from the penis to the crown back through the same four energy wheels; (iv) "dispersing" them within the channels throughout the body; (v) "mix" them with the winds;



(vi) "rely upon emptiness"; (vii) "eradicate" your intellect; and (viii) "reverse your ordinary body and mind". Longchenpa's other discussions generally specify five of these topics by name: (i) "bringing down"; (ii) "retention" or "damming up"; (iii) "reversal"; (iv) "dispersal"; and (v) indicting (the nuclei and bliss) within great primordial gnosis (for example, see KGYT3 54,5). It appears that i-iii are the same as above, while iv here includes iv-v above, and v here is the same as vi, with vii and viii seemingly included (while i-vi are clearly explained in a number of texts, the exact reference of vii-viii is not perfectly clear). Longchenpa's descriptions of these phases are all from the point of view of the male, while the concomitant visualizations and benefits for the female consort must be researched on the basis of the oral tradition and/or other textual sources.

(i) *Bringing down*: the white seminal nuclei initially are concentrated within the crown energy wheel in the head, which LYT1 337,1 and 339,1 refer to as the "lamp of our crown". While joined to the consort in sexual embrace, the male visualizes that this sexual stimulation causes the nuclei to flow downwards sequentially through the throat, heart and navel wheels, such that ultimately they fill up the genitals energy wheel. The sequential descent of these nuclei through the four channels is affectively experienced as a series of increasingly blissful sensations termed the four joys: joy, supreme joy, beyond joy, and coemergent joy. These are discussed at length by Longchenpa in ZMYT1 376,3-389,2 in the context of both solitary meditation (376,4-382,6) and meditation with a sexual consort (382,6-389,2), as well as in Geshe Gyatso's *Clear Light of Bliss* (67-99). While obviously the actual physical semen does not flow forth from the brain or anywhere near it during sexual intercourse, it must be kept in mind that these internal visualizations are hermetic symbolic dramas that cannot be reduced to the material (though neither can they be removed from it). However, it is also true that recent research in the West increasingly indicates a direct link between the brain and sexual sensations (including the finding that electrode stimulation of certain parts of the brain produce sensations of sexual pleasure), such that some have even described the brain as "our primary sexual organ" (see Anand's *The Art of Sexual Ecstasy* 307).

(ii) *Retention*: once the nuclei have descended to the penis, the key is to "retain" or "hold" them there without allowing any emission of semen. While the semen are retained in the "root", "waist" and "tip" of the penis, the male visualizes that the "vibrant energies" (i.e. seminal nuclei) of the his partner are "sucked up" into his penis (ZMYT1 384,4), such that now the white and red seminal nuclei (which in ordinary conception merge as sperm and ovum to form the new embryo in the female) are now instead concentrated in the male's penis. In this way, the tremendous potency and creativity ordinarily channeled into the generation of new life is now contained within the male's genitals as the concentration of the vibrant energies of the male and female, and as such will be pulled upwards as the "enlightened mind" that will reenergize his body/mind and propel him towards Buddhahood. This is obviously related to the insertion of the vaginal "anthers" into the penis, which I above suggested may relate to the clitoris. However, ZMYT1 384,4-5 refers to the women's "three channels", of which the male must insert into his penis "whichever he can locate", and I have yet to obtain an oral explanation of that passage. Once the male and female nuclei have mixed together and are retained in the penis, the man experiences great bliss, which he should remain focused on for a lengthy period of time in a meditative state, without his body, speech, or mind wavering at all (LYT1 339,5). The methods for pulling the women's "vibrant quintessences" or "nuclei" up into the penis are particularly clear in KGYT2 283,2-284,3.

(iii) *Reversal*: now that the white and red vibrant energies are mixed together within the penis, the male must "reverse" them, i.e. pull them up from their location in the penis backup through the four energy wheels into the crown (ZMYT1 386,3). Thus this phase can also be termed "pulling the nuclei up" (LYT1 339,6), and ultimately results in the nuclei re-dissolving back into the "crown's lamp" (LYT1 340,2).

(iv) *Dispersal within the channels*: TCD1 (also in Longchenpa's follow-up comments on 407,4), ZMYT, TDD 327, and Ati all specify the alternative term "plant (the nuclei) within the channels" (*gDab Pa*) in their readings of this line, though LYT agrees with TDD's present reading of "disperse within the channels" (*dGram Pa; bKram Pa* (TCD1 227,5); - both are forms of '*Grem*s Pa; the related term *Khrem*s also occurs (LYT1 340,3; TCD1 227,7)). This phase involves visualizing that the nuclei concentrated within the crown's lamp (their source) disperse throughout all the channels in the body (LYT1 340,3) and 338,1, such that they pervade the entire body. The method to accomplish this involves lying down, as well as the manipulation of the breath and chanting (LYT1 338,1-3; LYT1 340,2-3). Thus these vibrant energies are distributed throughout the body rather than simply eliminating them in ejaculation, and thus we begin to develop a well rounded body image capable of experiencing bliss throughout ("whole body orgasm"). While usually the genital organization of our sexuality concentrates and restricts the nuclei's highly charged optimal energy, sexual yoga enables us to master their dynamics, and thus reenergize our entire existence, which is thoroughly "sensualized" or "seminalized" in the sense of transcending genital fixations and limitations. KYGT2 279,7 says that if you don't disperse the nuclei within all the channels following successfully "pulling them up" to the crown, you will become ill. KGYT2 280,4 appears to say that if you practice these yogas without any dissolution of the visualizations into emptiness, the nuclei will concentrate wherever you meditate (since the winds, mind, and seminal nuclei are inextricably linked to each other), which is what causes this problem with illness (evidently since the energies become unbalanced).

(v) *Mixing with the winds*: while the first four phases prominently figure in all of Longchenpa's accounts of sex yoga, this fifth phase is generally not detailed separately, though TCD1 227,6-7 does provide a separate mention of it. This is because the techniques of "dispersion" and "mixing with the winds" are basically used in conjunction with each other. In TCD1, Longchenpa indicates that the nuclei are "dispersed" throughout the channels by focusing on the breath-wind within, and then by holding those wind-breaths internally as long as you can, the nuclei become mixed with the wind-currents. Implicitly then, the nuclei as impelled by these wind-currents then are able to move throughout the body in optimally energized fashion, such that "physical strength expands" and we don't become ill. Longchenpa's subsequent comments indicate a potential pitfall pulling the seminal nuclei up from the penis involves their getting sidetracked or stuck, such that they can mix with the feces, or one cause strong feelings of nausea and stomach pains. Thus it is vital that we inhale and hold the breath within while dispersing these nuclei throughout the body, so that these winds are available to (VNT1 370,3 also glosses "mixing with the winds" in this context with "filling up with breath"). LYT1 338,2 may be referring to this when it says that for the "dispersal", you must lay down supine, join your knees to your chest, curl up your toes and fingers, and then "stuff" your wind-breaths downward, visualizing that the nuclei as well pervade throughout the body from the crown's lamp. Following that, by stretching out your arms and legs, breathing quietly (*rLung Bya?*), and letting-be the mind in a non-conceptual state, (the nuclei) will dissolve (*Khrem*s). On LYT1 340,2, Longchenpa repeats this in his account of "dispersal of the nuclei", saying that you "forcefully stuff in the

upper winds". See KGYT2 279,6-280,5 and KGYT3 58,1-3 in their account of "dispersion" for further details on the breathing technique utilized there.

(vi) *Relying upon emptiness*: ZMYT simply reads "make empty", TCD agrees with TDD, NGB reads "depend on emptiness", and Ati reads "stabilize emptiness". TCD1 227,5 says the period when you meditate on the presence of the "great seal of non-duality" transcendent of the intellect is called "the stabilization of the view", which ties into Ati's reading.

In TCD1 407,4's follow-up remarks to this quotation, Longchenpa characterizes this phase as "indicting (everything) as reality itself", indicating that after all these internal visualizations, intense sensations and varied actions of sexual yoga, it is now essential that you "reveal" the ultimate emptiness of the nuclei so as to avoid any possible sexual obsessions or power fixations deriving from your mastery over them. This follows the standard pattern of all Tantric meditation (including Direct Transcendence contemplation), where following the main phase of vivid visualizations, breath manipulation, yogic postures, and so on, everything is dissolved back into its empty source as you relax in a natural state perfectly attuned with reality itself. LYT1 340,3-5 discusses this in a section entitled "indicting (everything) as the great primordial gnosis", with "indicting" in the sense of a "breakthrough revelation", where we finally get at the final truth of the matter. In this context, Longchenpa indicates we sit in the lotus posture quietly breathing so that we can't even sense the passage of breath, and relax in a state of bliss with all sensations naturally calmed down. By meditating thus, the primordial gnosis of empty bliss beyond all discursiveness manifests instantaneously within our inner being, and this is termed "the wisdom of the non-duality of the Totally Positive consort pair", and "remaining within the state of primeval reality's great original purity". KGYT3 58,4ff also terms this "indicting (everything) as the great primordial gnosis", which it divides into two aspects: indicting its original purity (contemplating emptiness), and indicting its spontaneous presence (contemplating luminous visions). TCD2 3,7 says that "having reversed the nuclei, you plant them within the channels and mix them with the winds, such that you indict or reveal (your feelings of) bliss as being empty". TCD1 223,6-7 says that when you have properly purified the "channel", then no blood or lymph flows through it, and thus it is certain that will be free of bodily disease and irritation. Longchenpa also says that "the channel's interior is emptied, and thus is opened up, such that we remain within the state of emptiness". This would suggest that "empty" here also implies that the channels' interiors are "empty" in the sense of their energy-flows having been purified and dematerialized, such that we are naturally able to contemplatively remain within a state of emptiness. KGKYT2 285,3-286,1 gives an especially nice summary of how these sensations of bliss must be "sealed with emptiness", and that is important to never be separate from realization of the primordially empty primeval abiding reality "from the moment the first feelings of bliss stir to the final indictment of them as originally pure".

In short, we first master the nuclei's movements, intermediately distribute them throughout the body in an energizing process, and finally reveal them as utterly empty, devoid of any concrete identity that we could egotistically "possess". In this final phase, bliss and emptiness are perfectly integrated as we rest our minds in totally non-conceptual primordial gnosis directly perceiving emptiness, whereas prior to this phase the intense feelings of bliss and preoccupation with the nuclei's visualized movements tended to push our awareness of emptiness into the background.

(vii) *Eradicating the intellect*: TCD1 407,4 apparently describes this as "subsequently you examine your experiences" in Longchenpa's follow-up comments to this citation, which makes me uncertain of my interpretation of this phrase (*bLo rJes bCad*). VNT1 370,3 also mentions examining "subsequent cognitive experiences" (*rJes Kyi Shes Pa'i Nyams*) following the phases of "dispersion", "mixing with the winds", and "sealing (with emptiness)". The term *rJes bCad* usually means "to eradicate", though DAS gives a meaning of "to follow a trace or track". It could also be Longchenpa is interpreting *rJes* as meaning "subsequently", and *bCad* as "examine" (perhaps in sense of *Thag bCad*), with "intellect" (*bLo*) then referring to "your experiences". I had initially interpreted this as referring to "conventional intellection and conceptualization" being "cut off" as you remain in a non-conceptual state within the range of emptiness. TCD1 227,5 indicates such an interpretation by saying that following your dispersion of the nuclei within the channels, you savor the experience of the Great Seal, which "transcends the intellect" (*bLo Las 'Das Pa*). LYT1 340,5 follows the previous section with a short section on "how you subsequently sustain yourself in this contemplation", which simply notes that you must familiarize your intellect (*bLo*) with these states again and again, gradually lengthening them, and taking them into your experience via the nuclei's "blazing", "dripping", and so on (referring to the navel's fire "blazing" upwards, and causing the crown's white nuclei to "drip" downwards through the four centers). KGYT2 280,5-281,3 gives its concluding account of what you do "subsequent to dispersion" by saying that you can either sit up straight or lie flat on your back, but the key is to utterly relaxed without any bodily movements, talking or thought. In this way, you remain in a state of realization without any discursiveness like an infant or crazy man, experiencing everything in a state of complete bliss. KGKYT2 285,5-6 also says that in the final phase you must actualize the "freedom from all limitations beyond all attachment in a great transcendence of the intellect".

(viii) *Reversing the body and mind*: TCD1 407,4 describes this as "adhere to the contemplative experiences of reversing the ordinary body and mind" in Longchenpa's follow-up comments on this citation. Though there may a specific technique may be referred to here, for the time being I can only interpret it as meaning that our ordinary physical and mental distortions are transcended via the vibrant energy and non-conceptual meditative states generated by the practice of sexual yoga, and we must keep this sensation of "pure vision" without degenerating into old habits and perceptions. ZMYT1 388,2 says that via these practices "your own body is freed within the great vibrant energy", such that you obtain an adamantine Spiritual Body with "a life span equal to the sun and moon, beyond birth and death..." TCD1 228,4ff speaks of the disciple's ordinary body, speech, and mind becoming integrated with the Master's, and thus transformed into their enlightened dimensions. KGYT2 280,4 says "you relax your body and mind, and rest in equanimity within original purity", as well indicating on 281 that our mind should be like a "crazy man", or a "young child".

*On the other hand, through reliance upon the ultimate seminal nuclei you can meet with the objects of the empty Reality Body: stimulating the lamp of the empty seminal nuclei, you train on awareness' efflorescent dynamics, and when you finally gain deep attunement such that (their luminosity is vividly clear) without ordinary distinctions between daytime and nighttime, these (luminous nuclei) directly manifest without any exertion on your part - this is the measure indicating experiential mastery (of this practice):* while the first section of this quote explained sexual yoga and its manipulations of the conventional nuclei, the second section briefly describes Direct Transcendence contemplation in which the ultimate nuclei of

light play a key role. These ultimate nuclei are visually experienced as spheres of light which we initially focus our attention on, and which eventually transform into divine palaces containing mandalas of spiritual images (i.e. Buddhas and their retinue). They are referred to as one of the four gnostic lamps, ("the empty seminal nuclei lamp"), and are said to be "empty forms" since they are the heart's pure light energy devoid of any materialization, yet are perceived in the sky as "objects" of our vision. The empty Reality Body refers to our own pristine self-awareness resident within the heart's palace, while its "objects" refer to its luminous radiation shining outwards via the white silk luminous channel, spilling out of our eyes' gateways, and forming rainbow-colored, mandalically organized vibrant images of light in the space around us. TCD2 122,5 discusses how the Reality Body's "objective dimension" is spontaneously present natural radiation, since its emptiness is not a sterile nothingness, but rather is inherently radiant awareness. In TCD1 407,5-6, Longchenpa explains these lines in his follow-up comments, and in particular indicates that "stimulation" (*gTems* for TDD's reading of *ITems*) means that a beginner must meditate on the empty seminal nuclei lamp by first pressing his eye channel to stimulate these visions (see TDD 271 for further details on this technique). VNT1 373,1 clearly indicates that this is what Longchenpa refers to in TCD, though as I mention elsewhere, pressing on the eyes forms an important part of learning to meditate in complete darkness (the "Dark House" retreat), yet as far as I know has no significant role in Direct Transcendence contemplation as practiced outdoors. At any rate, the main significance of "stimulation" here is that initially we must "arouse" or activate these visions (which don't initially spontaneously appear in vivid, clear form), and then engage in sustained contemplation on these visions. This called training on "awareness' efflorescent dynamics" since these luminous visions in the sky are understood as the exteriorized radiation of our heart's interior awareness (which shines out via our eyes), and in fact the empty seminal nuclei in particular are understood as the "lighting-up of awareness" (*Rig sNang*) in contrast to the rainbow-colored lights forming their backdrop, which are referred to as the "lighting-up of the expanse" (*dByings sNang*). With sustained training, these visionary presences of light gradually increase in size, stabilize, intensify in radiance, become more complex in organization, and eventually spontaneously appear without any need to stimulate or ignite them by staring at the sun or pressing on the eyes (they are "effortlessly" present), which is the main indication that we have "mastered" the basics of the seminal nuclei in this phase of the contemplation. These radiant presences thus become spontaneously present throughout the day and night, and their vivid clarity is identical regardless of external light, such that the usual dichotomy between daytime clarity and nighttime murkiness is transcended - "night" and "day" are integrated (TCD1 407,6) as our entire waking and sleeping existence is transformed into the contemplation of the heart's radiant light.

556. Therefore, the two classifications of seminal nuclei are related as follows: the conventional seminal nuclei are not the real spiritual path, aside from simply being a belief and interest-inspiring efficacious means of entering (certain types of people) into this path (of the Great Perfection): for those who don't have any trust or belief in the significance and importance of the ultimate luminous nuclei or spiritual concerns in general (which are not immediately manifest to reason or experience), working with the conventional nuclei (whose role in sexuality provide an easily accessible path to their dynamics) is an alternative means to engage them on the path. Thus they can be gradually led to see the reality and importance of the ultimate nuclei, and overcome their initial disparagement of any type of spiritual practices concerning the non-material (which they otherwise confuse with the "immaterial"). For this reason Longchenpa briefly outlines the techniques of sexual yoga, but doesn't go into any detail since these lower order contemplations are not actually part of the system of Great Perfection meditation proper. In particular, the current text is concerned to give a detailed

account of the essentials of Great Perfection philosophy and contemplative practice without any digression into such matters as historical background, textual categories, auxiliary meditations and rituals, and so on. In Longchenpa's other Great Perfection writings that are not so tightly structured and instead cover a wide range of topics (i.e. TCD, ZMYT, LYT, etc.), sex yoga is thus discussed in extensive detail as a popular and efficacious means to help people enter the spiritual path who would otherwise be disinterested or bewildered by the practices of Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence.

*This is an extremely important point, since nowadays some people assert that both the conventional and ultimate seminal nuclei are the Great Perfection path, and in particular, those people fixated upon the conventional seminal nuclei don't see these (luminous nuclei's vital) significance. They advocate many strenuous practices in training on the conventional seminal nuclei such as "binding" with yogic physical exercises (yantras) and forced visualizations, while as fruit of such training they desire the bliss and emptiness of depth-contemplation within the coarse body:* the reference is to subtle body contemplations such as sex yoga which involve complicated physical movements, complex forced visualizations, difficult breathing techniques and so on which forcibly "bind" and restrict our energies to prevent ordinary neurotic thought activity, none of which play a part in Great Perfection contemplation. In particular "yogic exercises" ("Yantras" in Sanskrit) refer to various physical postures and movements performed along with certain patterns of breathing (ranging from simply to near impossible), which are designed to manipulate our body's internal energies (i.e. the seminal nuclei and wind-currents); "(forced) visualization" (*dMigs Pa*) indicates the various visualizations utilized in the lower order channel-winds practices of the lower vehicles, which are fabricated and forcibly manipulate and concentrate our physical and psychic energy. In contrast to this, Direct Transcendence contemplation involves only very simple postures and gazes, while the object of our focus is self-manifest visions (*sNang Ba*) spontaneously unfolding without any fabricated visualizations on our part. In TCD2 195,2-196,2, Longchenpa strictly differentiates Great Perfection meditation from these lower order subtle body contemplations, including the well know "six yogas" (*sByor Drug*) detailed in Cozort's *Highest Yoga Tantra*. In general he describes these techniques as being very "strenuous" in their directly attempting to forcefully manipulate and redirect our conventional energy (i.e. physical body and ordinary thought activity), and thus full of obstacles and potential pitfalls; in contrast to this, Direct Transcendence contemplation instead works directly with our inner spontaneous gnostic energy, avoiding the coarse dimensions of our body, speech and mind apart from their mere "restriction" via the three modes of non-wavering (see below) - since it thus only involves "undistorted" ultimate gnostic energy, the many potential obstacles and pitfalls inherent in working with distorted, materialized energy are absent. In addition, these lower order contemplations tend to fixate on the various psychic experiences and sensations (*Shes Nyams*) that emerge during contemplation and thus deviate, while in Direct Transcendence contemplation these psychic experiences are not prioritized or clung to, and instead the focus is on the "visionary experiences" (*sNang Nyams*) of the natural radiation of radiant light, i.e. the exteriorized images of awareness' radiation that we have visions of within the space around us (see TDD 390,4ff for the contrast between "psychic experiences" and "visionary experiences", the former which are internal sensations, and the latter which are external visions). Since in these visions we perceive primordial gnosis in direct sensory experience, there is no possibility of error or deviation, unlike the changing succession of inner psychic sensations. Finally, Longchenpa differentiates Direct Transcendence from the "six yogas" thus: Direct Transcendence involves "awareness' radiation" (*Rig gDangs*) which is like "the light of a lamp" and is the "radiation of (awareness') actual radiant light, i.e. pure appearances" via which we can

become free; the six yogas instead involve "the winds' radiation" (*rLung gDangs*) which is like "the light of a jewel" and is "the radiation of awareness' impure dynamism, i.e. distorted appearances" via which we cannot become free.

*The Great Perfection tradition is quite the opposite: in its advocacy of a series of triadic key points in contemplation (your body being unshakable from the "watching postures" and so on) and its desired attainment of a body of light, there is a very important distinction:* Longchenpa thus contrasts these two contemplative systems both in terms of their techniques and the desired "fruit" or "climax": the Great Perfection involves very simple, natural postures and spontaneous visions rather than difficult contortions and forced artificial visualizations, while the ultimate goal is a "body of light" wherein all corporeality dematerializes rather than simply sensations of bliss and concentration within our current corporeal body. As for being "unshakable" from the body's "way of looking" or "watching postures", these are explained on TDD 375,6-7 as the three "postures" or "looks" which the body should remain within without any wavering, which together with your speech being unshakable from silence and your mind being unshakable from undistracted non-conceptual gazing at the center of the open sky, form the three modes of being "unshakable" in Direct Transcendence contemplation. In general, the key points of this contemplation simply emphasize being "unwavering" in the sense of remaining within a calm, natural state of quite disturbed by neither the ordinary turbulence of neurotic activity nor strenuous yogic contortions. The significance of this unwavering is then unpacked in a series of interlinked triads, the most important classifications of which are the "three key points" (TDD 375,7-377,6) and "the three unwavering states" (TDD 403,1-406,6).

### Mini-Encyclopedia of Great Perfection Terminology

As mentioned previously, this section was originally intended to be a very extensive series of essays explaining the various key terms used in TDD, yet time constraints have forced me to scale it back along the lines of a glossary. Given the strikingly different translation methods and theories currently employed by scholars in research on Tibetan Buddhist materials, it would seem helpful to make a few remarks on the language of the texts that the present work is based on. To begin with, it is important to keep in mind that each syllable in the Tibetan language generally has an independent meaning etymologically, while the vast majority of phrases can usually be analyzed into independent meaning units which are either monosyllabic or disyllabic (i.e. *De bZhin gShegs Pa* into *De-bZhin* and *gShegs-Pa*). A second important point is that the entire number of these "meaning units" would appear to be significantly lower than the number of "words" in the English language, such that a single "meaning unit" will often be used in a bewildering variety of ways. Thus whereas English is given to abstract terms and the creation of phrases which are often quite explicit, Tibetan language is usually inclined to imbuing already-used words with contextual meaning, such as its translation of "karma", which as *Las* literally means "action" - it is understood that "action" in this case is fueled by ultimately neurotic emotions even should it be conventionally virtuous, and thus the term "action" would never be used with respect to the Buddha, who engages exclusively in "enlightened activities" (*Phrin Las*). Needless to say, to insist on such an artificial usage for "action" in English would be highly inappropriate. For this reason, a thorough study of the nomadic dialects of colloquial Tibetan could actually prove quite illuminating on questions of literary Tibetan, since many forms and terms now considered "literary" in Central Tibet were colloquial in origin, and as such are still used to this day in the more static dialects of Tibetan spoken by nomads.



Tied into this is the significant chasm existing between colloquial and "literary" Tibetan, as well as the extremely technical discourse most Tibetan genres of writing tend towards, which entails that even a very learned native scholar can easily become quite lost hermeneutically if asked to read materials from outside of his/her field of expertise (obviously this is not a problem unknown in English language materials, though it is particularly exaggerated in Tibetan literature, where supposed reliance upon oral commentary is said to alleviate many of these problems traditionally). In addition, "compound" formation is at times very ambiguous in Tibetan texts, as often the grammatical relationships between the individual elements of terms or a succession of terms are left unspecified, and as such can be construed in a number of ways (in general, it is fair to say that Tibetan grammar is used quite sparingly in comparison to English), which at times results in multi-dimensional experiential-based resonance that is quite powerful (particularly in Great Perfection texts), and at other times results in vague deadening passages. While in Tibetan to a degree it is possible merely to leave these "as-is", it is of course necessary to make choices in translation, in relationship to which intensive study of a group of texts and systematic survey of these compounds' explication in various passages is crucial, as only your own experience will ultimately enable you to make authentic decisions here. This flexibility in compound formation also results in a proliferation of neologisms, which can either be explicit such as the quad-syllabic ones Longchenpa is so fond of (*Ban Ne Bun Ne; Shag Ma Shig Ma; Khral Ma Khrol Ma*), or less explicit ones that only become discernible upon repeated reading of a given cycle of texts (the line between neologistic compound and phrase is not at all clear). This ambiguity is compounded by many canonical texts having been translated and/or composed in syllabic verses, which results in extremely terse passages where the interrelation between the individual lines is often obscure, specific references or abbreviations are difficult to determine, and at times even the subject of the passage is difficult to specify. All these factors combine to produce texts that can be extremely meaning-intensive with their rich ambiguity, yet at the same time often fail in the basic task of

intersubjective communication via the written word, creating a situation where the text as a whole becomes dependent upon the transmission of the spoken word, the danger of which has become quite apparent in the twentieth century, and in fact should have been clear long before that. The richest resource of the Tibetan language thus lies in its syllable-based meaning, which allows for a particularly flexible and pervasive etymologizing that at times creates a discourse where each syllable resembles the proverbial hat from which the magician-author pulls rabbits, one after the other. This etymologizing is at times based on true or false homonyms, at times involves actual linguistic etymologies, and at times is derived from a term's individual syllables without regard to the term's etymology as a whole. Thus standard three, four, five or six syllable terms will often be given syllable-by-syllable etymologies which vary in each context, and actually constitute a creative thinking expanding the texts' semantics outwards to infinity, an open-ended process which we ourselves should feel perfectly free to participate in. Philosophically this is quite important, as it constitutes a type of built-in deconstructionism since these single syllables provide an infinite capacity for reinterpretation of the overall term, such that one only need draw on the obvious resources of the language itself for a multi-level and expanding hermeneutic. This creative etymologizing, which Longchenpa in particular powerfully exploits, derives from the limited number of technical terms used in intellectual discourse (most of which can be easily analyzed into monosyllabic and/or disyllabic components), as well as the general monosyllabic-based meaning inherent in the Tibetan language, such that a single syllable can assume an extremely flexible range of meanings in different contexts and discourse genres, while still retaining a root flavor deriving from its etymology that somehow connects all these different uses. While the result of this inherent ambiguity and pervasive etymologizing is certainly a hermeneutically treacherous highly technical language that requires extremely localized interpretative practices, contrary to many Tibetan and Western scholars, I would say that it is the continuity in all these usages that is striking rather the discontinuity, even though it should go without saying that the same English

translations cannot be applied across the board simply because, as in any language, a given Tibetan term even in a specific discourse will have shifting shades of meaning that no English term will precisely match. This remarkable continuity applies in the relation of colloquial usages to literary usages of terms, though it is especially applicable in vital technical terms used in philosophical and contemplative treatises. A good example is the important Great Perfection term *Thugs rJe*, which in other contexts means "compassion", though literally it etymologizes as "the Lord of the Enlightened Mind", or "the ruling principle in the Enlightened Mind": in the Great Perfection this term has a very technical meaning signifying how energy is not only simultaneously empty and radiant, but also is self-organizing and alive with intelligence. In my opinion these two usages are closely interlinked (see below under "compassionate resonance"), and thus it is vital that we explain the nature of that interlinkage, i.e. to explain imaginatively why the original creators of this terminology chose to use the term *Thugs rJe* and how that original imagined intention still resonates within the term as used herein. As for the controversial term *sKu*, which normally is the honorific term for "body" (see my discussion below on "Spiritual Body"), it again strikes me as undeniable that the vast majority of occurrences of this term in Longchenpa's texts is very closely tied to its root meaning of "body", though rendering it merely as "body" would be utterly erroneous given the critical distinction between *sKu* and *Lus* (the non-honorific term for "body"). Because this interlinkage has seemed so clear and vital to me, as well due to my general feeling that English terms are capable of such flexibility given an overall fluent, coherent framework (i.e. as opposed to being stuck into a overall translation-discourse with awkward grammar and word choice that deadens each term), I have in general attempted to render key terms in close connection to both their etymological roots and their actual usage, though admittedly the results are mixed. Whatever the nature of the actual results, it must be acknowledged that the syllabic-based meaning of the Tibetan language and the above considerations results in texts which set up intricate semantic fields on the basis of these single syllables used in different terms yet

somehow remaining a root flavor in each usage (an obvious example is *Sa* as found in the ordinary term *Sa* as the spiritual levels attained by a visionary, and such common Great Perfection terms as *Rang Sa* and *bTsan Sa*; a more difficult example is the use of *sKu* in *sKu gSum*, in *sKu lTar* as one of the 8 *Lhun Grub 'Char sGo*, in *gZhon Nu Bum sKu*, and so forth). Thus when we choose to render the terms abstractly with a tendency to picking "equivalents" from Western literature, we not only collapse these interlocking semantic fields but often dissipate the localized etymological basis of the term's usage in any given context, though in skilled hands such a practice also has the advantage of providing a much more precise rendering of the term's overall usage as well as creating a linguistically more sophisticated text overall (Guenther's work over the past decade has been quite skilled in this sense, particularly in the overall fluency of his texts (often overlooked because of focusing on his translations of certain key terms), though similar practices by less skilled authors inevitably produce markedly inferior results). Yet if we simply grab "equivalents" and insert them clockwork-like at regular intervals to produce "non-subjective" translations, we generally arrive at texts that are not only tortuous to read, but in fact are often full of interpretative errors, and de-vitalize the reader such that it is literally impossible for a reader basing him/herself on that text to consistently penetrate back to the original text's thought (certainly examples of such can be located in the present work, as even up to the last minute I was busy locating and eradicating occurrences of it). English language-culture is not the linguistically and philosophically simplistic homogenous language-culture that it appears Tibetan was when Buddhist texts were transmitted into Tibet, and it seems ludicrous to try such artificial tactics in the present context as were supposedly utilized in the latter context. While it is true that an articulate discourse with extensive interpretative apparatus has every right to expect an audience to imbue thoughtfully chosen terms with a circle of meanings not "explicit" to the word itself in isolation, it is also a self-evident truth that our primary concern should be to understand the thought of the original and convey that thought with evocative force, while at the same time attempting to

maintain the rich unexpressed interlocking semantic fields as much as possible (loss is inevitable, though creation as well remains possible).

In any language, even the best of dictionaries will only provide a woefully inadequate handful of core meanings for any given word, while in actual graphical and verbal usage a word has an almost infinite variety of shades of meanings, and in a highly complex linguistically self-conscious work such as a poem or philosophical treatise, each term's hermetic quality (i.e. the meaning deriving from its location in that text-world) often tends to go into the ascendancy over its referential quality (i.e. the meaning deriving from its referring to an external "fact", or to a standardized usage reflected in lexicographic materials or "common knowledge"). Given that this state of affairs applies to any two given languages involved in an act of translation, the immense problems inherent in such a project immediately become clear, which are especially exaggerated when dealing with intensely linguistically self-conscious texts such as those of Longchenpa's (whereas a simple verbal conversation about the weather may be relatively straight-forward). In fact, Longchenpa's corpus on the whole is one of the most linguistically self-conscious body of writings in Tibetan literature, such that problems of translation become particularly acute in dealing with it. For these reasons, it would a priori be very unlikely that English translations of key terms (and even non-technical terms) could be appropriately applied without variance, since in each context those terms' gestalt of meaning varies, and thus inordinate devotion to one's lexicon inevitably entails obscuration of the overall passage. Thus we need not only an extremely sensitive reading of the original (that no Tibetan scholar will be able to "give" you as a substitute for your own understanding), as well as an extremely sensitive translation (which again very few Tibetans could possibly "verify" in the case of a philosophically complex treatise, and certainly not via one verbally translating the translation back into Tibetan, as admirable a practice as that is in general for those with the verbal facility and temporal access to competent scholars). The end result is the necessity for a difficult balancing act between sensitivity to contextual variance of terms' significance and an

awareness of the remarkable continuity and interlinkage between individual syllables and terms throughout: in my own work I have attempted as much as possible to maintain consistency throughout for technical terms (including using variant translations semantically tied to each other), while giving a perhaps inordinate weight to a given Tibetan term's etymology. Through providing extensive interpretation of key terms and passages tied to the terms' etymological roots and actual usage, I have tried to avoid introducing lengthy abstract paraphrases for what I hope is a more faithful recreation of the original discourses' vertical and horizontal networks of meaning. I have not hesitated to add words without parenthetical indications, since given the vast differences between Tibetan and English, what many call "glosses" are in fact not glosses at all, since they are crucial requirements in translating a given sentence's meaning into literate meaningful English. The omission of such "glosses" is precisely what makes even some very recent translations extremely difficult to understand, even when one has considerable background in the area in question. At the same time, I find the "gloss" theory of translation articulated by Lipman (*Primordial Experience* xvii-xxv) problematic despite agreeing with the overall tenor of his remarks on the innate tendency towards deadening jargon, and in particular feel that his translations of *Rig Pa* ("awareness") as "the flash of knowing that gives awareness its quality", or *Sems* ("mind") as "our potential for experience", are inadequate solutions for translation-interpretation as opposed to commentarial-interpretation (surely a distinction we want to maintain), and in my own mind often obscure the basic sense of these texts, which have a remarkably simple way of expressing complex thoughts characterized by their powerful oscillation back and forth between very simple direct senses of a given term and more complex reinterpretations of it (an additional problem of such renderings is the dissipation of the above mentioned semantic fields set up by the etymological/literal meanings of key terms). I mention Lipman's work because he has obviously given considerable thought to the very real problems inherent in translating these works, while the works of some other scholars are so flawed due to a basic inadequacy in thinking-out their interpretative strategy and/or editing the resultant

translations, that I hesitate to cite them for fear of being perceived as overly negative. In addition, given the way Great Perfection texts tend to be strikingly similar to the Heideggerian corpus in how they seek out the "true meaning" through or by way of the "correct meaning" (in marked contrast to the dry, perfunctory texts of other Tibetan writers), it must be said that the translation of these texts is particularly problematic in relation to this issue, just as we find in translations of Heidegger into English - see *The Question Concerning Technology* (3-4) where the translator explains how *Wesen* is first translated as "essence", but subsequently is rendered as "coming to presence" as Heidegger reinterprets the term, first seeking his way through the "correct" meaning, i.e. "essence").

A few concrete instances may be of help. A critical and pervasive term in Longchenpa's writings is literally "self" (*Rang*), which is used by itself as well as in a wide variety of compounds (*Rang sNang*, *Rang Shar*, *Rang Ngo Shes Pa*, *Rang bZhin*, *Rang Rig*, *Rang Sa*, etc.), and often is merely an abbreviation for "natural" (*Rang bZhin*). Apart from the numerous English terms we may be inclined to render it with ("natural", "intrinsic", "auto-", "inherent", "self-", etc.), the grammatical relation of *Rang* to the following term in a compound is often unclear (*Rang Rig* can connote "aware as self", "aware of self", "aware by self", "aware via self", etc.), and/or the precise reference of *Rang* as "self" can be ambiguous (*Rang Rig* as "awareness inherent to the Universe itself" or "our own intrinsic awareness"). Another example of a very important conceptual and semantic field based on a single syllable is that of *Chos*: the Buddha's precepts as *Chos*, all phenomena as *Chos Thams Cad*, the objective correlate of non-sensory intellectual cognition as *Chos*, reality as *Chos Nyid*, the name of the fourth vision of Direct Transcendence as *Chos Zad*, all manifest dimensions both pure and impure as *Chos Can*, and so on. A less difficult example would be that of such groups as '*Khrul sNang*', '*Khrul Pa*', '*Khrul gZhi*', and so on. Closely related to this issue is the use of highly technical "code terms" in these texts, which summarize highly complex philosophical and experiential gestalts into single words. The intrinsic tendency of Tibetan discourse to such

"code terms" is even more problematic in attempting to translate them into a foreign thought-pattern, symbolism and language, since we cannot assume shared images, or resonances, that a Tibetan may take for granted. This is one reason why I think it is important to develop localized "dictionaries" providing etymological explanations of each term along with the term's specialized usage, and how that latter plays off and transforms the former. In this way the serious reader can appropriate these discussions, and thus in part alter his/her consciousness such that these key terms/codes can come to be imbued with imagistic resonances that surround them with an aura of meanings ("the circle of the unexpressed") that then deepens and expands as the person reads and re-reads the terms in their diverse context. An example is again the critical term *sKu*, which of course is a quite ordinary term in colloquial and standard literary Tibetan as the honorific term for "body", and as such used as a prefix to form other honorific terms relating to one's body. This then is used to refer to the Buddha's body to mark our great respect for him, with the additional extension of significance to indicate his physical existence being "optimal" and "holistic" as opposed to our fragmentary and neuroticized physical embodiment with its unlived lines. Then with the three *sKu* theory the term admittedly expands beyond specifically "physical" existence, clearly indicated in their correlation with a Buddha's Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind, and quite obvious to anyone with eyes to see. The only partial correlate in English to such pervasive honorific forms in Tibetan is capitalization, i.e. "Body", which at least avoids the erroneous conflation of *Lus* and *sKu*. Just as we must keep a continued sensitivity to the coded nature of Tibetan terms, the infinite variations on meaning and continually shifting circle of the unexpressed that is context-dependent, obviously we must do the same in English, where the term "body" has a rich history of poetic associations that range far beyond merely one's physical existence - for example Norman Brown's *Love's Body*, an exploration of the richness of what we understand by "body" in our imaging of experience, which as in the Russian poetic theory of "estrangement" ("making the words strange") is "strangified" by its capitalization such that this quite ordinary word suddenly becomes



unknown, and the reader finds him/herself on unfamiliar ground, though with a rope back to the known (we all know "body", but now what has happened to it?). Of course such "code"-translations in themselves and by themselves neither succeed or fail, as it is the overall context of the translation/interpretation that either bring them alive or drag them down ("vibrant" (*Dwangs Ma*) or "solidified" (*sNyigs Ma*) energy), and it is here that I think the issue of such code-words' translations has been confused because of the poorly worded and thought-out translations which we have become so prone to in Tibetan-oriented research. That is to say a term gains poetic force and evocation only in the overall context of the flow of poetic-thought text that it finds itself in, and which we discover it within, while in a poorly thought-out and awkwardly written context, "Body" remains the lowest common denominator of one's physical "body", and we begin to have nightmares of the Buddha's "three corpses", an obscure theory of strangely different types of flesh and blood bodies with odd sounding names. Yet perhaps in a sophisticated and fluent English text "Body" might yet re-gain its own rich associations and be able to embrace the resonance of *sKu*, though I agree this remains to be seen; in the same way perhaps such bankrupt and overused words as "spiritual" may be revived contextually, breathing new and strange life into them through the surrounding text-world. The particular code words that have been chosen to express these philosophical images and experiential factors are quite important (such as *Thugs rJe*), and I am thus inclined to think we should attempt to re-create these with similar code/images, since rather than being a "code" in the sense of a prosaic non-poetic code to be broken by purely technical means, these are poetic codes, word-images used both as codes and as evocative images with these two aspects completely interlinked. I have tried to find non-discursive and non-abstract images with evocative force, and with the use of the present "mini-encyclopedia" attempt to overcome the inherent deficiency of the code-aspect of these images which in part need to be discursively understood and which no pure image can adequately convey. One of the main attractions of these Tibetan texts is this pervasive "creative etymologizing" with its intricate unfolding of infinite meaning, yet while

this code-image type of discourse obviously has its advantages in the succinct, highly condensed (yet simultaneously infinitely expansive) and charged language it enables, it also has its defects in terms of obscurity, and the inevitable esoterization of discourse encouraging elitism, reactionary secrecy, and inexorably over the years a declining interpretative tradition ("profound secret" beginning to become a term/excuse for a text where you have to use your own mind, and/or are unable to do so). This pervasive de-empowering of the reader/visionary of these texts and tradition has been something that I have been quite concerned with, and many of my practical strategies are an attempt to empower the reader, helping him/her to participate in the expanding/condensing re-embodied depth-text (beyond mindless "worship", arrogant "condescension", or facile "acknowledgment") rather than sacrifice that multi-layered dimension to the sterility of a still-born text encouraging one or all of the negative tendencies mentioned above.

**"Abiding reality" or "abidingness"** (*gNas Lugs*): literally "the way (*Lugs*) in which it abides (*gNas*)" or "the abiding-mode", this term refers to the deep abiding reality of phenomena, and as such, is closely connected to the term "internal radiance". "Abiding" (*gNas Pa*) should be understood in contrast to "appear" (*sNang Ba*), since "abiding reality" indicates how something truly is in its final nature rather than merely "how it appears to be" (*sNang Lugs*). The "Ground in its abiding reality" thus refers to the Ground in its pure abiding-potential (*Nang gSal*) rather than in its actualized presencing (*gZhi sNang*).

**"Able One" or "Sage"** (*Thub Pa; Muni*): this is a title of the Buddha, and literally means "the one who is capable". This indicates that the Awakened One is "up to" whatever situation confronts him/her, and not only masters all intellectual and spiritual knowledge, but also is endowed with a perfect mastery of skill-in-means which enables him/her to efficaciously interact with other living beings to guide them along the spiritual path.

The "six Able Ones" (*Thub Pa Drug*) refer to how the Buddha takes special form in each of the six principal life-worlds of cyclic existence (i.e. human, animals, hell, gods, demigods and

starving spirits) so that he may guide each type of living being to liberation in accordance with their particular capacities and modes of perception. In particular, these are explained as the incarnations of the Spiritual Hero of compassion named Avalokiteśvara, and are directly related to the six syllables of his mantra *Om Ma-ṇi Pad-me Hūṃ*. Their importance in the present context is that they are six of the forty two peaceful deities within the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, the key visionary element in post-death visions as well as the culminating third vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation. See Lauf's *The Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Book of the Dead* 68-71 and 118-137 for extensive details on this visionary role of the six Able Ones.

**"Activate"** (*blTem Pa; gTems Pa*): see "stimulate".

**"Actualization"** (*sGrub Pa*): also see "ritual approach and evocation" (*bsNyen sGrub*). The term *sGrub Pa* is a common term meaning to "fulfill", "accomplish", or "acquire", while in philosophical-contemplative treatises it often means to "actualize" a contemplation, i.e. to bring the contemplative goal or visualization into full vivid reality.

**"Accomplishment", "establish"** (*Grub Pa; Grub Pa*): this term can mean to logically "establish" a proposition or that a given phenomena is "established" as having some type of solid ontological reality, as well as simply that something "comes to pass" or is "accomplished".

**"Accumulations"** (*Tshogs; Sambhāra*): see "two spiritual accumulations".

**"Actions of inexorable retribution"** (*mTshams Med Pa'i Las; Ānantarya-karman*): these refer to particularly heinous acts such as matricide which are so negative that their karmic retribution is immediate and unavoidable: some sources say that these actions karmically propel you to be reborn within hell the moment you die without (*Med Pa*) passing through any intermediate linking states (*mTshams*) such as the post-death visions and so on ("immediate" in the sense that these actions bear this fruit immediately upon cessation of this life without any chance of avoidance ("inexorably"), rather than simply having an indeterminate effect in future

lives that could possibly be transformed by other subsequent positive actions). They are usually enumerated as fivefold: matricide, patricide, killing someone of advanced spiritual attainments, causing dissension in a spiritual community, and causing an Awakened One to bleed with malicious intentions.

**"Adamantine" or "adamantine reality" (*rDo rJe; Vajra*):** this literally reads "the lord of stones", and can connote a diamond, though in fact the latter in its own right is termed *rDo rJe Pha Lam* or merely *Pha Lam*. In ancient Indian literature, *Vajra* also has the sense of a kind of "thunderbolt" wielded as a weapon of irresistible force by the Vedic god Indra (though again Tibetans declined to use the indigenous term *gNam lCags* in translating *Vajra*). In the current texts, this term is closely linked to the esoteric tantric teachings of Buddhism, which can also be referred to as the "adamantine vehicle" (*rDo rJe Theg Pa*). In Tibetan thought, *rDo rJe* is usually glossed as "indestructible" or "unchanging", and thus connotes indivisibility, immutability, and so on, which obviously also relates to a diamond with its extraordinary hardness, as well as its perfect crystalline beauty. I have chosen to render it as "adamantine" (or "adamantine reality" when used as a noun) since "adamantine" connotes a unimaginably hard substance that is impenetrable, unbreakable, and unyielding, as well as being directly linked to diamonds. *rDo rJe*'s presence in compounds usually indicates the term refers to a particularly subtle dimension closely linked to the final indestructible reality of the Universe. In Reynolds' *Self-Liberation*, he points out that the term *rDo rJe* has no intrinsic connection with the Tibetan terms "thunder" (*Brug sGra*) or "lightening" (*gLog*), and thus rejects some Western scholars' rendering of it as "thunderbolt" (which derives from the ancient use of the term *Vajra* in India to refer to the weapon carried by the Vedic deity Indra). While it is true that the primary meaning of *rDo rJe* in Tibetan thought is "indestructible" or "indivisible" and translations of it exclusively as "thunderbolt" obscure that sense, it is also true that Tibetan scholars (not to mention former Buddhist scholars in India) often have a surprisingly extensive knowledge concerning non-Buddhist Indian mythology (I have heard this etymology of *rDo*

*rJe/Vajra* as a thunderbolt several times from Tibetan scholars), as well as knowledge of the etymologies and alternative meanings of the Sanskrit terms corresponding to key philosophical and contemplative terminology used in the Tibetan language (even among scholars who are otherwise utterly unable to read a Sanskrit text or passage). For this reason, and within the very specialized community of learned Buddhists, many of these key terms in the Tibetan language have a circle of meaning that transcends their purely Tibetan derivation as they reach back to their Sanskrit equivalents, and beyond. This is an extremely important point that I failed to touch on in my short notes above on these texts' language, and in part can be understood merely by pointing to the current "community" of those in the US who understand literary Tibetan and thus use English terms which are implicitly understood by "colleagues" as having lines of meaning extending beyond their simple usage in extrinsic discourses back to the original Tibetan terms (likewise for English language studies in Heideggerian thought, which continually point back to the original Germanic terms), though the relative homogeneity of Tibetan intellectual life and the artificial character of literary Tibetan's creation gives a special type of intensity to this issue that has continued many centuries after social and personal links to India itself were severed. While it is of vital importance that we begin to do research into the Tibetan language in terms of its own capacities, deficiencies, and genius (and not treat it merely as some type of artificial contrived Sanskrit-substitute), we must also recognize the peculiar multi-dimensional links of literary Tibetan to Sanskrit (in terms of word formation, etymologies, literature, and so on) if we are to be sensitive to the important factors those links play in understanding the Buddhist discourse in Tibet, even in regard to a corpus so resolutely Tibetan as Longchenpa's.

As for a few of its many specialized uses, *rDo rJe* signifies one of the five spiritual affinities (see TDD 225,4). *rDo rJe* also refers a type of ritual "scepter" that plays an important role in tantric ritual in conjunction with a small ritual bell: the "scepter" symbolizes compassion and efficacious means, while the bell represents insight into emptiness, such that together they

symbolize the Awakened One's indivisible union of insight and efficacious means. The different elements of the scepter are frequently explained symbolically in relation to a given context, such that its center core is "indestructible reality", while its two ends are "appearance and emptiness", and so forth. Of particular interest is the "prongs" or "tips" at either end of the scepter, which in number are variable ("three tipped scepter", "nine tipped scepter", etc.), and are frequently cited in unpacking the symbolism of contemplative visualizations to link them to the Ground's ultimate adamantine reality (see TDD 374,4 for a reference to the important *rDo rJe* position, where our two upraised hands and head are understood as the "three tips" of a *rDo rJe* scepter). Finally, this scepter is said to be shaped like a thunderbolt, and in that it represents the masculine element symbolically and visually, the term *rDo rJe* is also used to signify the penis in describing sexual yogic processes, while the women's vagina is referred to as the "lotus".

