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Buddhahood Without Meditation

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Buddhahood Without Meditation

Buddhahood Without Meditation:
Düdjom Lingpa's Visions of the Great Perfection, Vol. 2

BUDDHAHOOD WITHOUT MEDITATION

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Buddhahood Without Meditation



Advice for Revealing Your Own Face
as the Nature of Reality, the Great Perfection

by
Düdjom Lingpa



"BUDDHAHOOD WITHOUT MEDITATION: Advice for Revealing Your Own Face as the Nature of Reality, the Great Perfection," Is Presented Here.

[292] With unshakable faith I pay homage to the Omnipresent Lord and Primordial Protector, the display of the supreme cities of apparitions of primordial consciousness.

Nowadays, when the five kinds of degeneration are on the rise, due to the uncouth nature of sentient beings and their powerful, negative karma, every one of them clings to this life—which is no more than an episode in a dream—makes long-term plans for living indefinitely, and shows no concern for meaningful pursuits pertaining to future lifetimes. Therefore, those who strive for the states of liberation and omniscience appear no more often than stars in the daytime.

Although some people bear death in mind and enthusiastically practice Dharma [293], they let their lives pass while engaging in mere verbal and physical spiritual practices and striving for higher rebirths as gods and humans.

Some, while lacking even the faintest understanding of the view of emptiness, ascertain their own minds as empty, merely identify the nature of discursive thoughts or inactive consciousness, and then passively remain in that state. As a result, they are simply propelled into rebirths as gods in the desire and form realms, without coming even a hair's breadth closer to the path to omniscience.

Therefore, if there are a few individuals who have accrued vast accumulations [of merit and knowledge] over the course of countless eons, conjoined them with fine prayers, and established a karmic connection with the ultimate [294] Dharma, I have bestowed this as their inheritance. Those who have no karmic connection with me and who lack the particular fortune of mastering the Dharma of the Great Perfection will engage in either projection or denial regarding this teaching and will thereby banish their own minds into the wilderness. You people who are not like that and whose fortune is equal to my own, attend to this advice—and by investigation, analysis, and familiarization, recognize saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as great emptiness, and realize its nature.

Among the three divisions—the division of the mind, the division of the

expanse, and the division of pith instructions—of [the teachings on] the nature of reality, the Great Perfection, this is called the category of secret pith instructions. [295] In this regard there are three sections: view, meditation, and conduct. First, the view is determined and authentically realized by way of four themes: nonexistence, oneness, uniform pervasiveness, and spontaneous actualization. This is a sublime, essential point.

Teachings of Avalokiteśvara

First, to determine the manner of nonexistence, there are the determination of personal identity and the determination of phenomenal identity. First, as for so-called personal identity, the mere appearance of the existence of a self during waking experience, dreaming experience, the intermediate period, and future lifetimes [296] is called *personal identity*. As soon as this appearance occurs, there is a latent consciousness that takes it to be “I,” and this is called *subsequent consciousness* or *discursive thinking*. This consciousness clarifies [the appearance of the self] and then stabilizes and fortifies it.

Investigating the source from which the so-called “I” first arises leads to the conclusion that no such source exists.

This is how to investigate whether or not the so-called “I” has a location and is an agent bearing real characteristics that can be individually identified in the interim period [between its origin and cessation].

The head is called the *head*; it is not the “I.” Likewise, the scalp is called *skin*; it is not the “I.” The bones are called *bones*; they are not the “I.” Likewise, the eyes are *eyes* and not the “I.” The ears are *ears* and not the “I.” The nose is the *nose* and not the “I.” The tongue is the *tongue* and not the “I.” The teeth are *teeth* and not the “I.” The brain, too, is not the “I.” Moreover, regarding the flesh, blood, lymph, channels, and tendons, each has its own name and is not the “I.” This is revealing.

Moreover, the arms are *arms* and not the “I.” The shoulders are likewise not the “I,” nor are the upper arms, the forearms, or the fingers. The spine is the *spine* and not the “I.” [297] The ribs are not the “I,” nor are the chest, lungs, heart, diaphragm, liver, or spleen. The intestines and kidneys are not the “I,” nor are urine or feces. Furthermore, the word “I” is not attributed to the legs. The thighs are called *thighs* and not “I,” and the hips are similarly not the “I,” nor are the calves, the soles of the feet, or the toes.