**"Adamantine body"** (*rDo rJe'i Lus*): The "vajra body" generally refers to our subtle body particularly in relation to it being the basis for contemplative actualization, i.e. the sophisticated multi-dimensional tantric analysis of our body-mind's energetics, which is summed up in the triad of inner channels, energy winds, and seminal nuclei. The unique facet of the Great Perfection presentation of the "adamantine body" lies in the luminous channels and two super-nuclei (GTD 376,1), and in general it is defined as "the basis of the super primordial gnosis" (STCP2 11a 5). In KGNT1 61,4, Padmasambhava etymologizes this term by saying that the body's five principal channels run straight up its center, and thus resemble the five tips of a vajra-scepter (the flavor channel, the solitary channel, the "ultimate central channel" (i.e. the luminous channel), the Avadhūti channel (i.e. the spinal cord), and the all encompassing channel (i.e. the vitality channel).

**"Adamantine Hero"** (*rDo rJe Sems dPa'*; *Vajrasattva*): this refers to a very important Buddha-image that is pure white, and which plays an especially important term in purificatory contemplations. In terms of the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, he is

generally understood as the initial form of the Enjoyment Body dimension as a unity (Lauf's *Secret Doctrines* 103, Reynolds' *Self-Liberation*), which in expanded form is the five Spiritual Bodies or five Buddhas (see "body"). Additionally, in explaining the five Buddhas, Longchenpa uses the terms "Adamantine Hero" and "Unshakable" (*Mi bsKyod Pa*) interchangeably (TCD2 131,4) since the latter is the Buddha corresponding to the spiritual affinity of "adamantine reality" (Lauf also notes this in *Secret Doctrines* 106). In other contexts, Longchenpa often uses this term as a symbol for awareness in its pure indestructible intensity (TDD 191,7).

**"Adamantine linked chains"** (*rDo rJe Lu Gu rGyud*): see "linked chains".

**"Adamantine nucleus of radiant light"** (*'Od gSal rDo rJe sNying Po*): see "radiant light".

**"Adamantine topics"** (*rDo rJe'i gNas; Vajra-pada*): see "eleven adamantine topics".

**"All-encompassing channel"** (*Kun 'Dar Ma; \*Avadhūti*): in Longchenpa's corpus, this is the main term used to refer to the central channel of the human body (*dBu Ma*), which runs up its center in conjunction with the flavor channel on the right and the solitary channel on the left. See the extensive discussion in Chapter Five, and in particular my commentary to TDD 253,1, where among other things I point out that these texts seem to understand this as a transliterated foreign word rather than an indigenous term. Also see "channels, inner winds and seminal nuclei" in the mini-encyclopedia. Finally, Padmasambhava in KGNT1 60,3ff details three aspects to the term "central channel": the Avadhūti channel which is the spinal cord, the all-encompassing channel which is the vitality channel, and the ultimate central channel which is the luminous channel.

**"Aloke"** (*Āloke*): see "Surya, Candra and Aloke".

**"Animals"** (*Byol Song; Tiryak*): see "six types of life forms", of which "animals" signifies one. The etymology of the term seems to be "those who have gone (*Song*) astray (*Byol*)" or

"those who avoid (*Byol*)" (human contact?). It is important to keep in mind that "animals" as a class of beings are strictly separate from "humans" (*Mi*).

**"Anu" or "Anuyoga"** (*A Nu Yo Ga* or *rJes Su rNal 'Byor, Anuyoga*): see "Atiyoga".

**"Aorta"**: see "vitality channel".

**"Appearances", "presences", "presencing", "vision", "experiences", "visionary presence", "to light-up", "lighting-up"** (*sNang Ba*; \**Ābhāsa*): *sNang Ba* is a common term in general, but is of particular importance in Great Perfection texts. In philosophical discourses, the term ordinarily means "appearances" as opposed to "emptiness" (*sTong Pa*), but also has the sense of our "experiences" (as borne out by its colloquial usages of "impression", "feeling", "sensation", "attentiveness" or "interest" - see TEDM). While its most frequent sense is of "external appearances", it is thus also closely tied up with the sense of "internal visions" or "internal experiences" - the former sense emphasizes their seeming eternity, while the latter term emphasizes that we only know them as experienced internally. For this reason, the internal experiences and external visions that are experienced in Direct Transcendence contemplation are classified into four "visions" (*sNang Ba*). Along these lines, Longchenpa rejects assertions that "all appearances" (*sNang Ba Thams Cad*) can be reduced to our own mind (*Sems*) as idealism would have it, and explains his rejection by making a distinction between "appearances" (*sNang Ba*, which are in fact totally dependent upon our own karmically determined perceptual and conceptual frames), and "that which appears" (*sNang Yul*, which are the external phenomena independent of our own particular acts of perception and experience). In addition, *sNang Ba* is often used in explicit contrast to "gloom" or "darkness" (*Mun Pa*), indicating very clearly its root meaning is "to light-up", i.e. that "appearance" intrinsically involves a presence of light and illumination. It should also be noted that the term can alternately function along the lines of a noun (*sNang Ba Thams Cad*), adjective (*sNang Ba'i*), and verb (*sNang Byed*), usages which are not always clearly differentiated, especially in verse. *sNang Ba* is usually understood in contrast to the "abiding



reality" (*gNas Lugs*) of all phenomena, since how a given thing appears (*sNang Lugs*) can be quite different than how it truly is in its abiding reality; this contrast can also refer to self-contained interiority and its movement into exteriorized actuality, such as with "the Ground in its abiding reality" (*gNas Lugs gZhi*) and the "Ground-presencing" (*gZhi sNang*). To capture the various nuances of this term, I have rendered it with a variety of terms, and in particular have somewhat idiosyncratically used the terms "presences" and "presencing" to emphasize the dynamic and holistic character of the processes indicated.

As with everything else, the term "presencing" or "appearance" has both lower order and higher order dimensions, which is reflected in the contrast between "pure vision"/"pure appearances" (*Dag sNang*) and "distorted experiences"/"distorted appearances" (*Khrul sNang*); it can also itself carry a connotation of solidified materiality, such as in the opposition of "empty forms" (*sTong gZugs*) and "manifest forms" (*gZugs sNang*). One of its most important usages is in the term "Ground-presencing" (*gZhi sNang*), which simultaneously means "the presencing of the Ground", "appearances from within the Ground", "the Ground-in-its-presencing", and "the lighting-up at the Ground", and in general signifies the initial movement of the totally self-contained Ground devoid of any externalization or actuality into an expanding cosmos of "presences" (see my discussion of the first adamantine topic in the introduction). An equally important use is the term "self-presencing" (*Rang sNang*), a term often explained on the basis of a dream-world, where we seem to experience a succession of things and people that are externally existent, when in fact they have no ontological status outside the context of our own dream, and thus are understood as "our own self-presencing" (*Rang sNang*), i.e. our own projections retroactively experienced as appearances in our vision. In the emergence of the Ground-presencing's luminous visions (in its primordial context, as well as within Direct Transcendence visions and in the post-death visions of the reality intermediate state), the key to enlightenment lies in recognizing these "appearances" or "presences" as "our own self-presencing", a truth which is particularly vividly experienced

within the Direct Transcendence visions as the entire range of luminous mandalas first shines forth from our own heart via our eyes into the external sky, where we then perceive it as our own eyes. Failing to recognize these presences as "of self" or "pertaining to self", we instead grasp at them as "other" (*gZhan*), creating the basic substratum of "ignorance" or "dimmed awareness" (*Ma Rig Pa*) upon which we stray into cyclic existence. The entire range of emotional distortions and neurotic conceptuality is based upon this fundamental dualism, as we attempt to symbolically alleviate the overwhelming tension of alienation set up by this dualism via attempts to unify with the other (love) and negate the other's independent existence (hatred). In this context, "self-presencing" must be understood as awareness' (*Rig Pa'i*) "own natural presencing", since all "matter" is the congealed forms of pure light energy, which is itself the "dynamism" (*rTsal*) or "radiation" (*gDangs*) of awareness. In this sense, "awareness" refers to the inherent intelligence of the Universe-as-such, which is self-organizingly operative both within our own psycho-physical state as well as the dynamics of "matter" itself, and must be strictly distinguished from our "ordinary mind" (*Sems*) with its reactionary distorting neurotic framework. "All appearances" are our mind's "own projections" (*Rang sNang*) in the sense of its active manipulation and framing of all our experiences, but it cannot be said that the entire universe is our mind's "own self-presencing" (*Rang sNang*), an idealistic claim which Longchenpa severely criticizes in Chapter Four - the key to understanding the difference between "self-presencing" and idealism can be found in the distinction between the ordinary mind and primordial gnosis (or "awareness") explained in the fourth chapter.

Literally "self-appears" without any specification of the grammatical relationship between "self" and "appear", *Rang sNang* simultaneously means "the lighting-up inherent to the Ground", "awareness' own presencings", "one's own experiences", "apparent in and of themselves", "one's own projections", "Being's own manifestations", and "manifest in and of themselves": the term embodies the mystery of "self" both in the liminal zones between Being and beings or the individual and the Universe (in the ontological difference, where is "self"

located?), as well as between internal subjectivity and external presences. Provoked by the images of the dreamer and his/her dreamed world, or a face and its reflection in a mirror, we must journey beyond our limited ego-logical conception of self defined in strict separation from the objective dimension that confronts us, and in expanding our notion of "self" or the "natural" into this dimension which is no-thing, the fissure between "subjectivity" and "objects" begins to dissolve, and a seamless unity stands revealed within the vibrant radiantly empty self-organizing gnostic intelligence of the Universe. It is only at this level of contemplatively-arrived-at experience that the true significance of all appearances being "self-presencing" can be realized, and the ever threatening specter of the "other" finally begin to subside (a specter haunting not only our unconscious, but also the physical structures of our bio-logical existence). TLKS 310 defines "self-presencing" as "the non-presence of otherness, and being devoid of cognitive dualism", pointing to the key distinction between "self-presencing" and "other-presencing" (*gZhan sNang*), the latter term meaning "extrinsic", "adventitious", "dissociated" or "unnatural" (*Rang bZhin Ma Yin Pa*). *Rang sNang* describes the Ground as experiencing its own self-lighting-up in full self-consciousness and self-awareness (*Rang Rig*) of itself, which is why an Awakened One's experience is always *Rang sNang*, while other living beings' experience of his/her presence is *gZhan sNang*, i.e. experienced as intertwined with the illusory specter of the other. In the final analysis, the Universe is intrinsically intelligent and hence inherently self-organizing in its self-evolution and self-exploration, which is in strict contrast to viewing that organization as imposed by some external godhead, or the product of some accidental occurrence in an otherwise lifeless cosmos.

**"Appearances and the fictive worlds therein", "all appearances and their interpretations by sentient life", or "all appearances and life-worlds" (*sNang Srid*):** while this could be literally translated as "all that comes (*Srid*) to appear (*sNang*)", or "that which exists (*Srid*) and appears (*sNang*), or even "all possible (*Srid*) appearances (*sNang Ba*)" in other contexts, and as such is rendered as "phenomenal existents" by Tulku Thondup

(*Buddha Mind* 207), it is very clear in Longchenpa's corpus that he consistently intends this term to be understood in terms of its two separate elements along the lines of "appearances" (*sNang Ba*) forming the external material environment and "fictive existence" (*Srid Pa*), i.e. the animate life-forms within that environment whose consciousness enables them to interpret those appearances and create "fictive life-worlds" in which they live. As such, it is related to another common term designating the material environment and life-forms within it, i.e. *sNod bCud*: the material environment is like a "vessel" (*sNod*), while the life-forms inhabiting it are the vessel's "quintessence" or "elixir" (*bCud*) - in fact, in ZMYT1 360,4-5 Longchenpa explicitly correlates the two terms (i.e. *sNang* with *sNod*, and *Srid Pa* with *bCud*). The etymology of *Srid* in this context is its standard use in the sense of "cyclic existence" based on its literal meaning of "(the wheel of) becoming", "existence", or "possibility"; in the current context, I think there is a particular emphasis on the various "possible" life worlds that sentient beings can create from the givenness of the physical environment as they "come into existence" within the latter's infrastructure. I have explained this at length since not only do Tibetologists in general often misunderstand the intensely self-conscious hermetic nature of these texts' use of language (for example there can be no question that *Ye Shes* refers to "primordial knowing", while in other traditions this emphasis on the etymological sense of "primordial" is quite subdued), but often even those who have experience with these particular traditions fail to understand how this pervasive etymologizing not only sets up intertwined semantic fields, but also operates to re-define terms in their ordinary denotation, thereby undercutting a rigid insistence on separating "etymology" from "denotation". At the same time, certainly such a distinction must be maintained in some contexts where a single term is given multiple creative etymologies which would lead to numerous problems if we based our general translation of the term on them - my main point here is that in this case Longchenpa's etymologizing of the term has clearly redefined its denotation, and in the vast majority of cases within his corpus, rendering *sNang Srid* as "phenomenal existents" would be quite erroneous.

**"Apprehension"** (*Dzin Pa*): see "subject-object duality".

**"As-is" or "suchness"** (*De bZhin Nyid; Tathatā*): this term literally means "like-this-precisely", and since *De bZhin* is a common term meaning "that itself", "like that" or "such", and *Nyid* means "itself" or "-ness", "suchness" is a very literal translation. In general this refers to phenomena's "abiding reality" (*gNas Lugs*), while TCD2 247,4 cites a passage reading "suchness of all phenomena", which the Tantra's context clearly indicates is none other than "awareness".

**"Atiyoga"** (*A Ti Yo Ga; Shin Tu rNal 'Byor; Ati-yoga*): see my discussion of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga within the introduction in the section *Overview of the Great Perfection*.

**"Avadhūti channel"** (*Avadhūti*): this is a transliterated Sanskrit term used to refer to the central channel of the human body, which runs up its center (see "channels, inner winds, and seminal nuclei" for details; also see Chapter Five). While the term "all-encompassing channel" (*Kun 'Dar Ma*) is often understood as the Tibetan translation of this Sanskrit term, there appears to be some question as to original linguistic source of *Kun 'Dar Ma* (or at least the syllable *'Dar*), and in Great Perfection writings it would appear there is a distinction between how these two terms are used, though whether a distinct reference is entailed is debatable. Padmasambhava in KGNT1 60,3ff details three aspects to the term "central channel": the Avadhūti channel which is the spinal cord, the all-encompassing channel which is the vitality channel, and the ultimate central channel which is the luminous channel (I have yet to locate a comparably clear analysis in Longchenpa's own writings).

**"Awakened One"** (*Sangs rGyas; Buddha*): see "Buddha".

**"Awareness", "aware-ing"** (*Rig Pa; Vidyā* - given in Ati1 390,2): *Rig Pa* is a common colloquial and literary term that can be used as a verb as well as a noun. In colloquial Central Tibetan it most often means "intelligence" ("she is extremely intelligence"), while in more archaic nomadic dialects it is still often used verbally in the sense of to become aware of something, to perceive something, or to see something; in literary Tibetan, it often means

"knowledge" or "awareness". In the context of the Great Perfection, *Rig Pa* refers to the inherent "intelligence" or "aware-ing" dimension of the Universe itself in its pure undiluted intensity, and thus is said to be the "one and only" (*gCig*) from which the entire physical and psychic cosmic derives. Our own ordinary neurotic psychic activity ("mind"; *Sems*) is understood as the distorted derivative of awareness' radiation (*gDangs*), while pure awareness in its high intensity potentiality remains present within our heart as the "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy", or "Buddha-nature" (*De bZhin gShegs Pa'i sNying Po*). "Primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*) generally signifies the dynamic aspect of awareness, and thus we can speak of the differentiation between the "ordinary mind" and "awareness", or between the "ordinary mind" and primordial gnosis": TCD2 100,4 analogizes awareness to water, while our ordinary mind is like the "water bubbles" or "froth" emerging from the water-awareness' dynamism as stirred up by the wind. Another important contrast is between "awareness" and "dimmed awareness" (*Ma Rig Pa*), the latter term usually meaning "ignorance" but literally reading "non-aware", and in this context connoting that due to its lack of self-recognition, awareness in its pure intensity retreats to the background while its active functioning as the "psyche" or "mind" becomes "dimmed" and "distorted" (*Khrul Pa*). Despite this pristine awareness or gnostic intelligence of the Universe becoming obscure within-and-as-us, it continues to operate as the ultimate source of our entire psycho-physical vitality via its gnostic dynamism radiating outwards from the heart to in-form and direct our biological and psychic processes. In this way "enlightenment" (which is understood as the self-recognition of awareness, and consequent unfolding of its inherent capacities or "talents" (*Yon Tan*)) merely consists of this inner nucleus of awareness going into the ascendancy in its pure undiluted luminous intensity, which at no point falls under the control of neurosis, even though our alienated dualism clouds its vibrant presence from our view.

Along these lines we must interpret the term *Rang Rig*, literally "self-awareness", and often used in the sense of "introspection" (i.e. aware of ourselves as the thinker). In the context of

Great Perfection literature, it signifies the "inherent (*Rang*) intelligence" of the Universe itself, i.e. the aware-ing that is intrinsic to cosmos from its primordial beginnings, as well as our own "awareness-as-self": in our primordial encounter with the luminosity that presences to us as if external, we must recognize it as self-presencing, and thus be "aware of the presences *as self*" (*Rang Rig*), whereby we tune into the pure intensity of awareness within us (*Rang Rig*), and realize the hidden unity of all that is.

**"Being"** (*gZhi*; German *Sein*): the important term "Ground" (*gZhi*) has generally been translated quite literally as "Ground", but it is clear that the sense of the term is closely related to the Heideggerian term "Being", as well as the term "Universe" found in modern scientific and pseudo-scientific literature (see Jantsch's *The Self-Organizing Universe*). However, despite "Being" and "Universe" being very evocative terms that help lead us back into the Western realms of discourse and thought, each term is somewhat problematic in its own right due an unavoidable tendency towards entity-based interpretation as some-thing or totality of things standing apart from our own existence, as well as each constituting its own unique frame of reference from the gestalt of discourses centered around them (and which as such have significant points of contact and difference with the Great Perfection term "Ground"): for instance, "Ground" in these texts has little of the personal flavor of "Being", nor does it ever have the sense of the "totality of things" that "Universe" is often interpreted as. To capture this problematic tendency to think in terms of these vital concepts while aware of their problematic status, as well as to "estrangle" these two terms in the hope that a more appropriate meaning might evolve, I have chosen, on the whole, to strike these two terms out - "Being" and "Universe" - with the intention that the strike out stops us from taking these terms for granted, as well as blocking attempts to quickly construe them on thing-based models of reference. Where I have used "universe" in a more common sense of the cosmos at large beyond our restricted physical and mental being, I have generally left it in lower case without any strike-through.

Another key term of Heideggerian thought relating to "Being" is that of the "ontological difference", which refers to the inescapable difference between "Being" (*Sein*) and "beings" (*Seiendes*) despite our tendencies to constantly construe "Being" along the lines of "beings" or "things", when in fact "Being" is precisely that which eludes all such attempts to capture and enframe it. I have found this simple principle an useful hermeneutical tool for comprehending the essential thrust of Longchenpa's treatment of the "seven views of the Ground" in the first chapter, which generally revolve around our inexorable attempts to reduce the Ground to our thing-based linguistic and conceptual schemes.

**"Billionfold galaxy"** (*sTong gSum; Tri-sāhasra*): This refers to a cosmos containing one billion world systems like our own (generally described with a mystic geography as consisting of four continents), and a cosmological measurement arrived at in three steps (called the "three thousands", or "thousand cubed" cosmos): first a thousand world systems, then one million world systems (a thousand squared), and then one billion world systems (a thousand cubed). The third phase is symbolically termed "the great thousand" cosmos.

**"Blessings" or "inspiration"** (*Byin rLabs; Adhiṣṭhāna*): literally "waves (*rLabs*) of grace (*Byin*)", this can simply refer to the "blessings" received by being in the presence of a powerful spiritual force (a person, thing or place) as its holistic energy "irradiates you", as well as the way this energy "inspires" you.

**"Bliss"** (*bDe Ba; Sukha*): a very common term meaning "comfortable", "blissful", or "pleasant", in these texts it generally refers to intense sensations of bliss experienced in contemplation, which together with "radiance/clarity" (*gSal Ba*) and "non-conceptuality" (*Mi rTog Pa*), forms a standard threefold classification of internal psychic experiences (*Shes Nyams*) occurring in contemplation. "Great bliss" (*bDe Chen*) indicates the "super" intensity of this feeling transcendent of ordinary sensations, and often has a particular reference to the orgiastic sensations of bliss experienced in sex yoga, which are related to conventional genital orgasm, yet are actually more intense, as well as re-energizing instead of de-vitalizing. In the



Great Perfection tradition, such practices are not encouraged, and "bliss" or "great bliss" are not necessarily linked to these practices of sexuality. Finally, "bliss" often connotes the "optimal mode of functioning" of our energy: via contemplation our subtle body energetics (channels, winds, and nuclei) begin to operate optimally devoid of their usual distortions and blockages, and this optimal functioning is affectively experienced as "bliss" (the subjective experience of everything going smoothly, or "getting into a zone" where everything naturally comes together). Thus at times these optimal modes of energy flow can be referred to as "bliss".

**"Body" (*Lus*) and Spiritual Body (*sKu*; *Kāya*):** In general, *Lus* is the non-honorific term for "body" in Tibetan (here rendered as "body", or "ordinary physical existence), while *sKu* (Sanskrit *Kāya*) is the honorific or polite term (here rendered as "Spiritual Body" or "Enlightened Body", and less frequently as "gestalt" or "spiritual gestalt"), a distinction deriving from colloquial Tibetan (*Lus* also has an etymological sense of "left behind" or "remaining", since at death the physical body is left behind while consciousness departs from that existence). Philosophically *Lus* indicates the impure physical existence of ordinary living beings living under the conditions of neurosis, while *sKu* signifies the corresponding holistic pure dimension of an Enlightened One, or Buddha - his "enlightened body" (keeping in mind that the notion of "physicality" is usually bound up with the material elements, and hence would be inappropriate to describe the "bodily" existence of an Enlightened One, since/she has liberated all materiality into its pure light intensity). This usage of the non-honorific and honorific terms for "body" (to refer to non-optimal and optimal modes of physical existence respectively) was duplicated with reference to the other two dimensions of human existence - speech and the mind: "ordinary speech" (*Ngag*) is contrasted with "Enlightened Speech" (*gSungs*), and "ordinary mind" (*Sems*) or "psyche" (*Yid*) is contrasted with "Enlightened Mind or Spirit" (*Thugs*). I have generally utilized capital letters in English to indicate the Tibetan honorific forms, as that is the only form in English that is even partially analogous to the pervasive use of honorifics in Tibetan language. The distinction between these two sets of

terms is extremely strict in Tibetan, and thus it would be highly unusual to speak of an Awakened One in terms of *Lus*, *Ngag* or *Sems* (the distinction is especially marked in the Great Perfection tradition).

As the Buddhist tradition continued to explore the implications of this radically different type of existence referred to as a "Buddha" (which transcends dualistic splits between the "body" and "mind", as well as liberating "physicality" into pure light), an existence which rather than being extinguished like a candle continues to be dynamically present to the "end" of time, it began to develop varying classifications to explain the nature of enlightened existence both in terms of its realization and its ongoing activity. Thus the tradition began to elaborate on the distinction between the Buddha and ordinary unenlightened living beings (with "Buddha" understood on the paradigm of the historical founder of Buddhism, but also as a state attainable by other spiritually advanced followers as well), and that distinction's philosophical and soteriological implications, just as Christianity has struggled for centuries in its understanding of the relation of "Christ" to the Godhead, and "Christ" to other living being. In understanding the nature of the "Buddha" both to articulate how he is different from our ordinary neurotic ways of existence as well as explain the way in which his enlightenment naturally evolves into dynamic activity, various classifications were developed to analyze his different modes of existence in terms of realization as well as manifestation. These modes were termed his different types of "Spiritual Bodies" (*sKu*), and thus the term "Body" (*sKu*) came to refer to "modes or gestalts of existence" embracing all three dimensions of life: mental, verbal and physical. The principal classification is into a dyad that breaks down into a triad, the dyad being the Buddha's Reality Body (*Chos sKu*; *Dharma-kāya*) and his Form Body (*gZugs sKu*; *Rūpa-kāya*). This dyad obviously corresponds to an initial analyses of the Buddha's existence into the imperceptible depth of his realization (the "Reality Body"), and the manifest aspects of his continued verbal and physical existence perceptible to others (the "Form Body"). The "Form Body" was then further analyzed into two separate divisions, the Enjoyment Body

(*Longs sKu; Sambhoga-kāya*) and the Emanational Body (*sPrul sKu; Nirmāṇa-kāya*): the Enjoyment Body refers to the psychic bliss, and splendid nature of his speech and body enjoyed by a Buddha (and capable of interaction with spiritually refined individuals in visionary experiences as mandalic forms of pure luminosity), as well as the basis of the proliferation of the Emanated Bodies), while the Emanational Body indicates his capacity to soteriologically interact with, and respond to, all living beings via his ongoing emanation of diverse physical forms appropriate to each situation (including "flesh and blood" incarnations right here in our own ordinary life-world). Thus this triad of "Spiritual Bodies" was initially developed as an analysis of a fully enlightened individual (the "fruit" of spiritual practice and yoga) into three modes of being: the ineffable empty state of his/her total realization, the luminous and amazing manifest dimensions unfolding from within that realization in terms of body, speech, and mind, and his/her infinite capacity for ongoing manifestation in a variety of modes to lead other living beings enmeshed in neurosis to an identical state of spiritual awakening.

This theory then underwent two further closely linked transformations in the development of so-called "Buddha-nature" literature and tantric thought/praxis, both of which are of vital importance in understanding the concept of "Spiritual Body" in the Great Perfection. Since the Buddha's (*Sangs rGyas*) "enlightenment" (*Byang Chub*) was understood as being his realization of the ultimate nature of all phenomena and thus of the Universe as such, such that he "tuned into" and "unfolded" (*rGyas*) that ultimate nature's full capacities divested (*Sangs*) of that which obscures it in ordinary beings, it is a natural extension of such thinking to begin to reflect on the possibility that the capacities inherent in the enlightened state are already present within the Universe itself, which the Awakened One then merely "tunes into" and "unfolds" rather than creating anew. This speculation on "primordial enlightenment" inevitably led to the notion of the primordial enlightenment of all living beings, since if enlightenment inheres within the very fabric of the Universe, it would naturally inhere in living beings whom

originate within that Universe as well. This was reflected by the notion of a "Buddha-nature" or "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" being present within all living beings, which was further elaborated as the implications of locating the dynamics of enlightenment within the ontological structure of existence itself began to unfold. With this shift of orientation, the terms initially restricted in usage to describing the enlightened state (such as "insight", "efficacious means", "Reality Body", and "enlightened mind") now expanded in reference to describe reality's own intrinsic dynamics, as well as the depth dynamics of all sentient beings own psycho-physical energy, which resulted in the new problem of the tension between this "primordial purity" or "inherent enlightenment", and the manifest impurity and ignorance pervading the world around us. This effort to understand how this enlightened energy could be inherent to the Universe itself yet somehow obscured within the infinite variety of sentient beings laboring under the premises of dualism led to the transformation of Tantric thought, where a sophisticated multi-dimensional symbolism developed that located the entire drama of enlightenment and alienation within the imaginal structure of our own body, with an initial emphasis on the dynamics of our sexual energy: the "semen" (*Thig Le; Bindu*) was identified as the "enlightened mind" (*Byang Chub Sems; Bodhi-citta*), the principal right and left inner channels as its "insight" (*Shes Rab; Prajñā*) and "efficacious means" (*Thabs; Upāya*), and in general the mandalic visions both perceived and emanated by the enlightened Buddha are specified as already present within our own body.

The Great Perfection tradition is a sophisticated rethinking of these developments, and as such, identifies the Buddha's three "Spiritual Bodies" or "holistic modes of being" as the triune dynamics of the Universe itself ("the Ground"): the Reality Body is its empty essence, the Enjoyment Body is its radiant nature, and the Emanational Body is its all-pervasive compassionate resonance (see Chapter One). The Ground-presencing as the "early history" of the Universe is thus explained purely in terms of technical terminology applying to the enlightened state and its capacities: compassion, rainbow-colored lights, Spiritual Bodies,

primordial gnoses, non-duality, and freedom from limitations. This triune energetics is also present within the core of all living beings at their heart as the ultimate pure source-potential of their psycho-physical vitality, though due to their dimmed awareness it becomes self-interpreted and self-distorted into the derivative forms of ordinary body, speech, and mind that retroactively obscure its own innate vibrantly intelligent empty radiance. The Spiritual Bodies not only inhere within ordinary living beings in terms of the triune character of pristine awareness located at the heart-palace, they also are present as gestalts of radiating energy imagistically described as the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, which are in particular concentrated within the heart and brain. Though in many ways the term *sKu* has become radically transformed from its "initial" significance merely as the "body" of the Buddha as it now applies to our psycho-physical energetics as well as the ultimate dynamics of the Universe itself, it is undeniable that these latter meanings are directly connected to the former root significance, which they constantly play off to set up a powerful semantic web of interconnections that is vital to the overall thought of a given text. For example, the experienced "content" of the Ground-presencing and Direct Transcendence visions is primarily described in terms of vivid rainbow-colored and intensely symbolic visions of mandalas of deities, which can be classified into the Reality Body (the naked deep blue of the Totally Positive One in union with his consort), the Enjoyment Bodies (the fivefold five-hued mandalas of the five Buddhas (see below)), and the Emanational Bodies (the six "Able Ones", i.e. the six forms the Awakened One emanates to guide the six types of living beings in accordance with their individual capacities and perspectives). Just as significantly, the Great Perfection tradition chose to image the self-contained pure potential of the Ground devoid of any exteriorization as "the Youthful Body within a Vase" (*gZhon Nu Bum sKu*), an image evidently based upon a statue, doll or some mythical person enclosed within a vase, such that despite being fully present it is invisible from the outside. This root meaning of *sKu* as body is constantly being played off, inverted, transformed, and returned to by Longchenpa in an

intricate web of meanings that ultimately force us to rethink our own "body", and the corporeal presuppositions that we take for granted. Once we translate the term *sKu* as "primordial contact", "dimension", "communication" (Lipman's *Primordial Experience*), it becomes extraordinarily difficult for the ordinary reader to understand the specific line of thought (as well as the overall field of interconnections set up) based on its root meaning of "Body", despite at times rendering particular passages clear and/or creating a more fluent discourse on the whole (the simplicity of Guenther's "gestalt" or Lipman's "dimension" is particularly attractive). However we choose to translate *sKu*, it is essential that we keep in mind the centrality of its etymological roots, as well as the basic simplicity of a text such as Longchenpa's TDD, which in one way tells a very straightforward story seamlessly interweaving contemplation and philosophy by its reliance upon the root meanings of terms, which is then transforms, expands, distorts, and liberates, yet nevertheless always returns to. It is also essential to realize that the concept of "Spiritual Body" in the Great Perfection is decidedly an ontological concept used to evoke the primordial nature of the Universe itself, as well as its early history in exteriorization, in clear contrast to interpretation that describe the Spiritual Bodies as being created anew in enlightenment, and as such, only vaguely present in "potential" within living beings per se.

In addition to the standard set of three Spiritual Bodies, Longchenpa often refers to a set of five (*sKu lNga*), which he usually explains in two ways. The first less frequent fivefold classification of the Spiritual Bodies is merely an expansion of the standard three, to which he adds "the Spiritual Body of Manifest Enlightenment" (*mNgon Par Byang Chub Pa'i sKu*) and "the Spiritual Body of Unchanging Adamantine Reality" (*Mi 'Gyur rDo rJe sKu*) and . In GGC 260,4ff, Longchenpa defines these five in the following manner: (i) the Reality Body is divested of all the limiting extremes of discursive elaboration; (ii) the Enjoyment Body functions as a treasure wherein all the dynamic qualities (of the Ground/enlightenment) are spontaneously present; (iii) the Emanational Body teaches each living being in forms and

modes according to their individual capacities and needs; (iv) the Spiritual Body of Manifest Enlightenment is the expansive awakening of all phenomena into the singularity of their perfectly complete sameness (i.e. within the range of awareness); and (v) the Spiritual Body of Unchanging Adamantine Reality is the nature of the seamless union of "Spiritual Body" and "primordial gnosis". In KYT2 471,3 defines this quintet thus: "...(i) The Reality Body is divesture from discursive elaboration; (ii) the Enjoyment Body is his/her radiance in terms of the perfect characteristics and exemplary forms (of an enlightened being); (iii) the Emanational Body appears in varied forms; (iv) the Spiritual Body of Unchanging Adamantine Reality is those (Spiritual Bodies') reality, i.e. the Essence Body (*Ngo Bo Nyid Kyi sKu*) endowed with the two purities - the stainless purity of his/her primeval nature, and the purification of the adventitious stains via his/her self-recognition (in enlightenment); and (v) the Spiritual Body of Manifest Enlightenment is his/her his/her non-referential compassion (i.e. the Buddha's natural compassion that spontaneously emerges without requiring a particular object of pity) performing enlightened activities (for the sake of all living beings) until cyclic existence is emptied out via . Finally, TCD2 526,7ff mentions this quintet, and defines the Spiritual Body of Manifest Enlightenment as "attaining peace with the ultimate actualization of overcoming (what must be overcome) and realizing (what must be realized)", and the Spiritual Body of Unchanging Adamantine Reality as "neither shifting nor wavering from the originally pure expanse".

More frequently in these Great Perfection texts, the five Spiritual Bodies (*sKu lNga*) refers to the five Buddhas forming the core of the mandala of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities as the respective "heads" of the five spiritual affinities (*Rigs lNga*), and are understood as the "Enjoyment Body" (*Longs sKu*) dimension unfolding from the Reality Body (understood as the Totally Positive One in union with his consort). Within that mandala, these five Buddhas form the center of both the peaceful and wrathful sections (in their corresponding peaceful and wrathful forms), and are each in sexual union with the corresponding consort

while surrounded by a retinue of deities belonging to its "spiritual affinity" or "spiritual family" (*Rigs*). These mandalas are of crucial importance to the Great Perfection tradition not only because the Ground-presencing and post-death visions are usually described in terms of a type of panoramic vision of their luminous unfolding across the horizon (which gradually descends into the impure worlds of sentient beings), but also because their visionary presence in the sky is the ultimate culmination of the spontaneous visions inspired by Direct Transcendence contemplation, while their dissolution marks the attainment of Buddhahood. See TDD 223,4ff for a general description of these five Buddhas, and TDD 225,3ff for a description of the corresponding five spiritual affinities: the Illuminator (*rNam Par sNang mDzad*) who incarnates the realized affinity; the Unshakable One (*Mi bsKyod Pa*) who incarnates the adamantine affinity; Precious Matrix (*Rin Chen 'Byung lDan*) who incarnates the precious affinity; Immeasurable Light (*'Od dPag Med*) or Limitless Illumination (*sNang Ba mTha' Yas*) who incarnates the lotus affinity; and the Efficacious One (*Don Yod Grub*) who incarnates the action affinity. This quintet is essentially symbolic rather than referring to independently existent beings, and signify aspects of gnostic awareness, i.e. the inherent intelligence of the Universe. Their iconographically depicted form provides a direct means by which we can contact these energies via visual, sonic, and mental contemplative techniques, and hence they are often discussed as real Buddhas to whom you pray, whose forms you visualize, and to whose pure lands you aspire towards. However, Longchenpa's emphasis throughout is on their inner esoteric significance as facets of the gnostic awareness dwelling within our hearts, and the overall symbolic field of symbolism which they embody via the following systems of correspondences (drawn from various passages throughout Longchenpa's corpus).

**Order:** Buddha, (i) consort, (ii) color/light, (iii) spiritual affinity or "family", (iv) "primordial gnosis", (v) wrathful form and (vi) wrathful consort, the fivefold classification of an Enlightened One's attributes (vii) symbolic hand gesture, (viii) symbolic implement held,



(ix) throne, (x) direction, (xi) pure land location, (xii) elemental energy, (xiii) sensory faculty, (xiv) psycho-physical component, (xv) emotional distortion.

**1. The Illuminator** (*Vairocana; rNam Par sNang mDzad*): Space's Expanse Mistress (*Ākāśadhātviśvari; Nam mKha' dByings Kyi dBang Phyug Ma*), blue, the Realized family, "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis, Buddha-Heruka and Buddha-Krodheśvari, Enlightened Mind, the supreme enlightenment gesture, holding a wheel, lion throne, center, the Highest pure land (*Akaniṣṭha, 'Og Min*), space energy, the tactile sensory faculty, form component, ignorance.

**2) The Unshakable** (*Akṣobhya; Mi bsKyod Pa*): Adamantine Māmaki (*Vajramāmakī, rDo rJe Māmaki*), white, the Adamantine family, mirror-like primordial gnosis, Vajra-Heruka and Vajra-Krodheśvari, Enlightened Body, the earth-suppressing gesture, holding a vajra, elephant throne, east, the Manifest Joy pure land (*Abhirati; mNgon dGa'*), water energy, the visual sensory faculty, consciousness component, hatred.

**3) The Precious Matrix** (*Ratnasambhava; Rin Chen 'Byung lDan*): Buddha Vision Lady (*Buddhalocanā; Sangs rGyas sPyan Ma*), yellow, the Precious family, sameness primordial gnosis, Ratna-Heruka and Ratna-Krodheśvari, Enlightened Qualities, the granting of refuge gesture, holding a jewel, supreme horse throne, south, the Glorious pure land (*Śrīmat; dPal lDan*), earth energy, the olfactory sensory faculty, sensation component, pride.

**4) Immeasurable Light or Limitless Illumination** (*Amitābha; 'Od dPag Med or Nang Ba mTha' Yas*): White Cloaked Lady (*Pañḍaravāsini; Gos dKar Mo*), red, the Lotus family, discerning primordial gnosis, Padma-Heruka and Padma-Krodheśvari, Enlightened Speech, the meditative equipoise gesture, holding a lotus, peacock throne, west, the Stacked Lotus pure land (*Padmakūṭa; Pad Ma brTsegs Pa*), fire energy, the auditory sensory faculty, the discernment component, desire.

**5) The Efficacious One** (*Amoghasiddhi; Don Yod Grub Pa*): Commitment Savioress (*Samayatārā; Dam Tshig sGrol Ma*), green, the Action Family, efficacious primordial gnosis,

Karma-Heruka and Karma-Krodheśvari, Enlightened Activity, the snapping fingers hand gesture, holding a double diamond scepter, Nam mKha' lDing/Shang Shang bird throne, north, the Thoroughly Accomplished Action pure land (*Karmaprasiddhi; Las Rab Grub Pa*), wind energy, the gustatory sense faculty, the "habitual conditioning forces" component, jealousy.

**"Body in general", "body's general structures", or "general features of the body"** (*Lus sPyi, sPyi*): see my annotations to TDD 230,1. Literally this term refers to "the body in general", i.e. "throughout the body".

**"Body's vibrant energies"** (*Dwangs Ma; \*Prasāda, Prasanna*): see "vibrant energies".

**"Brahma"** (*Tshangs Pa; Brahman*): one of principal deities in the Hindu pantheon, Brahma is renowned as the creator of the cosmos; he also plays an intentionally minor role in Buddhist cosmology as the ruling deity in one of the form realm "heavens", and is said to have delusions of grandeur that result in him perceiving himself as a "creator". He is also known for his melodious speech.

**"Brahma's aperture"** (*Tshangs Bug*): see my annotation to TDD 161,1 for a detailed explanation of this term, which refers to the top of the head where hair swirls out. Its special significance in Great Perfection literature is that it is the location of the upper tip of the "naturally free empty channel" (*Rang Grol sTong Pa'i rTsa*), the luminous channels (*'Od rTsa*) with the special function of acting as the conduit for the shining forth of the linked chains of awareness' radiation.

**"Brahmin"** (*Tshangs Pa*): this refers to the high priestly caste in India, and contrasts to the lower social castes and/or "untouchables".

**"Breakthrough"** (*Khregs Chod*; CBD 115,2 has the alternate form *Khregs gCod*) **and** **"Direct Transcendence"** (*Thod rGal; \*Vyutkrānta(ka), Vyutkartaka, Avaskanda(ka) or Viṣkandaka*): see my discussion of the "eighth adamantine topic" in the introduction for a brief outline of these two contemplative systems (which represent the quintessence of Great

Perfection meditation), along with a discussion of the "four visions" involved in Direct Transcendence contemplation.

The term "Breakthrough" (*Khregs Chod*) appears to be a neologism that doesn't occur in other contexts, and appears to not correspond to any Sanskrit term (unlike so many neologisms of literary Tibetan). It may that the the term was a relatively late neologism applied to a system of thought and contemplation that was discernible much earlier, though it should be noted that the term does occur in *The Seventeen Tantras* (of interest is TDCM's definition of it as a term meaning *Lhag mThong* in archaic translations of the Nyingma sect). I have translated it as "Breakthrough" to connote its sense of unprecedented freedom, unimpeded fluidity, and effortlessness, such as we talk of a book or a new product as a real "breakthrough", or after struggling on something for long time, we finally get a real breakthrough where our exertion dissolves and everything falls into place effortlessly. However, while *Chod* seems to mean "cut off" or "cut through", the actual etymology and meaning of *Khregs* is unclear. Many scholars have apparently understood *Khregs* as an old spelling for *mKhregs Pa*, which generally means "hard", "solid", "stubborn" or "obstinate", and TDCM supports this with its definition of *Khregs Pa* as an old spelling for *mKhregs Pa*. Thus Dorje and Kapstein have rendered *Khregs Chod* as "cutting through resistance" in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*; Karmay renders it as "cutting off rigidity", i.e. "the wearing down of the bodily elements" in *The Great Perfection* (213); Namkhai Norbu renders as "cutting loose one's tension" in *Dzogchen* (54); and Matieu Ricard has rendered as "cutting through the solidity of clinging" in his translation of Dilgo Khyentse's *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* (107); more ambiguously, Tulku Thondup renders it as "the Cutting Through" in *Buddha Mind* (52), and Guenther as "barrier-free" in *From Reductionism to Creativity* (192). In this interpretation, we could say this contemplation involves "breaking through" the apparent solidity of appearances to the expansive openness they exist within, giving one a feeling of utter emptiness, a free-for-all devoid of anchors, as if you breakthrough to rescue a loved one, completely intent on the

rescue, yet to your utter surprise the wall merely concealed an abyss, and you are falling through space without footholds or reference. In his *The Crystal and the Way of Light*, Norbu explains the term in the following manner (101): "...Once one has arrived at contemplation through any method, one has to continue in it, and working to bring this continuation into every action and situation is what is called *Khregs Chod*, which literally means "cut loose", in the sense that one relaxes completely in the same way that a bundle of sticks that has been tightly bound together, once the string binding it has been cut, just falls loosely into a more relaxed sort of pattern..." In his *Self-Liberation*, Reynolds goes one step further to claim that *Khregs* literally means "bundle", such as in a bundle of twigs and sticks a woodsman might cut loose after carrying it home from the forest. However, I have been unaware of any spelling of *Khregs* which would yield this sense, though he may be basing himself on an explanation of some homonym derived from colloquial dialects of Eastern Tibet that Norbu provided (or a less likely literary form such as *Khres Po*, which does mean "bundle").

However, Khanpo Jikphun in conversation generally analyzed the term as *Khregs Gir Chod*, saying it meant to directly (*Khregs Gir* as *Thad Kar*) cut off the flickering movements of the ordinary mind's neurotic conceptuality. This interpretation of *Khregs* as perhaps an alternate spelling of *Khrigs* (i.e. "completely" or "directly") rather than an old spelling for *mKhregs* ("solidity", "rigidity") is also supported by two passages, one in Longchenpa's ZMYT, and one in the twentieth century Khanpo Nag dBang's corpus (the latter was first pointed out to me by Dr. Guenther). ZMYT1 214,4ff apparently etymologizes *Khregs Chod* as *Ka Dag Tu Khrigs Kyis bCad Pa* ("completely cut through to original purity"?) in its concluding remarks in a discussion of Breakthrough contemplation: "...De lTar Na (i) Rang Rig Chos sKur Ngo sPrad, (ii) Ngang gDangs dGongs Par Thag bCad, (iii) Shar Grol Ka Dag Tu gDeng bCa' Ba gSum Gyis (i.e. via these three points of Garab Dorji) Gang Shar lTos Med Kyi Shes Pa gNyen Po'i bLo Dang Bral Ba gZhi Ye Yin Ka Dag Tu Khrigs Kyis bCad Pa'i Ngo sPrad De..." In his *Three Works on the Structure of rDzogs-chen (Atiyoga) Practice*

(New Delhi 1972, mKhan Po Ngag dBang dPal bZang on p.5 also etymologizes *Khregs Chod* as *Khriḡs Kyis gCod Par*, and appears to etymologize *Khriḡs Kyis* as "directly" (*Thad Kar*) or "into little bits" (*Dum Bu Dum Bur*): in this practice, we directly cut through dualistic conceptuality, or cut it into little bits. Goldstein in TEDM gives *Khriḡs Se* as "totally, completely, fully", while TDCM gives *Khriḡs Te* and *Khregs Se* as "from the root", "completely", "totally", with the examples of finishing all work "completely"; and waking "completely" up from sleep. This indicates that the above two etymologies are in the sense of "completely cut through to the Ground" or "completely eradicate conceptuality" without any half-measures, just as in the morning we must "completely wake up" if some important task awaits us.

Unlike *Khregs Chod*, *Thod rGal* is a term occurring in other contexts as well as translating several standard Sanskrit terms. In his *Buddha-nature*, Ruegg points out that the Sanskrit words translated elsewhere by *Thod rGal* are *Avaskanda(ka)* and *Viṣkanda(ka)*, meaning jumping over, and *Vyutkrānt(ka)*, used in the sense of striding over; *ava-skand* can also mean "to assault, storm", which pertains to the *Avaskanda(ka)* technique designating an accelerated and very rapid process. The basic etymology of *Thod rGal* is "crossing over (*rGal*) the crest (*Thod*)" (see Karmay's *The Great Perfection* 193), and in other contexts generally means "leaping over" intermediate stages of meditation as the practitioner passes directly from one stage to another, such that intervening stages are bypassed rather than sequentially progressed through one by one in the usual manner (this terminology in particular is applied in discussing the common exoteric teaching on the four "meditative states" (*bSam gTan*)). Another interesting use of term occurs in Mahāmudrā literature, which can be found in Lhalungpa's translation (*Mahāmudrā* 350): "...meditators are divided into three groups - great, average, and ordinary - according to their present spiritual potentials, which are considered to be the result of achievements in their past lives. A "great person" means a meditator who has a strong potential for instantaneous realization (*Cig Car Ba*). An "average person" means a meditator

who has the potential for an evanescent realization (*Thod rGal Ba*), and an "ordinary person" means a meditator who has the potential for a gradual realization (*Rim Gyis Pa*)..." In our current context, the term indicates that we directly access the gnostic nucleus within us, such that its luminosity spontaneously unfolds in the space surrounding us in a series of visions which bypass ordinary meditation relying on our obscured body and mind. I have thus chosen to translate *Thod rGal* as "Direct Transcendence", since by "directly" accessing our inner nucleus of enlightened energy, we "go beyond" the nature that we know, and are able to directly perceive the visions of transcendent reality (*Nirvana*) prior to enlightenment. In the same text of Khanpo Ngag dBang cited above, on 6,1 he etymologizes *Thod rGal* as meaning "instantaneous" (*gCig Car*), since this contemplation causes the three Spiritual Bodies to be instantaneously present as "presences within the spiritual path" (*Lam sNang*); in this context he identifies the first two visions as the Emanational Body, the third vision as the Enjoyment Body, and the fourth vision as the Reality Body.

As for the relation between "Breakthrough" and "Direct Transcendence", obviously both stress "direct" immediate access to enlightened energy, though the former concentrates on its emptiness, and the latter on its luminosity. Ruegg (*Buddha-nature* 164) discusses these two terms in the context of "various forms of rapid way and immediate access to Awakening", and says that *Thod rGal* has "often been regarded as an essentially gradual, even though accelerated, process as opposed to *Khregs Chod*. But in some cases *Thod rGal* too can be extremely rapid and for all intents and purposes sudden". This description is somewhat misleading, so it may be helpful to examine the matter further. On TCD1 122,7ff, Longchenpa does characterize Breakthrough contemplation as involving "effortless primordial freedom" (*Bad Med Ye Grol*) and thus for those with "the capacities of the instantaneous one" (*dBang Po Cig Car Ba rNams*); on the other hand, he characterizes Direct Transcendence contemplation as "gradual and involving effort" (*Bad bCas Rim Pa*), and thus for those with "the capacities of the gradualist" (*dBang Po Rim Gyis Pa rNams*). This characterization derives from the manner

in which each contemplation proceeds: Breakthrough contemplation directly accesses pure empty awareness within without a complicated series of intermediate steps or phases, or the application of any external "key points" of meditation; Direct Transcendence contemplation, on the other hand, involves applying a number of physical and other extrinsic key points, as well as a gradually unfolding series of light visions that sequentially progress to their culmination in enlightenment. Thus Breakthrough is "instantaneous" since it merely involves this immediate direct recognition, while Direct Transcendence is "gradual" since it usually entails a series of distinct phases that only unfold sequentially. Ruegg is correct to point out that in extremely rare cases it is possible that the Direct Transcendence visions will directly pass from their inception to their culmination in an almost instantaneous manner, a situation which applies for someone whose spiritual training in previous life times has made him/her perfectly prepared for this moment (I believe this possibility is noted by Longchenpa in TCD2, though I have no page reference at present). However, these characterizations are somewhat misleading since usually in pragmatic terms it is held that via Breakthrough contemplation alone, it will take the typical meditator an extremely lengthy time in order to become enlightened, while by practicing Direct Transcendence contemplation in conjunction with Breakthrough, one's progress towards enlightenment will be greatly accelerated. Finally, Namkhai Norbu in his various transcripts (for example, the one referred to as the "Yellow Book I", 84) has often spoken of the difference between *Khregs Chod* and *Thod rGal* as terms both implying "direct": *Khregs Chod* means there is nothing to stop you, no impediments or obstacles in your way, while *Thod rGal* is more like something like telepathy or "beaming" in Star Trek, such that passage between two points is instantaneous without any sensation of the transition.

**"Briguta"** (*Briguta*): this is obviously a transliteration of an Indic word, but as yet remains of uncertain origin and etymology. It refers to the "eyes" as the one of the four main "palaces" where awareness resides within our body (see TDD 230,4).

**"Buddha", "Awakened One", "Enlightened One", "expansive awakening of Buddhahood" or "expansive awakening"** (*Sangs rGyas; Buddha*): generally *Sangs rGyas* is the translation of the Sanskrit term "Buddha", referring to the historical Buddha who founded Buddhism some 2500 years ago in India, as well as any other living being who becomes definitely enlightened and spiritually liberated in the same manner. As a noun, I have often translated it as "Awakened One" or "Enlightened One", which must be understood in strict contrast to a "sentient being" (*Sems Can*), since the latter is by definition characterized by neurotic psychic structures ("awakened" corresponds to the pure intensity of awareness that burns within the Buddha, while sentient beings "slumber" in the ignorance of dimmed or reduced states of awareness). The term *Sangs rGyas* etymologically refers to how in this enlightenment experience the Buddha "clears away" (*Sangs*) the sleep of ignorance, and thus "unfolds" or "expands" (*rGyas*) the enlightened qualities (*Yon Tan*) of pristine awareness previously obscured by the clouds of ignorance enveloping it: thus literally it means "expansive awakening", or "enlightened wakefulness", i.e. s/he "who has purified and expanded", or is "awakened and full of vitality". This etymological sense of "clearing away" (stains, the sleep of ignorance, etc.) and "expanding"/"flourishing" (referring to the dynamic qualities of our inner gnostic energy) dies directly into the other dyads characterizing Great Perfection thought: the Ground's original purity (*Ka Dag*) and spontaneous presence (*Lhun Grub*); "inner calm" (*Zhi gNas*) and "incisive vision" (*Lhag mThong*); "Breakthrough" (*Khregs Chod*) and "Direct Transcendence" (*Thod rGal*); "purified" (*Byang*) and "perfected" (*Chub*; *Byang Chub* is the Tibetan rendering of *Bodhi*, or "enlightenment"). Thus the One and Only tends to express itself in these dyads tied to the very rhythms of life we experience all around us every moment: wakefulness and sleep, life and death, exhalation and inhalation, destruction and creation, reception and release, ingestion and elimination; this dyadic pattern can be expanded into triads as well, or into quintets (four and a centering one).



TCD2 42,1 interprets *Sangs* as the night's dissipation, and *rGyas* as the sun rising, i.e. dispelling the ordinary mind and dimmed awareness, such that the solar force of awareness's primordial gnosis can expand outwards. In this way enlightenment involves a return to the light (*rGyas*), though in an interesting way it also involves a return to the "darkness" of pure potential since it returns to the center of the spiral where "primordial gnosis coils up within the expanse" (*Ye Shes dByings Su 'Khyil*), and everything becomes un-manifest. In addition, just as in enlightenment we "wake up" (*Sangs*), and thus are brimming with vitality and energy (*rGyas*) to face the new day which dawns before us, *Sangs* also can be understood along the lines of cleansing physical and psychic toxicity which has overwhelmed us (i.e. the emotional distortions) as the necessary prelude to the possibility of rejuvenation, such that we can "unfold", or "expand" (*rGyas*) our own innate richness: *Sangs* is exhalation, elimination, contraction, destruction, purification, and original purity, while *rGyas* is inhalation, ingestion, creation, rejuvenation/regeneration, and spontaneous presence.

**"Buddha-nature"** (*Sangs rGyas Kyi Rang bZhin*): see "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy".

**"Butter lamp"** (*Mar Me*): prior to electricity, butter served as common source of light by burning a wick in liquid butter. This was especially common in the monasteries where hundreds of small butter lamps were kept lit throughout the day, and also played an important ritual role as the symbol of "offering light".

**"Candra"** (*Tsandra; Candra*): see "Surya, Candra and Alope".

**"Catalytic"** (*rGyu'i*): this term is prefaced to "dimmed awareness" (*Ma Rig Pa*) and "conventional nuclei" (*Kun rDzob Kyi Thig Le*) to indicate they act as causal impetus (*rGyu*). In the case of the former, it is the "catalyst" of straying into cyclic existence; in the case of the latter, it is the "catalyst" or "triggering mechanism" behind our physiological processes.

**"Central channel"** (*dBu Ma*): see "channels, inner winds, and seminal nuclei".

**"Channel"** (*rTsa; Nāḍī*): see "channels, inner winds, and seminal nuclei".

**"Channels"** (*rTsa; Nādi*), **"inner winds"** (*rLung; Vāyu*), and **"seminal nuclei"** (*Thig Le; Bindu*): also see "five winds". These are the three elements whose indivisible union constitutes the so-called "adamantine body" (*rDo rJe'i Lus*) or "subtle body" of human existence, the overall analysis of which I refer to as "tantric physiology". See the detailed discussion in TDD 208,2-212,4 in Chapter Two, and the entirety of Chapter Five (including my commentary on those passage). In STCP2 11a 5 (which David Higgins first pointed out to me), Longchenpa explains the channels as being like irrigation canals, the seminal nuclei as being like the water within those canals, and the winds being the "force" which impel those nuclei down the channels. The main innovation of Great Perfection theory lies in the so-called "luminous channels" (*'Od rTsa*), a network of slender channels branching out from the heart that consist exclusively of pure gnostic light-energy without the slightest dilution, impurity, or distortion, as well as the concept of two "super-nuclei" ("the Eye of the Lamps", and "the Eye of the Elements").

The term "seminal nuclei" refers to a wide range of high-energy dimensions both material and non-material, and in its lower order aspects particularly connotes the regenerative fluids, i.e. the father's sperm and the mother's egg. At times they are referred to as "vibrancy" or "vibrant quintessence" (*Dwangs Ma*), "element" (*Khams*), or "enlightened mind" (*Byang Chub Sems*): "vibrant quintessence" connotes their extremely subtle and lucent nature as dynamic high-energy potential; "seminal nuclei" emphasizes their character as creatively organizing generatrixes, and in particular their role in sexuality as the source of "bliss", optimal processes, and the tremendous creativity of conception; "element" indicates how they are the principal "element" or "source" in our body's energetic processes"; and "enlightened mind" emphasizes their crucial role in contemplation, as well as their identity as the high-energy expression of the enlightened nucleus within the heart via which the gnostic intelligence of the Universe continues to in-form our body/mind, and which will radiate from within when the dark clouds of alienation have been dispersed.

**"Channel-petal"** (*rTsa 'Dab*) has same denotation as "channels", but connotes that all channels are ultimately branches, petals or subsidiaries of the three main channels at the "wheels", themselves imaged as multi-petalled lotuses formed by these channels' networks. While some translations have rendered this as "center" or "networks of channels", LYT1 465,1 clearly indicates the term itself can be singular ("one channel"), though it is true that given the looseness of Tibetan language with regard to indicating the plural, the term by itself certainly can refer to the plural rather than singular, and in fact often does (such as LYT1 460,2ff, ZMYT2 110,6 and GTD 377,2 where Longchenpa uses the term to refer to the four wheels as "petals" branching off from the main three channels, with each petal then further branching into a vast network of channels). While there can be this connotation of a network of channels, it seems clear to me that in some passages the term can simply identify a "branch" off another channel, without intrinsically implying an entire network of channels, and certainly not a "center".

**"Channel-winds practices"** (*rTsa rLung*): this term refers to standard tantric practices that manipulate your internal energy via working on the subtle body with visualization, breathing, postures, and so on. In Longchenpa's corpus, these practices are generally considered "lower order" in comparison to Great Perfection contemplation, though there is a typical format in which he discusses a standard set of practices focused on the "winds" (*rLung sByor*), along with the practice of "sex yoga" that focuses on the seminal nuclei. ZMYT1 370,1ff is unusual in that Longchenpa also includes a separate section on practices focused on the "channels".

**"Citadel"** (*bTsan Sa*): literally "secure place", this term refers to attaining enlightenment by "seizing hold of the secure place" of reality itself (*bTsan Sa Zin*), i.e. the great internal radiance of the ultimate expanse, such that you are no longer susceptible to attack by the troops of cyclic existence, and will never again be reversed into the dualistic neurosis of sentient beings. (KGYT2 110,1). The term is closely linked to "seizing hold of your own-site" (*Rang Sa Zin*

*Pa*), which emphasizes "original purity" as your own "inherent" (*Rang*) site or "natural" place, i.e. your own true element just as the bird is free within the vast expanse of the sky: there is no more frenetic searching as you have arrived "home" (indicating the primordality of enlightenment), and can thus relax (*Ngal gSo*) in the comfort and security of your own natural dwelling place (see ZMYT2 397,6). The term "own-site" again indicates the mystery of "self" (*Rang*), since this "own-site" is also the site intrinsic to the primordial Ground, or Being itself: the Universe's own abiding reality is our true home and is perfectly secure since the "other" dissipates, in strict contrast to the neurotic illusions from which we spin worlds, and which we are in constant tension in relation to the "other", who alternately threatens and invites. *bTsan Sa* thus emphasizes the "security" of enlightenment and *Rang Sa* its "naturalness", while both are generally used in the context of becoming enlightened (obviously absence of "other" signified by *Rang Sa* is closely linked to the "security" of this state, the only true security we can ever have); further thought is needed as to whether any other possible distinction is present in Longchenpa's use of these two terms.

**"Clarity"** (*gSal*): see "radiance".

**"Climax"** (*Bras Bu; Phala*): see "fruit".

**"Cognitive capacity" or "psychic capacity"** (*Shes Pa*): this is a neutral term often used to signify the psychic energy that emerges within the Ground-presencing, i.e. its capacity for self-reflection.

**"Coming into the fore"** (*mNgon Du 'Gyur*): this term generally indicates a latent dimension goes into the ascendancy, such as when in enlightenment the "dynamic qualities" (*Yon Tan*) of awareness enfolded within our heart go into the ascendancy from their usual latency within the background.

**Commitments** (*Dam Tshig; Samaya*): in general these refer to "vows" or "guidelines" which are associated with initiatory empowerments, and which are vital in maintaining the integrity of your spiritual progress. In the Great Perfection tradition, there is the unique

description of "four great commitments" (*Dam Tshig Chen Po bZhi*), which are briefly discussed in the eighth chapter of TDD (308,3-309,2), and extensively discussed within Longchenpa's NLD. These four are something like "the rules of the Universe" since they refer to intrinsic facets of awareness from which nothing can transgress, though in our ego-logical delusions we lack any coherent self-consciousness of them: absence (*Med Pa*), uniformity (*Phyal Pa*), spontaneity (*Lhun Grub*), and solitariness (*gCig Pu*).

**"Common Ground"** (*sPyi gZhi*): see TDD 169,7. This term generally applies to the Ground as it evolves into the Ground-presencing, which is "common" in that it can function as the foundation for both freedom (i.e. the liberation of the Totally Positive One should it self-recognize itself) and straying (i.e. the bondage of sentient beings should it fail to self-recognize itself).

**"Compassion" or "Compassionate resonance"** (*Thugs rJe; Karūṇa*): see "essence, nature and compassionate expression", which together expresses the triune identity of the Ground described in Chapter One: its empty essence, radiant nature, and all-pervading compassionate resonance (*Thugs rJe*). While "essence" (*Ngo Bo*) and "nature" (*Rang bZhin*) are both quite common terms, the use of *Thugs rJe* here initially strikes one as odd, since the term is ordinarily used to refer to the Awakened One's "compassion". In fact all three terms are quite common in other texts, and Longchenpa himself uses them in these ordinary senses throughout his writings, such that not only do these ordinary references underlay these items' technical use in the Great Perfection system, the latter also reach back and transform the former, such that even these conventional usages are subtly altered as traces of the reformulated meanings seep in. *Thugs rJe* in this special technical use clearly signifies how this radiant empty energy is also inherently characterized by "intelligence" (*Rig Pa'i sNying Po*), such that rather than being mere static light energy, it is ceaselessly self-organizing as in-formed by this intelligence, and thus is "all-pervading". For this reason, the rendering of *Thugs rJe* as "energy" (as advocated by Namkhai Norbu's followers in various publications) would seem to

be quite inadequate, as such a translation only partly evokes this "self-organizing" dynamism, and completely lacks any connotation of the "intelligence" or "awareness" (*Rig Pa*) which the term so clearly signifies. For example, in the Ground-presencing it is usually said that *Thugs rJe*'s dynamism (*rTsal*) manifests as simple psychic awareness (*Shes Rig Tsam*) with the capacity to differentiate out objects (LYT1 295,6-296,1), i.e. the Ground's capacity to reflect on itself in this transition to exteriorization and actuality. It is essential to understand the poetic etymology at the heart of the term *Thugs rJe*, rather than merely dismissing *Thugs rJe*'s ordinary meaning of compassion as being just one facet of this special meaning of "energy" (such as "compassion" (*Thugs rJe*) is only one of the eight gateways to spontaneous presence that the Ground-presencing's dynamics are analyzed into): its ordinary meaning of "compassion" is absolutely central to this special use of *Thugs rJe*, and undoubtedly the original creators of this terminology very self-consciously chose to use the term *Thugs rJe*.

*Thugs rJe* is in other contexts understood as a honorific term referring to a Buddha' compassion, whereas ordinary sympathy, pity or compassion is referred to by the non-honorific form *sNyng rJe*. It is often said that *sNyng rJe* is the immense "compassion" cultivated by the Spiritual Heroes while progressing down the spiritual path towards enlightenment, whereas *Thugs rJe* is the enlightened "compassion" acting as the motivating force impelling the Awakened One to continue to manifest in our world in terms of the Enjoyment and Emanational Bodies for the sake of liberating all the long-suffering living beings therein. "Compassion" being that which drives the Buddha from his absorption in emptiness to manifestation, it is the "energy" behind his/her actions, and is an inherently active term. *Thugs* literally is the honorific form of "mind" (*Sems*) as well as of "heart" (*sNyng*), and is generally used as such to refer to the Buddha's "Enlightened Mind" which operates with optimal levels of energy in a non-distorted manner; *rJe* literally means "lord" or "chief". Thus *Thugs rJe* literally refers to "the lord of optimal mental states" or "the princely Mind/Heart", i.e. "compassion", which is particularly manifest in the Awakened One's Emanational Bodies that

take on concrete existence to most efficaciously lead us along the path of liberation. It should also be noted that *Thugs* means both "heart" and "mind", indicating that this "compassion" is inherently intelligent (and not mindless), and is present at the core or heart of the Awakened One. This compassion naturally manifests in action carried out within his/her thorough awareness of emptiness, and thus "compassion" (as the "active" aspect of the enlightened state) signifies the Awakened One's spontaneously responding to the needs of other living beings with various efficacious actions perfectly suited to each situation, resulting in proliferating manifestations of his/her Emanational Bodies which pervade the cosmos in ceaseless activity. Thus manifestation is compassion or "care", and compassion is inherently responsiveness: the creative act is an act of love. Additionally, "compassion" involves being "tuned into" other such that we "vibrate" in resonance with their plight, literally "to feel" ("passion") "with" ("com"), i.e. the enlightened state is "with passion": it possesses this natural uncontrived responsiveness to others rather than being flat, uninspired, unresponsive, like a candle blown out by the wind; compassion is the ability to empathize, when your own spirit "resonates" in tune with the other, transcending the distance between two lives.

Thus when the original creator of this terminology searched for terms to express their insight, they began with the standard terms "essence" (*Ngo Bo*) and "nature" (*Rang bZhin*): reality's quintessential essence is empty, yet its very nature is simultaneously radiant dynamism (*Rang bZhin* as literally "self-according" or "self-face", that its "own" essence expresses itself in this way). It was then necessary to find a third term to express how this empty luminosity is also intrinsically intelligent, and how that intelligence is naturally self-organizing without any need for the external hand of a godhead, adventitious accidents, or some other extrinsic force. They found this term in *Thugs rJe* (a term that in its ordinary meaning signifies intelligence, responsiveness, and action, this inner heart resonating within the enlightened state), and defined it as "the heart-nucleus of awareness" (*Rig Pa'i sNyung Po*) which is "all-pervading" (*Kun Khyab*) as the Universe dynamically expands, just as the Buddha's compassion naturally self-

organizes the enlightened energy into a vast array of particular emanations and enlightened activity permeating the cosmos. In addition, the term's etymology as "Lord (*rJe*) of the Enlightened Spirit (*Thugs*)" was capable of thorough reinterpretation, such that it can be understood as "the ruling principle within the Enlightened Mind", i.e. awareness itself with its vibrant self-organizing expression. Thus when correlated with the Buddha's Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind, "essence" corresponds to Enlightened Body, "nature" to Enlightened Speech, and "*Thugs rJe*" to Enlightened Mind. This can also be understood as a natural extension of understanding the Universe's ultimate dynamics in terms of the enlightened state (see my discussion of these trends under "body"), since the theory of essence, nature and *Thugs rJe* is in fact merely a reformulation of the standard analysis of enlightenment into the three Spiritual Bodies (*sKu gSum*), which are now understood ontologically as accounting for the primordial dimension of the Universe itself: its essence is empty (the Reality Body), its nature is radiant (the Enjoyment Body), and its *Thugs rJe* is all-pervading manifestation informed by intelligence (the Emanational Body). Since the "Emanational Body" is characterized as the essence of compassionate activity impelled by the Buddha's deep abiding intelligence as the natural dynamic of his/her awareness of emptiness, we are again led to the central term *Thugs rJe*, compassion which leads to action, compassionate expression which is in resonance with itself and everything else. Thus this responsiveness of the Universe that embraces all that exists, its inherent intelligence which is the natural manifestation of its essential empty radiance, was named *Thugs rJe*. It is this *Thugs rJe* which allows the Universe to reflect upon itself, this "resonating" with itself that also signifies its light being resonating rather than a static transparency, i.e. ceaselessly organizing and structuring itself; and thus we experience the Universe as "compassionate" rather than a dead, lifeless, alien interstellar nothingness, and in contemplation we experience it as "attuned to us", that it has a capacity to "feel", to "resonate" beyond itself in vibration or sympathy with us. It is for this reason I have chosen to translate



*Thugs rJe* as "compassionate resonance" to capture the unique flavor of this term, which connotes compassion, resonance, and responsiveness.

This triune identity also applies to the ultimate source/nature of our mind, referred to as "mind-as-such" (*Sems Nyid*): it is essentially empty and naturally radiant (or "clear"), which expressed itself as *Thugs rJe*, its unimpeded and unceasing (*Ma 'Gag Pa*) intelligence which enables us to have experience, and reflect upon experience; not only is the universe/mind empty and luminous, it is also alive with intelligence, whose vibrating resonance gives rise to the manifold of existence. In this sense the "lord of Mind" can be understood as the resonating responsiveness or capacity for self-reflection which enables the universe to go beyond emptiness and luminosity into the complex self-mirroring self-exploration from which worlds of cyclic existence and transcendence spin out in a dazzling succession. The emptiness is simultaneously light, an openness dynamic with light forms, while that itself is simultaneously alive with intelligence - at the heart of the Universe we find intelligence, and caring rather than the distant, "cold" interstellar spaces indifferent to human life; it is part of our own family and not other (*Rang sNang*), and as such we find there is "care", the compassion one has for one's own offspring (reality is our "mother", and our re-realizing it is evoked by a child leaping into its mother's lap, a moment permeated by compassion and warmth. Its translation as "resonance" connotes that this dimension is "vibrant" with energy shaping itself into various forms, yet remains capable of response and awareness (as opposed to sterile, inert forms characterized by solidity and lack of resonance), while "compassion" connotes that this dimension is experienced as caring, as something with which your own relationship is quite intimate; additionally, this "responsiveness" implies an Other not in the sense of the alienated Other, but rather in the sense that a profound dialogue is ongoing in the heart of reality. Although the "essence" of all that exists reveals nothing has any ultimate status in-and-of-itself, the "nature" reveals that a dynamic light energy continues to luminously manifest regardless,

and finally, "compassionate resonance" signifies that this luminosity is in continual dialogue with itself: even a dialogue within one's self is a dialogue none the less.

**"Components"** (*Phung Po; Skandha*): see "psycho-physical components".

**"Conceptual"** (*rTog Pa; Kalpanā; Kalpa*): see "neurotic".

**"Conceptual isolate"** (*IDog Pa; Vivartana*): this term is used to indicate that separate terms have a single "essence", but represent different analytical ways of focusing on, or describing, that essence. An example is the four aspects of the universal ground discussed on TDD 235. We "isolate" on different elements of a single phenomena or dimension, which can be analytically quite useful for our conceptual understanding, but has the inherent danger of substantializing each term rather than understanding them as fluid nuances of a single dimension. The term can also described two phenomena which are of the "same essence" in that one derives from the other as its source and primary reality, though in fact the two are strictly differentiated in terms of being source/derivative, and have quite different spheres of operations and modes of function (for example, an ocean and rivers).

**"Conch shell house"** (*Dung Khang*): see my commentary to 229,6ff.

**"Concluding supports" or "consolidations"** (*mTha' rTen*): see "follow-up supporting teachings".

**"Consciousness"** (*rNam Shes; Shes Pa; Vijñāna*): *rNam Shes* literally reads "aspect-know", with "aspect" generally signifying the various facets of objects which we can perceive (their "blueness", etc.); it often signifies something along the lines of "consciousness" such as when it said *rNam Shes* departs from the body at death, but in other contexts would perhaps more precisely rendered as "cognition", or even "perceptual process". In Great Perfection thought, the term *rNam Shes* only applies to the neurotic psychic activity of ordinary living beings, and is understood in contrast to the *Ye Shes* (literally "primordial knowing", and translated herein as "primordial gnosis") which exclusively characterizes the psychic activity of an Enlightened One (this is another way of expressing the distinction between "ordinary mind"

(*Sems*) and primordial gnosis (*Ye Shes*) as explained at length in TDD 237,7-248,6. In ordinary exoteric Buddhism, "consciousness" is identified as the fifth of the five psycho-physical components constituting human existence, and these "modes of consciousness" or "perceptual cognitive processes" are further classified into eight types: the five sensory modes (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile); the sixth "psychic" or "intellectual" mode (*Yid Shes; Mano-vijñāna*) which synthesizes that sensory data, conceptualizes it, and deals with abstract images/concepts; the seventh "emotionally distorted psychic" mode (*Nyon Yid; Klišṭa-manas*) which involves our web of emotional reactions, cathexis, and ego-logical tendencies; and the "universal ground consciousness" (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes; Ālayavijñāna*), which is the "unconscious" that constitutes a substratum that serves both as a type of psychic memory extending over many lifetimes, as well as ongoing source of all the other psychic modes' operations, which are like "streams" of psychic energy trickling out from it. In ZMYT2 247,3, Longchenpa characterizes the five sensory modes of consciousness as "cognizing (*Shes Pa*) aspects (*rNam Pa*) of objects", which are thus "cognitive energy" (*Shes Pa*) which develop resembling those (aspects), accounting for the term "perceptual consciousness" (*rNam Shes*, literally "aspect-cognize").

In the context of the Great Perfection, this "universal ground consciousness" is understood as deriving from the "brightness" (*Dangs*) of the luminous channels, and is viewed as "clouds" which obscure the heart's pristine awareness, which thus must be cleared away via contemplation in order to attain enlightenment. In addition, the Great Perfection tradition usually distinguishes between the terms "universal ground" (*Kun gZhi; Ālaya*) and the "universal ground consciousness" (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes; Ālayavijñāna*), a distinction discussed in detail in my commentary to Chapter Four. It should be noted that this distinction between the "universal ground" and the "universal ground consciousness" has its precedents in Indian Buddhist literature on the subject, such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* passage (cited on STCP1 85b 2) which relates the "universal ground" to "non-conceptuality uninvolved with

objects" (i.e. a total non-differentiation of any distinct objects), and the "universal ground consciousness" to "non-conceptuality involved with objects" (i.e. that which clearly sees presences, but doesn't conceptualize them); also see Sthiramati's commentary to the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra* cited on STCP1 84,5, where he characterizes the "universal ground" as the overall support or basis for the accumulation of karma (and thus resembling their "house"), while the "universal ground consciousness" is that which "opens up the space" for these karmic energies (which Longchenpa explains as "for the increase, amassing, decline, and so on of these karmic forces").

**"Consciousness-transfer"** (*rNam Shes 'Pho Ba*): after death, our essential consciousness or psychic energy transfers out of our previous physical existence, and enters the post-death intermediate state on its way to a new incarnation, or rebirth. This term also signifies a special meditative technique ("transference of consciousness") which is practiced at death, especially in case of sudden, unexpected death. It is generally a very simple visualization practice involving the creative imagination of your psychic energy as a luminous sphere, which you shoot out of the top of your head. In modern times, it is frequently practiced by ordinary Buddhists in seven day retreats, and is thought to create a tiny opening in the top of the head, which marks the successful completion of the practice. See Guenther's *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa* (72ff, 197ff) for further comments.

**"Consort"** (*Yum; Matr*): see "Father-Mother consort pairs".

**"Constituents"** (*Khams*): this can be used as a synonym for "seminal nuclei", as well as a general term for the constituents of the body.

**"Contaminating influences"** (*Zag bCas; Sāsrava*): a general term referring to the corrupting or polluting elements of our congealed corporeality and emotionally distorted psyche, all of which dissipate in the enlightenment-experience.

**"Contemplation" or "depth-contemplation"** (*Ting Nge 'Dzin; Samādhi*): *Ting Nge 'Dzin* is etymologized as "clearly (*Nge*) seizing hold (*Ting*) of the depths (*'Dzin*)", and in

exoteric sources often refers to meditative concentration on a given object, though in general it can also just signify a deep contemplative state. This term is used in a special threefold classification within Chapter Eight of TDD.

**"Contemplative equanimity"** (*mNyam gZhag; Samāhita*) **and** **"post-meditative awareness"** (*rJes Thob; Prṣṭalabdha*): *mNyam gZhag* is literally "rest evenly", "let go into sameness", "relax uniformly", or "balance"; *rJes Thob* is literally "subsequently attained", or "aftermath". In general, this refers to our mind being perfectly absorbed in a non-discursive directly experiential contemplation of emptiness (such as at the conclusion of a meditative session when an internal or external visualization is dissolved back into the pure vibrant emptiness from within which it was initially generated), and the following state when we "raise up" from the contemplative session such that sensation and conceptuality again go into the ascendancy. While the contemplative state itself is focused on "emptiness", it is important in our meditative awareness to maintain a sense of that realization even outside the formal structure of the meditative session, such that we attempt to perceive all phenomena as like magical illusions or dreams devoid of any real substantiality even as we re-engage the social reality of work, family, and so on. This dualism between formal meditation and "ordinary" activity, as well as between the experience of emptiness and of ordinary waking appearances, ultimately must be dissolved as we move towards the non-dual realization of the seamless unity between enlightenment and ordinary life, between emptiness and appearance.

**"Contemplative experience"** (*Nyams*): the internal sensations that we experience during contemplation are usually classified into the following triad: "bliss" (*bDe Ba*), "clarity" or "radiance" (*gSal Ba*), and "non-conceptuality" (*Mi rTog Pa*). Though these experiences are positive as signs of the authentic deepening of contemplation, they also constitute potential pitfalls as we can become fixated on these experiences with feelings of pride, egotism and attachment.

**"Contemplatively take into experience"** (*Nyams Su Len Pa*): see "practice".

**"Conventional (dissimulating) energies" or "conventional elements"** (*Kun rDzob Kyi 'Byung Ba*): see "elements".

**"Conventional truth"** (*Kun rDzob bDen Pa; Samvṛti-satya*): see "two truths".

**"Corporeal"** (*rDos bCas*): this term indicates the flesh and blood corporeal body characterizing human existence, with a solidity and material substantiality that contrast to the "luminous bodies" or "psychic bodies" found in the form and formless realms respectively, as well as in post-death existence. It should be kept in mind that within the Great Perfection tradition the material elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space) constituting this corporeality are believed to be the congealed, solidified forms of the five lights which have formed in co-involution with consciousness, and thus via contemplation it is possible to dissolve these elements into the pure rainbow-colored light intensities that are their essence (expressed as attaining the "rainbow body").

**"Corporeal beings"/"embodied beings"** (*Lus Can*) **and sentient beings** (*Sems Can; Sattva*): literally "possessing an ordinary body" and "possessing an ordinary mind", these two terms both refer to ordinary living beings (see Ati 2 517,4's gloss) who are by definition characterized by emotionally distorted dualistic psyches and/or coarse materialized corporeality, and as such, are to be understood in strict opposition to the Awakened Ones or "Buddhas", who are not "sentient beings" since they have no ordinary neurotic mind (*Sems*), only gnosis. Thus TCD2 40,7 etymologizes *Sems Can* as "those who are endowed with this mind which obscures awareness". GTD 378,5 defines the two terms thus:

*"..Since awareness' enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy is enveloped within the web of their ordinary body, they are "corporeal" (Lus Can); since it is enveloped within the web of their ordinary mind and its eight modes of consciousness, they are "sentient" (Sems Can); since it is obscured by their karmic activities and karmic propensity-traces, they are "obscured" (sGrib Pa Can); and since it is obscured by the nature of their dimmed awareness, they are "darkened" (Mun Pa Can)..."*

**"Crystal tube channel"** (*Shel Bug Can*): see "luminous channels".

**"Current"** (*rLung; Vāyu, Prāṇa*): an alternative translation of "energy wind".

**"Cyclic existence" ('Khor Ba; Saṃsāra) and "transcendence", "transcendent reality" or "passing beyond misery" (Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa, 'Das Pa; Nirvāna):** the original Sanskrit terms "Samsara" and "Nirvana" are widely known in the West, and in Tibetan are rendered as "circling" (*'Khor Ba*) and "passing (*'Das Pa*) beyond (*Las*) misery (*Mya Ngan*)" respectively. "Circling" indicates how we pass through rebirth after rebirth in fictive existence due to our ignorance and attachment, which constitutes a "vicious cycle" that can only be broken through reliance on the spiritual path. "Nirvana" is interpreted as "transcending misery" since this enlightened state is totally beyond all the suffering and frustration characterizing cyclic existence, while in the Great Perfection texts the term "transcendent" or "transcending" (*'Das Pa*) alone is often used, signifying the transcendent reality totally beyond the corporeal materialization and psychic distortions found in cyclic existence. This opposition between cyclic existence and transcendent reality is directly tied to the contrast between "sentient beings" and the "Awakened Ones" (or "Buddhas"), since the former reside within cyclic existence, and the latter within transcendent reality, though in essence cyclic existence never becomes other than transcendent reality (see the conclusion of Chapter Three), and their difference is "epistemological" in the sense of it being a question of recognition, not of substantial difference (ultimately the entire opposition as such is thus illusory given the inner unity of all life). Along these lines, this opposition contrasts sharply with the opposition of "good" and "evil" found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which are often understood as fundamental forces giving rise to permanent states embodied in "hell" and "heaven" (notions embodied in the rigid intolerance of the true "believer"): the fundamental difference lies in ignorance (non-recognition) and awareness (recognition) without any sense of moral culpability, while to the degree that "good" and "evil" have any validity outside of particular perspectives (i.e. "good" for me), they are merely the natural spectrum of positive and negative activities that we oscillate between as long as we remain within the grip of ignorance, upon which all other emotional distortions are founded (which is not to say, of course, that ethical considerations are ever irrelevant). It

should be noted that in the Great Perfection tradition, cyclic existence is described as having a very particular onset or "beginning" (see Chapter Two's beginning) as well as "end" (in enlightenment). In addition, "transcendent reality" (*Nirvana*) is understood as being the luminous radiation of awareness (*Rig Pa'i gDangs*), and as such, appears in the Ground-presencing within the cosmos' origination, in the visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation unfolding from within our heart, and in general are present within our body in the luminous channels, heart and skull. This is a subtle point and requires further discussion.

**"Dark House Retreat"** (*Mun Khang; Mun mTshams*): see my comments on the seventh adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Deity yoga"** (*Lha'i rNal 'Byor; Deva-yoga*): this practice of creatively visualizing yourself as a deity is explained in detail in Cozort's *Highest Yoga Tantra*, and has no place within the Great Perfection tradition.

**"Demigod" or "demigoddess"** (*Lha Min; Asura*): see "six types of life forms".

**"Depth-contemplation"** (*Ting Nge 'Dzin; Samādhi*): see "contemplation".

**"Depth radiance" or "depth-radiant"** (*gTing gSal*): see "radiance".

**"Dharma"** (*Chos; Dharma*): see "phenomena".

**"Dimmed awareness"** (*Ma Rig Pa; Avidyā*): see the beginning of Chapter Two in the translation and annotations, as well as my discussion of the second adamantine topic in the introduction. The three modes or phases of dimmed awareness are as follows: "the catalytic dimmed awareness of the single identity" (*rGyu bDag Nyid gCig Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*), "coemergent dimmed awareness" (*Lhan Cig sKyes Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*), and "the dimmed awareness of rampant reification" (*Kun Tu rTog Pa'i Ma Rig Pa*).

**"Direct immediacy" or "direct sensory experience"** (*mNgon Sum; Pratyakṣa*): see "immediacy".

**"Direct Transcendence"** (*Thod rGal*): see "Breakthrough".

**"Discourses"** (*mDo; Sūtra*): see "Sutric tradition".



**"Discourses on the Transcendental Consummation of Insight"** (*Shes Rab Pha Rol Tu Fhyin Pa'i mDo; Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*): these constitute a central group of Discourses that formed the core of the emerging "Great Vehicle" tradition, and generally consist of often interminable dialogues between the Buddha and his historical disciples focusing on the emptiness of everything, which is often expressed in circular, paradoxical expressions of negation. Edward Conze heroically translated the main texts (see bibliography), though he unfortunately chose to render the key term "transcendental consummation of insight" quite imprecisely as "perfection of wisdom". These texts are often said to constitute the "second" of the three cycles of the Buddha's teaching, and are implicitly criticized by Longchenpa for their insistence emphasis on total emptiness to the exclusion of dynamic luminosity and intelligence, though Longchenpa's criticisms could also be understood as applying to others' interpretations of these core texts (see Chapter Three of TDD for details).

**"Discursiveness" or "discursive elaboration"** (*sPros Pa; Prapañca*): this term literally means "expansion", "elaboration", "emit outwards", "dispersion", or "scattering", and can connote "development", "manifestation", "diffusiveness", "diversity", "spreading out", "enlargement", "activity", "vain imagining", or "falsehood"; in texts it often is used to refer to an "elaborate" ritual, or a meditative system which is "embellished" or "detailed", as well as simply meaning "I won't elaborate any further on this topic". Philosophically it signifies the constant stream of linguistic-conceptual "elaboration" on reality's immediacy that we consciously and unconsciously impose upon our experience, retroactively assuming it to be the "real world". I have thus rendered it as "discursiveness" to capture this sense of how our psychic energy is in constant haphazard motion in fits and starts creating "stories" or illusions through which we live, the internal flows of conscious inner monologues as well as the largely unconscious symbolic projects operative in the unconscious (analyzed so powerfully by Freud, Jung, and others). Some have compared it to the succession of frames projected by a film projector, and in fact the etymological sense of "emit" or "diffuse outwards" fits well with this

"projective" aspect of thought, which not only fabricates the illusion of isolated entities and a bewildering diversity of conscious biases and distortions as well as largely unconscious symbolic overlays, but also engages in cathexis as it invests our psychic energy in objects and people in complex patterns of attachment and aversion, love and hate. This proliferation of the mind as it flows out to external and internal objects is both incited by, and functions to reinforce, the ego-illusion, and while operative on unconscious and pre-conceptual modes, is especially manifest in our linguistic and conceptual activity, which reduces everything to fit in their limited "frames", "elaborating" on the bare immediacy of our experience with judgmental moralistic attitudes, as well as intense needs that give rise to the pervasive symbolic character of our interaction with the world around us.

The term "discursive elaboration" contrasts to the "singularity" (*Nyag gCig*) of grounding awareness, and thus the aim of contemplation is to attain the utter simplicity which is "beyond discursiveness" (*sPros Bral; Niṣprapañca*), i.e. divested of this incessant neurotic symbolizing and proliferating biased conceptuality whereby we give our life over the dead hand of the past in desperate attempts to escape the implications of our alienated condition. "Beyond discursiveness" thus signifies both a psychic state divested of this discursiveness, and the bare immediacy of reality itself which not reducible to our conceptual frames and logical propositions, but rather is precisely that which is ineluctably beyond such thing-based characteristics and categories and eludes every attempt to "define" it and pinpoint it as "this": it is "ineffable" (*brJod Med*), "inconceivable" (*bSam Mi Khyab*), without location (*gNas Med*), and devoid of specific onset or "unborn" (*sKye Med*); in a contemplative context, "the non-elaborated" or "non-discursive" often refers to contemplation of emptiness without all the complex elaborations of visualized deities, mantras, and so on. Since it can't be determined and defined in terms of our discursive elaboration, obviously the idea of "absolute truth" does not involve "truth" as we ordinarily conceive it, just as Heidegger called for a rethinking of the notion of *aletheia*, or "truth". At times discursive elaboration is compared to clothes such that

"beyond discursiveness" is becoming naked (MND 49,3), while elsewhere the former is clouds, rains, and mist, and the latter is the open vast sky devoid of such obscurations.

**"Distortion" (Khrul Pa) and "distorted appearances", or "distorted experiences"** (Khrul sNang): see "straying".

**"Divine palace"** (gZhal Yas Khang; Vimāna): literally "inconceivable house", this term is used in the beginning of TDD's Chapter Four to describe the major locations of awareness and its radiation within the human body. In addition, within the context of the third vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation, the seminal nuclei transform into "divine palaces" within which the linked chains ripen into images of Buddhas.

**"Doctrines"** (Chos; Dharma): see "phenomena".

**"Dynamism" or "dynamics"** (rTsal): "dynamism" (rTsal), "play" (Rol Pa), "ornamentation" (rGyan), "glow" (mDangs), and "radiation" (gDangs) are all highly technical terms used to describe the way in which the entire macrocosmic and microcosmic Universe derives from awareness, and as such are clearly defined and differentiated by Longchenpa. While these five terms are used in a variety of ways in previous texts such that their mutual relationships and differences become quite blurred, Longchenpa's typical terminological precision is quite clear in his use of these terms as well as in his incisive innovative explanations of each. However, only a full analysis would do this issue justice, and unfortunately time limitations prevent me from elaborating on this vital issue in the current context. It should be kept in mind that Longchenpa strictly differentiates between "glow" (mDangs) and "radiation" (gDangs), with the former signifying a non-manifest internal glowing associated with "internal radiance" (Nang gSal), and the latter signifying externally manifest radiation into actualized forms associated with "external radiance" (Phyir gSal).

**"Egoic psyche"** (Yid; Manas): see "psyche".

**"Efficacious means"** (Thabs; Upāya) **and** **"insight"** (Shes Rab; Prajñā): also see "lamp" for the "insight lamp". Thabs literally signifies "means", "method", "manner" or "way", while

*Shes Rab* is etymologized as "cognition" (*Shes*) which is "sharp", "optimal", "excellent" or the "best" (*Rab*). Together "efficacious means and insight" form a very ancient dyad in the Buddhism, which originally stemmed from a common-sense analysis of both (i) the process towards enlightenment and (ii) the enlightened state itself: (i) "technique"/"action" is the expedient means (whether contemplative, psychological, pedagogical, and so on) relied on to spur our spiritual growth, while "insight" is the actual insight or "peak" states of consciousness which are phenomenologically experienced due to those activities; alternatively "insight" is our perception of the suffering of life, emptiness of self, and so on, while "efficacious means" is our resolutely remaining in this world to help other living beings, as well as work towards enlightenment; (ii) in the context of the Buddha, the dyad indicates he utilizes a variety of "means" or actions ("skill-in-means") governed by his abiding "insight" into ultimate reality to skillfully guide his disciples along the path to liberation; alternatively, the Buddha's perfect union of "means and insight" connotes his perfect blend of "compassion and wisdom", that his life reflects both ethical and intellectual mastery undercutting conventional oppositions into "compassionate" saints contrasted to "brilliant" scholars, knowing the "ways of the world" (the conventional reality) in contrast to the "essence of the world" (the ultimate reality), "stupid" compassion in contrast to "cold" intellectual sophistication. Not only did the Buddha have perfect "insight" into reality itself, he also was exceedingly knowledgeable in terms of people's individual psyches, such that he knew how to incisively reach into their lives with a variety of "techniques", and strip away defenses to guide them to attaining insight in their own beings. Thus the enlightened state is considered to be a perfect blend of penetrating wisdom and dynamic activity, while in particular "insight" is associated with transcendent reality, and "efficacious means" is associated with cyclic existence, since it is compassion which impels the Awakened One to remain active within cyclic existence in order to liberate all living being. Subsequently this dyad also was tied into the standard "Great Vehicle" doctrine of the "six transcendental consummations" that the aspiring visionary must train in, with "efficacious

means" referring to training in the first five practices of "giving", "ethical morality", "patience", "diligence", and "meditative contemplation", and "insight" referring to the sixth consummation, i.e. "insight: insight is crucial as the basis for enlightenment, yet practical means and action are also vital to fully implement that realization. See Pye's *Skillful Means* for a full length study of these two concepts in the context of exoteric Buddhist traditions, which the preceding brief overview severely over simplifies.

From its presumably simple origins, this dyad gradually assumed an extensive interlocking set of symbolic correspondences, and in particular, "efficacious means" was considered as masculine, and "insight" as feminine. Its most significant transformation took place in Tantra: once the "enlightened mind" (*Byang Chub Sems; Bodhicitta*) was imaginatively interiorized by identifying it with the "semen", it was a natural extension that semen or the "seminal nuclei" (*Thig Le; Bindu*) would then be classified into the two categories of "efficacious means" and "insight", the dual aspects of the enlightened mind closely connected to "compassion" and "emptiness". In relation to the above correlation with cyclic existence and transcendent reality, "efficacious means" was thus often understood as signifying "conventional" (*Kun rDzob*) processes of reduced obscured energy, while "insight" signified "ultimate" (*Don Dam*) processes of high intensity liberated energy. This symbolism was further extended to sexual intercourse, where the male/penis were understood as "efficacious means" and the woman/vagina as "insight", such that with the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, the males are referred to as "Spiritual Bodies of Efficacious Means", and the females as "Spiritual Bodies of Insight" (see TDD 231,2). This symbolic interiorization is the basis for TDD's Chapter Five use of the terms "insight" and "efficacious means" in analyzing the seminal nuclei that flow through the right and left channel (see my commentary), since in accordance with its overall project of describing the Buddha's "enlightenment" as a primordial indwelling dimension already present within the Universe's very fabric as well as all living beings (see my discussion under "body" and in explaining the third adamantine topic within the

introduction), the Great Perfection uses these key terms usually restricted to the Buddha or proto-Buddhas to explain the energetics of all life, such that "efficacious means" refers in part to our conventional physiological processes, and "insight" to our body and mind's inherent intelligence (see the commentary to Chapter Five for further interpretation).

**"Efflorescent dynamics". "efflorescences", "creative efflorescence" (rTsal):** see "dynamism".

**"Ego-memory" (Dran Pa; Smṛti):** see "memory".

**"Eight auspicious signs" (bKra Shis rTags brGyad):** these eight sacred signs symbolize various qualities of a perfectly Awakened One, and as such are said to have been offered to the historical Buddha at his birth.

(i) **The Precious Parasol:** this is a traditional sign of respect or honor, resembling an ornate canopy.

(ii) **The Two Golden Fishes:** these are represented as forming a circle together, and are said to symbolize the eyes of the Buddha, i.e. his transcendent gnosis.

(iii) **The Vase of the Great Treasure Vase:** this is a symbol like a "cornucopia", i.e. a vase with inexhaustible riches contained within it, and as such evokes the limitless marvelous qualities of a Buddha's realization, and "Body". It also connotes the "water of long life".

(iv) **The Excellent Lotus Flower:** just as a lotus grows out of the mud yet in itself is a pure, radiant flower, the Buddha's mind as well is inherently perfectly pure, despite having "grown" within the swamp of cyclic existence.

(v) **The Precious White Conch With a Spiral that Turns to the Right:** conches whose top spiral turns towards the right instead of the left are traditionally considered particularly auspicious, while in general conches are blown in to make sound, and as such symbolizes the sound of the Spiritual Teachings which pervade the ten directions.

(vi) **The Sacred Knot (dPal Gyi Be'u; Śrīvatsa):** this is iconographically represented as a perfectly symmetrical series of interwoven loops, said to represent the Awakened Ones' great

compassion and love, as well evoking the infinite continuity of the teachings stemming from their enlightenment as well as a sense of "eternity". This auspicious mark also is found on a Buddha's feet and hands as one of the eighty exemplary forms of an enlightened being, in which context Dorji in his thesis (409) renders it as "the glorious heart-orb" (also his rendering in *The Nyingma School I* 409). MW defines the original Sanskrit term as "the favorite (*Vatsa*) of Śrī", which refers to the Hindu deity Viṣṇu, who is married to Lakṣmī, the goddess of prosperity or beauty (also known as Śrī, literally meaning "glorious"). While "Vatsa" can mean "beloved", "my darling", or "my dear child", etymologically it apparently means "calf", "the young of any animal", "offspring", or "child", and in fact the Tibetan translation renders it very precisely as *Be'u*, which means "calf" (literally reading "the calf of the glorious one"). In the Hindu context, MW says it is a particular mark or curl of hair on the breast of Viṣṇu (or other divine beings) which is white and represented in pictures by a symbol resembling a cruciform flower. See its use in TDD 229,6, and my comments there.

(vii) *The Supreme Victory Banner*: a cylindrical "banner" hoisted to represent military victory, it here symbolizes the Buddha's victory over negative influences in his attainment of enlightenment.

(viii) *The Golden Wheel*: the "wheel" is a traditional symbol of the Buddha's teachings, which he is often said to "turn the wheel of". In addition "gold" indicates that these teachings are of the highest value to us spiritually, just as gold is the most valuable material item in our world.

"Eight gateways of spontaneous presence shining forth" (*Lhun Grub Kyi 'Char sGo*): see "original purity and spontaneous presence", and the extensive discussion in Chapter One of these eight gateways as the inner dynamic of the Ground's spontaneous presence emerging as the Ground-presencing.

"Eight-part consciousness" or "eight modes of ordinary consciousness" (*rNam Shes Tshogs brGyad; Vijñāna*): see "consciousness".

**"Eighteen sensory elements"** (*Khams bCo brGyad; Dhātu*): these refers to the six types of perceived objects (visual form, sound, smell, taste, tangibility, and a corresponding mental image), the six sensory faculties (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental), and the corresponding six modes of sensory consciousness based upon those faculties (classifying the "mind" as the sixth sense). Together, these eighteen elements or constituents of the process of perception account for the entire range of sensory experience, including internal mental images which are "sensed".

**"Eighty exemplary forms of an enlightened being"** (*dPe Byad bZang Po brGyad Cu; Aśityānuvyañjana*): see "thirty two perfect characteristics and eighty exemplary forms of an enlightened being".