In short, the outer skin is not called “I”; the intervening flesh and fat are called *flesh* and *fat*, not “I”; the inner bones are called *bones* and not “I”; and the innermost marrow is called *marrow* and not “I.” Consciousness, too, is so called and is not named “I.” Therefore, emptiness as the nonexistence of a

location and agent during the interim [between the origination and cessation of the self] is certain.

Finally, you should likewise come to a decisive understanding that this transcends all destinations and the agents who go to them. The apparent existence of something that in fact does not exist is like a hallucination. Uttering the names [of such things] is like talking about the horns of a hare.

Second, to determine the identitylessness of phenomena, there are (A') searching for the bases of designation of names, (B') dissolving grasping at the permanence of things [298], (C') counteracting the flaws of benefit and harm, and (D') collapsing the false cave of hope and fear.

First, if you seek out the referents of all names, you will see that they do not exist and are nothing more than imputations upon the merely natural displays of thoughts; for it is impossible for any phenomenon to be established as self-sustaining upon its own basis of designation. For instance, upon what is the so-called head designated and why? Is it so designated because it is the first part of the fetus to develop, or because it is round, or because it appears above? In fact, the head does not arise as the first part of the fetus; everything that is round is not called a *head*; and if you examine *above* and *below*, you will find that they do not exist in space. Likewise, hair is not the *head*. Skin is only skin and is not called a *head*. Bones are called *bones* and not a *head*. The brain is not the *head*, nor are the eyes, ears, nose, or tongue.

If you think that none of these individually is the *head*, but their collective assembly is called a *head*, consider: If you severed a creature's head, pulverized it into its constituent molecules and atoms, and showed this to anyone in the world, no one would call it a *head*. Even if you reconstituted these molecules and atoms with water, it would not be called a *head*. Therefore, know how the so-called head is nothing more than a verbal expression, with no objective basis for this utterance. [299]

Likewise, regarding the *eyes*—that name is not attributed to all pairs of spheres. The sclera is not an *eye*, nor are tears, veins, or blood. An *eye* is none of these individually, nor is it the assembly of their particles, or the lump of them reconstituted with water. That which sees forms is consciousness, not the eyeballs, which is evidenced by the fact that visual perception takes place in dreams and in the intermediate period.

Likewise, regarding the *ears*—neither the auditory canals nor the skin are the ears, and the flesh, channels, ligaments, blood, and lymph all have their own names, so they are not the *ears*. The powder that would result from reducing them to tiny particles is not the *ears*, nor is the lump that would be formed by reconstituting them with water. If you think that the name *ear* is attributed to that which hears sounds, check out what hears sounds in a

dream, the waking state, and the intermediate period. It is only the primordially present consciousness of your mind and not the ears.

Likewise, regarding the *nose*—the nostrils, skin, cartilage, flesh, channels, and ligaments all have their own names, so they are not called a *nose*. Moreover, that which smells odors is consciousness itself, so you should investigate what smells odors in a dream and in the intermediate period.

Likewise, regarding the *tongue*— [300] its flesh, skin, blood, veins, and nerves all have their own names, so they are not called a *tongue*. If they were pulverized into a powder, this would not be called a *tongue*, and if it were reconstituted into a lump, it would still not be called a *tongue*. This applies to all the following instances as well.

Likewise, regarding the *arms*—the shoulders are not the *arms*, nor are the upper arms, forearms, fingers, knuckles, flesh, skin, bones, or marrow. Likewise, regarding the *shoulders*—the skin is not the *shoulders*, nor are flesh, bones, their assembled particles, or the lump reconstituted with water. The basis of designation of the name *shoulder* is empty in that it has no objective existence. Likewise, by investigating the upper arms and forearms, it becomes apparent that each component has its own name, with flesh being called *flesh*, bones called *bones*, skin called *skin*, and marrow called *marrow*. Not even an atom can be established as their basis of designation.

By investigating the bases of designation of the *body* and the *aggregates*, it becomes apparent that the *body* does not refer to the spine or ribs, or to the chest, flesh, skin, or bones. The heart, lungs, liver, diaphragm, spleen, kidneys, and intestines are all called by their own names, so the bases of designation of the *body* and *aggregates* [301] are empty in that they have no objective existence: they are emptiness.