**"Eighty thousand emotional distortions"** (*Nyon Mongs sTong Phrag brGyad Cu; Kleśa*): see "emotional distortions".

**"Elements or elemental energies"** (*Byung Ba; Bhūta*): 'Byung Ba normally means "to emerge" or "to come about", but is here used in the sense of the basic "elements" or "elemental energies" which material existence is analyzed into: water (*Chu*), earth (*Sa*), fire (*Me*), wind (*rLung*) and space energy (*Nam mKha'*). At times "space energy" is omitted and only "four elements" are referred to. These five elements are a traditional classification of Indian Buddhist thought, and as such are discussed in the first chapter of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* (see the Poussin/Pruden translation 68-70, 99-103). They shouldn't be understood reductively as some type of naive analysis, since the terms "earth", "fire", "water" and "wind" are chosen by virtue of their rich web of symbolic associations deriving from their characteristic attributes (earth's solidity, water's fluidity, etc.), which enable them to evoke the particular energetic qualities that make up these "fundamental forces". The five elements are also symbolically linked to the other fivefold classifications so pervasive of Great Perfection thought (see TDD 223,3ff), and in particular are correlated to the respective female consorts of the five Buddhas (see TDD 225,2; see under "body" for a chart of these correlations). In the Great Perfection tradition,



these five elements are understood as the congealed solidification of the pure light intensities referred to as the five lights, a materialization which takes place by virtue of our failure to recognize the lights as self-presencing, and our consequent straying into the alienation of cyclic existence (see Chapter Two): earth energy corresponds to yellow light, fire to red, water to white, wind to green, and space to blue (though these five lights are explained in terms of the colors of a rainbow, it must be kept in mind that they refer to energetic values rather than simple colors). As such, these five material elements are intrinsically connected with intelligence, and in fact are in co-evolution with it, to the extent that by recognizing these elements as the self-presencing of awareness, it is said that all materiality dissolves into pure luminosity, and the visionary dissolves his/her own corporeality into a "body of light", such that astonishing feats become available (walking through solid walls, and so on). The theory of these elements is dealt with in detail by Longchenpa, and form a cornerstone of Great Perfection thought with the divisions into "conventional elements" (*Kun rDzob Kyi 'Byung Ba*) and "ultimate elements" (*Don Dam Pa'i 'Byung Ba*), "solidified energy" (*sNyigs Ma*) and "vibrant energy" (*Dwangs Ma*), and further subdivisions; the former division is closely linked to that between the "conventional seminal nuclei" (*Kun rDzob Kyi Thig Le*) and "ultimate seminal nuclei" (*Don Dam Pa'i Thig Le*). For the present, I am forced to leave my discussion at that. See the conclusion of Chapter Two's presentation of the twenty five divisions of the five elements, and my commentary on it.

**"Eleven adamantine topics"** (*rDo rJe'i gNas bCu gCig; Vajra-pada*): see my discussion of these in the introduction.

**"Eloquent One"** (*'Jam dByangs; Mañjughoṣa*): see "Mañjuśrī".

**"Emanational Body"** (*sPrul sKu; Nirmāṇa-kāya*): see "body".

**"Embodied beings"** (*Lus Can*): see "corporeal beings".

**"Emotional distortions"** (*Nyon Mongs; Kleśa*): this refers to the various ego-logical emotions that resemble poisons, pollutants or toxins that muddy our psyche (constituting the

"disease" of cyclic existence), and which are all based on dimmed awareness (*Ma Rig Pa*), i.e. the fundamental non-recognition of/as self (see Chapter Two). The basic triad of emotional distortions is desire, hatred and ignorance (or attachment, aversion, and dull indifference). TDD 224,6 expands this to form a standard quintet by adding "pride" and "jealousy". ZMYT2 249,1-2 adds "anger" to form a list of six, and etymologizes "emotional distortions" as being "since these are inferior mind-sets which link one to suffering", while TCD2 48,7ff instead adds "dimmed awareness" (Longchenpa defines "dimmed awareness" as "the delusion of distorted conceptualizing of objects and subjects", and "ignorance" as "the not knowing which is the reverse of awareness' insight"). There are also larger classifications such as TDD 247,1's reference to "80,000", though such artificial classifications have little psychological reference other than to indicate the pervasiveness and infinite variety of these emotional distortions within our psyche. TCD2 50,6 details a classification of 84,000: 21,000 derive from desire, 21,000 derive from hatred, 21,000 derive from ignorance, and 21,000 are an equal balance of all three.

**"Empowerment"** (*dBang; Abhiṣeka*): see my comments on the eighth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Emptiness"** (*sTong Pa Nyid; Śūnyatā*): as I have discussed throughout the thesis, Longchenpa stresses the simultaneity and seamless union of "emptiness" and "luminosity", which in Great Perfection terminology is expressed as "original purity" (*Ka Dag*) and "spontaneous presence" (*Lhun Grub*), or the empty "essence" (*Ngo Bo*) and radiant "nature" (*Rang bZhin*). Longchenpa consistently criticizes assertions that the ultimate truth is pure emptiness like the sky, a sterile nothingness devoid of any dynamism, luminosity, and/or intelligence. See KGNT1 64-65 for Padmasambhava's very succinct analysis of how "sky" is used as an image for "emptiness", yet as usual with images, is only partially appropriate: the sky is utter nothingness devoid of awareness, whereas emptiness is the emptiness of mind-as-such (*Sems Nyid*), inherently endowed with dynamic awareness. Nyingma scholars verbally often draw a distinction between the term "empty" (*sTong Pa*), and "empti-ness" (*sTong Pa*

*Nyid*), saying that "empty" signifies the pure nothingness of space, whereas "emptiness" signifies the vibrant emptiness of reality (*Nyid* literally means "itself", "precisely", or "-ness", but in the terms *Chos Nyid* and *Sems Nyid* connotes vibrant energy that is no-thing, yet from which everything derives). The term *sTong Pa* is a very common term in colloquial and literary Tibetan, and generally means "empty", such as an empty glass, or container. This sense is very clear in the Great Perfection texts, though it has been reinterpreted to mean a "dynamic emptiness" seething with light energy and intelligence in contrast to the blank sterility of space. Because of this positive sense of *sTong Pa Nyid*, along with the frequent use of the vast sky to image emptiness, some scholars (Guenther in particular) have suggested "openness" would be more appropriate than "emptiness" as a translation, since it lacks the deadening connotations of sterility and nothingness that "emptiness" or "nothingness" usually evokes (an "open sky" is obviously more evocative than an "empty sky"). However, I feel that the term "emptiness" is capable of such positive evocation when properly contextualized, and in addition, think it captures the powerful tension inherent in the original Tibetan term, which simultaneously evokes negation and presence, the paradox of an emptiness that is "full" and dynamic; this significant tension is utterly dissipated in translations such as "openness", despite the attractive evocative character such a term has, and in addition such translations often obscure the basic thought of these texts, which continually play off the sense of "emptiness" as "no-thing", and an absence (along these lines, I note that Guenther has recently rendered it as "dynamic nothingness" and "Being's nothingness" in *From Reductionism to Creativity* (275, 277), which to my mind is far more powerful than "openness").

**"Empty forms"** (*sTong gZugs*): see "appearances"; see TDD 398,5.

**"Empty seminal nuclei lamp"** (*Thig Le sTong Pa'i sGron Ma*): see "lamp".

**"Encircling rims"** (*Mu Khyud*): *Mu Khyud* literally means "circumference", "rim", or "surrounded", and in the context of the visions unfolding within Direct Transcendence contemplation, *Mu Khyud* refers to the concentric rainbow-colored circles radiating out from

the center of the seminal nuclei, which is generally a standard visual feature of the initial phases of the visions. This also indicates the nature of the seminal nuclei, which are organizing centers with influence or waves of light energy radiating out from their center in perfect mandalic circles of organization.

**Energy wheels** (*Khor Lo*; *Cakra*): this term literally means "wheels", and signifies the main intersections of channels within the center of our body (i.e. "centers"). These important centers of nexuses of energy in our body are often imaged as wheels with the channels forming the "spokes" which intersect at its hub, or as lotuses with each "petal" being an individual channel. In Longchenpa's corpus, he generally speaks of four principal wheels branching off from the subtle body's three main channels, each of which is given a special name: "the initial generativity wheel" at the navel (*sKyed Byed Dang Po'i 'Khor Lo*), "the memory storage wheel" at the heart (*Dran Pa 'Dus Pa'i 'Khor Lo*), "the flavors storage wheel" at the throat (*Ro rNams 'Dus Pa'i 'Khor Lo*), and "the ordering summit wheel" at the crown (*rTse Mo rNam Par bKod Pa'i 'Khor Lo*). See TDD 254,2-255,4 for an account of these four in relation to the body's three main channels. However, Padmasambhava's KGNT and Longchenpa's commentary in KGYT enumerate a fifth "wheel" or "energy center" located at the genitals (literally "secret place"), which is referred to as the "bliss sustaining wheel" (*gSang gNas bDe sKyong Gi 'Khor Lo*). STCP2 9b 2 mentions an enumeration of six wheels, which the sixth referred to as "the wheel of great bliss" (*bDe Ba Chen Po'i 'Khor Lo*) located at the "center" (*dBu Ma*), which evidently refers to the upper of the central channel located at the center between the two eyebrows (see KGYT2 168,4). This account of six plays no role in Longchenpa's Great Perfection writings, however, nor does the well-known account of seven wheels found in the *Kālacakra Tantra*.

There are varying accounts of these four wheels describing how many "petals" or secondary channels they consist of, playing off the visual image of these centers as like lotuses. In understanding these accounts, it should be kept in mind that these "wheels" are no more, nor

less, than the energy channels which intersect at these points. Since innumerable minute channels branch off from these principal secondary channels (ZMYT2 109,6), the number of channels each wheel is said to consist of simply refers to the main branches close into the center of the wheel, and as such, that number can vary depending how near or far from the center you chose to analyze the channels branching out from the wheel's center. For example, KGYT2 155,5ff specifies 64 at the navel, 8 at the heart, 16 at the throat, and 32 at the crown, totaling 120 in all; TDD 203,2 specifies 32 channels divided off from the root 8 channels of the heart, and 360 channels at the crown, while agreeing with KGYT2 in the enumeration of the navel and the throat wheels' channels. The number 360 simply includes sub-branches off the 32, and thus these various enumerations merely involve varying conceptual and classificatory schemes that differ only in where they chose to make the demarcation for describing the number of root channels in a given wheel rather than involving any substantial difference.

**"Energy"** (*Byung Ba; Bhūta*): see "elements".

**"Enframe"**: see "frame".

**"Enjoyment Body"** (*Longs sKu; Sambhoga-kāya*): see "body".

**"Enlightened activity"** (*Phrin Las*): see "spiritual activity".

**"Enlightened Gazes"** (*gZigs sTangs*): see "three enlightened gazes".

**"Enlightened mind(s)"** (*Byang Chub Kyi Sems; Bodhi-citta*): see "enlightenment"

**"Enlightened Mind", "Enlightened Heart-Mind", or "Enlightened Spirit"** (*Thugs; Citta*): see "body" for my comments on the contrast between the honorific forms of "body, speech, and mind" used to refer to the Enlightened ones, and the non-honorific forms of "body, speech, and mind" used to refer to ordinary neuroticized sentient beings. "Enlightened Mind" must be strictly contrasted to the term "mind" (*Sems*, which indicates the ordinary dualistic distorting psychic activity of the unenlightened), and since it is the honorific form of "heart" (*sNyin*) as well, it can mean "Heart-Mind" or "Spirituality".

**"Enlightened nucleus"** (*sNying Po*; *Garbha*), **"enlightened nucleus of realized-energy"** (*De bZhin gShegs Pa'i sNying Po*; *Tathāgata-garbha*) and **"enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy"** (*bDe gShegs sNying Po*; *Sugata-garbha*): see the extensive discussion of these terms in Chapter Three, as well as my notes on the third adamantine topic in the introduction. These two terms are basically synonymous, and refer to the nucleus of enlightened energy present within the hearts of all living beings (ZMYT2 321,6 refers to it as "the nucleus of enlightenment" (*Byang Chub Kyi sNying Po*), a notion which has been somewhat popularized in the West by the term "Buddha-nature" (*Sangs rGyas Kyi Rang bZhin*). As I indicate elsewhere, the entirety of the Great Perfection can be understood as an extremely sophisticated transformation of the relatively simplistic views of "Buddha-nature" within Indian Buddhist literature, and in brief, the theory is based on the essential core energetics of the Awakened One being always already present within living beings rather than being a newly created gestalt or state that is put into place at the time of enlightenment. These terms are ordinarily merely understood as "the nucleus of Buddhahood", since *De bZhin gShegs Pa* and *bDe gShegs* are usually titles of the Buddha: "He who thus (*De bZhin*) gone (*gShegs Pa*)" to enlightenment", and "He who gone (*gShegs*) to bliss (*bDe*)". *De bZhin* can also be interpreted as "suchness" or the "as-is" (*De bZhin Nyid*), and along these lines we could interpret this title as he who has "departed" from out neurotic and materialized world and "arrived" at "suchness", i.e. who have consciously entered the ultimate reality of the Universe within Ground's primordially, and realized its inner significance. It should be noted that there is a certain significant ambiguity with the verb *gShegs Pa*, which is the honorific form of both "to go" and "to come"; *sNying Po* is a common term meaning "core" or "nucleus". Since in Tibetan these two terms can refer verbally to the energy of this enlightenment rather than simply static nouns or titles, and given the awkwardness of alternate translations, I have chosen to render them as "realized-energy" and "bliss-energy" respectively.

**"Enlightened One"** (*Sangs rGyas*; *Buddha*): see "Buddha".

**"Enlightened gazes"** (*gZigs sTangs*): see "three enlightened gazes".

**"Enlightened postures"** (*bZhugs sTangs*): see "three watching postures".

**"Enlightened wakefulness"** (*Sangs rGyas; Buddha*): see "Buddhā".

**"Enlightened qualities"** (*Yon Tan; Guṇa*): this is a common term colloquially meaning "talents", "capacities" and/or "good qualities". In the present texts it is understood in opposition to "defects" or "faults" (*sKyon*), and refers to the Awakened One's "enlightened qualities" (*Yon Tan*) which unfold from the enlightenment experience. These "enlightened qualities" are none other than the "dynamic qualities" (*Yon Tan*) of the Ground's own fundamental energetics as revealed in the Ground-presencing, and hence are understood as a primordial dimension.

**"Enlightened Speech"** (*gSungs; Vāc*): see "body".

**"Enlightenment"** (*Byang Chub; Bodhi*) **and** **"enlightened mind"** (*Byang Chub Kyi Sems; Bodhicitta*): *Byang Chub* refers to the nature of the moment of realization whereby we become a fully Enlightened One, or "Buddha", who has realized the quintessential reality of his/her own microcosmic life and the macrocosmic Universe. As usual, Longchenpa tends to emphasize the etymological roots of this term, which correlate directly to the basic dyad of "original purity" and "spontaneous presence" (just as with *Sangs rGyas*, i.e. "Buddha"): *Byang* refers to awareness' inherent "purity" and its "cleansing" of adventitious stains, while *Chub* refers to awareness' natural "perfection" as the rich inherent talents (*Yon Tan*) of awareness spontaneously unfold into a "consummate" state of realization and dynamic activity. "Enlighten-ment" captures the sense that *Byang Chub* involves the translation back into light, the return to the pure radiant light which is our final source and reality that "lightens" us into a pure freedom liberated from the heaviness of corporeality and the dark gloominess of emotional distortions.

The term "enlightened mind" in exoteric contexts refers to "the thought of enlightenment", i.e. the practice of encouraging oneself to become devoted to the altruistic aspiration of attaining

enlightenment for the sake of liberating all living being. This inspiring aspiration is often termed the "relative" enlightened mind, while the "ultimate" enlightened mind is the gnostic awareness which directly perceives emptiness itself. This "enlightened mind" was thought to consist of two factors - "insight" (*Shes Rab; Prajñā*) and "efficacious means" (*Thabs; Upāya*) - which as realization and contemplative/ethical actions on the part of the visionary impel him towards the achievement of the actual "enlightened mind", while in the Awakened One her/himself, the state of enlightenment expresses itself both in terms of penetrating insight into the final nature of all phenomena, and efficacious activity that efficiently liberates all living beings. In Tantric thought, this term "enlightened mind" was interiorized as referring to the "semen" in their symbolic rediscovery of sexual intercourse, which eventually was identified with the "seminal nuclei" (*Thig Le; Bindu*) in general as tantric physiology was elaborated in detail. See my detailed comments in Chapter Five on this issue, as well as under "efficacious means and insight". *Byang Chub Sems* is also an extremely important term in the Great Perfection tradition, where it is often used to refer to the pristine nucleus of awareness itself (i.e. "the Great Perfection") as the ultimate ground of the entire panorama of cyclic existence and transcendent reality manifesting as its playfulness. While the term does not figure prominently in TDD, in CBD Longchenpa provides an intensely beautiful poetic thinking on the nature of the "enlightened mind" in this sense, which can be understood along the lines of a hymn to the mind of enlightenment.

**"Epistemology":** in general this term of course refers vaguely to "the philosophy of knowing", while in the current text is used to refer to tendencies to focus on "thing"-based knowing, i.e. the reification of our own ordinary perspectives and ways of knowing (in contrast to attempting to know the Ground which is no-thing at all), which often goes hand in hand with the tendency to grant syllogistic logic a special status in terms of our capacities to know and think (as contrasted to the "poetic thought" articulated by Heidegger).



**"Essence", "nature", and "compassionate resonance"** (*Ngo Bo, Rang bZhin, Thugs rJe*): this refers to the triune nature of the Ground or Universe as empty essence, radiant nature, and all-pervading compassionate resonance, which is discussed at length in Chapter One. This triune identity applies to all phenomena, and in particular is used to analyze awareness and its primordial gnosis. In brief, it indicates the perfect simultaneity of emptiness and light energy ("radiance"), while "compassionate resonance" signifies how this empty light is also inherently "self-organizing" and thoroughly intelligent (see "compassionate resonance"). This triad is a unique feature of the Great Perfection tradition, though it is directly linked to the more ancient triad of the three modes of being of an Awakened One (*sKu; Kāya*): the Reality Body (*Chos sKu*) of empty essence, the Enjoyment Body (*Longs sKu*) of luminous radiance, and the Emanational Body (*sPrul sKu*) of pervasive multi-dimensional activity and manifestation. In this way, it can be seen that this theory of the Great Perfection is a natural extension of describing the nature of the Universe in its primordially in terms of the dynamics of enlightened existence, and as such, clearly has its roots in classical Indian Buddhist thought. This basic continuity running through all existence entails that the three Spiritual Bodies characterize not only the Buddha, but also the primordial Universe and our own psycho-physical being: everything is empty, luminous, and resonating with intelligence/energy. An additional point of contact with the three Spiritual Bodies theory is that this triad can also be summed up in the Ground's "original purity" (*Ka Dag*) and "spontaneous presence" (*Lhun Grub*), just as the three Spiritual Bodies can be encapsulated into the empty purity of the Reality Body, and the luminous dynamism of the "Form Bodies": "spontaneous presence" includes both its nature and compassionate resonance, and "Form Bodies" includes both the Enjoyment and Emanational Bodies.

**"Essential organs" and "hollow organs"** (*Don sNod*): *Don* refers to the "five essential internal organs within the trunk of our body" (*Khog Pa'i Nang Khrol Don sNying Po lNga*), and *sNod* refers to the six "vessel" organs. The former perform "essential" functions with

respect to our sensory faculties and acting as the fundamental supports for our body's vibrant energy (*Dwangs Ma*): the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, and kidneys. The latter are the six "vessels" where the remains of blood and the vibrant energies reside: stomach, intestines, abdomen, gall bladder, urinary bladder, and seminal vesicle/uterus.

**"Establish", or "established"** (*Grub Pa*): see "accomplishment".

**"Eternalism"** (*rTag Pa; Śaśva, Nitya*) and **"nihilism"** (*Chad Pa; Uccheda*), or **"the opposition of permanence and annihilation"**: literally "permanent" and "cut off", these are the two extremes of philosophical views, as well as the two extremes we all swing back and forth between in our view of the world/life. In brief, "eternalism" involves belief in "things" and personal "selves" existing as static enduring isolated entities, while "nihilism" signifies the belief that "nothing exists", whether denying future existence beyond this life, negating the importance of spiritual pursuits in favor of a life of materialistic hedonism, or claiming that ultimately the Universe is a "sterile nothingness" completely empty of all dynamism. In Longchenpa's hands, the term "nihilism" does bear distinct resemblance to Heidegger's use of the term in Western philosophy.

**"Ethereal spirits"** (*Dri Za; Gandharva*): see "scent eater".

**"Evolute"**: used to refer to something derivative of a prior phenomena in an evolutionary or involutionary process.

**"Evolution"**: in short, I use the term "involution" to refer to how the Ground-presencing descends into the materialized alienation of cyclic existence, while "evolution" signifies the consequent movement from the depths of cyclic existence back towards the Universe's origins in the enlightenment experience. Obviously this issue requires a more detailed discussion, but for the moment I must limit myself to merely pointing out the importance of "intelligence" at all stages of this evolutionary process (which hinges on "recognition" and "non-recognition").

**"Exemplary forms of an enlightened being"** (*dPe Byad bZang Po; Aśityānuvyañjana*): see "the thirty two perfect characteristics and eighty exemplary forms of an enlightened being".

**"Exhaustion"** (*Zad; Kṣaya*): see my discussion of the fourth vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation in my notes on the eighth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Expanse"** (*dByings; Dhātu*): see my discussion of the seventh adamantine topic in the introduction. The expanse is usually discussed in terms of the "external expanse" (*Phyi'i dByings*) and the "internal expanse" (*Nang Gi dByings*). Also see the "four lamps" of primordial gnosis, which includes the "expanse lamp". The term "the expanse of reality" (*Chos Kyi dByings*) is less common than "expanse" (*dByings*), but does occur in these texts, particularly as the name of one of the five primordial gnoses.

**"Expanse's lighting-up" or "manifestation"** (*dByings sNang*): this refers to the luminous manifestation of the expanse lamp in the Direct Transcendence visions, which is particularly prominent in the second vision, and in the third vision becomes the pure lands (*Zhing Khams*) within which the mandalas of deities appear. It is contrasted to the "lighting-up of awareness" (*Rig Pa'i sNang*), and indicates clearly that the expanse is not mere emptiness, but rather is brimming with dynamic light energy. See my discussions of the "expanse" within the context of the sixth and seventh adamantine topics in the introduction.

**"Expansive awakening" and "expansive awakening of Buddhahood"** (*Sangs rGyas; Buddha*): see "Buddha".

**"Experience"** (*Nyams*): see "contemplative experience".

**"External expanse"** (*Phyi dByings*): see "expanse".

**"External radiance"** (*Phyir gSal*): see "radiance".

**"Extremists"** (*Mu sTegs; Tirthika*): generally a term referring to non-Buddhists who hold a variety of erroneous views on the nature of life, the Universe, and the spiritual path, *Mu sTegs* is etymologized in a variety of ways: *Mu* is the "extremes" (*mTha'*) of eternalism and nihilism that they "uphold" (*sTegs; Yar 'Dzin*), and so on.

**"Eye"** (*sPyan; Mig*): the eyes and vision are of vital importance to the Great Perfection tradition, which above all is related to the luminous channels running from the heart to the eyes

acting as the conduit for the heart's gnostic luminosity to shine outwards in the Direct Transcendence contemplation (see my discussion of the sixth adamantine topic in the introduction). Not only are the eyes referred to as "the far ranging noose water lamp" in this capacity (technically the term applies to the tip of these luminous channels located at the pupils) and as the "watery eye orbs" (*Chu Bur Mig*) in terms of the physical eyes, two other special terms transliterated from Indic languages are often referred to in describing the eyes: the *Briguta*, and the *Tsakshu* (i.e. *Cakṣu*). This linkage of the "eye" to the heart in some ways is strikingly similar relation to Corbin's description of Sufi thought in *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabi* 221: "...the gnostic's heart is the "eye", the organ by which God knows Himself, reveals Himself to Himself in the forms of His epiphanies..." The seminal nuclei as well are often described as "eyes" both in that they visually resemble eyes with their concentric circles of light, and in their vibrant self-organizing intelligence that is able to "see" its way and thus adjust its course. While *Mig* is the ordinary non-honorific term signifying "eye", *sPyan* as the honorific form of "eye" (which I have generally capitalized as "Eye") is used in a variety of ways to signify of capacities for spiritual vision (see TDD 380,2ff; LYT1 492,2), including clairvoyance, and so on. Of greater significance is the unique theory concerning two "Eyes" present within the subtle body, which I have in that rendered as "super nuclei": "the Eye of the Lamps" (*sGron Ma'i sPyan*) and "the Eye of the Elements" (*Byung Ba'i sPyan*). As explained on TCD2 1,2ff, these two "super nuclei" are present within the embryo's navel "wheel" of channels right from the beginning, with the Eye of the Elements guiding and directing the formation of the physical body, and the Eye of the Lamps acting as the primary foundation of the lighting-up of primordial gnosis, i.e. guiding and directing the gnostic visions we experience in Direct Transcendence contemplation. Thus these two are like super nuclei governing our biological and spiritual processes respectively. See the reference to these two on TDD 201,6, where they are also referred to as "two small eyes" (*Mig Chung gNyls*); on TDD 203,1, where they are said to be present within each of the four main energy wheels located up

a vertical axis in the center of the body (navel, heart, throat, and crown); and the clear reference on TDD 254,7 in the context of the flavor channel containing the seed-potencies of the gnostic lamps. This innovation in subtle body theory (which apparently derives from Longchenpa himself) is clearly tied to his general tendency to model processes in terms of complex interlocking hierarchies, such that there is constantly lower order and high order aspects to all energy flow and structures. The symbolic roots of this theory would seem to derive from the prominence of the two eyes in the developing embryo, their overall vital importance in terms of the Great Perfection tradition, and the general connection between the term "eyes" and "seminal nuclei", with the latter term signifying the creative generatrixes in the subtle body system which trigger, organize, and guide energetic processes (as impelled by the "winds" down the lines of development provided by the "channels"). Thus these two super nuclei are the main organizational centers which "see" and "orient" our evolving energy on both bioenergetic and gnostic levels, and in the latter sense ("the Eye of the Lamps") is directly related to the network of luminous channels, which are the pathways through which this "Eye" directs and channels the pure gnostic luminosity. TCD2 12,5ff further specifies that these two "Eyes" originate in the three corned channel-knot of the embryo's navel, and from that, the eye's physical basis, translucent sensory faculty, and the vibrancy (*Dangs Ma*) of the luminous channel emerge, which is connected from the navel up through the four energy wheels to the two eyes via the luminous channels. Clearly these two "Eyes" are closely linked to what we ordinarily conceive of as our "eyes" and capacity for vision, and in essence constitute a creative thinking on the inner significance of "eyes" and vision, emphasizing how intelligence which "sees" and "thinks" is operative at all dimensions of our biological and spiritual existence (present within each of the main energy centers of the body termed "wheels"), and rejecting the notion that "blind", "dumb" or "accidental" processes are at work either in our physical or psychic existence. These two eyes are also clearly related to the discussion of "conventional" and "ultimate" elemental energies, and the distinction between solidified, materialized energy

(*sNyigs Ma*) and vibrant, luminous energy (*Dangs Ma*). See Guenther's *Kindly Bent to Ease Us II* 17-19 for further comments on this notion of two "Eyes".

**"Father-Mother consort pairs"** (*Yab Yum*): *Yab Yum* is literally the honorific terms of "Father" (*Yab; Pitr*) and "Mother" (*Yum; Matr*), and technically signifies a pair of deities in sexual union with each other (usually depicted iconographically as the female sitting in the male's lap facing him). The main reference in these texts is generally to the five Buddhas in union with their respective consorts, which form the center of the mandala of peaceful and wrathful deities that appears in the third vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation. The male symbolizes "efficacious means" (*Thabs*), the female symbolizes "insight" (*Shes Rab*), and their sexual union symbolizes their inner unity within the enlightened mind.

**"Fathom"** (*Dom*): this unit of measurement is defined as the length from the fingertips of one hand to the fingertips of the other, with the arms outstretched to either side. Most forms of measurements referred to in these texts are imprecise means based on one's own body.

**"Far ranging water lamp"** (*rGyang Zhags Chu'i sGron Ma*): see "lamp".

**"Fictive existence"** (*Srid; Bhava*): this term is often used as a synonym for "cyclic existence", and generally refers to the various "states of existence" therein that we are reborn into time after time. As such, it forms one of the twelve links of interdependent origination (see TDD 193), as well as the fourth intermediate state, that of post-death experiences leading to a new "rebirth" in cyclic existence (see my discussion of the tenth adamantine topic in the introduction). Also see its use in the important term "appearances and the fictive worlds therein" (*sNang Srid*).

**"Five Buddhas"** (*Sangs rGyas lNga; Buddha*): see "five Spiritual Bodies".

**"Five elemental energies"** (*Byung Ba lNga; Bhūta*): see "elements".

**"Five emotional distortions"** (*Nyon Mongs lNga; Kleśa*): see "emotional distortions".

**"Five lights"** (*'Od lNga*): these are the five colors the rainbow - white, yellow, red, green, and blue - understood as the pure light energy of Ground's radiant nature which is the self-

presencing of the five primordial gnoses (see TDD 224,7-225,3); they are subsequently congealed and solidified into the five elements within the context of cyclic existence. In the context of their pure virtual existence within the Ground, these refer to energy values rather than simply visual data, and it is often said they cannot be reduced to "colors" (*Kha Dog*).

**"Five paths"** (*Lam lNga; Mārga*): see "path".

**"Five (emotional) poisons"** (*Dug lNga*): a synonym for "five emotional distortions".

**"Five sensory faculties"** (*dBang Po lNga; Indriya*): the five sensory faculties are of course the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and tactile faculty (which is spread throughout the body), though the precise reference is generally to very subtle translucent materials capable of receiving sensory data.

**"Five Spiritual Bodies"** (*sKu lNga; Kāya*): see "body".

**"Five spiritual affinities" or "five spiritual families"** (*Rigs lNga; Gotra*): see "body" for a discussion of the five spiritual affinities in relation to the five Spiritual Bodies.

**"Five winds"** (*rLung lNga; Vāyu*): see "channels, inner winds, and seminal nuclei" for general comments; these five are enumerated in different ways depending on whether karmic or gnostic winds are being discussed. I am currently preparing a detailed paper on the various classifications of winds in the Great Perfection tradition, but have been unable to include it herein due to time constraints - see TDD 213,2-214,5 and TDD 225,6-226,3 for discussions of the fivefold gnostic winds.

**"Fixate on"** (*Dzin Pa*): see "subject-object duality".

**"Flavor channel"** (*Ro Ma; Rasanā*): see "channel".

**"Flexibility"** (*Las Su Rung*): literally "able to do an activity" or "serviceable", this term refers to making our internal flows of energy "pliable" or "flexible" via contemplatively dissolving their usual blockages and distortions (TCD1 403,6).

**"Follow-up supporting teachings"** (*rGyab Chos*): this term refers to a series of precepts applying to Direct Transcendence contemplation which function as an essential support to

proper progression through the four visions (see TDD 402,6ff for a detailed discussion). This classification of precepts is also referred to as "supplementary supports" (*rGyab rTen*) or "concluding supports"/"consolidations" (*mTha' rTen*).

**"Form Bodies"** (*gZugs sKu; Rūpa-kāya*): see my discussion under "body", as well as "essence, nature and compassionate resonance".

**"Forms of emptiness"** (*sTong gZugs*): see "empty forms".

**"Four great commitments of the Great Perfection"** (*Dam Tshig Chen Po bZhi; Mahā-samaya*): see "commitments".

**"Four conditions"** (*rKyen bZhi; Pratyaya*): discussed at length in Chapter Two, these are the four conditions which make non-recognition, and hence straying into cyclic existence, possible in conjunction with the main "cause", i.e. dimmed awareness itself (*Ma Rig Pa*): the "causal condition" (*rGyu'i rKyen*; i.e. this triune dimmed awareness), the "objective or referential condition" (*dMigs Pa'i rKyen*; i.e. the appearances manifesting in the Ground-presencing), the "controlling condition" (*bDag Po'i rKyen*; i.e. consciousness or ego which dualistically apprehends objects and its self), and the "immediately antecedent condition" (*De Ma Thag Pa'i rKyen*; i.e. the other three's temporal conjunction). These four conditions are terminology drawn from epistemological texts, where they are defined as the standard four conditions necessary for perception to take place.

**"Four elemental energies"** (*Byung Ba bZhi; Bhūta*): see "elements".

**"Four empowerments"** (*dBang bZhi; Abhiṣeka*): see "empowerments".

**"Four formless meditative absorptions"** (*gZugs Med Pa'i sNyoms 'Jug bZhi; Samāpatti*): see "meditative states".

**"Four joys"** (*dGa' Ba bZhi; Sukha*): the "four joys" are a series of increasingly blissful sensations ignited by the progressive movements of the seminal nuclei through the four energy wheels arrayed up the center of the body (navel, heart, throat, and crown) in the context of sex yoga, which can be performed while engaging in sexual intercourse with a consort, or solitarily



via the power of imaginative visualization: joy (*dGa' Ba*), supreme joy (*mChog dGa'*), beyond joy (*dGa' Bral*), and coemergent joy (*Lhan Cig sKyes dGa'*). See my discussion in the commentary to Chapter Five, ZMYT2 379 for Longchenpa's detailed discussion, and Cozort's *Highest Yoga Tantra* for a basic description.

**"Four lamps"** (*sGron Ma bZhi*): see "lamps".

**"Four limiting alternatives"** (*Mu bZhi; Koñ*): these are defined in various ways, but most commonly refer to existence, non-existence, both, and neither, a logical device used to classify the four possible ways of describing things (i.e. as existent, as non-existent, as both existent and non-existence, or as neither existent nor non-existent). As such, this classification doesn't apply to the Ground itself due to the ontological difference, since the Ground is no-thing, and as such inexorably escapes our attempts to pinpoint and limit it our conceptual categories.

**"Four modes of fearlessness" or "fourfold fearlessness"** (*Mi 'Jigs Pa; Vaiśāradya*): these are four types of fearlessness said to be unique characteristics of the enlightened state, and often iconographically represented by four lions. These four are defined in varying ways within different texts, while the following list is drawn from *The Unsurpassed Continuity* as cited on GTD 498,5 (see Holmes' *Changeless Nature* 107 for a translation of this section): fearlessness in his/her perfect enlightenment (realizing the true nature) of all phenomena, in his/her having brought all hindrances (that block realization) to a state of cessation, in his/her teaching the spiritual path to others, and in his/her revealing the cessation (of those hindrances) in the context of the spiritual path.

**"Four meditative states"** (*bSam gTan bZhi; Dhyāna*): see "meditative states".

**"Four truths"** (*bDen Pa bZhi; Catvāri-satya*): these four truths are said to derive from the historical Buddha's public teachings, and reflect a very basic insight into the pervasiveness of suffering, the origin of that suffering in our mistaken belief in an isolated "ego", that this suffering is not inevitable but can be overcome, and that the way to overcome neurotic suffering lies in the contemplative path articulated in Buddhism: the truth of suffering, the truth

of suffering's origin, the truth of its cessation, and truth of the spiritual path. These four truths were subsequently elaborated and analyzed to death, and, despite being particularly associated with the "lesser vehicle", continued to play an important role in subsequent doctrinal innovations.

**"Four times"** (*Dus bZhi*): this can refer to the four seasons (winter, spring, summer, autumn), the three times (past, present, future) plus the timeless, or the four periods (twilight, midnight, dawn, and daytime) involved in the special Great Perfection contemplation outlined on TDD 324,3ff.

**"Four visions"** (*sNang Ba bZhi*): see "Direct Transcendence". The four visions are as follows: the vision of reality's immediacy (*Chos Nyid mNgon Sum Gyi sNang Ba*), the vision of contemplative experience's intensification (*Nyams Gong Phel Gyi sNang Ba*), the vision of the awareness' optimization (*Rig Pa Tshad Phebs Kyi sNang Ba*) and the vision of exhaustion within reality (*Chos Nyid Zad Pa'i sNang Ba*).

**"Four wheels" or "four energy wheels"** (*Khor Lo bZhi; Cakra*): see "energy wheels".

**"Fourfold fearlessness"** (*Mi 'Jigs Pa bZhi; Vaiśāradya*): see four "modes of "fearless".

**"Frames", "framing", or "enframing"**: loosely based on Heidegger's term *das Ge-stell*, I simply use this term to indicate our tendency to force things to fit into our preconceptions, and to become obsessively devoted to our linguistic and conceptual "frames", especially in overriding the ontological difference.

**"Freedom"** (*Grol Ba; Mukta*): see my brief discussion in the eighth adamantine topic within the introduction.

**"Fruit"** (*Bras Bu; Phala*): see my discussion of the eleventh adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Gateways"** (*sGo; Dvāra*): see my discussion of the sixth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Gelukpa sect"** (*dGe Lugs Pa*): this is one of the most important sects of Tibetan Buddhism, which is particularly noted for its political domination of Tibet over the past few centuries, its current domination of academic research into Tibetan Buddhism in the U.S., and its emphasis on logic and epistemological studies. In contrast to this, the Nyingma sect which above all is related to the Great Perfection teachings, was markedly apolitical, has been all but ignored by the academic establishment in the U.S., and in general has historically paid little heed to logical debate and its concomitant hermeneutical practices. Despite these marked contrasts, it should also be noted there have been a number of great figures in the past who have been devoted to both traditions, such as the fifth Dalai Lama (1617-82) and Zhabs dKar Pa sNa Tshogs Drug Rang Grol (19th century), a tradition continued by the current Dalai Lama and Khanpo 'Jigs Med Phun Tshogs, to mention the two most prominent representatives.

**General features of the body** (*Lus sPyi*): see "body's general structures".

**"Generation phase** (*bsKyed Rim*; *Utpatti-krama*) **and perfection phase** (*rDzogs Rim*; *Niṣpanna-krama*) **of tantric meditation**: these are the two phases of meditation found in classical "exoteric" Buddhist tantra, and which are analyzed in detail by Cozort in *Highest Yoga Tantra*: the "generation phase" involves the creative visualization of yourself as a deity (or deities) according to standard iconographical depictions and textual descriptions that explain an intricate web of symbolic correspondences, with the ultimate goal of making your visualization intensely vivid and natural; the "perfection phase" involves the "culmination" or "completion" of that imaginative visualization as you are transformed into the deity (or "Buddha") in reality. The perfection phase is often said to be either "non-symbolic" (*mTshan Med*) contemplation which involves the dissolution of all visualizations into emptiness, which is then directly contemplated, or "symbolic" (*mTshan bCas*), which involves simple or complicated techniques of internal visualization focused on our subtle body of channels, energy winds, and seminal nuclei (see Guenther's *The Life and Teaching of Naropa* for one famous systematization of these practices referred to as the "six doctrines of Naropa"). Another standard set of

"symbolic" perfection phase contemplative techniques is often discussed in Longchenpa's corpus as auxiliary meditations (including the sexual yoga discussed at the end of Chapter Five in TDD), though such practices are considered lower order techniques not intrinsically belonging to Great Perfection itself. While these two terms are at times explained in terms of the Great Perfection, they don't form a significant part of Longchenpa's discussion in TDD, though it may be helpful for some to consider Direct Transcendence contemplation as related to generation phase meditation, and Breakthrough contemplation to perfection phase meditation. One key point to keep in mind is that while normal generation phase meditation involves forced creative visualizations according to a prescribed pattern, the visions of deities unfolding in Direct Transcendence contemplation is said to be completely spontaneous, and involves no intentional fabrication or direction (with the exception of some adjustments of the direction of your gaze in relation to the nature of the visions at any given point).

**"Glow"** (*mDangs*): see "radiation".

**"Gnostic"** (*Ye Shes; Jñāna*): see "primordial gnosis".

**"Gnostic energy"** (*Ye Shes; Jñāna*): see "primordial gnosis".

**"Gnostic winds"** (*Ye Shes Kyi rLung*): see "karmic winds and gnostic winds".

**"Gods"** (*Lha; Deva*) and **"goddesses"** (*Lha Mo; Devi*): see "six types of life forms".

**"Going astray"** (*Khrul Pa; Bhrānta*): see "straying".

**"Grasping"** (*Dzin Pa*): see "subject-object duality".

**"Great"** (*Chen Po; Mahā*): this term commonly means "great" or "large", and in Great Perfection terminology indicates the term it is suffixed to should be understood as of high intensity energy (such as *Ye Shes Chen Po*), and at times indicates that the term in question is to be understood in an extraordinary sense totally beyond its normal reference (such as referring to the Buddha as the "super sentient being" (*Sems dPa' Chen Po*)). "Super" would thus seem the most precise rendering of this use of *Chen Po*, though I tend to feel "super" as an evocative term is untenable due to its associations with "superman" or the colloquial "that's super!".

**"Great Bliss"** (*bDe Chen; Mahā-sukha*): see "bliss".

**"Great kati golden channel"** (*Ka Ti gSer Gyi rTsa Chen*): see "luminous channels".

**"Great Perfection"** (*rDzogs Chen; \*Mahāsandhi, Santimahā*): the "Great Perfection" refers to a particular contemplative-philosophical tradition and body of literature of controversial origins that was purportedly transmitted into Tibet during the 9th century, though we currently possess only Tibetan language materials directly explicating it (see my "Overview of the Great Perfection" in the introduction); the term also signifies the ultimate nature of the Universe itself. A more precise translation would be the "Super (*Chen*) Completeness (*rDzogs*)", though I find "super-" terms rather flat on the whole: *rDzogs* can mean both "to be exhausted", "to be finished", "to come to the end", "to consummate", "to fulfill", "accomplished", and "to complete", as well as "completely", "fully", "copious", "thoroughly" (*rDzogs Par*). These meanings are all partially present in the term *rDzogs Chen*, though the main sense is this "super completeness" of reality wherein all the dynamic qualities of the three Spiritual Bodies are primordially spontaneously fully present in their entirety, such that nothing need be altered, supplemented, or created within this holistic fullness of the whole. "Perfection", however, can also connote this primordial completeness and purity wherein everything is already "perfect" and "perfectly" present without the slightest need of transformation or "correction". See Guenther's perceptive comments in *From Reductionism to Creativity* (184-194).

**"Great Seal"** (*Phyag rGya Chen Po; Mahāmudrā*): aside from being the name of a particular tradition in Tibet (see Lhalungpa's *Mahāmudrā*), this term is commonly used in a variety of contexts in other traditions in its etymological sense of a "great seal". The meaning varies in dependence upon the context, such as "sealing" all phenomena with emptiness, which thus "owns" all phenomena as a King controls all people within his kingdom. I haven't noted any characteristic common usage of the term in Longchenpa's corpus, though it appears in various contexts.

**"Great Vehicle"** (*Theg Pa Chen Po; Mahāyāna*) **and Lesser Vehicle** (*Theg Pa dMan Pa; Hinayāna*): the reader should cōnsult Williams' *Mahāyāna Buddhism* and the numerous other works in English dealing with this basic divisions in Indian Buddhism.

**"Ground"** (*gZhi; \*Āśraya*) **and "Ground-presencing"** (*gZhi sNang*): see my discussion of the first adamantine topic in the introduction, as well as the extensive discussion in Chapter One. *gZhi* literally means "ground", "basis", or "foundation", along with connotations of "cause" or "source", and is one of the key terms in Great Perfection thought. It obviously has provocative connections with Heidegger's "Being", Jantsch's "Universe", the "Godhead" in Christian mystical treatises, the "Tao" in Taoist thought, Hegel's Spirit, and so on, though to explore such interconnections requires sensitive and detailed research. It should be noted that the term "Ground" also occurs in the important triad of "Ground, path, and fruit" (*gZhi Lam 'Bras Bu*); similarly, "Ground-presencing" (*gZhi sNang*) forms a triad with the "spiritual path-presencing" (*Lam sNang*), and "presencing of the climaxing fruit of enlightenment" (*'Bras sNang*), which are identical in terms of being awareness' natural radiation (*Rig Pa'i Rang gDangs*), yet differ in terms of the perceiving subjectivity: the *gZhi sNang* presences in the primordial beginnings as well as post-death visions yet the perceiver is dominated by the stains of non-recognition; *Lam sNang* involves the preliminary visions along the spiritual path after the perceiver has been introduced to the reality of awareness by his/her Spiritual Master; and *'Bras sNang* involves the fully Enlightened One's internal radiation manifesting externally as the Enjoyment and Emanational Bodies (see ZMYT1 222,2-223,1).

**"Grounding"** (*gZhi gNas*): literally "abiding within the Ground", this term contrasts to *gZhi sNang* (literally "presencing within/from the Ground", as well as to *mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa* (literally "functioning with characteristics", or "sustaining characteristics". In brief, "grounding" refers to a dimension being pure potential remaining within internal latent radiance (*Nang gSal*) devoid of any actualization, yet present as the unceasing source-potential of external manifestation. Thus "grounding awareness" (*gZhi gNas Pa'i Rig Pa*) indicates the

pure potency of awareness that is latently present within our heart, as well as "the awareness present within the Ground", i.e. the inherent pure intelligence of the Universe, rather than our particular distorted ego-logical awareness wrapped up in particularized appearances and concerns. See "primordial gnosis" for the use of these terms in that context.

**"Hand-held symbols"** (*Phyag mTshan*): this refers to the various items such as a lotus, flower, or sword which a mandala's deities hold in their hands, and which symbolize their inner energy..

**"Heart"** (*sNying; Citta, Hṛdaya*): see "energy wheels" for references to the "heart" as one of the four main energy wheels, or intersections of channels of energy flow in our body. The "heart" is often referred to as "Tsitta" in Great Perfection texts in its special capacity as the principal seat of pure awareness (*Rig Pa*) within our body, and the palace of the mandala of peaceful deities (see TDD 229,5ff in Chapter Four), whose "radiation" (*gDangs*) is said to be present as the mandala of wrathful deities within the skull. It is of course a general belief in Asia that the true residence of the psyche or consciousness is the heart rather than the brain; Hopkins' *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth* (62) specifies that the spot where consciousness initially enters the combined semen and blood in the woman's womb subsequently becomes the heart. This location of our psychic essence within the heart refers to a subtle dimension, but none the less is closely linked with the physical heart, its blood vessels and functions. See my commentary to the final section of Chapter Four for extensive comments on these questions of subtle body theory, especially in the context of Longchenpa's specifying the "mind" as being located between the lungs and heart (245,1).

**"Hell"** (*dMyal Ba; Nāraka*): this is one of the six types of life forms thought to inhabit our world, and are classified into different types. See Zahler's *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism* 25-33.

**"Heruka"** (*He Ru Ka; Heruka*): "Heruka" is merely the transliteration of the Sanskrit term, and is usually interpreted as "blood-drinkers". This ordinarily refers to the wrathful forms the five Buddhas take in the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities.

**"Higher order"**: see "two truths".

**"Hollow organs"** (*sNod*): see "essential organs and hollow organs".

**"Honorific and non-honorific terms"**: this feature of Tibetan language is particularly pronounced in Lhasan dialect, where an entire set of "honorific" or polite terms exists for referring to another person's bodily parts, possessions, and so on, and a quite different set of "non-honorific" or familiar terms exists to refer to those same things as they apply to yourself, or close friends (there is no comparable duality in the English language, where generally we use the same individual terms regardless of whom we are talking about, though presumably we might say "ass" to a friend, while politely point out a stain on an employer's "rear"). See under "body" for a discussion of the philosophical significance of this distinction.

**"Humans"** (*Mi; Nara, Puruṣa*: see "six types of life forms").

**"Idealist"**: an idealist position reducing all external appearances to one's own mind is often ascribed to the Cittamātra or Yogācāra school of Indian Buddhism, and as such is often used as a type "straw man" by Tibetan authors. However, the actual positions of this heterogeneous tradition are certainly considerably more complex than that, and its subsequent transformations in Tantric thought as well as in the Great Perfection tradition must be considered to gain a holistic perspective on the tradition, though little research along these lines has yet to be done. The Great Perfection appropriates a number of key elements of this "idealist" tradition, just as it does with the "Buddha-nature" body of literature (*Tathāgatagarbha*), though its treatment of them in the corpus of Longchenpa strikes me as quite a bit more sophisticated than their original formulations in India. It should also be noted that Longchenpa very consistently and emphatically rejects claims that all "appearances" (*sNang Ba*) can be reduced to our "mind" (*Sems*), such as on TDD 241,1ff.



**"Immediacy" or "direct immediacy"** (*mNgon Sum; Pratyakṣa*): see my discussion of the eighth adamantine topic in the Introduction, where this term occurs as part of the name of the first of the four visions stemming from Direct Transcendence contemplation.

**"Impartial outlook"** (*gZu Bo'i bLo*): see my annotation to TDD 184,5.

**"Incisive vision"** (*Lhag mThong; Vipāśyanā*) **and** **"inner calm"** (*Zhi gNas; Śamatha*): see my brief discussion of these two terms in the section on the eighth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Indicted"** (*La bZla*): this term forms a triad with "confined" (*'Gag bsDam*) and "chained" (*Chings Su bCing*), which Longchenpa uses to structure his discussion of Breakthrough contemplation on TD 339,3ff. The term *La bZla* etymologically means "to cross (*Zla*) a pass (*La*)", and thus is used in the sense of "resolve" (after the long winding journey up to the pass, you finally cross it and see the valleys spread out below). TDCM thus defines *La Zlo Ba* as "to resolve" or "to determine" (*Thag gCod Pa*), as well as "one who has crossed a pass" (*La brGal Zin Pa*), which is based on its definition of *Zlo Ba* as "to transcend" (*'Da' Bar Byed Pa*). Thus Guenther renders it as "to finalize" (*Kindly Bent to Ease Us II* 85), Dorji renders it as "determined" in his thesis, and Tulku Thondup renders it as "one has to reach" (*Buddha Mind* 269). The usage clearly means that you "resolve" all phenomena as being empty, "reveal" them as primordially empty, "penetrate" to their emptiness, or "judge" them to be empty. I have based my translation on the clear legal imagery operative here ("confine" and "chain" the suspect), which Dr. Guenther first pointed out in the context of Longchenpa's NLD as probably being connected to his political problems towards the end of his life, where he was unjustly accused by the fanatic ruler of Tibet at that time, Tā'i Situ Byang Chub rGyal mTshan (Guenther also said that he had seen the term *La bZla* in one passage within a Nyingma tantra that seemed to clearly have the legal meaning of "indict", though he didn't have a page reference). Whether or not *La bZla* ever had the legal sense of "indict", it seems to me an evocative translation given its associations with "confinement" and "chaining", and its

association in NLD with the four "super" commitments (*Dam Tshig Chen Po bZhi*) of the Great Perfection, which are almost like "laws" of the Universe, which no one at all can transgress.

**"Indomitable"** (*Mi mJed; Saha*): this is the name for our particular billionfold galaxy, which consists of one billion worlds like our own. The etymology of *Mi mJed* is said to be "patience", "endurance" or "unfrightened", since despite the pervasive sufferings and emotional distortions that living beings experience in this galaxy, they are able to "endure" and still "fearlessly" engage in spiritual practice to vanquish them. See *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (vol. 1 130, vol. 2 28) for further details on this cosmology.

**"Inhabitants of hell"** (*dMyal Ba; Nāraka*): see "six types of life forms".

**"Inner calm"** (*Zhi gNas; Śamatha*): see "incisive vision and inner calm".

**"Inner winds"** (*rLung; Vāyu*): see "winds".

**Insight** (*Shes Rab; Prajñā*): see "efficacious means" and "insight", as well as "lamp" for the "self emergent insight lamp".

**"Inspiration" or "inspiring blessings"** (*Byin rLabs; Adhiṣṭhāna*): see "blessing".

**"Interdependent origination"** (*rTen 'Brel; Pratītya-samutpāda*): see TDD 193,1ff.

**"Intermediate state"** (*Bar Do; Antarābhava*): see my discussion of the main four types of intermediate states in the explanation of the tenth adamantine topic in my introduction. The four intermediate states are: the ordinary or natural intermediate state (*Rang bZhin Gyi Bar Do; Rang bZhin Du gNas Pa'i Bar Do*), the intermediate state of dying (*'Chi Ka'i Bar Do*), the intermediate state of reality (*Chos Nyid Kyi Bar Do*), and the intermediate state of rebirth or fictive existence (*Srid Pa'i Bar Do*). To this list of four, ZMYT2 78,3ff adds "the intermediate state of contemplation" (*Ting Nge 'Dzin Gyi Bar Do*) and "the intermediate state of dreams" (*rMi Lam Gyi Bar Do*); LYT2 218,1 adds these two, and substitutes "the intermediate state of the abiding Ground" (*gNas Lugs gZhi'i Bar Do*) for "the ordinary intermediate state". By

itself, the term "intermediate state" generally denotes the "intermediate state of reality", i.e. the post-death visions.

**"Internal expanse"** (*Nang dByings*): see "expanse".

**"Internal radiance"** (*Nang gSal*): see "radiance".

**"Introduction"** (*Ngo sProd*): a colloquial term meaning "to introduce" (literally "face-deliver"), this is an important term in Great Perfection literature (it can also mean "identify" or "point out"), and generally describes various symbolic means (crystals, etc.) by which the Master "introduces" you to the fundamental nature of the mind (or some other dimension of contemplation), after which it is up to you to follow up on this "introduction" with sustained contemplation (just as after a friend introduces you to an important person, what you make of that opportunity subsequently is up to you). There is a classical list of twenty one "introductions" discussed in the tradition, and the accounts of the introduction to Direct Transcendence contemplation are quite interesting.

**"Involution"**: see "evolution".

**"Isolate"** (*IDog Pa; Vivartana*): see "conceptual isolate".

**"Karma", "karmic actions"** (*Las; Karma*): see Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind* 214-260.

**"Karmic propensities", "karmic imprints", "latent tendencies"** (*Bag Chags; Vāsanā*): see my discussion in commentary to TDD 234,7.

**"Karmic winds"** (*Las rLung*) **and** **gnostic winds** (*Ye Shes rLung*): see my discussion in commentary to TDD 208-209.

**"Kati crystal tube channel"** (*Ka Ti Shel Gyi sBu Gu Can*): see "luminous channels".

**"Khyung"** (*Khyung Chen*): this is a mythological bird later assimilated to the Indian Garuda, though perhaps originally deriving from other sources. In the Great Perfection texts this "King of Birds" is said to be a magnificent bird with an immense wingspan capable of fabulously swift flight, the chief relevant characteristic of which is that its young are perfectly developed in terms of wings and flight power while still within the egg's encasing shell, such

that the moment the shell is cracked open, they are able to soar into space without pause. This thus serves as the perfect metaphor for the Great Perfection understanding of awareness dwelling within our heart with all its capacities or "dynamic qualities" perfectly intact, though it is obscured by the encasing shell of our neurotic corporeality. Yet the moment we crack through that shell to be spiritually "born", this enlightened energy is able to soar into the expanse immediately without requiring any creation, modification, or supplement to its own intrinsic capacities.

**"The knowable"** (*Shes Bya; Jñeya*): literally "that which is known or cognized", this term is often understood as "the object of knowledge" or "cognitive objects". I have at times rendered it as "the knowable", however, to emphasize its ambiguity, since in the context of primordially where there is only a seamless continuum of pure light energy, we may prefer not to speak of it in terms of discrete "objects" split off from subjects, but rather just as "the knowable" in contrast to "the knowing" (*Shes Pa*). This is related to the ambiguous reference of *Yul*, which is a common term meaning "objects", but can also mean "sphere", and thus refer to the objective sphere which presences to us in our knowing, yet isn't necessarily reducible to "things" and discrete "entities" (see my discussion of the seventh adamantine topic in the introduction).

**"Lamp"** (*sGron Ma; \*Āloke, Pradīpa*): see my discussion of the sixth adamantine topic for a detailed discussion of the four gnostic lamps. The four lamps are as follows: the far ranging noose water lamp (*rGyang Zhags Chu Yi sGron Ma*), the empty seminal nuclei lamp (*Thig Le sTong Pa'i sGron Ma*), the thoroughly pure expanse lamp (*rNam Par Dag Pa'i sGron Ma*), and the self-emergent insight lamp (*Shes Rab Rang Byung Gi sGron Ma*). The fivefold classification found in LYT: the flesh lamp of the Tsitta (*Tsitta Sha'i sGron Ma*), the lamp of the Ground in its abiding reality (*gNas Lugs gZhi'i sGron Ma*), the lamp of the smooth white channel (*dKar 'Jam rTsa'i sGron Ma*), the far ranging water lamp, and the lamp of luminously radiant gnosis (*'Od gSa! Ye Shes Kyi sGron Ma*). the sixfold classification found

in ZMYT: (i) the abiding Ground lamp (*gNas Pa gZhi'i sGron Ma*); (ii) the flesh lamp of the Tsitta; (iii) the lamp of the smooth white channel; (iv) the far ranging noose water lamp; (v) the lamp of the (post-death) intermediate state period (*Bar Do Dus Kyi sGron Ma*); and (vi) the lamp of the ultimate fruit (*mThar Thug 'Bras Bu'i sGron Ma*).

**"Latent tendencies"** (*Bag Chags; Vāsanā*): see "karmic imprints".

**"Laying in the posture of a lion"** (*Seng Ge'i Nyal Lugs*; ): this posture is said to be that assumed by the historical Buddha on this death bed, and is used in some contemplative techniques (the following explains it in the context of men, while the sides will be reversed for women): you lay on your right side with the right hand under the head palm against the cheek, leaving the left side open (it may also involve closing off one of the nostrils with your hand).

**"League"** (*dPag Tshad; Yojana*): a measure of distance classically defined as 4,000 arm-spans, or five times the reach of hearing.

**"Lesser Vehicle"** (*Theg Pa dMan Pa; Hinayāna*): see "Great Vehicle and Lesser Vehicle".

**"Liberative means"** (*Thabs; Upāya*): see "efficacious means".

**"Light channels"** (*'Od rTsa*): see "luminous channels".

**"Lighting-up"** (*sNang Ba*): see "appearance".

**"Lights" or "luminosity"** (*'Od*): see "the five lights".

**"Linked chains"** (*Lu Gu rGyud*): this literally reads "a chain or train (*rGyud*) of lambs (*Lu Gu*)", keeping in mind that "lamb" (*Lu Gu*) refers to young sheep (*Lug*). This refers to the form in which awareness' radiation (*Rig Pa'i gDangs*) first appears to us within the Direct Transcendence visions, which are like minute linked chains of light (these in fact are ordinarily visible to everyone as flickering transparent images especially clear in bright sunlight or against a transparent background like glass, though usually we pay no attention to them in our focus on ordinary objects). In general, they are described as "minute and linked" (*Phra La 'Bren*), and derive from the radiation of the luminous channels (see KGYT2 212,5ff). Initially these linked chains are highly unstable, floating across our field of vision in various shapes without any

way to concentrate on them, and are also compared to "garlands of pearls" with their various loops, translucent pearls, and overall visual appearance. The image of "linked chains of lambs" is thus particularly appropriate, and is based on the common practice in Tibet of connecting a group of lamps with a rope at their neck, such that a long train of linked lamps results (these two elements of the "lambs" and the "rope" also closely resemble the "linked chains" initial appearance in terms of spherical as well as string-like aspects), which the shepherd leads through the hills as for grazing. As these trains of lambs wind their way up and down the mountain sides, they visually appear like an undulating rope continually looping and coiling around itself, and in constant movement, just as the "linked chains" of light are initially constantly moving. By extension, this term can also mean "continuous" or any type of chain or rope of interconnected links (see DAS), and I have thus translated it as "linked chains". These are also referred to as "adamantine linked chains" (*rDo rJe Lu Gu rGyud*) to indicate their status as high intensity radiation of awareness, which as such contain the seed potency of the Spiritual Bodies. While in actuality they thus form the main focus of Direct Transcendence contemplation, initially their constant flickering movements (generally downwards out of the range of your vision) make it impossible to focus on them, and thus as provisional technique we instead focus on the rainbow-colored appearances of the empty seminal nuclei and expanse lamps. These linked chains' movements gradually settle down until they become immobile via our application of the key points of application and unwavering gaze, until ultimately they are perfectly still against the expanse's rainbow-colored background (imaged as "imprisoning the linked chains within the expanse), whereupon you can fix your gaze upon them directly. In the third vision, these linked chains then spontaneously transform or ripen into the mandala of deities that form the vision of the peaceful and wrathful deities appearing across the sky at that point (which is technically referred to as "awareness ripening into the Spiritual Bodies").

**"Lion posture"** (*Seng Ge'i Nyal Lugs*): see "laying in the posture of a lion".

**"Listeners"** (*Nyan Thos; Śrāvaka*): the first (and lowest) spiritual vehicle within the standard nine vehicle classification used by the Nyingma sect.

**"Little tip channel"** (*rTse Chung*): see my discussion in commentary to TDD 245,2, 248,4, and 251,1.

**"Logic"**: I generally use this term to refer to implicitly or explicitly syllogistic reasoning, and the tendency to perpetuate the illusion that all rigorous thought must be based on such considerations under the guise of promoting "clarity" and "reason" (a tendency undercut by the notion of "poetic thought").

**"Lotus"** (*Pad Ma; Padma*): the lotus flower is commonly used as an image in Tibetan Buddhism, and its evocative power stems from how its roots extend down into the mud of a swamp, yet its flower opens up in pristine beauty reach up towards the open sky, unsullied by the filthy mud below it. It thus serves as the perfect image for awareness, which is present within the filth and pollution of cyclic existence, yet somehow remains unsullied by it as the pristine lotus of our heart. The lotus is also one of the five spiritual affinities (see TDD 225,3ff), and in terms of sex yoga refers to the woman's vagina while the "vajra" or scepter (*rDo rJe*) signifies the male's penis. "Lotus" also is especially important in the Great Perfection teachings due to the critical importance Padmasambhava was said to have played in the early transmission of these teachings to Tibet, whose name literally means "lotus-born".

**"Lotus posture"** (*rDo rJe sKyil Krung; Vajra-paryaka*): literally, "the adamantine crossed legs", this basic posture for meditation has become well known in English as "the lotus posture". This posture is often expanded to include the following characteristics in accounts of the "seven-point posture of the Illuminator" (*rNam Par sNang mDzad Kyi Chos bDun*): (i) the legs are crossed in the lotus posture with the right one over the left one; (ii) the hands are in the gesture of meditative equanimity, with the right hand atop the left hand (palms facing upwards); (iii) the waist and back is kept as straight as a stack of coins; (iv) the neck is slightly bent; (v) the eyes are focused on the tip of the nose; (vi) the tongue's tip curls upward to touch

the palate; (vii) the lips and teeth are relaxed in their natural position; and in particular your gaze should be focused on space about twelve finger widths from the middle of the eyebrows, you shouldn't speak, and you shouldn't indulge in thought as you settle into the range of space (these seven points are described in slightly different ways in different texts, and the preceding account is drawn from Longchenpa's GGC 500,3).

**"Lower order"**: see "two truths".

**"Lukhang murals"**: this refers to the famous kLu Khang island temple located behind the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet. The top floor of this temple contains unusual annotated murals on the north and west walls which depict many of the contemplative practices and visions described in TDD. I recorded these annotations by hand and photograph in 1990 and 1991, and eventually plan some type of study of them.

**"Luminous channels"** (*'Od rTsa*): see "channels, inner winds, and seminal nuclei". These channels of pure light energy are a unique facet of subtle body theory in the Great Perfection tradition, and are discussed in detail in Chapter Five: the great golden kati channel (*Ka Ti gSer Gyi rTsa Chen*), the crystal tube channel (*Shel Bug Can*), the white silk thread channel (*Dar dKar sNal Ma*), the slender coil channel (*Phra La 'Khril Ba*), and the naturally free empty channel (*sTong Pa Rang Grol*).

**"Luminously radiant"** (*'Od gSal; Prabhāsvara*): see "radiant light".

**"Lymph"** (*Chu Ser*): literally "yellow water", this term derives from Tibetan medical theory, which we have yet to seriously research in the West. Blood and lymph are said to be the fluid parts of the body which provide moisturization, and as such derive from the element of water-energy. The latter is described as red in color like gold water, derives from the solidified dimension (*sNyigs Ma*) of blood and the vibrant dimension (*Dwangs Ma*) of bile, and exists in joints, between the flesh and skin, and so on. TDD 207,2 says that blood generates lymph, while lymph generates the conventional seminal nuclei.



**"Magical illusion"** (*sGyu Ma; Māyā*): something that vividly appears, but has no ontological solidity beyond the perception of it.

**"Mahayoga"** (*Ma Ha Yo Ga; Mahā-yoga*): see "Atiyoga".

**"Mandala"** (*dKyil 'Khor; Maṇḍala*): I have treated the well-known "mandala" as part of the English language at this point; the Tibetan term literally reads "center (*dKyil*) and periphery (*'Khor*)", "revolving around a center", or "whirling out from the center", like a spiral. While its best known significance is in terms of symmetrical arrangements of deities arranged around a centering deity or group of deities, the term is used frequently in its etymological sense to refer to any integrated "configuration" of a central dynamic dimension that radiates out energy in holistic patterns or gestalts.

**"Mandala of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities"** (*Zhi Khro Rigs brGya*): see "one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities".

**"Mandalic center"** (*dKyil*): this literally means "center", but often implies the term "mandala" (*dKyil 'Khor*), and thus a dynamic center around which activity organizes itself.

**"Mañjuśrī"** (*'Jam dPal; Mañjuśrī*): a famous Spiritual Hero, whose name literally means "smooth/gentle (*'Jam*) glory (*dPal*); he is also referred to as "smooth voiced" or "sweet sounding" (*'Jam dByangs; Mañjughoṣa*), and thus I have referred to him as "the Eloquent One".

**"Mantra"** (*sNgags; Mantra*): as with "mandala", I have translated this term with its corresponding Sanskrit original, which by become a part of the English language.

**"Material environment and life forms therein"** (*sNod bCud; Bhājana-sattva*): see "appearances and the fictive worlds therein".

**"Means"** (*Thabs; Upāya*): see "efficacious means".

**"Means of concentration"** (*Sems 'Dzin*): "see twenty one means of concentration".

**"Measures"** (*Tshad*): see "signs and measures".

**"Meditation"** (*sGom; Bhāvanā*): Longchenpa at times defines this term in a special restricted sense, but often just uses it vaguely in its colloquial sense, which resembles how we say "to meditate".

**"Meditative fruit"** (*Ḍras Bu; Phala*): see "fruit".

**"Meditative state"** (*bSam gTan; Dhyāna*) and **"formless meditative absorptions"** (*gZugs Med Pa'i sNyoms 'Jug bZhi; Samāpatti*): see Zahler's *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism* for a detailed account of these, which represent both a phenomenology of altered states of consciousness accessible through contemplative techniques, as well as description of the states of being which one can be reborn into. As stations of rebirth as a "deity" (one of the six life forms), the four meditative states constitute the "form realm" and the four formless meditative absorptions constitute the "formless realm", which along with the "desire realm" of coarse corporeal existence, are the three realms of cyclic existence (such that "meditative state gods" (*bSam gTan Lha*) and so on are spoken of, which simply refer to living beings who have temporarily taken rebirth as a "god"). These are a standard classification of exoteric Buddhism, and as such, are occasionally referred to by Longchenpa.

**"Memory", "attention", "memory-based psyche", "ego-memory", "instinctive ego-memory"** (*Dran Pa; Smṛti*) or **"memory-based thought activity"** (*Dran bSam*): *Dran Pa* is usually defined as "that which prevents forgetting or forgetfulness", and hence ordinarily means "mindfulness" in contemplation or "memory", in the latter sense it is often said that "memory" (*Dran*) is reflection on a past objects or events (*'Das Pa'i Yul Kyi dMigs Pa*), while "thought" (*bSam*) concerns objects or events in the present. In this sense, the common thread is the psyche's sustained focus on a particular object (whether sensory or abstract), which it "keeps in mind" or "remembers"; thus in addition to its usual meaning of "memory", it can mean "mindfulness", "recollection", "attention", "keep in mind", or even "consciousness", i.e. our self-awareness of our self, or presence of mind. Colloquially, the term means "memory" or "recollection" as well as being used verbally as "to recall", "to remember", and even "to miss"

(i.e. "I miss home" in the sense that it is constantly coming to my mind); significantly, *Dran Pa brGyal* means "to faint" and "to lose consciousness", *Dran Pa Med Pa* means "unconscious", *Dran Pa gSo* means "to regain consciousness" or "revive", and *Dran Par 'Gyur* means "to regain consciousness" (see Goldstein's TEDM, DAS, etc.). In nomadic dialects, the term *Dran* is used verbally to convey "that's how I think", "that's how I see it", "in my opinion", or "that's how it seems to me". In these ways, *Dran Pa* can also signify "consciousness" in terms of our self-conscious awareness of ourselves as individual agents within a wider environment (whereas *rNam Shes* signifies particular cognitive modalities and operations), or even "the ego" keeping tight watch on everything, maintaining coherence as it directs our psychic and emotional energy via its ongoing "memory" and self-conscious attention to its own processes (such that with fainting the ego temporarily loses control, and thus this "ego-memory" is absent"); this sense can be understood as a variation of *Dran Pa* as memory or attention, since we "recollect" ourselves in self-consciousness from instant to instant, stringing together the story of our lives.

*Dran Pa* is a very frequent term in Longchenpa's corpus both by itself and in compounds, such as *Dran Rig*, *Dran bSam*, and *Dran rTog*. In line with his general precise use of terminology, Longchenpa strictly differentiates *Dran Pa*, *Dran bSam*, and *Dran rTog* from *Dran Rig*, the former referring to intrinsically neurotic, distorted psychic activity, and the latter to optimal non-dual knowing (just as the term *Shes Pa* is at times seemingly used neutrally in contrast to its two modes as *Ye Shes* and *rNam Shes*, it may be at times that *Dran Pa* is used neutrally in contrast to its two modes as *Dran rTog/Dran bSam* and *Dran Rig*, though on the whole it would seem Longchenpa's uses *Dran Pa* as a negative term grouped with *Dran bSam* and *Dran Rig* - in connection to this, it may also be that the *Shes Pa* group of terms tends to deal with psychic activity as oriented towards externality, whereas the *Dran Pa* group of terms as a whole tends to deal with psychic activity as oriented towards internality). Given the vagueness of the term *Dran Pa*, it would seem advisable to explore every possible resonance

of its use in Longchenpa's thought; the special term used to refer to the heart wheel is *Dran Pa 'Dus Pa'i 'Khor Lo*. In *Dran rTog* and *Dran bSam*, *rTog* generally refers to "divisive conceptuality/reification" and *bSam* to "ordinary thought": both terms by definition apply only to the distorted, dualistic, alienated psyches of ordinary sentient beings, and as such are absent within the enlightened state. A typical passage can be found on ZMYT1 447,5 concerning the Reality Body:

*...though its essence is empty, it doesn't lapse into nothingness; though its nature is radiant, it can't be established in terms of concrete characteristics; and though its compassionate resonance is aware, it doesn't waver into ego-memory (driven) reifications (Dran rTog)".*

TDD 237,1-2

*The Reality Body is the exhaustion of contamination;  
Empty and radiant, it is pervasive in that radiance;  
Not polluted by ordinary thought (bSam Pas), it is cleansed of instinctive ego-memory (Dran Pa).*

TDD 327,7-328,1 talks about identifying the space between the previous and subsequent *Dran rTog*, which is the non-conceptual state you must find in contemplation. In such contexts (aside from the obvious sense of *Dran Pa* indicating this psychic activity is a mode of "attention" to something), one connotation is that this distorting reification and neurotic emotionality derives from karmic memory traces in the "universal psychic ground" (*Kun gZhi*), i.e. the so-called "karmic propensities" (*Bag Chags*), which constitute a type of unconscious karmic "memory" extending over many lifetimes, and comprehensively influences our current psychic activity. In addition, *Dran Pa* connotes the obsessive nature of neurotic thought, that it is driven by symbolic projects in the unconscious to attempt in twisted ways to re-institute the primal undifferentiated unity that we sense or "remember", and thus are driven in these neurotic symbolic dramas which we "can't forget" (in this sense psychoanalysis reveals this primal union we unconsciously remember, a powerful latent memory which fuels our present psychic activity at a largely unconscious level). In relation to its general meaning of "memory", i.e. that we are previously acquainted with something and thus don't forget it, acting as an antidote to

distraction and forgetfulness as it keeps us focused, the ego keeps us constantly aware of our alienation as it continues to focus us on the rigid barrier between self and other (recollecting our alienation and separateness), desperate to block "forgetfulness" of this rigid dualism at all cost, since the absence of memory will be experienced as the death of the ego, which cares nothing for the consequent spiritual rebirth such death engenders. Thus *Dran Pa* in this negative sense connotes a sense of separate self, the lingering memory of unity symbolically twisted in our suffering worlds, the superego watching over as the "police" of this distorted internal world, the universal ground as "super memory" with its network of karmic seeds derived from endless lifetimes, and above all the ego-logical project of sustaining the illusion of separateness, which at all costs must be "recollected" and "kept in mind".

At the same time, memory is also the key to liberation, since the crucial element in enlightenment is "recognition" (*Ngo Shes*), i.e. recalling that which we once knew. In fact, even in our current distorted alienated psychic activity, we somehow also participate in Being, not only in our being driven by the ongoing memory of the unitary source, but also in that our own psyche is a faint echo of the inherent intelligence of Being itself. This also leads us to the question of whether we remember being, or if Being remembers us, that somehow we are driven by Being's re-collection of itself to itself. In enlightenment we must surrender the memory of the karma-traced universal ground, and give up our jealously guarded "sense" of ourselves as separate, discrete ego, and enter the "no mind" of Zen beyond this ego-logical distorted memory, no longer conditioned and neuroticized by our memory of endless lifetimes of obsessive ignorance, no longer self-consciously aware of ourselves as alienated, isolated individuals, and no longer chasing through our unconscious after the faint memory of our long forgotten pristine source. Yet just as "no self" merely prepares us for the true mystery of self, "no memory" doesn't entail the Awakened One fades away like mist at daybreak or becomes a fool devoid of even a coherent sense of him/herself, and thus we speak of *Dran Rig*, pure awareness (*Rig*) which "recollects" (*Dran*). Thus the enlightened state entails being fully

aware of its own primordial source without the slightest distraction into cathexis, distorted emotions, and corporeality, awareness which possesses full memory of the empty radiance of mind-as-such, and thus recognizes everything it encounters as the self-presencing of its own inherent gnostic energy, divested of every vestige of the long night of forgetting. Also see Guenther's translation of *The Royal Song of Saraha* (11ff,169ff) for extensive discussions of "memory" and "nonmemory" by sKye Med bDe Chen and Kar Ma 'Phrin Las Pa. In addition, SUNY has announced a work edited by Janet Gyatso entitled *Mindfulness and the Mirror of Memory* due out by September 1992, which supposedly contains an article on "memory" in the Great Perfection tradition by an unspecified author. Hopefully that essay will supersede my own hasty remarks on the subject.

**"Mental images"** (*Chos; Dharma*): see "phenomena".

**Mental states or mental factors** (*Sems Byung; Caitta*): this are generally classified into a standard set of fifty one, and refer to the various "operations" or "factors" which characterize the mind's discursive thought processes and emotional reactions. See the extensive discussion in Hopkins' *Meditation On Emptiness* 238ff.

**Mind** (*Sems; Citta*): see the extensive discussion at the end of TDD's Chapter Four concerning the distinction between "mind" and "primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*). It must be kept in mind that the "mind" is intrinsically neurotic in structure, and as such is contrasted to the "Enlightened Mind" (*Thugs*) of the Awakened One. The complex of non-optimal distorted psychic operations termed "mind" is understood as the derivative of primordial gnosis' radiation under the general conditions of non-recognition, such that TLKS 445,1ff says the mind and primordial gnosis cannot be said to be "one" or "different": the mind is the "dynamism" of primordial gnosis, which is the mind's "foundation".

**"Mind-as-such"** (*Sems Nyid*): this important term is defined on TCD2 42,6 as referring to the "nature of the mind" (*Sems Kyi Rang bZhin*) or "the abiding reality of the mind" (*Sems Kyi gNas Lugs*), and relates it to the famous line from *The Transcendental Consummation of*

*Insight in Eight Thousand Lines* that says "the mind is not the mind; the mind's nature is radiant light". *Nyid* is usually a reflexive meaning "itself", but in the present sense indicates the preceding term's "abiding reality" or "ultimate nature", and connotes dynamic vibrant energy. This is similar to the term *Chos Nyid*, which signifies the abiding reality of all phenomena (*Chos*), i.e. the vibrant possibilizing emptiness which is their source and reality. Often a subtle distinction is drawn between "awareness" (*Rig Pa*) and "mind-as-such", such as TCD2 52,1, which speaks of "awareness" and "the mind-as-such which emerges from awareness" (*Rig Pa Las Byung Ba'i Sems Nyid*).

**"Minor or minute seminal nuclei"** (*Thig Phran*): literally "minor seminal nuclei", this refers to the visual appearance of minute circles of light smaller than the major seminal nuclei. I am unsure of the significance of this term beyond that. Dr. Guenther related an amusing story concerning this term: when he asked Bya Bral Rinpoche (a famous Tibetan Lama who speaks little English) about this term, he was told they were "baby thikle".

**"Mirror-disc"** (*Me Long (Gi dKyiil 'Khor)*): this can simply mean "mirror", but often refers to a ritual item of special symbolic significance to the Great Perfection tradition. They are highly polished discs made of varying metallic or precious substances, which on the average are perhaps five inches in diameter. Longchenpa uses this term to describe the seminal nuclei appearing in the Direct Transcendence contemplations based on the visual resemblance, since both are perfectly circular and radiant, in addition to the "mirror-discs" often having smaller circles in a mandalic arrangement of five, just as the nuclei gather in groups of five. In other contexts, the term "mirror disc" is used to indicate the size of these seminal nuclei at a given point (about the five inches in diameter, the size of a typical mirror-disc), since these nuclei usually appear initially as pea-sized circles of light, and then sequentially increase in size until they appear as vast circles filling the sky.

**"Mystic fire"** (*gTum Mo; Caṅḍāli*): literally "fierce woman" or "savage woman", this refers to a standard contemplative technique utilized in many lower order meditation systems

(such as detailed in TDD 320-321), and which is centered around a visualized flame blazing up from near the area of the navel. See Guenther's *The Life and Teaching of Naropa* 53ff and 158ff ("mystic fire", and Geshe Gyatso's *Clear light of Bliss* 33ff ("inner fire").

**"Naro letter"** (*Yi Ge Na Ro*): this is one of the four Tibetan vowels (transliterated in English as "o"), and in written form resembles two wings of a bird coming together when viewed from a distance. It is thus often referred to by Longchenpa to describe the initial manifestation of the expanse lamp in the Direct Transcendence contemplations, which appears in the space in front of us in a form resembling a dark blue "Naro" letter (other sources describe it as a rainbow-colored form against a dark blue background). With sustained contemplation, this form eventually expands outwards into much larger rainbow-colored forms that are generally described as circular overall, with a variety of internal patterns.

**"Naturally", "natural"** (*Rang, Rang bZhin Gyi, Rang bZhin Gyis*): see "self".

**"Natural Emanations"** (*Rang bZhin sPrul sKu*): see "pure land of natural emanations".

**"Naturally free empty channel"** (*sTong Pa Rang Grol*): see "luminous channels".

**"Nature"** (*Rang bZhin; \*Svabhāva*): see "essence, nature and compassionate resonance".

**"Neurosis", "neurotic", "neuroticization"; "neurotic thought activity", "neurotic conceptuality"** (*rNam rTog; Vikalpa*): *rNam* literally means "aspect", "part", "form", "difference", "separate", or "divisions", while *rTog Pa* means "to consider", "to analyze", "to think", "to reflect on", or "ideation"; together, they signify "divisive conceptuality" that is obsessed with reifying, objectifying and granulizing experience into discrete things. Thus *rNam rTog* indicates the universal neurosis of all life, which involves the constant projection of symbolic images and concepts onto our experience as driven by our emotionally distorted search for union and separation, such that we substitute our frames for the immediacy of experience, and attempt to reduce everything to our own ideas, abstractions, and feelings, as well as unconsciously projecting an intricate symbolic overlay of images onto our experience of other people, things, and events, creating a symbolic landscape through which we journey in



the light of day. *rNam rTog* also indicates the inherent instability of our psyche with its constantly changing fantasies, cathexis and distraction, which is thus totally unable to contemplatively "tune in" to the empty radiance of reality, since it insists on "thinking about" it, reducing to its own categories, and in general substituting its own images for that which presences to it. The necessity of "non-conceptual" (*Mi rTog Pa*) awareness doesn't mean the cessation of psychic activity or the forsaking of abstract through processes, but rather denotes the cessation of this neurotic thought activity with its emotional distortions, ceaseless cathexis, aggressive reduction of experience to conceptual frames, and the unconscious projection of symbolic images onto reality, people, and things.

**"Nihilism"** (*Chad Pa; Uccheda*): see "eternalism and nihilism".

**"Nine Spiritual Vehicles"** (*Theg Pa dGu; Yāna*): see my comments in the "Overview of the Great Perfection" section of my introduction.

**"Nirvana"** (*Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa; Nirvāṇa*): see "transcendence".

**"Non-conceptual"** (*Mi rTog Pa; Akalpya, Akalpana*): see "neurotic".

**"Non-dual"** (*gNyas Su Med Pa; Advya*): "non-dual" indicates the ultimate illusion of the split between self and other, subjectivity and objectivity, and in general all the fragmentation that ensues when the Ground-presencing fails to self-recognize itself. See my discussion under "self-presencing".

**"Non-honorific"**: see "honorific and non-honorific terms".

**"Non-humans" or "non-human spirits"** (*Mi Ma Yin*): gods and demons who have no concrete form, i.e. the immaterial spirits which haunt the boundaries of our subconscious and at times assume a semi-material form by force of our own hopes and fears (see TDD 427,2).

**"Nuclei"** (*Thig Le; Bindu*): an abbreviation of "seminal nuclei".

**"Nucleus"** (*sNying Po; Garbha*): literally meaning "core" or "nucleus" such as the "core" of a tree or the sun, this is usually an abbreviation of the "enlightened nucleus" (see there). Because it is used to indicate this dynamic center-point radiating energy outwards (such as the

core of the sun which ceaselessly radiates light outwards), some scholars have rendered it as "energy pulse" (Lipman's *Primordial Experience* 152), "energy" (Guenther's *Matrix of Mystery* 221, 230, etc.), "evolutionary dynamics" (Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 237), "the total system's energy" (Ibid., 287), or "the thrust toward it(self)" (Ibid., 133).

**Nyingma sect** (*rNying Ma*): see "Gelukpa sect".

**"Object" or "objective sphere"** (*Yul*): see my discussion of the seventh adamantine topic on the ambiguity of *Yul*, which means "objects" that are perceived, as well as the "sphere" in which something shines forth (deriving from its common meaning of "location" or "region"), or the "domain" of a given factor's operations. TLKS 310 defines *Yul* as "the location/site of its residence, and its manifestation/appearance", and in the Chapter Six of TDD Longchenpa uses *Yul* as an analytical heading to describe how each of the gnostic lamps appears "objectively" to us in the Direct Transcendence visions, i.e. its mode of appearance, or how it appears to us. Often the *Yul*, or "objective sphere", in this context is identified as the sky, which plays off the ambiguity of *Yul* to refer to both our inner luminosity entering the exterior "sphere" (*Yul*) of the sky from the depths of our heart, as well as our thereby cognizing it within that exterior sphere as an external "object" (*Yul*) of our perception.

**"Objectification"** (*dMigs Pa*; *Ālambana*): this term can denote acts of perception or visualization as well as the observable objects which form the content of such perception or visualization. To connote both the noetic and noematic, I render it as "objectification" "referential" (also see the "four conditions", which includes *dMigs Pa'i rKyen*), both of which also emphasize *dMigs Pa* essentially refers to intentional processes. In terms of ordinary thought processes, *dMigs Pa* tends to connote referential psychic activity that focused on discrete things, which it "objectifies" or "reifies" out from the entire field; as forced visualization, it contrast to the spontaneous vision which naturally unfolds in Direct Transcendence contemplation.

**"Obscurations"** (*sGrib Ba*; *Āvaraṇa*): see "two types of obscurations".

**"One hundred peaceful and wrathful deities"** (*Zhi Khro Rigs brGya*): the mandala of one hundred "peaceful" (*Zhi*) and "wrathful" (*Lha*) deities is generally said to appear to all living beings within the post-death visions of the intermediate state, and in this context have been described in detail by Lauf in his *Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Books of the Dead*. Longchenpa describes these intensely symbolic mandalas of rainbow-colored light in detail in GGC, his main commentary on *The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra*. The center of these mandalas is formed by the five Buddhas in sexual union with their respective consorts, whom appear in both peaceful and wrathful forms (see my discussion under "body"). This presencing of awareness' natural radiation forms the essence of the Ground-presencing, and as such, also forms the semi-culmination of Direct Transcendence contemplation, where in the third visions their luminous mandalas fill the sky after shining forth from within our body via our eyes. In general, the mandala of 42 peaceful deities is said to be present within the heart of all living beings within the *Tsitta* palace, while their radiation is present as the mandala of 58 wrathful deities in the skull, referred to imagistically as the "Conch Shell House" (*Dung Khang*). See my commentary to TDD 229,5ff in Chapter Four.

**"One of the Select"** (*Rigs lDan*): literally "embodying the spiritual family" or "possessing the lineage", this refers to a visionary who via spiritual contemplation has brought to the fore the latent spiritual affinity with enlightened awareness that is present within us all.

**"Ontological difference"**: see "Being".

**"Original purity"** (*Ka Dag*) and **"spontaneous presence"** (*Lhun Grub*; \**Anābhoga*): *Lhun Grub* is a common term meaning "spontaneous" and connoting "effortless" and "natural"; *Ka Dag* is a neologism only found in Great Perfection works, which literally means "pure (*Dag*) from the letter "A", "Ka" being the first letter of the Tibetan alphabet. Thus *Ka* implies *Ka Nas* ("from Ka"), and signifies not only that this purity is primordial (present from the beginning rather than adventitious or temporary), but also that it is total and applies in every aspect. Longchenpa consistently explains this "original purity" as referring to "emptiness"

(*sTong Pa Nyid*), and "spontaneous presence" as signifying the dynamic light energy that is inherent within that emptiness (usually glossed as "the spontaneous presence of all the dynamic qualities of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses). Thus these two terms refer to the two main characteristics of the Ground, which is simultaneously utterly empty and spontaneously dynamic, such that it can be characterized as a dynamic nothingness, or an empty dynamic radiance: while nothing exists as such within the pure potential and virtual reality of original purity, the dynamism of its spontaneous presence gives rise to the Ground-presencing as its pure source-potential, and thus the vast cosmos of cyclic existence and transcendent reality comes into existence across the horizon of its self-exteriorization. Simultaneity of emptiness and dynamic radiance as referred to by "original purity" and "spontaneous purity" is also further divided into the triad of the Ground's essence (its emptiness or original purity), its nature (radiance) and compassionate resonance (self-organizing intelligence), with the latter two aspects correlating to spontaneous presence (see under "essence, nature and compassionate resonance" as well as under "compassionate resonance"). See the extensive discussion of these terms in Chapter One, as well as my discussion of the first adamantine topic in the introduction.

Finally it should be noted that *Ka Dag* contrasts with the term *rNam Dag*, which literally means "aspect-pure", or "pure in its observable facets", "pure in its features", "visually pure", or "pure in its looks". *rNam Dag* is associated with spontaneous presence in that it is the purity of energy in actualized presencing, whereas *Ka Dag* is the utter purity of virtual reality totally devoid of any actualized dimensions as any-thing at all. Thus *Ka Dag* is correlated to the Ground's essence (*Ngo Bo*) which is utterly pure in its emptiness, while *rNam Dag* is often correlated with the Ground's nature (*Rang bZhin*) which is "thoroughly pure" or "pure in how it looks" in its dynamic luminosity. *rNam Dag* can also describe how something is pure throughout its manifestations and dynamics, a purity which co-exists in and as the actual manifestations. *Ka Dag* means no-thing at all is established in any way right from the beginning, just as if the first letter of the alphabet ("Ka") isn't established, then none of the

subsequent letters will be either; *rNam Dag* is looking at the continuing purity that applies even within the ceaseless dynamism that this emptiness gives rise to, the gnostic radiation which remains stainless throughout with being materialized or distorted despite the adventitious clouds of the storm that gathers on its horizon. We can also correlate *Ka Dag* to internal radiance, and *rNam Dag* to external radiance. TLKS 310 defines "thoroughly pure" appearance (or "lighting-up") as "appearance devoid of plurality", and defines the "thoroughly pure expanse" as "free of minute dust particles since the solidified elements are not present within it, and it possesses the potency for primordial gnosis's radiation shining forth".

**"Ornamentation"** (*rGyan*): see "dynamism".

**"Own-place" and "own-site"** (*Rang Sa*): see "citadel".

**"Passage beyond misery"** (*Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa; Nirvāṇa*): see "cyclic existence and transcendence".

**"Path"** (*Lam; Mārga*): "path" refers to the spiritual path which we must journey down to arrive at our true destination, which is none other than enlightenment into the Ground's internal expanse. In addition, "path" forms a triad with the "Ground" (*gZhi*) as the starting point, origin and base, and the "fruit" or "culmination" (*Bras Bu*), the climaxing enlightenment which all paths eventually lead to. In this sense, "path" can also have a sense of "involution" and "evolution" between the formless self-contained absence of the Ground prior to time and space, and the ultimate self-recognition of the Universe in the culminating event of Buddhahood, where the journey arrives back at its point of departure, but only now recognizes the true significance and value of its home.

**"Path manifestations" or "path-visions"** (*Lam sNang*): "path-visions" or "presencing along the spiritual path" indicates visions experienced while still on the spiritual journey back to the source, the visionary who has yet to arrive at his "own-place" (*Rang Sa*) of enlightenment and the definitive awakening of Buddhahood. In particular, this term is used to signify how in Direct Transcendence contemplation the transcendent presences of the Buddha's three Spiritual

Bodies actually light-up to our naked eyes, even while we remain on the spiritual path not yet arrived at the citadel of Buddhahood. In addition, at times it seems "path-manifestations" connotes the "path" in the sense of the evolutionary path (see "path" above), and not just the restricted sense of the contemplative path. Finally, see under "Ground-presencing" for a significant ZMYT passage explaining the differences between the Ground-presencing (*gZhi sNang*), path-presencing (*Lam sNang*), and fruit/climax-presencing (*Bras Bu*).

**"Peaceful and wrathful deities"** (*Zhi Khro*): see "one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities".

**"Penetrating"** (*Zang Thal*): see "unimpeded".

**"Perceptual consciousness"** (*rNam Par Shes Pa; Vijñāna*): see "consciousness".

**"Perfect characteristics and exemplary forms of an enlightened being"** (*mTshan dPe*): see "the thirty two perfect characteristics and eight exemplary forms of an enlightened being".

**"Perfection phase"** (*rDzogs Rim; Niṣpanna-krama*): see "generation and perfection phases of tantric meditation".

**"Permanence"** (*rTag Pa; Śāśva, Nitya*) and **"annihilation"** (*Chad Pa; Uccheda*): see "eternalism".

**"Phenomena"** (*Chos; Dharma*): the term *Chos* is extremely wide-ranging in reference. It is the principal term to refer to the Buddha's "spiritual precepts" or "teachings", and as such refers to the "religion" or "spiritual path" of Buddhism as a whole - colloquially, *Chos* clearly is used in the sense of "religious", or the "spiritual life", as opposed to materialistic mundane pursuits (one "does" *Chos* in the sense of offerings, contemplation, and so on). However, the term *Chos* is also frequently used in the sense of "all phenomena" (*Chos Thams Cad*), as well as having the specific meaning of the "mental images" which are the object of the sixth mode of consciousness (that of "intellectual" or "conceptual" operations), just as the five sensory modes of consciousness have the corresponding five types of sensory objects as their respective

objects (i.e. visual consciousness perceives colors and shapes, auditory consciousness perceives sounds, and so on).

A related term of particular importance is *Chos Nyid (Dharmatā)*, which literally means "phenomena-as-such" (*Nyid* usually meaning "itself", "exclusively", "precisely", or "barely"), and signifies the ultimate nature of all phenomena as dynamic emptiness (*Nyid*) which lights-up (*sNang Ba*) as phenomena (*Chos*), the "vibrancy" (*Nyid*) that makes all "phenomena" (*Chos*) possible. This term is part of the names of the first and fourth of the four visions of Direct Transcendence contemplation: the vibrant luminosity appearing in the first vision is termed "reality" lighting-up in direct immediacy, while the dissolution of those visions within the fourth vision is referred to as the dissolution within "reality", since the initial source always ends up as the ultimate destination. In the context of the first vision, ZMYT1 218,1-2 defines "reality" as ""this very vision is of the depth-radiant spontaneous presence existing within the space of the great original purity of awareness' empty and radiant enlightened mind", while "immediacy" refers to seeing this in rainbow-colored light with you own eyes in the space surrounding you. *Chos Nyid* also contrasts to term *Chos Can*, literally "possessed of qualities" or "possessing phenomena-ness", i.e. "phenomenal appearances". As TCD2 118,1ff clearly explains, "reality" (*Chos Nyid*) corresponds to the internal radiance of pure potential ("the essence" (*Ngo Bo*)), while "phenomenal appearances" (*Chos Can*) corresponds to the external radiance of actualized manifestations or lighting-up ("the observable facets" (*rNam Pa*)). "Phenomenal appearances" include normal distorted appearances as well as the pure gnostic presences of the four visions (which are both "external radiance" in contrast to "internal radiance"), since even the latter must eventually dissolve within the expanse of reality in the attainment of enlightenment (see TDD 398,2).

**"Phenomenal appearances"** (*Chos Can*): see "phenomena"

**"Phenomenology"**: I generally use the term "phenomenological" quite loosely to emphasize the experiential rather than intellectual nature of a given dimension, though in

general I think the phenomenological practices articulated by Husserl and others will ultimately prove of great value in creating a paradigm to understand the various contemplative traditions of Buddhist systems.

**"Playfulness" or "play"** (*Rol Pa; \*Lilā*): see "dynamism".

**"Portico"** (*rTa Babs*): a feature of real or imagined palaces consisting of columns with elaborate ornate "pediments" standing outside the main gateways. Literally this reads "descend from the horse", since in ancient times these were said to mark the spot where guests had to dismount as a sign of respect.

**"Post death visions"** (*Chos Nyid Bar Do'i sNang Ba*): this refers to the visions taking place in the "intermediate state of reality" following death. See "intermediate state".

**"Post-contemplative state or post-contemplative awareness"** (*rJes Thob; Prṣṭalabdha*): see "contemplative equanimity and post-meditative awareness".

**"Postures"** (*Dug sTangs*): see "three watching postures".

**"Practice"** (*Nyams Su Len Pa*): literally "take into your own experience", this refers to experiential realization that goes beyond simple intellectual comprehension or conventional aesthetic experiences to transform the depth-structures of your own psycho-physical corporeality and neurosis. See my discussion of the eighth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Practitioner"** (*rNal 'Byor Pa; Yogin*): see "visionary".

**"Presence", "presences" or "presencing"** (*sNang Ba; Ābhāsa*): see "appearance".

**"Primordially" or "primordially"** (*Ye Nas*): in contrast to the term *Thog Ma* (which literally means "beginning") or the term *gDod Ma* ("primeval"), both of which can at times be used synonymously with *Ye Nas*, "primordial" (*Ye Nas*) never signifies the so-called early history of the Universe or even its very inception, but rather indicates the pristine state of the Ground in its pure virtual intensity prior to all actualization, the fundamental source-potential beyond which there is nothing. At the same time, its significance is not restricted to a



cosmogonic reference far removed from our own experience, since it simultaneously evokes our own primordial state as revealed in our pristine intensity of awareness, that instant before it is conditioned, dissipated in endless cathexis of libidinal energy, before everything hardens into place with alienation, fragmentation, fear and desire. This primordality of the Universe's resonating intelligence always connotes internal radiance (*Nang gSal*) or pure potential, since all external radiance (*Phyir gSal*) in actualized forms always returns back to its source as waves rise and fall, yet never leave the ocean's profound vastness. The term "primordial" must be understood in strict contrast to "adventitious" (*gLo Bur*), that which is temporary, incidental and fleeting.

**"Primordial gnosis"** (*Ye Shes; Jñāna*): literally "primordial (*Ye*) knowing (*Shes*)" or the "knowing stemming from that which is primordial", this term's etymological roots are emphatically stressed in the Great Perfection tradition as referring to the primordial gnostic intelligence of the Universe, the knowing of Being seeking itself (TDD 187,1). This primordial gnosis is the driving dynamic of the Ground's self-exteriorization into the Ground-presencing, and thus clearly indicates how intelligence is intrinsic to the Universe at every dimension including the material in its co-evolution with the psychic, which clearly contrasts to assertions of the adventitious development of consciousness, the haphazard nature of evolution, and the strict split between the Universe's material substructure and the psychic awareness of living beings. This primordial knowing or gnostic intelligence is also the central force in our own psycho-physical existence though it becomes obscured by the billowing clouds of our own corporeality and the neurotic delusions of own ordinary mind (see TDD 237,7-248,6 for a lengthy discussion of the strict demarcation between the ordinary mind (*Sems*) and primordial gnosis (*Ye Shes*), and thus contemplation involves tuning into this vibrant gnosis that is always already present, the dynamics of enlightenment which we need only recognize, not create. In relation to "awareness" (*Rig Pa*), "primordial gnosis" generally signifies its dynamism or pure modalities of operation, and thus at times I have rendered it less literally as "gnostic energy" to

indicate this intrinsically intelligent character of the fundamental energy of the Universe, or in a compound I have rendered it as "gnostic" (for the sake of aesthetic considerations, I have somewhat idiosyncratically rendered the plural of "gnosis" as "gnoses"). According to TLKS 316,1, the five primordial gnoses are the "dynamism" (*rTsal*) of awareness, the five light rays are the dynamism of primordial gnosis, the five elements are the dynamism of the five light rays, and the dynamism of the five elements manifests individually (in their functional capacities that we experience in our material existence and environment - the liquidity of water, and so forth).

TDD 506,1 distinguishes three principal classifications of primordial gnosis: the threefold grounding primordial gnosis of the Reality Body (*Cho sKu gZhi gNas Kyi Ye Shes*), the fivefold characteristics-endowed primordial gnosis of the Enjoyment Body (*Longs sKu mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Ye Shes*), and the twofold all-pervasive primordial gnosis of the Emanational Body (*sPrul sKu Kun Khyab Kyi Ye Shes*). The first set refers to the triune identity of the virtual Ground (emphasizing that each dimension of the Ground is innately vibrant with intelligence): its empty essence (*Ngo Bo sTong Pa*), radiant nature (*Rang bZhin gSal Ba*), and all pervading compassionate resonance (*Thugs rJe Kun Khyab*; see TDD 171,5ff). The second set refers to this gnostic energy's fivefold expression as it moves into exteriorized actualization (based on the ambiguity of *'Dzin Pa* as "apprehend" as well as "sustain/support", this signifies both its incarnating actual dynamic characteristics on its own part (*mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa*) and its capacity to apprehend characteristics (*mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa*), i.e. experience, in contrast to self-contained singular interiority (keeping in mind that their self-presencing is the five lights which give rise to all materiality - see LYT2 29,4): mirror-like primordial gnosis (*Me Long lTa Bu'i Ye Shes*), sameness primordial gnosis (*mNyam Pa Nyid Kyi Ye Shes*), discerning primordial gnosis (*So Sor rTog Pa'i Ye Shes*), efficacious primordial gnosis (*Bya Ba Grub Pa'i Ye Shes*), and "reality's expanse" primordial gnosis (*Chos Kyi dByings Kyi Ye Shes*; see TDD 224,2ff). The third set then refers to the twofold primordial

gnosis of that which can be known (*Shes Bya Ye Shes gNyis*): the primordial gnosis which is sensitive to the knowable in all their plurality (*Shes Bya Ji sNyed mKhyen Pa'i Ye Shes*), and the primordial gnosis which is sensitive to the knowable just as they are ultimately (*Shes Bya Ji lTa Nyid mKhyen Pa'i Ye Shes*). LYT1 467,4 says that awareness' dynamism (*rTsal*) manifests as the fivefold primordial gnoses which is sensitive to everything in internal radiance, and the twofold primordial gnosis which is sensitive to everything within external radiance "just as they ultimately are" and "in their plurality".

**"Proportionately sized eyes"** (*sPyan Phul Thag Tsam*): see TDD 232,5-6 and 248,6-249,2 for an explanation of this controversial term.

**"Psyche" or "egoic psyche"** (*Yid; Manas*): the term "psyche" (*Yid*) usually refers to a facet of the "mind" (*Sems*), just as in an optimal context "insight" (*Shes Rab*) refers to a facet of "primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes*). For this reason Longchenpa discusses the differentiation of the mind from primordial gnosis, and the psyche from insight. See TDD 244,7 where the "mind" is correlated to the universal ground consciousness (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes*), the "psyche" is correlated to the processing of objects (*Yul La sPyod Pa*), and "consciousness" (*rNam Shes*) is correlated to the five sensory modes of perceptual consciousness (*sGo lNga'i rNam Shes*). See under "consciousness" for a discussion of the eight classifications of "consciousness" (*rNam Shes*), which include the five sensory modes, "intellectual cognition" (*Yid Shes*) which conceptualizes and abstracts, the "emotionally distorted psyche" (*Nyon Yid*) with its emotional cathexis and ego-logical trends, and the universal ground consciousness (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes*), the depth-unconscious and basic substratum of all psychic energy. Thus "psyche" indicates our mind's neurotic character both in terms of distorted emotions' cathexis to the external world as well as its tendency to substitute its linguistic and conceptual frames for the immediacy of experience. See the detailed discussion of the psyche's six facets on TDD 189,1-3.

**"Psychic attainments"** (*dNgos Grub; Siddhi*): literally "achieve in reality", or "truly actualize", this refers to the types of extraordinary abilities you achieve as direct result or byproduct of meditative practice: the ultimate attainment is enlightenment itself, while the conventional attainments are a wide range of psychic powers including telekinesis, clairvoyance and so on.

**"Psychic body"** (*Yid Kyi Lus; Manas-kāya*): in the attenuated states of the formless realm as well as in post-death existence prior to reincarnation in a new physical form, it is said that living beings have no material existence but rather only the sensation or "image" of a body, which is purely psychic in nature and derives from the karmic imprints (*Bag Chags*) of many lifetimes of embodied existence.

**"Psychic capacity"** (*Shes Pa*): see "cognitive capacity".

**"Psycho-physical components"** (*Phung Po; Skandha*): human existence is usually classified into a standard set of five psycho-physical components (along with the other standard systematizations such as the "three gateways" of body, speech, and mind, or "the eighteen sensory elements", and so on): "physical form" (*gZugs; Rūpa*), sensation (*Tshor Ba; Vedanā*), discernment or perception (*'Du Shes; Saṃjñā*), karmic conditioning forces (*'Du Byed; Saṃskāra*), and perceptive consciousness (*rNam Shes; Vijñāna*). The term *Phung Po* literally means "heap" or "aggregate", which ZMYT2 250,2 explains as "encapsulating many".

**"Pure expanse lamp"** (*dByings rNam Par Dag Pa'i sGron Ma*): see "lamp".

**"Pure land" or "pure field"** (*Dag Pa'i Zhing, Zhing*): see "spiritual realm".

**"Pure land of natural emanations"** (*Rang bZhin sPrul Pa'i Zhing, Rang bZhin sPrul sKu'i Zhing sNang*): see TDD 179,1 for its reference to an aspect of the visionary appearances of the Ground-presencing; the term also frequently occurs as signifying a type of "pure land" which those visionaries of inferior capacity aim to be reborn within at death, since they are unable to obtain freedom within this life or in the dying/post-death experiences. Once reborn in this luminous realm, they are able to engage in spiritual contemplation without obstacle and

thus become liberated. The term itself (especially *Rang bZhin*) requires further explanation in terms of its etymological sense, as well as how it links the two usages mentioned above, but again time limitations force me to leave it at that.

**"Pure source-potential"** (*Char gZhi*): literally "the ground/foundation (*gZhi*) of shining-forth/manifestation (*Char*)", this is a common term meaning "plan", "design", or even "blueprint". In the Great Perfection, it has the technical sense of Ground's of virtual dynamics, which remain non-manifest internal radiance but are the energetic and intelligent source of everything that exists in manifest actuality. Thus the pure potentiality of the Ground's dynamic emptiness has everything in-folded within it as the genetic material of the cosmos, the "master plan" along the lines of a blueprint containing the entire arrangement and structuration of a complex yet itself only a propensity, latency, or potentiality devoid of any direct manifestation, i.e. the "pure source-potential".

**"Quintessences"** (*Dwangs Ma*): see "vibrant energy".

**"Radiance"** (*gSal Ba*): this term can mean both "clarity" (a pellucid transparency) and "radiance" (the emission of light), and this oscillation between these two poles is at times difficult to render. *gSal Ba* is also closely related to cognitive states ("this isn't clear in my mind", etc.), and along with "bliss" and "non-conceptuality" forms the three principal contemplative experiences in general (see "contemplative experience"). It also forms many compounds that are important terms in the Great Perfection (see "radiant light"), two of the most important being "internal radiance" (*Nang gSal*) and "external radiance" (*Phyir gSal*). I have literally rendered each term, which together form a contrasting yet complementary dyad: "internal radiance" indicates the state of pure virtual source-potential devoid of exteriorized actuality, while "external radiance" signifies the movement into actualization and exteriority. Thus the emergence of the Ground-presencing from the Ground is characterized as the transition from "internal radiance" to "external radiance", and an Awakened One's enlightened activities are described as issuing forth from his/her "internal radiance" into "external radiance",

yet at the same time in the context of cyclic existence the Ground-presencing's luminosity retreats into a state of internal radiance within our heart's luminous channels. While Longchenpa's use of these two terms is consistent, he applies them in a complex way to a variety of dimensions in varying contexts, such that interpretation of them must be correspondingly aware of the interlocking hierarchies of "potency" and "actualization" that pertain (see my extensive discussion in the commentary at various points). A related compound is the term "depth-radiant" or "depth-radiance" (*gTing gSal*), which can denote both internal radiance ("radiant *at* the depths") or external radiance ("radiant *from* the depths").

**"Radiant Light"** (*'Od gSal; Prabhāsvara*): *'Od* signifies "light" or "luminosity", while *gSal* means both "clear" and "radiant", leading to a common translation by some scholars in the West as "clear light". In the Great Perfection tradition the emphasis is clearly on "radiance" rather than "clarity", and hence I have on the whole rendered it as "radiant light", and when used adjectivally, as "luminously radiant". This "radiant light" or "brightness" is the core of our own psyche, as stated in the famous line from *The Transcendental Consummation of Insight in Eight Thousand Lines*: "the mind is not the mind; the mind's nature is radiant light". It is also part of the important expression "the adamant nucleus of radiant light" (*'Od gSal rDo rJe sNying Po*), which signifies the ultimate reality of the Universe as the "enlightened nucleus" within. As such, "radiant light" is generally associated with the Ground's spontaneous presence, which gives rise to the luminously radiant dynamic qualities of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses. This radiant light's presencing thus plays critical roles in the process of dying, sleep and the Direct Transcendence contemplations, and is at times classified into "empty radiant light" (*sTong Pa'i 'Od gSal*) and "presencing radiant light" (*sNang Ba'i 'Od gSal*). A full essay on its various classifications and uses is required, and in particular its relation to the opposition between "internal radiance" and "external radiance". KGYT2 116,6 has an interesting reference to "intermediate radiance" (*Bar gSal*): the Spiritual Bodies of awareness' essence are internal radiance self-contained within the mandalas at the

heart and skull (i.e. the un-manifest "Body within a Vase"), the luminosity ('*Od*) of its nature is intermediate radiance which permeates the body's interior (like a butter lamp within a vase, whose light spills out of its top), and the radiating lamps of its compassionate resonance are external radiance which flows through the eyes into the external expanse of the sky (like the surface of a mirror).

**"Radiation"** (*gDangs*): see "dynamism".

**"Raised-up", "raises-up"** (*Phags Pa*): while this term is commonly found in exoteric texts to refer to spiritually distinguished individuals as "exalted", etymologically it means "rise up", "to be elevated", "to ascend", "to raise oneself", or "to jump up". It is used in the latter sense as a technical term to signify the moment of transition from the Ground to the Ground-presencing (see TDD 177,6), where awareness ascends out of the former's formless shadowy depths of pure potential into the vast expanding Universe of actuality, from no-thing into a brand new world. In technical terminology, this pure potential of virtual reality is termed "internal radiance" (*Nang gSal*), while actualized exteriorized manifestation is termed "external radiance" (*Phyir gSal*). While the etymology of this term would seem clearly to be "raised-up" or "elevated" as this movement of the cosmos' origination comes upwards out of the depths of nothingness, some translators have preferred to render it loosely as "breaking free", "flash forth", or "a (symmetry) break occurs" (the latter reading from Guenther's *From Reductionism to Creativity* 195).

**"Reality"** (*Chos Nyid; Dharmatā*): see "phenomena".

**"Reality Body"** (*Chos sKu; Dharma-kāya*: see "body".

**"Reality's expanse"** (*Chos Kyi dByings; Dharma-dhātu*): see "expanse".

**"Realized One"** (*De bZhin gShegs Pa; Tathāgata-garbha*): see "enlightened nucleus".

**"Rebirth" and "reincarnation"**: it is a standard tenet of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist thought that all living beings (usually considered as humans, animals, insects and other non-manifest beings, though not generally thought to include plant life) are constantly cycling through a

series of life forms, such that at death the psychic energy withdraws from its corporeal existence, experiences a series of luminous visions and sounds in the post-death state (see "intermediate state"), and is eventually re-incarnated with a new material existence, or rebirth. While personal memory generally doesn't usually survive the sever shock of "death" and "rebirth", there is an personal unconscious substratum that retains "imprints" or "impressions" of psychic propensities that continue beyond death, and play an important role in that living being's future existence (see "universal ground"). This notion of rebirth has a very positive influence on respect for all life, which is clearly evidenced in many Buddhists' genuine concern for the welfare of animals and insects (the latter in particular is ridiculed in the West with their emphasis on *human* rights), though at times it also has a negative influence in the passive acceptance of social injustice and institutional cruelty (since all suffering is karmically "deserved", and social/political injustice derives from personal and collective delusions over many lifetimes, the emphasis is on spiritual growth rather than institutional transformation). It should also be noted that this theory of rebirth is not in conflict with the famous "no-self" teaching of the historical Buddha, since the transition from death to rebirth via the post-death state is only one instant of the ongoing transition we undergo from moment to moment, and "no-self" in no way signifies that our existence is thought to be totally reducible to gross corporeality. This notion of cyclical rebirth plays an important role in Longchenpa's thought -see my discussion of the tenth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**Recognize** (*Ngo Shes Pa*): literally "know (*Shes Pa*) the face (*Ngo*)", this is a common colloquial and classical term meaning "to recognize", or "to know someone". It is an exceedingly important term in Great Perfection thought is intrinsically connected to the term "self" and "self-presencing", and in fact is often found as "self-recognize" or "recognize as self for yourself" (*Rang Ngo Shes*). See my discussion of "self-presencing" under "appearance", as well as my discussion of "memory" for more details. At the instant the Ground-presencing goes into ascendancy from out of the Ground's self-contained interiority, its capacity for self-



reflection confronts its radiant presencing in terms of the five lights, and at that very instant either recognizes them as self, or fails to recognize them as self: in the former case there is the freedom of the Totally Positive One, and in the latter case there is straying into the materialization and fragmentation of cyclic existence. In the case of non-recognition, the psychic capacity fissures itself from the luminosity as it creates the notion of alienated "self" and "other" intertwined with the separation of "subjectivity" from "objectivity", and thus the two dimensions co-involve down into neurotic psyches and congealed, solidified light, i.e. the five material elements (earth, water, fire, wind, and space energy). In a dream we in fact are totally within our own creation and thus inherently free, yet because we fail to recognize the various appearances as self in our forgetfulness, we bind ourselves, feeling panic, anxiety, restriction; if only we "wake" up within the dream and self-recognize, we will in fact be totally self-liberated without changing the slightest thing. In the process of dying, this materialization re-dissolves and we re-experience the pure radiant light of the Ground, at which point again we face this crucial juncture of recognition and non-recognition; if we again err, then the Ground-presencing dawns in the luminous visions of the post-death state, where we again the opportunity for re-collection wavers in front of us, and where again we err, and on we go through the vicious cycle of cyclic existence. Despite the luminous Ground-presencing being manifest in external radiance at these crucial junctures in shimmering mandalas, it is still up to us to recognize them as our own awareness' radiation shining externally, just as if with a long lost brother who beyond all probability may suddenly show up next to us on a sidewalk, and yet if we fail to recognize him, all is lost.

**"Reification"** (*rTog Pa; Kalpanā, Kalpa*): see "neurotic".

**"Ritual approach and evocation"** (*bsNyen sGrub; Sevā-sādhana*): this terms generally is understood as referring to stages in the practice of creative visualization of a deity, also known as the "generation phase" of tantric meditation. "Ritual approach" involves devotion to the deity through recitation of its mantra and visualization of its form, while "evocation" means

actualizing that deity's energy or force through existentially identifying or merging with it, such that these indicate sequential processes of first "approaching" or getting to know the deity and its energy, and subsequently "actualizing" or merging with it. This is usually divided into four distinct phases: ritual approach (*bsNyen Pa; Sevā*), culminating approach (*Nye Bar bsNyen Pa; Upasevā* - literally the approach that "nears" (*Nye Bar*) the transition to the next phase of "evocation"), evocation (*sGrub Pa; Sādhana*); and the great evocation (*sGrub Chen; Mahāsādhana*). Dorji provides standard exoteric definitions for these in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism II* 125 in the following account (reworded): (i) "ritual approach" is our recitation of the visualized deity's mantra and devoted prayer to it; (ii) "culminating approach" is the prayer that the deity's blessing will descend and transform our ordinary body, speech and mind into the three syllables of adamantine reality; (iii) evocation involves the spiritual attainments being absorbed into the deity from the Buddhas throughout the cosmos, and then into ourselves; and (iv) the great evocation is the ultimate realization of original purity which is experienced when our body, speech and mind are completely merged with that of the deity. Also see Beyer's perceptive comments in *The Cult of Tārā* 106ff and 432ff. In ZMYT2 344,2-6, Longchenpa gives a special Great Perfection interpretation of these four phases, which he says are superior to the ordinary "ritual service and evocation that is strenuously accomplished in ordinary generation and perfection stage tantric meditation": (i) ritual service is self-recognizing the Reality Body via being self-introduced to self-emergent primordial gnosis; (ii) culminating service is sustaining or preserving your awareness within that state; (iii) evocation is become free from fixating beliefs in self; and (iv) the great evocation is the coming to the fore of the spiritual fruit, i.e. the climaxing event of enlightenment.

**"Ritual scepter"** (*rDo rJe; Vajra*): see "adamantine".

**"Sacred knot"** (*dPal Be'u; Śrī-vatsa*): see "eight auspicious signs".

**"Sacrificial cake"** (*gTor Ma*):

**"Sage"** (*Thub Pa; Muni*): see "Able One".

**"Samsara"** (*Khor Ba; Samsāra*: see "cyclic existence")

**"Savior Loving One"** (*Byams mGon; Maitreya-nātha*): this is the name of the prophesied Buddha of the future, while the historical Buddha born in India is considered the "Buddha of the present". His main characteristic is said to be that of love.

**"Scent eater"** (*Dri Za; Gandharva*): this is a literal translation of a term used in ancient India for a class of spirits, often connected with celestial musicians, and which came to be applied to the immaterial existence of our psychic essence after death prior to being reincarnated in a new physical existence. Traditionally such post-death "intermediate state" beings are said to gain sustenance or nourishment from odors (lacking the coarse physical apparatus to consume food and liquids), and hence came to be termed "scent eaters" (a term which also fit since these are beings in search of materialization with a very attenuated existence). Guenther in *The Creative Vision* 40 notes some interesting aspects to the term: "...This term may well reflect a very early phase in the evolution of the brain - the so-called reptilian brain, including the olfactory system, which still plays an important role in oral and genital functions such as feeding and mating, and the so-called paleomammalian brain or limbic system, which brings emotional preferences into play. Related to this early phase is the designation of the female's contribution to reproduction as 'blood' (*Khrag*) or "estrus" (*rDul*), the latter still playing a role in the sexual cycle of all female mammals except the primates who, in the evolution of their brains, have largely circumvented these older layers and emphasized visual and auditory functions. Although these old terms may seem thoroughly antiquated, in light of what we now know about sexual reproduction, their persistence shows that language does not keep pace with a rapidly increasing knowledge and also that possibly more is involved in reproduction than what science so far has been able to account for..."

In that these intermediate state beings experience "cities" in post-death experience which manifest instantaneously in their totality and abruptly disappear in similar fashion (see Gyatso's *The Clear Light of Bliss* 200), "the cities of scent-eaters" is often a phrase used as an analogy

for the illusory nature of our ordinary experiences, referring to something like "castles in the sky", i.e. mirages we erroneously perceive in the sky. More typically, this term "city of scent eaters" indicates a city in the sky inhabited by magicians and spirits, since the "scent eaters" (the original sense of the term rather than its special usage as referring to the intermediate state beings) are traditionally said to be great masters of the art of illusion who specialize in constructing imaginary cities in the sky out of clouds (see O'Flaherty's *Dreams, Illusion, and Other Realities* 268-279 for an excellent summary of this image's significance). Tibetans often refer to "scent eaters" as beings with very subtle bodies who can even live inside rocks, are able to subsist by using scents for food, and inhabit cities that seem to spring out of nowhere and disappear suddenly. In that context, I have rendered "scent eater" as "ethereal spirit" to make the meaning immediately evident. See *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* III 91-96 for Guenther's translation of Longchenpa's poetic evocation of this image of illusion in *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* (which Guenther renders as "cloud land"), and STZP 62a,1-66b2 for Longchenpa's explication of these verses.

**"Seamless union"** (*'Du Bral Med Pa*): literally "without (*Mea Fa*) fusing (*'Du*) or separating (*Bral*)", i.e. a primordial simultaneity that is never created nor that can be divided, such that the two dimensions in question are seamlessly and inherently unified with each other.

**"Secondary channels"** (*rTsa Phran*): literally "lesser channels" or "little channels", this refers to all the various channels (including capillaries, nerve branches, and so on) which derive from the main channel trunks running through out body (i.e. the aorta, spinal cord, luminous channel, and so forth - see KGNT1 61,6).

**"Secret Mantra"** (*gSang sNgags; Guhya-mantra*): see "mantra".

**"Seizing hold of your own-site"** (*Rang Sa Zin Pa*): see "own-site".

**"One of the select"** (*Rigs lDan; Kulika*): literally "possessed of the family" or "endowed with the lineage", referring to practitioner who by dint of his sustained meditative realization has fully embodied the spiritual family or lineage of the awakened ones.

**"Self"** (*Rang; Sva*): as contrasted to the term "other" (*gZhan*), "self" (*Rang*) plays a very important role in Great Perfection thought, as well as forming many significant compounds (*Rang sNang, Rang Byung, Rang Grol, Rang Shar, Rang Ngo Shes Pa, Rang Rig, Rang gDangs, Rang Dag*, etc.). Because it is also part of the compound here translated as "nature" (*Rang bZhin*; literally "own face", or "self-according to", or "self-continuing"), it inherently evokes the meaning "natural", and is often glossed as such in other compounds. *Rang* is thus a very evocative word with a thoroughly experiential character (i.e. relating to contemplative experience rather than merely intellectual exercises), and it is in our understanding of self/natural that we can see the key distinction between the Great Perfection and idealism in the former's exploration of the true meaning of "self" and what is "natural", which lies at the heart both of alienation and enlightenment (see my discussion of "self-presencing" (*Rang sNang*) under "appearance"). Given this term's semantic intensity in compounds that simply cannot be reflected in the English use of "self" (as well as the absence of grammatical indicators for its use in compounds - "from self", "of self", "by self", etc.), I have varied my translation of *Rang* along the lines of "natural", "naturally", "self-", "in and of itself", "innately", "intrinsically", and so forth. This question of self-recognizing all appearances as innate to yourself is often explained by the analogy of a face's reflection rising in the mirror (keeping in mind *bZhin* means "face", and thus *Rang bZhin* means "own-face" as well as "nature") that it then contemplates, or the unique character of our dream-worlds - it seems there are independent environments, agents, and events, yet upon awakening, the entire panorama dissolves into our own psyche.

**"Self-Awakened Ones"** (*Rang Sangs rGyas; Pratyeka-Buddha*): the second of the nine vehicle systematization of the various spiritual systems found in Buddhism. See my discussion in "An Overview of the Great Perfection" in the introduction.

**"Self-awareness"** (*Rang Rig; \*Svasamvedanā, Svasamvitti, Svavidyā*): see "awareness".

**"Self-emergent insight lamp"** (*Shes Rab Rang Byung Gi sGron Ma*): see "lamp".

**"Self-manifestations", "self-display"** (*Rang sNang*): see "self-presencing"

**"Self-organizing"**: I use this term in the sense articulated by Jantsch in *The Self-Organizing Universe*. While there is no one Tibetan term that perfectly corresponds, it is closely linked with the term "self-presencing" (*Rang sNang*) or "self-emergent" (*Rang 'Byung*), and is a very important concept for understanding the basic structure of Great Perfection thought (see my discussion under "appearance" and "compassionate resonance").

**"Self-presencing"** (*Rang sNang*): see "appearance".

**"Seminal heart-essence"** (*sNying Thig*; \**Citta-tilaka*): this term is used synonymously with the "Great Perfection" (*rDzogs Chen*) to refer to the tradition as a whole, and can be interpreted in a number of ways. *sNying* can signify the "heart" (*sNying Ga*) which is the site of the singular seminal nuclei (*Thig Le Nyag gCig*) of pristine awareness, in addition to signifying the primordial "Buddha-nature" or "enlightened nucleus" (*sNying Po*) that this awareness is often described as. It can also be rendered generally as the "quintessence (*Thig* of the core (*sNying*)", "quintessence of the heart", "essence of the heart-mind", or more specifically as the luminous sphere (*Thig Le*) of the peaceful deities' mandala that forms within the heart (*sNying*). *Thig* can simply mean "quintessence" as well as "seminal nuclei" (*Thig Le*). Unfortunately, I have yet to locate an explicit etymology of the term in Longchenpa's corpus, though such a passage probably exists. In his *Self-Liberation*, Reynolds interprets it as "the essence of the mind" (obviously basing himself on the supposed Sanskrit original - *Citta* means "mind" (usually translated as *Sems*) and *Tilaka* as "essence"), and rejects the translation "heart-drop" (*sNying* as "heart" and *Thig Le* as "drop", which I have here rendered as "seminal nucleus"). Aside from ignoring the fact that the Tibetan term is *sNying* rather than *Sems*, his comment also suggests a very restricted hermeneutical model that I think is particularly inappropriate for these intensely self-conscious and creatively self-interpreting texts.

**"Seminal nuclei"** (*Thig Le*; *Bindu*, *Tilaka*, *Śukra*): see "channels, inner winds, and seminal nuclei".

**"Sensory fields"** (*sKye mChed; Āyatana*): the six internal sensory fields refer to the six objects (five sensory objects plus mental images), while the six external sensory fields refer to the corresponding five sensory modes of consciousness plus intellectual/psychic consciousness (*Yid Shes*), which together constitute the sensory "field". This could also be explained as the twelve sensory or perceptual "sources", since *sKye* literally means "to originate", and *mChed* means "to spread outwards": ZMYT2 247,4 etymologizes this as the six modes of cognition "manifest" (*sKye*) and spread outwards (*mChed*) on the basis of the perceptual cognition (*rNam Shes*) of the discernible features (*rNam Pa*) of these six types of objects, as well as meaning that the former (cognition) is "born" (*sKye*) from the latter (objects), and thus "spreads outwards" (*mChed*).

**"Sensory consciousness"** (*dBang Shes; Indriya-jñāna*): see "consciousness".

**"Sensory faculties"** (*dBang Po; Indriya*): these are the translucent semi-material dimensions of our body that are capable of acting as receptors for sensory data, and are located at the eyes, nose, tongue, ears, and throughout the body's skin (in the case of the tactile faculty). These five faculties are named imagistically on the basis of their visual appearance (ZMYT1 247,1): the visual faculty is like a *Zar Ma* flower, the auditory faculty is like a winding ravine (*Grog gCus?*), the olfactory faculty is like a copper tube (*Zangs Ma'i Bu Gu*), the gustatory faculty is like a half-moon, and tactile faculty is like skin soft to the touch (i.e. spread throughout the body).

**"Sensual qualities"** (*Dod Yon, 'Dod Pa'i Yon Tan; Kāma-guṇa*): literally "qualities of desire" or "desired qualities", this refers to the five types of sensory objects or sensory data (colors/shapes, sounds, flavors, scents, and textures), and emphasizes our lust for sensual enjoyment (food, sex, clothes, fragrance, music), and the incessant cathexis of libidinal energy flowing out to these sensed objects.

**"Sensual gods"** (*Dod Lha; Kāma-deva*): the deities which inhabit the upper reaches of the sensual realm. See "the three realms of cyclic existence".

**"Sentient being"** (*Sems Can; Sattva*): see "embodied beings".

**"Serpent spirits"** (*kLu; Nāga*): creatures particularly associated with water, and often said to keep teachings concealed until the appropriate time comes for their revelation in the human realm.

**"Seven point classical lotus position"**: see "lotus posture".

**"Sexual yoga"**: I use this term to a standard contemplative technique based on visualizations of the seminal nuclei within the body, which can either be done in conjunction with actual sexual intercourse, or a purely imaginative exercise in solitude. See TDD 258,1-259,3 at the end of the fifth chapter for details.

**"Signs and measures of progress and success in practice"** (*Tags Tshad*): see my discussion of the ninth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Six Able Ones"** (*Thub Pa Drug; Muni*): see "Able One".

**"Six emotional distortions"** (*Nyon Mongs Pa Drug; Kieśa*): see "emotional distortions".

**"Six transcendental consummations"** (*Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa Drug; Pāramitā*): literally "gone (*Phyin Pa*) to (*Tu*) the other side/shore (*Pha Rol*)", this is a well-known systematization of exoteric practices found in the Great Vehicle. The practice and mastery of the following five dimensions as guided and sustained by the sixth ("insight") lead us to transcend our ego-logical self, and thus impel us to enlightenment: generosity, ethics, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and insight. Four additional elements are often added to this list of six, and the resulting group of ten are then correlated to the ten spiritual levels through which we must progress towards liberation: efficacious means (or "expertise"), strength, aspiration/dedication, and gnosis.

**"Six types of objects"** (*Yul Drug; Viśaya*): this refers to the five types of sensory data (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile, i.e. colors/shapes, sounds, flavors, scents, and textures), along with the mental images (*Chos*) which form the object of our intellectual



operations (*Yid Shes*) dealing with abstract notions as well as generic images derived from sensory data. See "consciousness".

**"Six types of life forms or beings" or "six transmigrations"** (*Rigs Drug, 'Gro Drug; Gati*): these are the six types of living beings that are thought to inhabit our world in standard Buddhist thought: gods, demigods, humans, animals, starving spirits, and inhabitants of hell. These also describe psychological states that we can pass through in our current existence: being arrogant and egotistical in our talents, wealth or status ("gods"); being dominated by jealousy and envy (demigods); being balanced and integrated ("humans"); given to ignorance and sloth (animals); suffering intensely from emotional or material needs ("starving spirits"), and deep depression or inner torment ("hell"). See Zahler's *Meditative States* for details.

**"Sky Dancer"** (*mKha' 'Gro Ma; Dākiṇī*): literally "the female (*Ma*) who goes (*'Gro*) within the sky (*mKha'*)", this refers to a type of female spirit who can be negative as well as positive. The term is also often applied to an enlightened woman.

**"Slender coil channel"** (*Phra La 'Khril Ba*): see "luminous channels".

**"Smooth Voiced One"** (*'Jam Pa'i dByangs; Mañjuḥṣa*): see "Mañjuśrī".

**"Solidified forms of energy"** (*sNyigs Ma*): see "vibrant forms of energy".

**"Solitary channel"** (*rKyang Ma; Lalanā*): see "channel".

**"Son of the Lineage"** (*Rigs Kyi Bu; Kula-putra*): literally "son of the lineage", this etymologically is a term used to address the a son of a noble family, and as such is used by the Buddha in many canonical texts (which are presented as "transcripts" of lectures or teachings) to address the Spiritual Heroes in his audience (the term is masculine in line with the unfortunately prevalent tendency of these texts to emphasize males, and thus should be understood as "children" to include females as well). The term thus signifies their spiritual nobility by indicating they are the true inheritors of the spiritual "lineage" (or "affinity" - see "spiritual affinity"), since they have entered the "family" of the Awakened Ones with their altruistic commitment to achieving enlightenment for the sake of liberating all living beings

from the prison of cyclic existence. "Oh Son of the Lineage" is thus also often used by the Master in ritual situations to address the disciple, and as such can be found in various texts which provide a prescribed "transcript" to be read by the Master and disciple in performing that ritual.

**"Source potential"** (*Char gZhi*): see "pure source potential".

**"Space"** (*Nam mKha'*; *Ākāśa*): *Nam mKha'* refers both to the "sky" and "space", the latter referring to "space" as one of the five elemental energy (fire, water, earth, wind, and space energy). The "sky" is particularly important in the Direct Transcendence contemplations since the inner luminosity shines out from our heart via our eyes into the sky, where we experience these unfolding visions of shimmering reality.

**"Space"** (*kLong*): *kLong* is an extremely difficult term, which I must admit "space" is a quite inadequate cowardly translation of. TDCM defines it as "middle" (*dBu Ma*) or "center" (*dKyil*), as well as "interior" (*Khog*); the *Dag Yig gSar bsGrigs* defines it as "great in extent" (*rGya Khyon Che Ba*), as well as "many" (*Mang Ba*) or "profound" (*Zab Pa*); Geshe Chograk defines it as "middle" or "center" as well (see his *brDa Dag Ming Tshig gSal Ba*); Goldstein in TEDM defines it as "middle", "center", "mass", "bulk", "vast", "immense", and gives a verbal meaning of "to stir up", which relates to its use in *kLong 'Khor* as "whirlpool"; DAS gives an interesting definition of "a wave or any undulating thing", such as the coils in a conch shell, or in *rBa kLong* as "wave"; TLKS 310,2 defines it as "the absence of parts in a super vastness" (*kLong Zer Na Yangs Pa Chen Po'i Cha Shas Dang Bral Ba*), while Guenther has recently been translating it as "superforce" (*From Reductionism to Creativity* 275).

**"Spinal cord"** (*rGyungs Pa*): see my discussion in the commentary to Chapter Five, where I discuss its relationship to the central all-encompassing channel of the subtle body.

**"Spiritual"**: the term spiritual doesn't correspond to any one word, and in general I have used it along with "enlightened" to translate the Tibetan honorific, which signifies optimal

processes totally transcendent of their ordinary distorted modes that we define the given word in terms of.

**"Spiritual activity"** (*Phrin Las*): this term only applies to the activity of an Awakened One, whereas ordinary sentient beings engage in "karmic activities" (*Las*).

**"Spiritual affinity" or "spiritual family"** (*Rigs; Gotra*): see "body" for an explanation of the "five spiritual affinities".

**"Spiritual Body"** (*sKu; Kāya*): see "body".

**"Spiritual dimension"** (*Khams*): often used in conjunction with the term "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy", this multi-valent term apparently just means something like "spiritual dimension" or "sphere".

**"Spiritual Eye"** (*sPyan*): see "Eye".

**"Spiritual family"** (*Rigs; Gotra*): see "spiritual family".

**"Spiritual fruit"** (*Bras Bu; Phala*): see "fruit".

**"Spiritual gestalt"** (*sKu; Kāya*): an alternative translation to "Spiritual Body" (see there).

**"Spiritual Heroes"** (*Byang Chub Sems dPa'; Bodhisattva*): the Sanskrit original *Bodhisattva* has gained some currency in the West with the connotation of the tremendous altruism, ethical purity, and self-sacrifice of the aspiring Buddha as s/he engages in spiritual practices with the motivation of attaining enlightenment for the sake of all living beings. See Dayal's *The Bodhisattva Doctrine* for an extensive discussion.

**"Spiritual level"** (*Sa; Bhūmi*): these refers to the stages in realization you advance through along the spiritual path, which in exoteric Buddhist thought are usually classified into "ten stages of the Spiritual Hero", an analysis further expanded into sixteen levels within the Great Perfection tradition (which further more has a special application in terms of the practice of Direct Contemplation). The term *Sa* literally means "place", "site", or "earth", and also figures prominently in the important terms "citadel" or "secure place" (*bTsan Sa*) and "own-site" (*Rang Sa*).

**"Spiritual Master"** (*bLa Ma; Guru*): this term refers to a teacher who guides you along the spiritual path.

**"Spiritual path"** (*Lam; Mārga*: see "path").

**"Spiritual realm"** (*Zhing Khams; Kṣetra*): this term refers to "pure lands" (*Dag Pa'i Zhing, Zhing*) which are special trans-mundane environments set up by the blessing-inspiration of an Awakened One where all conditions are said to be perfectly optimal for spiritual contemplation, and which one can aspire to rebirth in. Different types of pure lands are described in relation to the different types of Buddhas, and in particular in relation to the five Buddhas (see under "body"). These pure lands with their intensely vivid rainbow-colored palaces and mandalas of deities form the substance of the third vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation.

**"Spiritual Teachings", "Spirituality", and "Spiritual Precepts"** (*Chos; Dharma*): see "phenomena".

**"Spontaneous presence"** (*Lhun Grub; \*Anābhoga*): see "original purity and spontaneous presence".

**"Stages"** (*Sa; Bhūmi*): see "spiritual stages".

**"Starving spirits"** (*Yi Dwags; Preta*): see "six types of life forms".

**"Sterile nothingness"** (*Phyang Chad*): this term is equivalent to *sTong rKyang* ("mere emptiness"), and indicates utter and absolute emptiness totally devoid of any dynamism or luminosity. This nihilistic notion of emptiness denies the inherence of primordial gnosis within the ultimate nature of the Universe and sentient beings, and is thoroughly rejected in Chapter One in favor of the simultaneity of original purity ("emptiness") and spontaneous presence (dynamic light energy).

**"Straying" or "distortion"** (*Khrul Pa; \*Bhrānta*): see "appearance" for "distorted appearance" (*Khrul sNang*). This term literally means "to err", and along with "freedom" (*Grol*) constitute the two interpretative possibilities that exist at the inception of the Ground-

presenting in the Universe's early history: if the Ground's psychic capacity fails to recognize itself, it strays into cyclic existence as sentient beings; if it self-recognizes, it is free as the Totally Positive One. Thus it is important to understand "freedom" and "straying" as opposites. See the beginning of Chapter Two for a detailed discussion of the mechanism of suffering as we lose our way, and wander through the long darkness of cyclic existence.

**"Stimulation"** (*blTem Pa*; *gTems Pa*): these two terms often mean to "press" the eyes or neck as part of a yogic technique, but in addition can mean "activate", "stimulate", or "cause to overflow" (*blTem Pa* in particular can have the latter meaning). See TDD 248,6.

**"Stupa"** (*mChod rTen*; *Stūpa*): I have simply used the Sanskrit term here, since it is fairly well-known in the West. This refers to structures originally developed as reliquaries, and still generally contain relics of an important Master or other sacred figures in Buddhism: some are enormous buildings with numerous internal chapels containing statues and murals, while others are miniature ritual items only a few inches in height. There are many different types architecturally, but all are intensely symbolic, and are usually described in terms of the Buddha's enlightenment. In some contexts, luminous images of these buildings will appear in the sky during the second vision of Direct Transcendence contemplation.

**"Subject-object duality"** (*gZung 'Dzin*; *Grāhya-grāhaka*): *gZung* refers to "that which is apprehended" (*gZung Bya*) while *'Dzin* signifies the act of "apprehension", "taking hold of", "clinging", "grasping", or "fixation". The term *gZung 'Dzin* thus inherently refers to psychic activity which is fundamentally dualistic and neurotic in structure, with biased subjectivity fissured off from objectivity, and the constant formation of emotional distortions forming cathexis to the alienated "objects" in desperate attempts to resolve this basic tension of alienation.

**"Suchness"** (*De bZhin Nyid*; *Tathatā*): see "as-is".

**"Super nuclei"** (*sPyan*): see "eye".

**"Supplementary supports"** (*rGyab rTen*): see "follow-up supporting teachings".

**"Surya", "Candra" and "Aloke"** (*Sūrya, Tsandra, Āloke*): these are the Sanskrit terms (merely transliterated, and not translated in the Tibetan text) for the sun, moon, and lamps respectively. These three are utilized in the practice of Direct Transcendence as sources of light which you gaze upon in order to ignite and spark the luminous visions, which then gradually spontaneously manifest such that these direct light sources become superfluous. The Sanskrit terms are referred to instead of their Tibetan equivalents (as with *Tsitta, Tsakshu*, and so on) in order to lend a numinous quality to the words, as well as indicating that this involves the application of key points and esoteric precepts in a special yogic set of practices, and is not simply "sun gazing".

**"Sutric tradition"** (*mDo; Sūtra*): this refers to the exoteric discourses attributed to the historical Buddha and the exegetical systems that developed from them, and should be understood in contrast to the esoteric teachings of "Tantric" Buddhism. These "Discourses" (*mDo; Sūtra*) are generally exoteric non-Tantric texts purported to be "transcripts" of actual lectures or teachings orally delivered by the historical Buddha in India. While some texts certainly go back to a core of very ancient material, others are just as certainly apocryphal, and are explained by the tradition as involving teachings that were given to only a very select group of disciples, concealed in non-human realms, and then only subsequently disseminated publicly many centuries later.

**"Symbolic hand gesture"** (*Phyag rGya; Mudrā*): these refer to special "gestures" made with your hands which have special symbolic significance, and are used in rituals as well as iconographical depictions of deities.

**"Take into your experience"** (*Nyams Su Len Pa*): see "practice".

**"Tantra"** (*rGyud; Tantra*): the term *rGyud* literally means "continuity", and as such was used to translate the Sanskrit term "Tantra" in its wide range of meanings pertaining to Tantric Buddhism or the "vehicle of adamantine reality" (*rDo rJe Theg Pa; Vajra-yāna*). This movement formed the basis of Tibetan Buddhism in all its forms, and is especially well-known

for its practices of creative visualization, striking sexual imagery, practice of sexuality as a yogic technique, and its often seemingly outrageous canonical texts (with such statements as "kill your parents", or "screw your mother", and so on); less well-known is the sophisticated transformation of philosophical discourse and enterprise that it embodied in relation to other schools of Buddhist thought. I have used the term *Tantra* to render *rGyud* when it occurs within a title to refer to this genre of literature since I have been unable to come up with an appropriate word to render it into English, and in my commentary often refer to "tantric" Buddhism to indicate this movement. See my comments in the introduction for a brief note on the question of the relationship of the Great Perfection tradition with tantrism: the former is undeniably based on the latter's innovations in subtle body theory, iconography, and so on, yet it is somewhat ambiguous whether to view it as the "culmination" of Tantrism, or a revolution so innovative (in its emphasis on primordiality rather than transformation, the spontaneous nature of vision in contrast to visualization, etc.) that it no longer belongs within the category of Tantric thought (certainly the role of sexuality in practice, imagery and language is quite reduced in the Great Perfection tradition, which may be surprising to some who have looked askance at its often non-monastic adherents). Longchenpa provides detailed wide ranging hermeneutical interpretations of the term *rGyud* based on its sense of "continuity" in TCD and elsewhere, which I will subsequently deal with in later work. For the time being, the reader is referred to *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism I* 263-267 for a related presentation concerning the "continuity" of the ground, path, and fruit/result (i.e. enlightenment).

**"Tantric physiology"** (*rDo rJe'i Lus*): see "adamantine body". This term refers to the elaborate and intensely symbolic analyses of the energetics operative in the human body/mind which developed in Tantric thought, and which are used in contemplative techniques to re-energize our existence and gain spiritual liberation through a series of interiorized dramas revolving around visualized channels, winds, and seminal nuclei. Eliade refers to this as "mystic physiology" in his *Yoga*, while other people often label it "subtle body theory".

**"Teacher"** (*sTon Pa; Śāstr*): this term refers to the Buddha or your own Spiritual Master, and literally means "someone to point it out", i.e. indicate the primordial Buddha-nature within us, and thus introduce us to our own pristine awareness.

**"Ten directions"** (*Phyogs bCu*): the ten directions refers to the four cardinal directions (east, north, west, south), the four interstitial directions (northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest), the zenith and nadir; in general it signifies throughout the universe as we know it.

**"Ten Powers"** (*sTobs bCu; Daśa-bala*): these are ten powers, or psychic capacities, traditionally exclusively attributed to a fully enlightened Buddha, and said to manifest at the moment of his/her enlightenment (at this point he "knows" these ten things with utter certainty). The term "power" or "strength" also indicates the high-energy force of an Awakened One's knowledge, which has the potency to penetrate without impediment to an amazing range of areas, including an infinite range of details about his/her own past lives and those of others, and an extraordinary sensitivity and awareness to the psychological states of his/her disciples. This is in marked opposition to our normal ways of knowing, which are distorted, encounter obstacles at every turn, and in general are only amenable to our control and desires in a very limited way. The extent of a Buddha's knowing is traditionally described as involving all sorts of "extrasensory perception", and in particular enable him/her to accurately assess the needs of disciples, and how to best guide each living being along the path of liberation. See Longchenpa's GTD 298,3-5 for a brief listing of these ten from *The Unsurpassed Continuity*, Poussin's translation of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* (1136-1141) for Vasubandhu's description, and Hopkins' *Meditation on Emptiness* (208).

i) *The power of knowing what is possible and what is impossible*: this basically involves an accurate assessment of the inner mechanisms of cyclic existence, such that he is perfectly aware of the possible causal relationships between events. In particular, it is the knowledge that virtuous activity or karma will invariably lead to positive rebirths (such as a human, deity, etc.), while negative activity or karma will invariably lead to negative rebirths (such as in hell, as an



animal, etc.). These causal relationships are "possible" since the effect corresponds to the cause (literally, this cause can serve as the "occasion" (*gNas*) or "site" for such an effect), while their reverse (i.e. virtuous activity leading to negative rebirths, or negative activity leading to positive rebirths) is then "impossible", since the effects would not correspond to the causes (literally, this cause doesn't serve as the "occasion" (*gNas Ma Yin Pa*) or site for such an effect), and this is simply not how the processes of cyclic existence function. In broader terms, the Awakened One also is aware of the mechanism by which sentient beings enter cyclic existence via dimmed awareness, karma and emotional distortions (the "possible"), while he is simultaneously aware of the erroneousness of analyses attributing this mechanism to some type of "God" or other extrinsic principles (the "impossible"). Thus this power is simply his penetrating insight into the mechanisms of the universe, "what will go" and "what won't go", with the emphasis being (as with those below) on the value of such realization in knowing how to best guide all living beings to spiritual liberation by efficiently interacting with the basic causal laws of the Universe. Just a farmer knows that you can only get rice by sowing the appropriate seeds, while it is "impossible" that rice would grow from his sowing of barley grains, the Buddha also knows that only virtuous acts lead to happy result, and thus teaches accordingly - he is in tune with reality, and the fundamentals that are necessary to properly perform his "work" (i.e. the salvation of all living beings). Unlike we who are caught up in our web of illusions and delusions, he clearly discerns "fact from fiction", or "what is so and what is not so", without allowing his perception to be warped or distorted by egotistic projects of his own.

ii) *The power of knowing the consequences of actions, i.e. how karma ripens*: this refers to his clear perception of all the details of each living beings' karmic states, seeing how their former acts shape their present physical and psychic states, as well as the specific effects their current actions will have on their future. Thus he possesses a very detailed knowledge of all the intricacies of karma in general and in specific cases (the causal relationship between your

own actions and how they ripen into your future psycho-physical states), which enables him to incisively work with his disciples to generate positive karmic energy that will be conducive to spiritual progress (ultimately leading to the destruction of "karma", whereby finally in enlightenment this neurotic emotionally distorted "activity" (*Las*) that chains you to ignorance is transformed into the "enlightened activity" totally devoid of delusion, self-dissipating like a design drawn upon water.

iii) *The power of knowing the diverse dispositions and personalities of those living beings needing spiritual guidance:* this involves a detailed sensitivity to the psychological states of his disciples, with a particular emphasis on their interests and inclinations (*Mos Pa*) such that he perfectly knows what will arouse their interest and spur their enthusiasm. In this way, he is able to accurately guide a given person to liberation by utilizing contemplative and pedagogical techniques perfectly suited to that person's own background, interests, and psychological makeup.

iv) *The power of knowing the diverse psychological types and various constituent types existence can be classified into:* this principally involves his accurate perception of each disciple's overall psychological "type" or "disposition" in a more generic structural sense than the above "personalities", such that he can discern how to best lead each disciple along the various soteriological paths. In addition, the term "types" or "temperament" (*Khams*) can refer to the various "elements" that consciousness, and objects can be divided into (the six aspects of sensory experience, and so on), all of which the Buddha has incisively understands.

v) *The power of knowing the variety of intellectual and spiritual capacities/faculties:* the Buddha is perfectly sensitive to each person's intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual capacities, such that he will suit his teachings to the disciple's particular gifts and limits (whether it be for "faith", "good works", philosophical speculation, visualization, or some other dimension). Thus he will not insist an intellectually limited student studies sophisticated philosophical analysis, while for an artist he may use aesthetic practices and images to guide him/her to

transformation; additionally he knows which people are "up to" the highest teachings (such as the Great Perfection), and which are more suited to lesser teachings which will be of immediate benefit to them (whereas a "higher" teaching might actually cause severe psychological damage due to their own deficiencies in receptivity).

vi) *The power of knowing all the diverse paths*: this involves a detailed knowledge of all the pathways which our life tracks may follow, and above all the soteriological paths with their corresponding results or end destinations (some leading to the citadel of Buddhahood, others to the lesser fruit of a Listener's status, and still others to quite negative states of being). With this comprehensive knowledge of how the various paths interlink along with their corresponding contemplative practices, philosophical structures, and psychological effects, the Buddha is able to steer his disciples away from negative orientations and behavioral patterns, and guide them to the most positive spiritual path for their eventual enlightenment.

vii) *The power of knowing the emotional distortions and purifying forces that are operative within the meditative states, contemplations, absorptions, and so on*: the Buddha clearly sees how these contemplative techniques and meditative states work in terms of the psychology of each individual, including how they can feed into our emotional distortions when applied improperly and become distorted by our own neurotic perception of "meditation" and "spirituality" ("spiritual materialism"), as well as the positive, purificatory impact they can have when engaged in properly. Thus he has a perfect understanding of all these "altered states of consciousness" in terms of their positive and negative dynamics, as well as the techniques involved in inducing such states, the various "pitfalls" and "deviations" that are inherent in such meditative practices, the various correctives to be applied in the case of such eventualities, and the optimal "signs and measures" in a practitioner's internal experience and physical being that indicate the transformative influence of contemplation's purification. In this way he is perfectly suited to guide us through the dangers of contemplation to the stronghold of liberation.

viii) *The power of knowing his own and others' past lives*: this involves a comprehensive recollection of past life memories, including the ability to perceive others' long garlands of lives. This capacity not only entails general memories, but also specific knowledge of each life's particular "states" - the type of living being, the particular "species", location, and an infinite list of other concrete details. With this knowledge, he is able to incisively deal with our individual karmic legacies to head off their ongoing negative fruition and utilize that energetic momentum in a positive direction to fuel our progress through the spiritual path.

ix) *The power of knowing how birth and the transference of consciousness at death operate (as well as all the particular case histories)*: the Buddha gains a perfect knowledge of the intricate mechanisms of birth and death, and the capacity to see beyond the limits of birth and death into the dynamics of the post-death intermediate state. Unlike we who cannot see beyond our own or others' death, the Awakened One has "divine vision" that freely ranges throughout the entire cosmic panorama of infinite numbers of beings constantly dying, passing into post-death limbo, being reincarnated, and so on - without basing himself on logical reasoning or scriptures, he has a direct perception of the entire cycle, and thus knows beyond doubt that all living beings are caught up in an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that has its roots in the ancient past, and extends into the foreseeable future.

x) *The power of knowing the permanent exhaustion of all contaminants within himself*: this signifies that at the point of spiritual awakening, he definitely realizes his own inherent purity, and with this realization comes the certainty that he can no longer regress into the deluded, contaminated neurosis of cyclic existence. This freedom from contamination in particular entails the complete dissipation of the twofold obscuration characterizing sentient beings - that of emotional distortions (how we continually distort the world around us in accordance with our obsessive needs), and of cognitive limitations (how our capacities to know are severely restricted due to our insistent belief in strict dualism, that the isolated personal ego is fundamentally divided from all that surrounds it). With this utter certainty that he is no longer

within the reach of corruption, suffering, and doubt, a deep "peacefulness", bliss, and utter confidence pervades his enlightened spirit, such that he is perfectly assured in his movement back into cyclic existence for the sake of all living beings.

**"Ten spiritual stages or spiritual levels"** (*Sa bCu; Bhūmī*): see "spiritual stages".

**"Ten transcendental consummations"** (*Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa bCu; Pāramitā*): see "six transcendental consummations".

**"Thirty two perfect characteristics (mTshan Sum Cu rTsa gNyas; Dvātriṃśan-mahāpuruṣa-lakṣana) and eighty exemplary forms of an enlightened being"** (*dPe Byad bZang Po brGyad Cu; Aśṭyānuvyañjana*): this is a traditional enumeration of the auspicious and attractive physical attributes of an Awakened One, which again reflects the interpenetration of the physical and mental. See Thurman's *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti* for a comprehensive enumeration (156-7).

**"Thorough purity"** (*rNam Dag; \*Viśuddha*): see my comments on this term under "original purity and spontaneous presence".

**"Three aspects of dimmed awareness"** (*Ma Rig Pa gSum; Avidyā*): see "dimmed awareness".

**"Three types of contemplative experience"** (*Nyams gSum*): see "contemplative experience".

**"Three enlightened gazes"** (*gZigs sTangs gSum*): the "enlightened gazes" literally reads "way of looking" with the honorific form of "to look" (*gZigs*), and are usually classified into a standard set of three which are utilized in the practice of Direct Transcendence (TDD 405,2ff). In brief, they basically refer to three ways to gaze upon the unfolding visions (the key being to apply them in a very relaxed manner): the Emanational Body way of gazing, which is to look downwards; the Enjoyment Body way of gazing, which is to look sideways to the right and left; and the Reality Body way of gazing, which is to look upwards. These gazes are used in conjunction with the three postures termed "the three watching postures" (*ITa sTangs gSum*),

and the particular gaze used is determined in relation to the characteristics predominating in the visions at any given point. Symbolically naming these three simple gazes in terms of the Buddha's three Spiritual Bodies indicates the purity of the visionary, whose own gazing is now revealed as the gaze of the Enlightened One's three modes of being, just as the appearances s/he gazes upon are gradually being transformed into the pure visions of the transcendent shimmering mandalas of deities.

**"Three gateways"** (*sGo gSum; Dvāra*): see "gateways".

**"Three principal channels"** (*rTsa gSum; Nāḍī*): the three main channels of the subtle body running up its center are the flavor channel (*Ro Ma; Rasanā*), solitary channel (*rKyang Ma; Lalanā*), and the all-encompassing channel (*Kun 'Dar Ma; \*Avadhūti*). See the detailed discussion of these in Chapter Five. Also see "inner channels, energy winds and seminal nuclei".

**"Three realms"** (*Khams gSum; Tri-dhātu*) or **"three transitory worlds"** (*'Jig rTen gSum; Triloka*): these are the three basic realms of cyclic existence: the sensual realm (*'Dod Khams; Kāmadhātu*), the form realm (*gZugs Khams; Rūpadhātu*) and the formless realm (*gZugs Med Khams; Arūpadhātu*). See Zahler's *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism* for a detailed description.

**"Three states of existence" or "tripartite fictive existence"** (*Srid gSum; Bhava*): this can be synonymous with the "three realms" with *Srid* simply meaning "states of existence" or "possibilities of existence", though it can also have an alternate reference to the triad of "gods" (*Lha*), "humans" (*Mi*), and serpent spirits (*kLu*).

**"Three times"** (*Dus gSum*): see the "four times".

**"Three watching postures"** (*ITa sTangs gSum*): literally "the way of looking", this term signifies the three main postures (there are additional postures less frequently used) in which you gaze at the spontaneous visions occurring in Direct Transcendence contemplation, and are also referred to as "postures" (*'Dug sTangs*) or "enlightened postures" (*bZhugs sTangs*). As

such, they are used in conjunction with the three enlightened gazes (see TDD 403,3ff): the Reality Body lion posture (*Seng Ge*), the Enjoyment Body elephant posture (*gLang Chen*), and the Emanational Body sage posture (*Drang Srong*).

**"Totally Positive One"** (*Kun Tu bZang Po; Samantabhadra*): see the conclusion of Chapter One for an account of the liberation of the Totally Positive One. This Buddha is called "the Totally Positive One" not only because his enlightened state is utterly pure devoid of negative ego-logical distortion or corporeality, but also because he becomes directly enlightened right within the initial exteriorization of the Ground into the Ground-presencing at the primordial beginnings of the cosmos, without first straying into cyclic existence, and then only gradually with great difficulty returning to his source in the enlightenment-experience - he becomes instantaneously enlightened devoid of even a brief experience of the illusions of ignorance and impurity. As a naked blue figure in sexual union with his consort "Totally Positive Female" (*Kun Tu bZang Mo*), he forms a central part of the mandala of one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, and is understood as symbolizing the Reality Body therein.

**"Transcendence or Transcendent Reality"** (*Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa, 'Das Pa; Nirvāṇa*): see "cyclic existence" and "transcendence".

**"Transcendental consummation"** (*Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa; Pāramitā*): see "six transcendental consummations".

**"Transference of consciousness"** (*rNam Shes 'Pho Ba*): see "consciousness transfer".

**"Transitory world", "world", "mundane"** (*Jig rTen; Loka*): this is the most common term for "world", while etymologically it means "the basis (*rTen*) of which is perishable or transitory (*Jig Pa*).

**"Tsakshu"** (*Tsakshu; Cakṣu*): this is the transliteration of the Sanskrit term for "eye", and is often used in Great Perfection literature to indicate the eye in its visionary capacity.

**Tune into** (*rNal 'Byor; Yoga*): see "yoga".

**"Twelve links of interdependent origination" or "the twelfefold process of cyclic existence's interdependent origination"** (*rTen 'Brel bCu gNyis; Pratītya-samutpāda*): see "interdependent origination".

**"Twenty one means of concentration"** (*Sems 'Dzin Nyi Shu rTsa gCig*): literally "fixing the mind" or "holding onto with the mind", these refer to lower order contemplative techniques usually discussed in a group of twenty one. See the section on the eighth adamantine topic in the introduction.

**"Two Eyes"** (*sPyan gNyis*): see "Eye".

**"Two (spiritual) accumulations"** (*Tshogs gNyis; Saṃbhāradvaya*): this refers to a common practice in exoteric Buddhism, which involves the disciple amassing "accumulations of primordial gnosis" (*Ye Shes Kyi Tshogs*) and "accumulations of merit" (*bSod Nams Kyi Tshogs*). The origination of this division is obviously along the lines of the necessity of practicing positive ethical actions in conjunction with the development of penetrating insight into the ultimate truth of all phenomena, though as usual this basic insight was transformed in tantric literature.

**"Two obscurations"** (*sGrib Pa gNyis; Āvaraṇadvaya*): these are generally defined as emotional and cognitive obscurations, those factors that "obscure" or clouds up the natural clarity of our inner awareness, just as the clouds of a gathering storm obscure the sun's natural radiance. In the Great Perfection, it is thus said that you merely must disperse these clouds so that this natural gnostic radiation will flood forth from within to irradiate your existence with warmth, light, and life, such that there is no necessity, or question of, creating some new force extrinsic to your own current existence.

**"Two spiritual aims" or "twofold spiritual aim"** (*Don gNyis; Artha*): this refers to the aim of achieving enlightenment for yourself, as well as working for the goal of others' spiritual liberation, which are intrinsically linked to each other.



**"Two truths"** (*bDen Pa gNyis; Satya*): "the two truths" are conventional truth (*Kun rDzob bDen Pa; Samvṛti-satya*) and ultimate truth (*Don Dam bDen Pa; Paramārtha-satya*), and this interpretative scheme of "lower order" and "higher order" interlocking dimensions is utilized throughout TDD (in particular see Longchenpa's comments on TDD 195 2-6). The terms "conventional" and "ultimate" are used to classify the elemental energies (*Byung Ba*), and seminal nuclei (*Thig Le*), and are at the basis of the differentiation between the universal psychic ground and the Reality Body, and between the ordinary mind and primordial gnosis, which are discussed at length in Chapter Four. "Conventional" etymologically means "totally (*Kun*) obscured (*rDzob*)", "dissimulating", or "concealed"; "ultimate" etymologically means "that which is of "supreme (*Dam*) significance (*Don*), or "the sacred (*Dam*) dimension (*Don*)".

**"Twofold enlightened knowing/sensitivity"** (*mKhyen gNyis; Jñāna*): see my discussion of primordial gnosis for the twofold classification into the sensitivity to the knowable in all their plurality" (*Shes Bya Ji sNyed Ba mKhyen Pa'i Ye Shes*) and the sensitivity to the knowable just as they are in their ultimate reality (*Shes Bya Ji Ita Ba mKhyen Pa'i Ye Shes*). This is also expressed as "enlightened sensitivity to everything's (reality)" (*Thams Cad mKhyen Pa*) and "enlightened sensitivity to everything's specifics" (*rNam Pa Thams Cad mKhyen Pa*), the former relating to internal radiance and the latter to external radiance.

**"Ultimate elements" or "ultimate energies"** (*Don Dam Pa'i 'Byung Ba*): see "elemental energies".

**"Ultimate truth"** (*Don Dam bDen Pa; Paramārtha-satya*): see "two truths".

**"Ultra pure"** (*Yang Dag; Samyak*): *Yang Dag* usually means "authentic" or "genuine", but can be etymologized as "ultra (*Yang*) pure (*Dag*)", with the connotation of "ultimate" (*mThar Thug*).

**"Unborn"** (*sKye Med*): literally "not born", "not produced", "not created", or "not generated", this term connotes the Universe's abiding reality which is primordial rather than a

thing having a specific onset and terminus, and is not definable within the next of cause and effect. Again we come to the ontological difference.

**"Unconditioned"** (*'Dus Ma Byas; Asaṃskṛta*): this term again refers to ultimate reality as being beyond conditions and causes, since it is a dynamic no-thingness rather than a thing caught within the parameters of origination, endurance, and cessation, and as such the language and concepts of things are useless in our comprehension of it. Generally *'Dus Byas* is etymologized as "forming (*Byas*) by way of many causes and conditions coming together (*'Dus*)", while *Ma* then merely makes the term into a negative, i.e. "not forming..."; the term unconditioned is also understood as applying to space.

**"Unimpeded"** (*Zang Thal*): *Zang Thal* generally means "unimpeded", "unobstructed", or "penetrating", and is also found in the form *Zang Ka* and *Zang Ka Ma*, which are essentially synonymous terms. Etymologically, *Zang* apparently means "unimpeded", "unhindered", or "without barriers", while *Thal* means "to pass through", "penetrate" or "go beyond". The term is often used to signify the transcendence of materiality such that one can literally walk through stone walls or mountains "without obstruction", as well as signifying the unimpeded, free-flowing, penetrating quality of our innate awareness.

**"Unique attributes of a Buddha"** (*Sangs rGyas Kyi Chos Ma 'Dres Pa bCu brGyad; Aṣṭadaśāveṇika-buddha-dharma*): this refers to eighteen qualities or attributes of a Buddha which, as a reflection of his/her perfect enlightenment, are not qualities found in lesser beings (i.e. they are unique to a fully Awakened One). There are two different standard enumerations of these, one in accordance with the normative Lesser Vehicle tradition, and one in accordance with the Great Vehicle tradition. The former is defined as his ten powers (see above), four types of fearlessness (see above), his three types of mindfulness (his remaining unperturbed in calm "mindfulness" devoid of emotional attachment, hatred, or passive indifference in the face of disciples or audiences that unanimously praise and heed him, unanimously disregard and denigrate him, and do a little of both), and his great compassion (see Poussin's

*Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* 1137-1145). The latter list of eighteen can be found in Hopkins' *Meditation on Emptiness* 211, or *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism II*, 174.

**"Universal psychic ground" or "universal ground"** (*Kun gZhi; Ālaya*) **and "universal ground consciousness"** (*Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes; Ālayavijñāna*): see the detailed discussion in Chapter Four, and my corresponding commentary; also see "consciousness".

**"Universe"**: see "Being".

**"Vajra"** (*rDo rJe; Vajra*): see "adamantine".

**"Vajra body"** (*rDo rJe'i Lus*): see "adamantine body".

**"Vase breathing"** (*Bum Chen*): this is a simple breathing technique used in many tantric systems of contemplation, and which involves imaginatively visualizing that the lower winds and upper winds of the body are concentrated within the body just below the navel, where you hold them within a "vase" without breathing.

**"Vertically ordered triad"** (*Sum brTsegs*): *Sum brTsegs* literally means "stack of three", "three stories" of a building, or "triune pile", and thus connotes a triune hierarchy that is vertically organized. Translated as "vertically ordered triad" in the context of the Great Perfection, this term generally applies to the three interrelated dimensions of primordial gnosis and awareness: its empty essence, radiant nature, and all-pervasive compassionate resonance (see "essence, nature and compassionate resonance", and "compassionate resonance"). TDD 226,6 thus specifies that awareness abides in terms of the following vertically ordered triad: its essence in terms of the Spiritual Bodies, its nature in terms of the light energy, and its compassionate resonance in terms of primordial gnosis. The term "triune stack" then indicates that these three dimensions are perfectly integrated with each like the three stories of a house or temple, since rather than being discrete unconnected "facts" about the Universe, each is "built" upon the other, mutually sustaining and enhancing each other. This also plays off the standard vertical imagery of the Ground-presencing, which is generally described as if an unfolding panorama viewed against the horizon from a distant cliff, with the pure potential of original

purity (*Ka Dag*) described as "upper" along the lines of the vast infinity of empty space, "below" which is its spontaneous presence (*Lhun Grub*) as the luminous sky, and further "below" then are the increasingly actualized, materialized realms of "cyclic existence", like the cities and villages "down" here on earth (clearly based on the experience of the solid earth beneath our feet, the luminous horizon, and infinite empty reaches of space stretching out above us). In terms of the current triad, awareness' empty essence is "above" as the dynamic nothingness that then extends "downwards" in terms of its nature and resonance, creating the possibility for the further descent into alienation and materialization, or, in the case of the Awakened One, emanating outwards in compassionate activity to engage all living beings. The term "triune stack" thus describes the coordinated self-organizing hierarchies so intrinsic to Longchenpa's thought, phases which retain their own dynamic character yet are perfectly interrelated with each other. This vertical imagery also indicates the involutory and evolutionary character of the Universe as "fluctuations" are possible both upwards and downwards: the entire Universe emanates outwards from its undivided grounding singularity, and can "descend" into cyclic existence through lack of self-recognition, yet simultaneously can "ascend" into transcendent reality through its recognition, the latter possibility remaining ever-present with the former as well, such that at the lowest depths we retain this capacity to move upwards. Thus the term "triune stack" signifies the self-organizing nature of the Universe that inherently structures itself at every dimension with its seamless union of emptiness, radiance, and intelligence, and as such is also reflected in the lower order dimensions: TDD 245,4 speaks of an "impure vertically organized triad", i.e. our dimmed awareness, ordinary mind and psyche (where triune gnosis is a "pure" vertically organized triad). As Guenther perceptively points out in *Matrix of Mystery* 19, this vertical imagery is clearly related to the standard description of a Buddha in terms of "five sublime perfections" (*Phun Sum Tshogs lNga; Sampanna*): the Teacher, his/her audience or retinue, the location of this teaching, the time of the teaching, and the content of the teaching itself (teacher, place, audience, teaching, and time).

This can be understood as a "horizontal" radiation outwards into perfect integrated gestalts at any level, which themselves can also be "vertically" arrayed into interlocking hierarchies that are perfectly indivisible (*dByer Med*). This horizontal fivefold gestalt is also reflected on the lower order, and thus TCD1 156,6f identifies it as the five psycho-physical components which constitute human existence: the location is the physical form component, the teacher is the consciousness component, the audience or retinue is the discernment component, the teaching is the sensation component, and the time is the karmic conditioning component. See Guenther's *The Creative Vision* 44-45, and *Matrix of Mystery* 220-221 for further comments.

**"Vibrant energies", "vibrant quintessence", "vibrancy" or "quintessence"** (*Dwangs Ma*) and **"solidified forms of energy"** (*sNyigs Ma*): this distinction between "vibrant forms of energy" and "solidified forms of energy" is basic to understanding the Great Perfection presentation of the five elemental energies (*Byung Ba*), i.e. earth, fire, water, wind, and space energy. Literally, *Dwangs Ma* means "to clear up", "refined", "quintessence", "pellucid", "translucent", "clear liquid", or "juice", while *sNyigs Ma* means "sediment", "dregs", "residue", "impurity", "pollution", "toxin", or "refuse". In medical and dietary terms, *Dwangs Ma* refers to the essential nutrients and energy extracted from ingested food and used to revitalize and nourish the body (forming blood, and so on), while *sNyigs Ma* signifies the waste products that are eliminated from the body via urination and excretion; in terms of the five elemental energies as a whole, *Dwangs Ma* indicates their pure vibrant dimensions as unmaterialized subtle rainbow-hued light-intensities, while *sNyigs Ma* refers to those intensities solidified, materialized, and gravity bound gross forms that co-involve in conjunction with dimmed awareness' distorted psychic functioning, and form the coarse material objects we normally perceive (i.e. the shock of non-recognition affects not only subjectivity, but also ripples throughout the system such that the initial luminous display congeals and hardens into material "objectivity"; *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* thus explains the difference between the *sNyigs Ma* and *Dwangs Ma* aspects of the elements with the analogy of "being asleep" and

"waking up"). This basic higher order/lower order distinction is used by Longchenpa in a variety of ways, such that the only generalization possible is that *Dwangs Ma* indicates *relatively* subtle, vibrant, dynamic dimensions of energy that en-liven and revitalize, while *sNyigs Ma* indicates *relatively* coarse, solidified, frozen dimensions of energy that deaden and de-vitalize. Often the term *Dwangs Ma* ("vibrant quintessence" or "vibrancy") is used to refer to the seminal nuclei (*Thig Le*), which usually are considered among the body's most vibrant, high-intensity energies, and are defined as the "vibrant quintessences of the elements" (KGNT2 61,6), whether in their conventional semi-material and material forms, or their ultimate forms of pure gnostic radiation; in other words, *Dwangs Ma* signifies the body's most vibrant lucent energies, and these vibrant energies are concentrated within the seminal nuclei (which on a material level can certainly include cells' genetic material, and has a special connotation of the regenerative fluids (sperm/ovum) with the intensely concentrated energy necessary to impel an embryo's creation and development). The term *Dwangs Ma* is thus also connected with the subtle translucency substance forming the sensory faculties (*dBang Po*), which have an extraordinary lucency enabling sensitivity to the external world, and consequently the "registering" of sensory data. The term is often used with other bodily dimensions to indicate their "subtle dimension" which relates to the imaginal energetics of the subtle body rather than their coarse forms involved in observable bio-logical processes, such as "the vibrant quintessence of breath", or "the vibrant energy of blood". The luminous channels of course contain the body's vibrant energies par excellence, which is often expressed as "the vibrant quintessence of vibrant energy" (*Dwangs Ma'i Dwangs Ma*) or simply as "luminous radiation" (*Od gDangs*). See Guenther's *The Creative Vision* 41ff for further comments, where he terms them "radiation-dominated fundamental forces" (*Dwangs Ma*) and "matter-dominated fundamental forces" (*sNyigs Ma*). The distinction must also be further contextualized within a detailed discussion of Longchenpa's complex presentation of the elemental energies.

**"Vicious Cycle"** (*Khor Ba; Saṃsāra*): see "cyclic existence".

**"Victoriously Transcendent One"** (*bCom lDan 'Das; Bhagavān*): this is a traditional epithet of the Buddha consisting of these three syllables: "conquer" (*bCom*), "possess" (*lDan*), and "pass beyond" (*'Das*). Longchenpa often etymologizes each syllable with meanings varying in accordance with the context (yet still based on these generic definitions of each syllable), and thus I have rendered it literally along the lines of the syllable's root meanings (obviously "one" doesn't perfectly correlate with "possess" however).

**"Victors"** (*rGyal Ba; Jina*): literally the "Victorious Ones", this is an appellation of the Enlightened Ones indicating their spiritual sovereignty, as well as connoting the historical Buddha, who forsake his status as prince for the spiritual search for meaning.

**"Victory banner"** (*rGyal mTshan*): a decorative item found in Tibetan temples made of brocaded silk or precious metal in cylindrical form, and which literally means "sign of victory", i.e. the banner or flag hoisted after winning a battle (in this case the spiritual battle against ignorance).

**"Vishnu"** (*Khyab 'Jug; Viṣṇu*): a particular deity of the Hindu pantheon (TDD 370,5. 373,7).

**"Visionary" or "practitioner"** (*rNa! 'Bycr Pa; Yogin*): this term literally reads "one who does yoga", etymologically means "s/he who is tuned into the natural pristine state"), and is commonly known in the West by its Sanskrit equivalent "yogi". The term generally connotes someone seriously engaged in contemplation, but whom has not yet attained the culminating fruit of enlightenment. See "yoga" for its etymological derivation.

**"Visualization"** (*dMigs Pa*): see "objectification".

**"Vitality"** (*Srog; Jiva, Prāṇa*) **and** **"vitality channel"** (*Srog rTsa*): see my extensive discussion at the end of Chapter Four, and in Chapter Five. In general, the coarse material reference is to the main blood trunk in the center of the body, i.e. the aorta.

**"Warmth"** (*Drod; Ūṣman*): "warmth" can signify body heat, but also connotes meditative realization as these high-energy processes of yoga begin to "heat up", or we "warm up" to the focus of contemplation.

**"Watching postures"** (*ITa sTangs*): see "three watching postures".

**"Watery eye orb"** (*Chu Bur Gyi Mig*): this refers to the physical eye, which resembles a "water bubble" (*Chu Bur*) both in terms of its curved shape, as well as its liquid nature. It generally contrasts to the "far ranging water lamp", which signifies the tips of the luminous channels located at the respective centers of the two eyes, and thus our "spiritual eye", or capacity for vision (see my discussion of the sixth adamantine topic).

**"Wheels"** (*Khor Lo; Cakra*): see "energy wheels".

**"White silk thread channel"** (*Dar dKar sNal Ma*): see "luminous channels".

**"Winds" or "wind currents"** (*rLung; Vāyu, Prāṇa*): see "channels, inner winds, and seminal nuclei".

**"Wisdom" or "wisdom energy"** (*dGongs Pa; \*Abhiprāya, Abhisandhi*): this important term is the honorific form of "to think", "to consider", "idea", "thought" or "mind" (as well as colloquially "permission" or "leave of absence"), and philosophically often means "intention" or "underlying intention", such as needing to discern the essential intention underlying the surface of a difficult passage ("insinuation"). As an honorific form, the term is particularly connected to an Awakened One with/his her non-fragmented optimal psychic energy, and as such is often glossed as "the psychic energy of the Enlightened Mind" (*Thugs Kyi Shes Pa*). In the Great Perfection tradition, *dGongs Pa* refers to state of enlightened realization as the basic intelligence of the universe, and in the sense of "contemplation" is clearly differentiated from fabricated meditation (*sGom Pa*) utilizing various techniques to recontact this state (the latter point emphasized in Reynold's *Self-Liberation*, though he fails to explore the particular meaning of *dGongs Pa* itself. This ties into its ordinary use as "underlying intention" of a text, since its "intent" or "wisdom" is the depth-reality that continues through the awakened one's



state of being, the Universe itself, and ourselves, though it is not immediately apparent amidst the surface dissimulations of cyclic existence's alienated state. In particular, *dGongs Pa* indicates that the Universe is inherently intelligence or "wise", and that this self-organizing intelligence has a "plan" or "design" that is thus inherent enfolded within reality's dynamic nothingness (and as such operative within every level of the cosmos that unfolds from it), which constitutes a resounding rejection of claims that our own intelligence is an "accident" amidst the drifting blank "dumbness" of the material alien cosmos. Yet in our current neuroticized and corporealized existence we are oblivious to this primordial "wisdom" (the enlightened nucleus of primordial gnosis vibrantly present within the core of our being), and it is necessary via contemplation to "divine" this intention, to "tune into" this fundamental design and wisdom obscured by the surface dynamics that we are obsessed with (obviously the term is used to indicate we must "read" the text of the Universe to penetrate to its fundamental structural unity and deep meaningfulness, in contrast to our ordinary skimming through its surface taking what literally appears at face value). Bohm expresses similar sentiments in Weber's *Dialogues with Scientists and Sages* 100: "...nature is alive...all the way to the depths. And intelligence...it can explain why we have this richness of forms far beyond what mere survival would call for...(it is) nature's intent, its deep intent..." This plan or intent (termed "a gnostic wind") of the Universe drives it out of its pure potential ("the Body in a Vase") into the possibility and actualization of fragmentation into a proliferating cosmos of sentient beings; it is a plan for self-recognition, driven by an obscure impulse within its own depth-heart termed the "vitality wind", the wind of life, or the "gnostic wind". At some level it wishes to be, or to know for itself and in itself what it is and is not, and this depth-intention of evolution is precisely what the Awakened One tunes into, thereby recognizing the game's final intent, resulting in the entire charade naturally collapsing ("the exhaustion of reality"). Yet in the end of the game there remains reality, and it is from the wisdom-energy of reality that the Awakened One continues to dynamically participate, driven by the inherent compassion of that

state to re-enter the game in a fundamentally different way. Not only are they fulfillment of the universe's underlying intention in a localized event, but they also become the agents whose enlightened activity helps to bring that intention to fruition on a cosmic scale ("until cyclic existence is empty"). Thus TCD1 370,1 refers to the wisdom (*dGongs Pa*) of reality manifesting within us as ego-logical conceptuality (*Dran rTog*) runs its course, indicating this "meaning" reverberates throughout every dimension of the Universe with its purposefulness, and coordinated order: KGNT 59,6 says that "wisdom energy of the Totally Positive One pervades all embodied beings in a self-emergent fashion, and in particular is present with your own body like sesame oil pervades the sesame seed". LYT1 450,5 compares this "wisdom energy" (*dGongs Pa*) of the primordial triune Ground's seamless union of Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnosis as like "the core of the sun" (*Nyi Ma'i sNying Po*), with its spontaneous fiery dynamics; KGYT2 218,2 describes the "radiant nucleus" (*sNying Po gSal Bar*) as involving awareness' own essence being unceasingly radiant, such that it is the "wisdom energy of the Buddha's expansive awakening" (*Sangs rGyas Kyi dGongs Pa*). At the same time, this wisdom of the Universe is utterly spontaneous in its dynamics, such TDD 509,2 describes spontaneously present gnostic energy as not being born, not ceasing, and never intending anything at all (*Mi sKye Mi 'Gag Cir Mi dGongs*). ZMYT1 212,4 speaks of the "wisdom energy of original purity", i.e. its inherent resonating intelligence with the multi-valent self-organizing design inherently enfolded within its dynamic nothingness; ZMYT1 213,2 defines enlightenment as "the single flavor within the wisdom energy of the seamless union of expanse and primordial gnosis" (*dByings Dang Ye Shes 'Du 'Bral Med Pa'i dGongs Par Ro gCig*). Along the same lines, the term *dGongs Pa* often occurs together with the terms "enlightened nucleus of realized-energy" and "enlightened nucleus of bliss-energy" to indicate the inherent intelligence and meaningfulness these two terms indicate. The general orientation of my interpretation of *dGongs Pa* is quite clear in Longchenpa's corpus with a little thought on the term's general use and the particular passages it occurs in herein, and while the term is also

used non-technically in more simple sense such as "to contemplate", or "intended" meaning", vague renderings of it as "primordial state" (Reynolds' *Self-Liberation*), "primordial condition" (Lipman's *You are the Eyes of the World*) or "the state" (Tulku Thondup's *Buddha Mind*) simply don't do justice to the term's technical reference as derived from its etymological roots and contextualized usage in Longchenpa's Great Perfection writings. I have rendered it as "wisdom" or "wisdom energy" (a term not used to render any other Tibetan term herein) to indicate its intrinsic connection to intelligence, its honorific character, its relationship to enlightenment, and its connotation of design, meaningfulness, primordially, and integrated gestalts. See Jantsch's *The Self-Organizing Universe* for very pertinent comments on "meaning" and "intelligence" in relation to the Universe's self-evolution, as well as Hoyle's *The Intelligence Universe* for a very straight forward presentation of related ideas. Guenther has rendered *dGongs Pa* as "Buddha intentionality" (*Kindly Bent to Ease Us II* 93), "intentionality" (*Matrix of Mystery* 174), "Being's meaning-rich potential" (*The Creative Vision* 28), "Mind of the Universe", "superthought" (*From Reductionism to Creativity* 89), and "holistic meaning-imparting superthought" (*Ibid.*, 94)

**"Wish-fulfilling gem"** (*Yid bZhin Nor Bu; Cintā-maṇi*): a mythological gem said to spontaneously grant the wishes of whoever possesses it.

**"Wrathful deities"** (*Khro Bo; Khrodha*): see "one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities".

**"Yoga"** (*rNal 'Byor; Yoga*): I use the corresponding Sanskrit term of *rNal 'Byor* due its having become part of the English language, and in general it should be understood as referring to contemplative techniques and systems utilizing our physical, verbal and mental energies and especially involving creative intensely symbolic visualizations of vivid images both inside and outside our body in order to free up and transform our psycho-physical energies, while in particular dissipating our characteristic patterns of cathexis and neurotic tendencies towards distraction. The etymology of *rNal 'Byor* is "tuning into ('Byor) naturalness (*rNal*)", or "linking up to ('Byor) a pristine innate state (*rNal Ma*)", and is often referred to in this sense in

Longchenpa's writings. In particular see his use of "settling into a pristine natural state" (*rNal dBab*) in relation to the preliminary practices (TDD 374,7ff).

**"Yogic exercises"** (*'Khrul 'Khor; 'Phrul 'Khor; Yantra*): this refers to certain yogic practices involving special postures, movements, and breathing patterns.

**"Yogic tuning into"** (*rNal 'Byor, Yoga*): see "yoga".

**"Youthful Body in a Vase"** (*gZhon Nu Bum Pa sKu*): this term signifies the primordial Ground in its self-contained pure potential devoid of exteriorization, and thus the Ground-presencing emerges when this vase's "seal is rent open", or its "encasing torn" (*rGya Ral*). Thus this term also signifies the internally radiant pristine awareness present within all living beings heart, the primordial Ground, "enlightened nucleus" or "Buddha-nature" obscured by our neuroticized corporeality (it thus constitutes a transformation of *Tathāgatagarbha* theory). The "Body" (*sKu*) indicates the dynamic qualities of the Spiritual Bodies and primordial gnoses, this rainbow hued gnostic energy that is inherent within original purity's dynamic nothingness: as internal radiance of pure potential, it is devoid of any external manifestation (and thus "within a vase" (*Bum Pa*), since the contents of vase are not visible from outside), as well as perpetually vibrant, ever fresh, untainted by cyclic existence and not susceptible to the mortality and decay of conditioned existence in actuality (and thus a "young" or "youthful" (*gZhon Nu*) body, that is unsullied, immortal, and ever fresh brimming with the dynamism of "youth", which also connotes its "primordially, when the Universe itself was/is "young" before the aging of involution and evolution). In this way, the "vase" connotes original purity, i.e. the Ground's total emptiness or nothingness, while the "Body" connotes its simultaneous spontaneous presence, i.e. the Ground's dynamic vibrancy that is as yet in state of pure virtual potential, or "internal radiance" (*Nang gSal*). It would appear clear the image is thus of a Body concealed *within* as vase, which is related to the frequent image of a butter lamp placed within a vase, such that its light is not apparent from the outside, yet nevertheless is luminously present within the depths of the vase's interiority that gives the vase a inner luminosity or glow (see

TDD 232,5), just as this gnostic energy is always already fully present within the Universe's ultimate quintessence, despite not being externally apparent. For this reason, translations rendering this as the "Vase Body" or "Vase-like Body" are quite mistaken, as they obscure the entire image, and in particular dissipate the contrast between the "vase" as original purity and the "Body" as spontaneous presence, the latter contained within the former's interiority as its subtle depth-radiance (*gTing gSal*), yet absent from external view. This misunderstanding seems to stem from the placement of the term "vase" (*Bum Pa*) between "young" (*gZhon Nu*) and "Body" (*sKu*), though this is easily resolved by understanding it as "the Body within a vase which is young", with the genitive (at times we find *gZhon Nu'i Bum*) merely indicating this "Body" is "of" the vase, i.e. is its contents. I have been unable to ascertain the source of this imagery (which may be Tibetan, Indian or Chinese), whether it stems from some mythological account of a deity or person concealed within a vase, some type of children's game involving dolls within containers such as the famous Russian dolls within dolls, a ritual item involving a statue contained within a vase, or some other source. Finally, "vase" obviously also indicates the cornucopia overflowing with abundance spontaneously, a powerful image evoking the positive understanding of emptiness (*sTong Pa Nyid*) in Great Perfection thought.

**Glossary: Tibetan terms with English translations**

*The following is a glossary of key Tibetan terms (ordered according to the Tibetan alphabet) specifying under what English term each can be located in the mini-encyclopedia.*

- Ka Ti Shel Gyi sBu Gu Can: see "luminous channels".
- Ka Ti gSer Gyi rTsa Chen: see "luminous channels".
- Ka Dag: see "original purity and spontaneous presence".
- Kun Khyab Kyi Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".
- Kun Tu rTog Pa'i Ma Rig Pa: see "dimmed awareness".
- Kun Tu bZang Po: see "Totally Positive One".
- Kun Tu bZang Mo: see "Totally Positive One".
- Kun 'Dar Ma: see "all-encompassing channel".
- Kun rDzob Kyi 'Byung Ba: see "elements".
- Kun rDzob bDen Pa: see "two truths".
- Kun gZhi, Kun gZhi'i rNam Shes: see "universal psychic ground".
- kLu: see "serpent spirits".
- kLong: see "space".
- dKar 'Jam rTsa'i sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- dKyil: see "mandalic center".
- dKyil 'Khor: see "mandala".
- bKra Shis rTags brGyad: "eight auspicious signs".
- rKyang Ma: see "solitary channel".
- rKyen bZhi: see "four conditions".
- sKu, sKu gSum, sKu lNga: see "body and Spiritual Body".
- sKye mChed: see "sensory fields".
- sKye Med: see "unborn".
- sKyed Byed Dang Po'i 'Khor Lo: see "energy wheels".

- sKyon: see "enlightened qualities".
- bsKyed Rim: see "generation phase and perfection phase"
- Khams: see "constituents" and "spiritual dimension".
- Khams bCo brGyad: see "eighteen sensory elements".
- Khams gSum: see "three realms".
- Khyab 'Jug: see "Vishnu".
- Khyung Chen: see "Khyung".
- Khregs Chod: see "Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence".
- Khro Bo: see "wrathful deities".
- mKha' 'Gro Ma: see "Sky Dancer".
- mKhyen gNyis: see "twofold enlightened knowing/sensitivity".
- 'Khor Ba: see "cyclic existence and transcendence".
- 'Khor Lo, 'Khor Lo bZhi: see "energy wheels".
- 'Khrul 'Khor: see "yogic exercises".
- 'Khrul Pa, 'Khrul sNang: see "straying".
- Gos dKar Mo: "White Cloaked One"; see "body".
- Grub Pa: see "accomplishment".
- Gröl Ba: freedom". see my brief discussion in the eighth adamantine topic within the introduction.
- gLan Chen: see "three watching postures".
- dGa' Ba, dGa' Ba bZhi: see "four joys".
- dGa' Bral: see "four joys".
- dGe Lugs Pa: see "Gelukpa sect".
- dGongs Pa: see "wisdom".
- 'Gag bsDam: see "indicted".
- 'Grub Pa: see "accomplishment".
- 'Gro Drug: see "six types of life forms or beings".

- rGyang Zhags Chu'i sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- rGyan: see "dynamism".
- rGyab Chos: see "follow-up supporting teachings".
- rGyab rTen: see "follow-up supporting teachings".
- rGyal Ba: see "Victors".
- rGyal mTshan: see "victory banner".
- rGyu bDag Nyid gCig Pa'i Ma Rig Pa: see "dimmed awareness".
- rGyu'i: see "catalytic".
- rGyu'i rKyen: see "four conditions".
- rGyungs Pa: see "spinal cord".
- rGyud: see "Tantra".
- sGo, sGo gSum: see "gateway".
- sGom: see "meditation".
- sGyu Ma: see "magical illusion".
- sGrib Pa, sGrib Pa gNyis: see "two types of obscurations".
- sGrub Chen: see "ritual approach and evocation".
- sGrub Pa: see "actualization"; see "ritual approach and evocation".
- sGron Ma, sGron Ma bZhi, sGron Ma Drug: see "lamps".
- sGron Ma'i sPyan: see "eye".
- Ngo sProd: see "introduction".
- Ngo Bo: see "essence, nature and compassionate resonance" and "compassionate resonance".
- Ngo Bo Rang bZhin Thugs rJe: see "essence, nature and compassionate resonance" and "compassionate resonance".
- Ngo Shes Pa: see "recognize".
- dNgos Grub: see "psychic attainments".
- mNgon Du 'Gyur: see "coming into the fore".
- mNgon Sum: see "immediacy".



- sNgags: see "mantra".
- bCom lDan 'Das: see "Victoriously Transcendent One".
- Chad: see "eternalism and nihilism".
- Chings Su bCing: see "indicted".
- Chu Bur Gyi Mig: see "watery eye orb".
- Chu Ser: see "lymph".
- Chen Po: see "great".
- Chos: see "phenomena".
- Chos Kyi dByings: see "expanse".
- Chos Kyi dByings Kyi Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".
- Chos sKu: see "body".
- Chos Can: see "phenomena".
- Chos Nyid: see "phenomena".
- Chos Nyid Kyi Bar Do: see "intermediate state".
- Chos Nyid mNgon Sum Gyi sNang Ba: see "four visions".
- Chos Nyid Zad Pa'i sNang Ba: see "four visions".
- Chos Ma 'Dres Pa bCo brGyad: see "unique attributes of the Buddha".
- mChog dGa': see "four joys".
- mChod rTen: see "stupa".
- 'Char gZhi: see "pure source-potential".
- 'Chi Ka'i Bar Do: see "intermediate state".
- Ji sNyed mKhyen Pa: see "primordial gnosis".
- Ji lTa Nyid mKhyen Pa: see "primordial gnosis".
- 'Jam dPal, 'Jam dByangs; see "Mañjuśrī".
- 'Jig rTen: see "transitory world".
- rJes Thob: see "contemplative equanimity and "post-meditative awareness".

- Nyan Thos: "Listeners".
- Nyams, Nyams gSum: see "contemplative experience".
- Nyams Gong Phel Gyi sNang Ba: see "four visions".
- Nyams Su Len Pa: see "practice".
- Nye Bar bsNyen Pa: see "ritual approach and evocation".
- Nyon Mongs: see "emotional distortions".
- gNyis Su Med Pa: see "non-dual".
- mNyam Pa Nyid Kyi Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".
- mNyam gZhag: see "contemplative equanimity and "post-meditative awareness".
- rNying Ma: see Gelukpa sect".
- sNyigs Ma: see "vibrant energy".
- sNying: see "heart".
- sNying Thig: see "seminal heart-essence".
- sNying Po: see "enlightened nucleus".
- sNyoms 'Jug bZhi: see "meditative states".
- bsNyen sGrub: see "ritual approach and evocation".
- bsNyen Pa: see "ritual approach and evocation".
- Ting Nge 'Dzin: see "contemplation".
- Ting Nge 'Dzin Gyi Bar Do: see "intermediate state".
- gTing gSal: see "radiance".
- gTum Mo: see "mystic fire".
- gTems Pa: see "stimulate".
- gTor Ma: see "sacrificial cake".
- rTa Babs: see "portico".
- rTag Chad: see "eternalism and nihilism".
- rTags Tshad: see "signs and measures of progress and success in practice".

- rTen 'Brel, rTen 'Brel bCu gNyi: see "interdependent origination".
- rTog Pa: see "neurotic".
- lTa sTangs gSum: see "three watching postures".
- sTong Pa Nyid: see "emptiness".
- sTong Pa Rang Grol: see "luminous channels".
- sTong gZugs: see "empty forms".
- sTong gSum: see "billionfold galaxy".
- sTon Pa: see "Teacher".
- sTobs bCu: see "ten powers".
- blTem Pa: see "stimulate".
- Thabs: see "efficacious means and insight".
- Thig Phran: see "minute seminal nuclei".
- Thig Le: see "seminal nuclei".
- Thig Le sTong Pa'i sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- Thugs: see "Enlightened Mind".
- Thugs rJe: see "essence, nature and compassionate resonance" and "compassionate resonance".
- Thub Pa, Thub Pa Drug: see "Able One".
- Theg Pa dGu: see "nine spiritual vehicles".
- Theg Pa Chen Po: see "Great Vehicle and Lesser Vehicle".
- Theg Pa dMan Pa: see "Great Vehicle and Lesser Vehicle".
- Thog Ma: see "primordality".
- Thod rGal: see "Breakthrough and Direct Transcendence".
- mTha' rTen: see "follow-up supporting teachings".
- mThar Thug 'Bras Bu'i sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- Dag Pa'i Zhing: see "spiritual realm".
- Dangs Ma: see "vibrant energy".

- Dam Tshig, Dam Tshig Chen Po bZhi: see "commitments".
- Dam Tshig sGrol Ma: "Commitment Saviress"; see "body".
- Dar dKar sNal Ma: see "luminous channels".
- Dug lNga: see "emotional poisons".
- Dung Khang: see "conch shell house".
- Dus gSum: see "three times".
- Dus bZhi: see "four times".
- De Ma Thag Pa'i rKyen: see "four conditions".
- De bZhin Nyid: see "as-is".
- De bZhin gShegs Pa'i sNying Po: see "enlightened nucleus".
- Don gNyi: see "two spiritual aims".
- Don Dam bDen Pa: see "two truths".
- Don Dam Pa'i 'Byung Ba: see "elemental energies".
- Don sNod: see "essential organs and hollow organs".
- Don Yod Grub: "the Efficacious One"; see "body".
- Drang Srong: see "three watching postures".
- Dran Pa: see "memory".
- Dran rTog: see "memory".
- Dran Pa 'Dus Pa'i 'Khor Lo: see "energy wheels".
- Dran Rig: see "memory".
- Dran bSam: see "memory".
- Dri Za: see "scent eater".
- Drod: see "warmth".
- Dwangs, Dwangs Ma: see "vibrant energies".
- gDangs: see "dynamism".
- gDod Ma: see "primordality".

- bDag Po'i rKyen: see "four conditions".
- bDe Chen: see "bliss".
- bDe Ba: see "bliss".
- bDe Ba Chen Po'i 'Khor Lo: see "energy wheels".
- öDe gShegs sNying Po: see "enlightened nucleus".
- bDen Pa gNyi: see "two truths".
- bDen Pa bZhi: see "four truths".
- mDangs: see "dynamism".
- mDo: see "Sutric tradition".
- 'Das Pa: see "cyclic existence and transcendence".
- 'Du Byed: see "psycho-physical components".
- 'Du Bral Med Pa: see "seamless union".
- 'Du Shes: see "psycho-physical components".
- 'Dug sTangs: see "three watching postures".
- 'Dus Ma Byas: see "unconditioned".
- 'Dod Khams: see "three realms".
- 'Dod Yon, 'Dod Pa'i Yon Tan: see "sensual qualities".
- 'Dod Lha: see "sensual gods".
- 'Dom: see "fathom".
- rDo rJe: see "adamantine".
- rDo rJe sKyil Krung: see "lotus posture".
- rDo rJe Theg Pa: see "Tantra".
- rDo rJe Māmakī: "Adamantine Māmakī"; see "body".
- rDo rJe Lu Gu rGyud: see "linked chains".
- rDo rJe Sems dPa': see "Adamantine Hero".
- rDo rJe'i gNas: see "eleven adamantine topics".

- rDo rJe'i gNas bCu gCig: see "eleven adamantine topics".
- rDo rJe'i Lus: see "adamantine body" and "tantric physiology".
- rDos bCas: see "corporeal".
- lDog Pa: see "conceptual isolate".
- Na Ro: see "Naro letter".
- Nang dByings: see "expanse".
- Nang gSal: see "radiance".
- Nam mKha': see "space".
- Nam mKha' dByings Kyi dBang Phyug Ma: "Space's Expanse Mistress"; see "body".
- gNas Pa: "abiding"; see "abiding reality".
- gNas Pa gZhi'i sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- gNas Lugs: see "abiding".
- gNas Lugs gZhi'i Bar Do: see "intermediate state".
- gNas Lugs gZhi'i sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- rNam rTog: see "neurosis".
- rNam Dag: see "thorough purity".
- rNam Par Dag Pa dByings Yi sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- rNam Par sNang mDzad: "the Illuminator"; see "body".
- rNam Par sNang mDzad Kyi Chos bDun: see "lotus posture".
- rNam Shes: see "consciousness" and "psycho-physical components".
- rNam Shes 'Pho Ba: see "consciousness-transfer".
- rNam Shes Tshogs brGyad: see "consciousness".
- rNal 'Byor: see "yoga".
- rNal 'Byor Pa: see "visionary".
- sNang Ba: see "appearances".
- sNang Ba mTha' Yas: "Limitless Illumination"; see "body".

- sNang Ba bZhi: see "four visions".
- sNang Lugs: "how it appears to be"; see "abiding reality".
- sNang Srid: see "appearances and the fictive worlds therein".
- sNod bCud: see "material environment and life forms therein".
- Pad Ma: see "lotus".
- dPag Tshad: "league".
- dPal Gyi Be'u: see "eight auspicious signs".
- dPe Byad bZang Po: see "the thirty two perfect characteristics and eighty exemplary forms of an enlightened being".
- sPyan, sPyan gNyi: see "eye".
- sPyan Phul Thag Tsam: see "proportionately sized eyes".
- sPyi: see "body in general".
- sPyi gZhi: see "common Ground".
- sPrul sKu: see "body".
- sPros Pa, sPros Bral: see "discursiveness".
- Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa, Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa Drug, Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa bCu: "six transcendental consummations".
- Phung Po: see "psycho-physical components".
- Phyag rGya: see "symbolic hand gesture".
- Phyag rGya Chen Po: see "Great Seal".
- Phyag mTshan: see "hand-held symbols".
- Phyang Chad: see "sterile nothingness".
- Phyi dByings: see "expanse".
- Phyir gSal: see "radiance".
- Phyogs bCu: see "ten directions".
- Phra La 'Khril Ba: see "luminous channels".
- 'Phags: see "raises-up".

- 'Pho Ba: see "consciousness-transfer".
- 'Phrin Las: see "spiritual activity".
- 'Phrul 'Khor: see "yogic exercises".
- Bag Chags: see "karmic propensities".
- Bar Do: see "intermediate state".
- Bar Do Dus Kyi sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- Bum Can: see "vase breathing".
- Bya Ba Grub Pa'i Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".
- Byang Chub: see "enlightenment and enlightened mind".
- Byang Chub Kyi Sems: see "enlightenment and enlightened mind".
- Byang Chub Sems dPa': see "Spiritual Heroes".
- Byams mGon: see "Savior Loving One".
- Byin rLabs: see "blessing".
- Byol Song: see "animals".
- Bri Gu Ta: see "Briguta".
- bLa Ma: see "Spiritual Master".
- dBang, dBang bZhi: see "empowerment".
- dBang Po, Bang Po lNga: see "five sensory faculties".
- dBang Shes: see "sensory consciousness".
- dBu Ma: see "central channel".
- dByings: see "expanse".
- dByings sNang: see "expanse's lighting-up".
- 'Byung Ba, 'Byung Ba lNga, 'Byung Ba: see "elemental energies".
- 'Byung Ba'i sPyan: see "eye".
- 'Bras sNang: see "Ground and Ground-presencing".
- 'Bras Bu: see "fruit".



- Ma Rig Pa, Ma Riḡ Pa gSum: see "dimmed awareness".
- Ma Ha Yo Ga: see "Atiyoga".
- Mar Me: see "butter lamp".
- Mi bsKyod Pa: "the Unshakable One"; see "body".
- Mi mJed: see "Indomitable".
- Mi 'Jigs Pa bZhi: "four modes of fearlessness".
- Mi rTog Pa: see "neurotic".
- Mi Ma Yin: see "non-human spirits".
- Mig: see "eye".
- Mu Khyud: see "encircling rims".
- Mu sTegs: see "extremists".
- Mu bZhi: see "four limiting alternatives".
- Mun Khang, Mun mTshams: see "Dark House Retreat".
- Me Long: see "mirror-disc".
- Me Long lTa Bu'i Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".
- Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa: see "cyclic existence and transcendence".
- dMigs Pa: see "objectification".
- dMigs Pa'i rKyen: see "four conditions".
- dMyal Ba: see "hell".
- rMi Lam Gyi Bar Do: see "intermediate state".
- Tsakshu: see "Tsakshu".
- Tsan Dra: see "Surya, Candra and Aloke".
- Tsitta Sha'i sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- bTsan Sa: see "citadel".
- rTsa: see "channel".
- rTsa 'Dab: see "channel-petal".

- rTsa Phran: see "secondary channels".
- rTsa rLung: see "channel-winds practices".
- rTsa gSum: see "three principal channels".
- rTsal: see "dynamism".
- rTse Chung: see "little tip channel".
- rTse Mo rNam Par bKod Pa'i 'Khor Lo: see "energy wheels".
- Tshangs Pa: see "Brahma" and "Brahmin".
- Tshangs Bug: see "Brahma's aperture".
- Tshad: see "signs and measures".
- Tshogs, Tshogs gNyas: see "two spiritual accumulations".
- Tshor Ba: see "psycho-physical components".
- mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa: see gZhi gNas.
- mTshan Nyid 'Dzin Pa'i Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".
- mTshan dPe: see "the thirty two perfect characteristics and eight exemplary forms of an enlightened being".
- mTshams Med Pa'i Las: see "actions of inexorable retribution".
- 'Dzin Pa: see "subject-object duality".
- rDzogs Chen: see "Great Perfection"
- rDzogs Rim: see "generation phase and perfection phase".
- Zhi Khro, Zhi Khro Rigs brGya: see "one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities".
- Zhi gNas: see "incisive vision and inner calms".
- Zhing, Zhing Khams: see "spiritual realm".
- gZhan: see "self".
- gZhal Yas Khang: see "divine palace".
- gZhi: see "Ground and Ground-presencing".
- gZhi gNas: see gZhi gNas.
- gZhi gNas Kyi Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".

- gZhi sNang: see "Ground and Ground-presencing".
- gZhon Nu Bum Pa sKu: see "Youthful Body in a Vase".
- bZhugs sTangs: see "three watching postures".
- Zag bCas: see "contaminating influences".
- Zang Ka, Zang Ka Ma, Zang Thal: see "unimpeded".
- Zad: see "exhaustion".
- gZigs sTangs, gZigs sTangs gSum: see "three enlightened gazes".
- gZugs: see "psycho-physical components".
- gZugs sKu: see "Form Bodies".
- gZugs Khams: see "three realms".
- gZugs Med Khams: see "three realms".
- gZugs Med Pa'i sNyoms 'Jug bZhi: see "meditative states".
- gZung 'Dzin: see "subject-object duality".
- 'Od: see "the five lights".
- 'Od lNga: see "five lights".
- 'Od dPag Med: "Immeasurable Light"; see "body".
- 'Od rTsa: see "luminous channels".
- 'Od gSal: see "radiant light".
- Od gSal rDo rJe sNying Po: "adamantine nucleus of radiant light"; see "radiant light".
- 'Od gSal Ye Shes Kyi sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- Yang Dag: see "ultra pure".
- Yab Yum: see "Father-Mother consort pairs".
- Yi Ge Na Ro: see "Naro letter".
- Yi Dwags: see "six types of life forms".
- Yid: see "psyche".
- Yid Kyi Lus: see "psychic body".

Yid bZhin Nor Bu: see "wish-fulfilling gem".

Yul: see "object".

Yul Drug: see "six types of objects".

Ye Nas: see "primordially".

Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".

Ye Shes Kyi Tshogs: see "two (spiritual) accumulations".

Ye Shes Kyi rLung: see "karmic winds and gnostic winds".

Yon Tan: see "enlightened qualities".

Rang: see "self".

Rang sNang: see "appearance".

Rang bZhin: see "essence, nature and compassionate resonance" and "compassionate resonance".

Rang bZhin Gyi, Rang bZhin Gyis: see "self".

Rang bZhin sPrul Pa'i Zhing, Rang bZhin sPrul sKu'i Zhing sNang: see "pure land of natural emanations".

Rang bZhin Gyi Bar Do, Rang bZhin Du gNas Pa'i Bar Do: see "intermediate state".

Rang bZhin sPrul sKu: see "pure land of natural emanations".

Rang Rig: see "awareness".

Rang Sa (Zin Pa): see "citadel".

Rang Sangs rGyas: see "Self-Awakened Ones".

Rig Pa: see "awareness".

Rig Pa Tshad Phebs Kyi sNang Ba: see "four visions".

Rigs, Rigs lNga: see "spiritual affinities".

Rigs Kyi Bu: see "Son of the Lineage".

Rigs Drug: see "six types of life forms or beings".

Rigs lDan: see "One of the Select".

Rin Chen 'Byung lDan: "Precious Matrix"; see "body".

- Ro rNams 'Dus Pa'i 'Khor Lo: see "energy wheels".
- Ro Ma: see "flavor channel".
- Rol Pa: see "dynamism".
- rLung: see "inner winds".
- rLung lNga: see "five winds".
- La bZla: see "indicted".
- Lam, Lam lNga: see "path".
- Lam sNang: see "Ground and Ground-presencing" and "path manifestations".
- Las: see "karma".
- Las rLung: see "karmic winds and gnostic winds".
- Las Su Rung: see "flexibility".
- Lu Gu rGyud: see "linked chains".
- Lus: see "body and Spiritual Body".
- Lus Can: see "corporeal beings and sentient beings".
- Lus sPyi: see "body in general".
- Longs sKu: see "body".
- Shel Bug Can: see "luminous channel".
- Shes Pa: see "cognitive capacity" and "consciousness".
- Shes Bya: see "the knowable".
- Shes Rab: see "efficacious means and insight".
- Shes Rab Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa'i mDo: see "Discourses on the Transcendental Consummation of Insight".
- Shes Rab Rang Byung Gi sGron Ma: see "lamp".
- Sa, Sa bCu, Sa bCu Drug: see "spiritual level".
- Sangs rGyas: see "Buddha".
- Sangs rGyas Kyi Chos Ma 'Dres Pa bCo brGyad: see "unique attributes of a Buddha".
- Sangs rGyas Kyi Rang bZhin: see "Buddha-nature".

- Sangs rGyas lNga: see "five Spiritual Bodies".
- Sangs rGyas sPyan Ma: "Buddha Vision Lady"; see "body".
- Sum brTsegs: see "vertically ordered triad".
- Sūrya: see "Surya, Candra and Alope".
- Seng Ge: see "three watching postures".
- Seng Ge'i Nyal Lugs: "laying in the posture of a lion".
- Sems: see "mind".
- Sems Can: see "corporeal beings and sentient beings".
- Sems Nyid: see "mind-as-such".
- Sems Byung: see "mental factors".
- Sems 'Dzin, Sems 'Dzin Nyi Shu rTsa gCig: see "twenty one means of concentration".
- So Sor rTog Pa'i Ye Shes: see "primordial gnosis".
- Srid: see "fictive existence".
- Srid Pa'i Bar Do: see "intermediate state".
- Srid gSum: see "three states of existence".
- Srog, Srog rTsa: see "vitality".
- gSang sNgags: see "Secret Mantra".
- gSang gNas bDe sKyong Gi 'Khor Lo: see "energy wheels".
- gSal Ba: see "radiance".
- gSungs: see "Enlightened Speech".
- bSam gTan bZhi: see "meditative states".
- bSod Nams Kyi Tshogs: see "two (spiritual) accumulations".
- He Ru Ka: see "Heruka".
- Lha: see "six types of life forms".
- Lha Min: see "six types of life forms".
- Lha Mo: see "six types of life forms".

Lha'i rNal 'Byor: see "deity yoga".

Lhag mThong: see "incisive vision and inner calm".

Lhan Cig sKyes dGa': see "four joys".

Lhan Cig sKyes Pa'i Ma Rig Pa: see "dimmed awareness".

Lhun Grub: see "original purity and spontaneous presence".

Lhun Grub Kyi 'Char sGo brGyad: see "eight gateways of spontaneous presence shining forth".

A Ti Yo Ga: see "Atiyoga".

A Nu Yo Ga" see "Anuyoga".

A Va Dhū Tī: see "Avadhūti channel".

A Lo Ke: see "Surya, Candra and Alope".

### Abbreviations of Titles Used in the Thesis

AKC: see *A Commentary on the Abhidharma Kośa: Clarifying the Path to Liberation* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

AKC2: see *An Annotation-Commentary on the Abhidharma Kośa* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

ATI1-3: see *The Seventeen Tantras*.

BST: see *Buddhist Sanskrit Texts* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

CBD: see *The Seven Treasures* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

CTNT: see *The Doctrinal Cycles of Cetsun's Seminal Heart-Essence Teachings* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

DAS: see *Tibetan-English Dictionary* in bibliography of reference materials.

GGC: see *Dispelling all Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

GTD: see *The Seven Treasures* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

KGNT1-2: see *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

KGYT1-3: see *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works. ...

KK: see *Kangyur* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

LYT1-2: see *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

MND: see *The Seven Treasures* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

MW: see *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* in bibliography of reference materials.

NGB1-2: see *The Seventeen Tantras*.

NGBI: see *Ko-Tantora Zenshū Kaidai Mokuroku* in bibliography of reference materials.

NLD: see *The Seven Treasures* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

NSK: see *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

P: see *The Tibetan Tripiṭika, Peking Edition* in bibliography of reference materials.



- SR:** see *gSo Ba Rig Pa'i Tshig mDzod gYu Thog dGongs rGyan* in bibliography of reference materials.
- SRNY:** see *gSo Rig sNying bsDus sKya Rengs gSar Pa* (in bibliography of reference materials).
- STCP1-2:** see *The Great Chariot: the Commentary on The Resting-at-Ease of Mind as Such* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- STZP:** see *The Excellent Chariot: the Commentary on The Resting-at-Ease of Magical Illusion* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- T:** see *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon* in bibliography of reference materials.
- TCD1-2:** see *The Seven Treasures* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- TDCM:** see *Bod rGya Tshig mDzod Chen Mo* in bibliography of reference materials.
- TDD:** see *The Seven Treasures* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- TEDM:** see *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan* in bibliography of reference materials.
- TLKS:** see *The All-Radiant Seminal Nuclei* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- VLDC:** see *Commentary on the Tantra of the Six Spaces of the Totally Positive One* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- VNT1-3:** see *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- YZD:** see *The Seven Treasures* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- ZLZN:** see *An Analysis of How Straying is Blocked With Respect to the Shining-forth Process of the Ground-Presencing from the Ground* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.
- ZMYT1-2:** see *The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* in the bibliography of Sanskrit and Tibetan Works.

### Bibliography of Secondary Literature

- Anand, Margo (1989). *The Art of Sexual Ecstasy*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc.
- Assagioli, R. (1965). *Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques*. New York: Viking Press.
- Bachelard, Gaston (1969). *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Batchelor, Stephen (1979). *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Dharmasala; Library of Tibetan Works & Archives.
- Becker, Ernest (1973). *The Denial of Death*. New York: Free Press.
- Beyer, Stephen (1973). *The Cult of Tārā: Magic and Ritual In Tibet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Brown, Norman (1959). *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
- Brown, Norman (1966). *Love's Body*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Caputo, John D. (1986). *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Conze, Edward (1973). *The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts*. London: Luzac, 1973.
- Conze, Edward (1973). *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary*. San Francisco, CA: Four Seasons Foundation.
- Conze, Edward (1974). *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Volume XIII of the Serie Orientale Roma. Rome: Is. M. E. O.
- Conze, Edward (1975). *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom*. Berkeley, CA: the University of California Press.
- Cozort, Daniel (1986). *Highest Yoga Tantra*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.
- Davidson, Ronald M. (1981). *The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī*. In *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques* 20, pp. 1-69. Brussels: Institute Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises.
- Davidson, Ronald (1985). *Buddhist Systems of Transformation: Āsraya-parivṛtti-parāvṛtti Among the Yogācāra*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of California, Berkeley.
- Dayal, H. (1932). *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Sanskrit Buddhist Literature*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.

- Dhargyey, Geshe Ngawang. *Kalachakra Tantra*. Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives.
- Dolma Khangkara, Dr. Lobsang (1986). *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine*. Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives.
- Dorje, Gyurme. *The Guhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary Phyogs bCu Mun Sel*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. The School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.
- Dorje, Gyurme and Matthew Kapstein (1991). *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume Two*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Dudjom Rinpoche, Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje (1991). *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Volume One*. Translated and edited by Gyurme Dorje with the collaboration of Matthew Kapstein. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Eckel, David M. (1986). *Jñānagarbha's Commentary on the Distinction between the Two Truths*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Eliade, Mircea (1958). *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Feldenkrais, Moshe (1972). *Awareness through Movement: Health Exercises for Personal Growth*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Freemantle, Francesca and Chogyam Trungpa (1987). *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Boston & London: Shambhala Publications.
- Goodman, Steven. *The kLong Chen sNying Thig: An Eighteenth Century Tibetan Revelation*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. The University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.
- Guenther, Herbert (1959). *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. London: Rider & Company.
- Guenther, Herbert (1963). *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Guenther, Herbert (1969). *The Royal Song of Saraha*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Guenther, Herbert (1972). *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice*. Penguin Books.
- Guenther (1975). *The Natural Freedom of Mind*. In *Crystal Mirror* 4, 113-146.
- Guenther, Herbert (1975-6). *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*. Three volumes. Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing.
- Guenther, Herbert (1983). "The Dynamics of Being: rDzogs-chen Process Thinking". Published in *Canadian Tibetan Studies* by Society for Tibetan Studies-Alberta; Calgary.
- Guenther, Herbert (1984). *Matrix of Mystery: Scientific and Humanistic Aspects of rDzogs-chen Thought*. Boulder & London: Shambhala.

- Guenther, Herbert (1986). "Being's Vitalizing Core Intensity". In *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies* #10. Naritasa; Shinshoji, Narita; Japan.
- Guenther, Herbert (1987). *The Creative Vision*. Novato, CA: Lotsawa.
- Guenther, Herbert (1989). *From Reductionism to Creativity: rDzogs-chen and the New Sciences of the Mind*. Boston & Shaftesbury: Shambhala.
- Guenther, Herbert (1992). *Meditation Differently*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Gyatso, Geshe Kelsang (1980). *Meaningful to Behold*. London: Wisdom Publications.
- Gyatso, Geshe Kelsang (1982). *Clear Light of Bliss*. London: Wisdom Publications.
- Haarh, Erik (1968). *The Zhang-Zhung Language*. Publications of the University of Aarhus: Acta Jutlandica XL:1.
- Halliburton, David (1981). *Poetic Thinking: An Approach to Heidegger*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Heidegger, Martin (1955). *What is Philosophy?* Translated by William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde. New Haven, Conn.: College & University Press.
- Heidegger, Martin (1962). *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row.
- Heidegger, Martin (1971). *On the Way to Language*. Translated by Peter D. Hertz. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Heidegger, Martin (1971). *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row.
- Heidegger, Martin (1972). *On Time and Being*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row.
- Heidegger, Martin (1977). *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row.
- Higgins, David (1987). *The Tibetan Lam-Rim Genre: A Comparative Study Focusing on Five Representative Texts*. Unpublished M.A. thesis. The University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.
- Holmes, Katia and Kenneth Holmes (1985). *The Changeless Nature (the Mahāyānottaratantrāsāstra)*. Eskdalemuir, Scotland: Karma Durbgyud Darjay Ling.
- Hookham, S. K. (1991). *The Buddha Within*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Hopkins, Jeffrey and Lati Rinbochay (1980). *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism*. Valois, NY: Gabriel/Snow Lion.
- Hopkins, Jeffrey (1983). *Meditation on Emptiness*. London: Wisdom Publications.

- Hopkins, Jeffrey (1992). *Tibetan Arts of Love*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.
- Hoyle, Fred (1984). *The Intelligent Universe*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Huntington, C. W. and Geshe Namgyal Wangchen. *The Emptiness of Emptiness*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1991).
- Ihde, Don. "Phenomenology and the Later Heidegger". In *Philosophy Today*, volume 18, number 1/4, spring 1975, pp. 19-31.
- Jantsch, Erich (1980). *The Self-Organizing Universe: Scientific and Human Implications of the Emerging Paradigm of Evolution*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Johnson, Kent (1988). *The rDzogs-Chen Distinction between Mentation and Excitatory Intelligence*. An unpublished M.A. thesis. University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.
- Kaelber, Walter O. (1989). *Tapta Mārga: Asceticism and Initiation in Vedic India*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Kalupahana, David (1986). *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Karmay, Samten (1988). *The Great Perfection*. London: E.J. Brill.
- Klein, Anne (1986). *Knowledge and Liberation*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.
- Kvaerne, Per (1983). "'The Great Perfection' in the Tradition of the Bonpos". In *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet* (pp. 367-392). Ed. Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series.
- Khyentse, Dilgo (1988). *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*. Translated by Matieu Ricard. Boston & London: Shambhala.
- Lauf, Detlef Ingo (1989). *Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Books of the Dead*. Translated by Graham Parkes. Boston & Shaftesbury: Shambhala.
- Levin, David Michael (1988). *The Opening of Vision: Nihilism and the Postmodern Situation*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Lipman, Kennard and Merril Peterson (1987). *You are the Eyes of the World*. Novato, CA: Lotsawa.
- Lipman, Kennard and Norbu, Namkhai (1987). *Primordial Experience: An Introduction to rDzogs-Chen Meditation*. Boston & London: Shambhala.
- Lhalungpa, Lobsang (1986). *Mahāmudrā*. Boston & London: Shambhala.
- Lowen, Alexander (1974). "The Body in Personality Theory: Wilhelm Reich and Alexander Lowen" in *Operational Theories of Personality*; ed. A. Burton. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Mueller-Ortega, Paul (1989). *The Triadic Heart of Śiva*. Albany: SUNY Press.

- Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Réne de (1956). *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Neumann, Erich (1972). *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Neumaier-Dargyay, E.K. (1992). *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind - the Motherly Buddha*. No publishing information available at this time.
- Newman, John (1984). With Roger Jackson and Geshe Lhundub Sopa. *The Wheel of Time: the Kalachakra in Context*. Madison, WI: Deer Park Books.
- Norbu, Namkhai (no date available). *The Small Collection of Hidden Precepts. A Study of an Ancient Manuscript of Dzogchen from Tun-Huang*. Arcidosso, GR, Italy: Shang Shung Edizioni.
- Norbu, Namkhai (1983). *The Mirror, Advice on Presence and Awareness*. Translated by Adriano Clemente and John Shane. Arcidosso, GR, Italy: Shang Shung Edizioni.
- Norbu, Namkhai (1986). *The Crystal and the Way of Light*. Compiled and edited by John Shane. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Norbu, Namkhai (1987). *The Cycle of Day and Night, Where One Proceeds Along the Path of the Primordial Yoga*. Translated and edited by John Reynolds. New York: Station Hill Press.
- Norbu, Namkhai (1989). *Dzogchen: the Self-perfected State*. Edited by Adriano Clemente and translated by John Shane. London: Arkana.
- Obermiller, E. (1931). *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation*. Acta Orientalia, Vol. IX, pp. 81-306.
- O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger (1984). *Dreams, Illusion, and Other Realities*. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press.
- Padoux, André (1990). *Vāc: the Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Poussin, Louis de La Vallé (1988). *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*. English translation by Leo M. Pruden. In four volumes. Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press.
- Prats, Ramon (1978). "The Spiritual Lineage of the Dzogchen Tradition". In *Tibetan Studies*, Ed. Per Kvaerne. Zürich: Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich.
- Prats, Ramon (1984). "Tshe dBang Nor Bu's Chronological Notes on the Early Transmission of the Bi Ma sNying Thig". In *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 197-209; ed. Louis Ligeti. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Pye, Michael (1978). *Skillful Means*. London: Duckworth.
- Reich, Wilhelm (1944). *The Function of the Orgasm*. New York: Orgone Institute Press.

- Reynolds, John (no date available). *Self-Liberation Through Seeing Everything in its Nakedness*. New York: Tallman Company.
- Rolfe, Ida (1972). *Structural Integration*. New York: Viking Press.
- Ruegg, David (1989). *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Schmidt, Erik Hein. *The Circle of the Sun*. Kathmandu: Rangjung Yeshe Publications (1990). Restricted circulation publication.
- Shahidullah, Mohammed (1966). *Buddhist Mystic Songs*. Dacca: Bengali Academy (revised and enlarged edition).
- Snellgrove, David (1959). *Hevajra Tantra*. Two parts. London: Oxford University Press.
- Snellgrove, David (1987). *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*. Two volumes. Boston: Shambhala.
- Takasaki, Jikido (1966). *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga*. Rome: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, Serie Orientale Roma XXXIII.
- Thondup Rinpoche, Tulku (1984). *The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa*. Marion, MA: Buddhayana.
- Thondup Rinpoche, Tulku (1986). *Hidden Teachings of Tibet: an Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism*. Edited by Harold Talbot. London: Wisdom Publications.
- Thondup Rinpoche, Tulku (1989). *Buddha Mind: An Anthology of Longchen Rabjam's Writings on Dzogpa Chenpo*. Edited by Harold Talbot. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.
- Thurman, Robert (1976). *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti*. University Park/London: the Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Tsarong, T. J. (1981). *Tsarong's Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine*. Dharamsala: Tibetan Medical Centre.
- Tucci, Giuseppe (1980). *The Religions of Tibet*. Translated by Geoffrey Samuel. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Valby, James (1983). *The Life and Ideas of the 8th Century A.D. Indian Buddhist Mystic Vimalamitra*. An unpublished Ph.D. thesis. The University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.
- Varenne, Jean (1976). *Yoga and the Hindu Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Waldron, William (1990). *The Ālayavijñāna in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Wisconsin at Madison.
- Washburn, Michael (1988). *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*. Albany, NY: SUNY press.

- Weber, Renée (1986). *Dialogues with Scientists and Sages: the Search for Unity*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wilber, Ken (1983). *Up from Eden: A Transpersonal View of Human Evolution*. Boulder: Shambhala.
- Williams, Paul (1989). *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Yamamoto, K. (1974). *The Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra*. Three volumes. Ube City: Karinbunko.
- Yuyama, Akira (1976). *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Critical editions of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts.



### Bibliography of Reference Materials

- A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon* (T). Editor H. Ui et al. The Tōhoku University catalogue of the sDe dGe edition. Sendai (1934).
- A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* by Sir Monier Monier-Williams (MW). New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1988).
- A Tibetan English Dictionary* by H. Ä. Jaschke. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1980).
- Bod rGya Tshig mDzod Chen Mo* (TDCM). Beijing: Nationalities Publishing House (1985).
- Dag Yig gSar bsGrigs*. Editor Tshan Chung. mTsho sNgon: the mTsho sNgon Nationalities Publishing House (1979).
- gSo Ba Rig Pa'i Tshig mDzod gYu Thog dGongs rGyan* (SR). Editor dBang 'Dus. Beijing: Nationalities Publishing House (1982).
- gSo Rig sNying bsDus sKya Rengs gSar Pa* (SRNY). Compiled by the research unit of the Tibetan Medical and Astrological School in Lhasa. Lhasa, Tibet: the People's Publishing House of Tibet (1979).
- Ko-Tantora Zenshū Kaidai Mokuroku* by Eiichi Kaneko (NGBI). Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai. This is a catalogue to the *rNying Ma rGyud Bum* edition in 36 volumes printed by Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche in Thimpu, 1973. All references to NGBI provide the number assigned to that text by Kaneko, along with the volume number and first page.
- brDa Dag Ming Tshig gSal Ba* by dGe bShes Chos Kyi Grags Pa. Beijing: Nationalities Publishing House (1990).
- The Tibetan Tripitika, Peking Edition* (P). 168 volumes. Tokyo-Kyoto: Suzuki Research Foundation (1955-1961).
- Tibetan-English Dictionary* by Chandra Das (DAS). Kyoto: Rinsen Book Company (1983).
- Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology* by Tsepak Rigzin. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives (1986).
- Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan* (TEDM). Editor Melvyn Goldstein. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar (1983).
- Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary* by Lokesh Chandra. Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co. (1982).

## Bibliography of Tibetan and Sanskrit Literature

All page references are given using the "Western" page numbers rather than the Tibetan style numbers, if both are given in the text; in the case of the latter (which gives one page number to both sides of a single folio), the front side of the folio is indicated by "a" and the reverse side by "b" (i.e. 1a would be the front side of the folio marked "gCig"). In general, I have tried to give line numbers as well as page numbers for ease of reference. "Of transcendental authorship" indicates that the text in question is a canonical text ascribed to "divine" sources, often purporting to be a type of transcription of dialogues taking place in enlightened realms between a given Buddha and a series of interlocutors.

*A Commentary on the Abhidharma Kośa: Clarifying the Path to Liberation* by dGe 'Dun Grub (*mDzod Tik Thar Lam gSal Byed*; AKC). Sarnath, Varanasi: Gelugpa Students Welfare Committee at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (1982).

*An Analysis of How Straying is Blocked With Respect to the Shining-forth Process of the Ground-Presencing from the Ground* by mKhan Po 'Jigs Med Phun Tshogs (*gZhi Las gZhi sNang 'Char Tshul De Las 'Khrul Pa lDog Tshul Gyi dPyad Pa*; ZLZN). This text was published recently in Eastern Tibet as part of a two volume collection of his works, but no specifics on the publishing are mentioned. Page references are to the Tibetan enumeration.

*An Annotation-Commentary on the Abhidharma Kośa* by Mi Pham rNam rGyal rGya mTsho (*Dam Pa'i Chos mNgon Pa mDzod Kyi mChan 'Grel Rin Po Che'i Do Shal bLo gSal dGyes Pa'i mGul rGyan*; AKC2). Sarnath, Varanasi: Nyingma Student's Welfare Committee, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (1986).

*Ascertainment of Valid Cognition* by Dharmakīrti (*Pramānaviniścaya; Tshad Ma rNam Par Nges Pa*). The Tibetan translation is P 5710, vol. 130; T 4211.

*Buddhist Sanskrit Texts* (BST). Dharbhaṅga, Bihar: Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning.

*Commentary on the Tantra of the Six Spaces of the Totally Positive One* by Vimalamitra (*Kun Tu bZang Po kLong Drug rGyud Gyi 'Grel Pa*; VLDC). Published by Samdrup Tsering for Dilgo Khyentse. New Delhi (1988).

*Dispelling all Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions* by Longchenpa (*Phyogs bCu'i Mun Pa Thams Cad rNam Par Sel Ba*; GGC). See *The Trilogy of Dispelling Darkness* for the other two texts related to this, Longchenpa's main commentarial work on *The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra (Guhyagarbha Tantra)*. There are at least four editions currently available (page references herein are to (i): (i) *The Expanded Collected Precepts of the Old School Tradition* volume 26 ; (ii) Varanasi: Tarthang Tulku (1967); I-Tib-248; (iii) Paro: Ngodup (1975); I(Bhu)-Tib 75-903142; and (iv) a Derge print available from the Derge publishing house in Eastern Tibet. It has been translated in its entirety by Gyurme Dorje in his thesis (see above).

*Engaging in the Spiritual Heroes' and Heroines' Way of Life* by Śantideva (*Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra; Byang Chub Sems dPa'i sPyod 'Jug*). Sanskrit original in BST

12 (1960). Tibetan translation is P 5272, volume 99; T 3871. An English translation can be found in Batchelor's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*; a commentary by a contemporary Tibetan scholar can be found in Geshe Gyatso's *Meaningful to Behold*.

*Entrance into the Middle Way* by Candrakīrti (*Madhyamakāvātāra*; *dBu Ma La 'Jug Pa*). Tibetan translation in *Bibliotheca Buddhica* 9 (1907-1912); St. Petersburg; P 5261, vol. 98 and P 5262, vol. 98. An English translation of just the root verses can be found in Huntington's *The Emptiness of Emptiness*.

*Exposition on Valid Cognition* by Dharmakīrti (*Pramāna-varttika-kārikā*; *Tshad Ma rNam 'Grel Gyi Tshig Le'ur Byas Pa*). Sanskrit original in *Bauddha Bhārati Series 3* (1968), editor D. Shastri, Varanasi, India. Tibetan translation is P 5709, vol. 130; T 4210.

*Hevajra Tantra* of transcendental authorship (*Kye rDo rJe*; *brTag gNyi*). Tibetan translation is P 10, volume 1; T 417-418. An English translation can be found in Snellgrove's *Hevajra Tantra*, which includes an edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts..

*Kangyur* of transcendental authorship (*bKa' 'Gyur*; KK). Page references are to Karmapa edition recently printed in India in red ink. No further information available.

*Nucleus of the Sun* by rTse Le sNa Tshogs Rang Grol (*Nyi Ma'i sNying Po*). The Tibetan text I have is without any publishing information, and is in *dBu Can* with fifty five folios. For an English translation, see Guenther's *Meditation Differently* and Schmidt's *The Circle of the Sun*

*The Adamantine Cutter Discourse* of transcendental authorship (*Vajracchedikā*; *rDo rJe gCod Pa*). Sanskrit original in BST 17 (1961) and Conze's *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*; Tibetan translation is P 739, volume 21; T 16. Translated into English by E. Conze in *The Short Prañāpāramitā Texts*, pp. 122-139, as *The Diamond Sūtra*, and in *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

*The All-Creating King* of transcendental authorship (*Kun Byed rGyal Po*). NGBI 1, volume 1 pp. 1-220. Evidently this text has been translated by Neumaier-Dargyay in *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind - the Motherly Buddha*. Also see Lipman's *You are the Eyes of the World* for a translation/study of Longchenpa's commentary on this Tantra.

*The All-Radiant Seminal Nucleus* of transcendental authorship (*Thig Le Kun gSal*; TLKS). NGBI 81, volume 5/"Ca" pp. 124-289. I have consulted the text from the mTsham Brag edition of *The One Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Old School* (volume "Pa", pp. 296-492).

*The Blazing Lamp Tantra* (*sGron Ma 'Bar Ba*). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Blazing Relics Tantra* (*sKu gDung 'Bar Ba*). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* (*sGra Thal 'Gyur*). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Discourse on the Great and Exalted Total Passage Beyond Misery* of transcendental authorship (*Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*; *'Phags Pa Yong Su Mya Ngan Las 'Das Pa Chen Po'i mDo*). The Tibetan translation is P 787-9, volume 30-1; T 119-121; KK volume Nya Pa. Translated by Yamamoto (see above).

*The Distinction Between the Two Truths* by Jñānagarbha (*Satyadvayavhbaṅgākārikā*; *bDen gNyis rNam 'Byed*). See Eckel's *Jñānagarbha's Commentary on the Distinction between the Two Truths* for a critical edition of the Tibetan translation (also T 3881), as well as an English translation.

*The Doctrinal Cycles of Cetsun's Seminal Heart-Essence Teachings* by lCe bTsun Seng Ge dBang Phyug (*lCe bTsun sNying Thig Gi Chos sKor*; CTNT). Published by Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche Pema Wangyal.

*The Excellent Chariot: the Commentary on The Resting-at-Ease of Magical Illusion* by Longchenpa (*sGyu Ma Ngal gSo'i 'Grel Pa Shing rTa bZang Po*; STZP). See *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* for publishing information.

*The Expanded Collected Precepts of the Old School Tradition* (*rNying Ma bKa' Ma rGyas Pa*). Editor Dudjom Rinpoche; 55 volumes. Kalimpong, WB: Dubjung Lama (1982). I-Tib 82-900981.

*The Exquisite Auspiciousness Tantra* (*bKra Shis mDzes lDan*). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* (*Mu Tig Phreng Ba*). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Gnostic Master* by 'Jigs Med kLing Pa (*Ye Shes bLa Ma*). This text is found in his vision-inspired collection *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Longchenpa*.

*The Great Chariot: the Commentary on The Resting-at-Ease of Mind as Such* by Longchenpa (*Sems Nyid Ngäl gSo'i 'Grel Pa Shing rTa Chen Po*; STCP). See *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* for publishing information (since this lengthy text is split between the first two volumes of *The Trilogy* with separate page sequences, references are accordingly given to STCP1 and STCP2).

*The Inlaid Jewels Tantra* (*Nor Bu Phra bKod*). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Litany of the Eloquent One's Names* (*Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṅgīti*; *Jam dPal Gyi mTshan brJod Pa*). Tibetan translation is T 360; see Davidson's *The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī* for an edition of the Sanskrit original along with an English translation.

*The Magical Transformations' Nucleus of Mystery Tantra* of transcendental authorship (also referred to as *The Nucleus of Mystery Tantra*; *Guhyagarbha Tantra*; *sGyu 'Phrul gSang Ba sNying Po*). I have utilized Dorje's translation and critical edition of the Tibetan in his thesis. The Sanskrit original is currently unavailable to us, and may be lost forever, though its original existence is hardly controversial despite traditional sectarian polemics in Tibet over the years. See *Dispelling Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions* for Longchenpa's main commentary on this critical Tantra, which Dorje has also translated in his thesis.

*The One Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Old School* (*rNying Ma rGyud 'Bum*). There are currently a number of different editions of this basic collection of the Nyingma Tantras circulating, among which there are considerable differences (Dharma Publishing under Tarthang Tulku's direction (Berkeley, CA) is apparently currently attempting to systematically gather all variations together in order to publish a definitive edition). The 36 volume edition printed by Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche in Thimphu, Bhutan (1973) has been catalogued by E. Kaneko (see above). In addition there is the mTsham sBrag edition in

46 volumes (NGB), printed by the National Library, Royal government of Bhutan in Thimphu, Bhutan (1982; Bhu-Tib 82-902165).

*The Root Text on Insight* by Nāgārjuna (*Prajñā-mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*; *rTsa Ba Shes Rab*). Tibetan translation is T 3824; Sanskrit text can be found in *Buddhist Sanskrit Texts* 10 (1960); Darbhanga, Bihar: Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning. See Kalupahana's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* for an English translation.

*The Self-Emergent Perfection Tantra* (*rDzogs Pa Rang Byung*). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Seminal Heart-Essence in Four Parts* by miscellaneous authors (*sNying Thig Ya bZhi*).

All page references are from the eleven volume edition published by Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi in New Delhi (1971), though I have utilized the current print available from Derge (*sDe-dGe*) Publishing House in Eastern Tibet to check readings as necessary. I have given references in accordance with the five sections given below, with each section then numbered from 1 to 3 (KGYT1, KGYT2, KGYT3, etc.) in accordance with which "volume" of that section the passage is found in. Exceptions to this are LYT, which is one volume but is divided into two parts, "E" (indicated by LYT1) and "Wam" (indicated by LYT2); and VNT-3, where the English numeration restarts with each text, and thus I have found it necessary to give the Tibetan syllable which indicates which internal division of this volume is being referred to (VNT3-"Pa", etc.). The current redaction has five sections, despite its title: *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Spiritual Master* by Longchenpa (*bLa Ma Yang Tig*; LYT - volume 1); *The Seminal Heart-Essence of the Sky Dancer* by Padmasambhava (*mKha' Gro sNying Thig*; KGNT - volumes 2-3); *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Sky Dancer* by Longchenpa (*mKha' Gro Yang Tig*; KGYT - volumes 4-6); *The Seminal Heart-Essence of Vimalamitra* by Vimalamitra and other early Great Perfection Masters (*Bi Ma sNying Thig*; VNT - volumes 7-9); and *The Seminal Heart-Quintessence of the Profound* by Longchenpa (*Zab Mo Yang Tig*; ZMYT - volumes 10-11).

*The Seminal Heart-Essence of Longchenpa* by 'Jigs Med gLing Pa (*kLong Chen sNying Thig*). Published in three volumes. New Delhi: Ngawang Sopa (1973); I-Tib 73-904268.

*The Seven Treasuries* by Longchenpa (*mDzod Chen bDun*). I have consulted three editions of this collection of seven separate works, though all page references are to (i) which has increasingly become the standard edition to consult in Western works, while references to (ii) are specifically indicated by "DD edition": (i) published by Sherab Gyaltser and Khyentse Labrang in six volumes; Gangtok, Sikkim (1983); I-Tib 83-905058; (ii) published by Dodrup Chen Rinpoche; Gangtok, Sikkim (c. 1969); and (iii) a xylographic edition currently available from Derge Publishing House in East Tibet. While (i), (vi) and (vii) consist of root verses with a lengthy auto-commentary, I have made no distinction between these two elements in my page references. The individual seven titles are as follows: (i) *The Wish-Fulfilling Treasury* (*Yid bZhin mDzod*; YZD), (ii) *The Treasury of Esoteric Precepts* (*Man Ngag mDzod*; MND), (iii) *The Treasury of Spiritual Systems* (*Grub mTha' mDzod*; GTD), (iv) *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* (*Theg mChog mDzod*; TCD), *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* (*Tshig Don mDzod*; TDD), *The Treasury of Reality's Expanse* (*Chos dByings mDzod*; CBD), and *The Treasury of the Precious Abiding Reality* (*gNas Lugs mDzod*; NLD).

*The Seventeen Tantras of the Great Perfection* of transcendental authorship (*rGyud bCu bDun*). I have consulted two editions of these crucial texts, indicated in the annotations by "NGB" and "Ati". NGB refers to the edition found in the "mTsham sBrag" edition of *The*

*One Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Old School* (volumes "Da" and "Na" indicated by NGB1 and NGB2, respectively); Ati refers to the three volume edition of *The Seventeen Tantras* put out by Sanje Dorje (1973) in New Delhi, based on the Adzom blocks (Ati1-3). Also see NGBI 143-159; volumes 9-10. The individual titles are as follows: *The Direct Consequence of Sound Tantra* (sGra Thal 'Gyur), *The Exquisite Auspiciousness Tantra* (bKra Shis mDzes lDan), *The Tantra of the Totally Positive One's Enlightened Spirit-Mirror* (Kun Tu bZang Po Thugs Kyi Me Long), *The Blazing Lamp Tantra* (sGron Ma 'Bar Ba), *The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* (rDo rJe Sems dPa' sNying Gi Me Long), *The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* (Rig Pa Rang Shar), *The Inlaid Jewels Tantra* (Nor Bu Phra bKod), *The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction* (Ngo sProd sPras Pa), *The Six Spaces Tantra* (kLong Drug), *The Tantra of the Wordless Secret* (Yi Ge Med Pa), *The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* (Seng Ge rTsal rDzogs), *The Garland of Precious Pearls Tantra* (Mu Tig Phreng Ba), *The Tantra of Awareness's Natural Freedom* (Rig Pa Rang Grol), *The Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness* (Rin Chen sPungs Pa), *The Blazing Relics Tantra* (sKu gDung 'Bar Ba), *The Tantra of the Sun and Moon's Intimate Union* (Nyi Zla Kha sByor), and *The Self-Emergent Perfection Tantra* (rDzogs Pa Rang Byung).

*The Six Spaces Tantra* (kLong Drug). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of Awareness's Natural Freedom* (Rig Pa Rang Grol). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of Overflowing Preciousness* (Rin Chen sPungs Pa). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of Self-Arisen Awareness* (Rig Pa Rang Shar). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of the Adamantine Hero's Heart-Mirror* (rDo rJe Sems dPa' sNying Gi Me Long). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of the Lion's Perfect Dynamism* (Seng Ge rTsal rDzogs). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of the Pointing Out Introduction* (Ngo sProd sPras Pa). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of the Sun and Moon's Intimate Union* (Nyi Zla Kha sByor). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of the Totally Positive One's Enlightened Spirit-Mirror* (Kun Tu bZang Po Thugs Kyi Me Long). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantra of the Wordless Secret* (Yi Ge Med Pa). See *The Seventeen Tantras*.

*The Tantric Songs of the People* by Saraha (Dohā-koṣa-gīti; Dohā mDzod Kyi gLu). I have referred to a 307 page collection of these Tantric songs from the Derge Tengyur entitled 'Phags Yul Grub dBang Dam Pa rNams Kyi Zab Mo'i Do Ha rNams Las Khol Byung Mu Tig Phreng Ba (DKS); also see P 3068 (volume 68) for the Tibetan translation. This text is from the famous *Three Cycles of Tantric Songs* (Dohā sKor gSum) attributed to the great Indian saint Saraha, which include *The Tantric Songs of the People*, *The Tantric Songs of the King*, and *The Tantric Songs of the Queen*. See Guenther's *The Royal Song of Saraha* for a translation of *The Tantric Songs of the King*, and pp.4ff for a story on the trilogy's

origin, as well as many other details. As he notes on pg. 13 that most quotations from this trilogy are in fact from *The Tantric Songs of the People*. See Shahidullah's *Buddhist Mystic Songs* for an English translation of the trilogy; evidently Dr. Guenther has a new publication in the works which will provide a translation of the entire trilogy as well.

*The Tibetan Book of the Dead* revealed by Karma gLing Pa (*Bar Do Thos Grol Chen Mo*). The title is actually *The Great Liberation through Hearing in the Post-death Intermediate State*, but it has become well known in the West as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. See Freemantle's *the Tibetan Book of the Dead* for an English translation. I have referred to a small size 549 page Tibetan edition printed on January first 1985 in India.

*The Transcendental Consummation of Insight in Eight Thousand Lines* of transcendental authorship (*Aṣṭa-sāhasarikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; *Shes Rab Kyi Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa brGyad sTong Pa'i mDo*). Sanskrit Original in *Buddhist Sanskrit Texts* 4 (1960). See Tibetan translations in P 734, volume 21; T 12. See Conze's *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & its Verse Summary* for an English translation.

*The Trilogy of Dispelling Darkness* by Longchenpa (*Mun Sel sKor gSum*). See *Dispelling all Darkness Throughout the Ten Directions* for its separate listing. The other two texts in this trilogy are (i) the *bsDus Don Ma Rig Mun Pa Thams Cad Sel Ba*; *The Expanded Collected Precepts of the Old School Tradition* volume 27; also a xylographic edition published by Sonam Kazi (1973); I(Sik)-Tib 73-905823; (ii) *sPyi Don Legs bShad sNang Bas Yid Kyi Mun Pa Thams Cad Sel Ba*; *The Expanded Collected Precepts of the Old School Tradition* volume 27; also a xylographic edition published by Sonam Kazi (1973); I(Sik)-Tib 73-905821.

*The Trilogy of Natural Freedom* by Longchenpa (*Rang Grol sKor gSum*). These texts are published with *The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease*. See Guenther's translation in as "The Natural Freedom of Mind".

*The Trilogy of Resting-at-Ease* by Longchenpa (*Ngal gSo sKor gSum*). Gangtok, Sikkim: Dodrup Chen Rinpoche (1973); 4 volumes. I have used the enlarged reprint of this edition in India which I obtained in 1988 in three volumes without any additional publishing information, and consulted the print available from Derge (*sDe dGe*) Publishing House in Eastern Tibet. This trilogy is an interlocking series of three root texts (*The Resting-at-Ease of Mind as Such*, *The Resting-at-Ease of Contemplation*, and *The Resting-at-Ease of Magical Illusion*) with lengthy auto-commentaries, structural analyses, outlines, and so on - see Guenther's *Kindly Bent to Ease Use* (three volumes) for a complete translation of the root verses. Since the Western page enumeration of the two reprints in India, as well as the sequence of the texts, is unaccountably different despite being identical otherwise, I have chosen to cite the Tibetan folio numbers instead of the Western numbers.

*The Twenty Five Thousand Stanza Transcendental Consummation of Insight Discourse* of transcendental authorship (*Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasarikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; *Shes Rab Kyi Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa sTong Phrag Nyi Shu lNga Pa*). The Tibetan translation is P731, volume 18-19; T 9. See Conze's English translation in *The Large Sūtra On Perfect Wisdom*.

*The Unsurpassed Continuity* by Maitreya and Asaṅga (*Uttara-tantra*; *rGyud bLa Ma*). The Sanskrit original has been edited by E. H. Johnston; Patna: Bihar Research Society (1950). I have used the critical edition of the Tibetan translation by Zuiryu Nakamura (*Zō-wa-taishō*, *Kukyō-ichijō-hōshōron-kenkyū*; Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation (1967)). See

its English translations in Holmes' *Changeless Nature*, Obermiller's *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation*, and Takasaki's *A Study on the Ratnagoṭravibhāga*

*The Verse Summation of the Transcendental Consummation of Insight Discourses of transcendental authorship (Ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā; Shes Rab Kyi Pha Rol Tu Phyin Pa sDud Pa Tshigs Su bCad Pa)*. See Yuyama's *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā* for an edition of the Sanskrit edition as well as the Tibetan translation. See Conze's *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & its Verse Summary* for an English translation.

*Three Works on the Structure of rDzogs-chen (Atiyoga) Practice* by mKhan Po Ngag dBang dPal bZang of Thog. New Delhi: published by B. Jamyang Norbu (1972).