Likewise, by investigating the *legs*, it becomes apparent that the hips are not the *legs*, nor are the thighs, calves, or ankles. Similarly, the name *hips* does not refer to flesh, skin, bones, channels, or ligaments. Regarding the *thighs* as well, this name does not refer to any of the skin, flesh, bones, channels, or ligaments. This goes for the *calves*, too. These names would not be applied if they were pulverized into powder, nor would they refer to the lump formed from that powder mixed with water.

If you seek the basis of designation of a *mountain* externally, it becomes apparent that earth is not a *mountain*, nor are shrubs, trees, stones, boulders, or water.

If you seek the basis of designation of a *building*, it becomes apparent that neither mortar, nor stones, nor lumber is a *building*. Moreover, just as walls are called *walls* and not a *building*, likewise there is nothing in the exterior or interior that is established as a *building*.

Although you may seek the bases of designation of a *human being*, a *horse*, a *dog*, and so on, it becomes apparent that their eyes, ears, noses, tongues, flesh, blood, bones, marrow, channels, and ligaments, together with their consciousnesses, all have their own names, so the bases of designation of a *human being*, a *horse*, and a *dog* have no objective existence. [302] These [names] are indicative of everything else.

Furthermore, among material objects, the name *drum* is not attributed to the wood, leather, exterior, or interior. Moreover, the term *knife* is not attributed to the metal, blade, back of the blade, tip, or haft. None of these is established as the object designated *knife*. Names and their referents change. For example, when a knife is formed into an awl, its name changes, and when this is made into a needle, all its previous names disappear.

In dependence upon the teachings I have received during a dream from my guru, the supreme ārya, the Great Compassionate One (Avalokiteśvara), I have thoroughly realized both the so-called “personal identity” [as identities] and this search for the bases of designation of names.

Teachings of the Lake-Born Vajra of Orgyen

On one occasion when I encountered the illusory body of the primordial consciousness of the Lake-Born Vajra of Orgyen, he granted me these instructions on perceiving appearances as illusory: “In order to be introduced to the dependent origination of the confluence of causes and conditions, consider this: Lucid, luminous absolute space, as the ground, having the potential to manifest any kind of appearance, serves as the cause; and consciousness that grasps at the ‘I’ serves as the contributing condition. In dependence upon the confluence of these two, all appearances manifest like illusions. Thus, absolute space, as the ground, the mind that arises from its creative power, and all the outer and inner phenomena that are appearances of this mind are called *dependently related events*, for they are interrelated as a sequence of events, like the sun and its rays. [303]

“This is like the appearance of an illusion that arises in dependence upon the interaction of transparent, clear space, the primary cause, with the magical substances, mantras, and mind that views the object, the contributing conditions.

“In this way, all appearing phenomena manifest due to the power of grasping at the ‘I,’ even though they don’t exist. This is like the appearance of a mirage due to the confluence of a lucid clear sky, warmth, and moisture.

“All waking appearances, dream appearances, and appearances during the intermediate period and thereafter appear, even though they don’t exist, and

confusion arises due to reifying them. As an analogy, during a dream, instead of thinking, 'This is a dream' and recognizing it as delusive, you apprehend it as an enduring, objective world and fixate on it.

"The appearances of various phenomena as something 'other' due to the dominant condition of inwardly grasping at the 'I' are like the appearances of reflections arising from the interaction of your face and a mirror.

"Due to being completely ensnared by the reification of the self, the worlds of the six cities appear to arise one after another. These are like the appearances of a city of gandharvas manifesting in an area such as a plain at sunset, which occur as visions grasped by the mind.

"While the appearances to the physical senses have never been established as real, your own diverse experiences of seeing, hearing, experiencing, and feeling appear as something 'other,' like echoes.

"All appearances are not other than the ground, [304] and they are of one taste with the ground itself, just as all the planets and stars reflected in the ocean are not other than the ocean and are of one taste with the water itself.

"Due to grasping at the 'I,' 'self' and 'other' appear as if truly existent in the panoramic sweep of the expansive, all-pervasive absolute space of the ground. These appearances are like bubbles emerging from water.

"The lucid luminosity of the empty absolute space of the ground is crystallized into self-appearances to mental consciousness. Due to this becoming reinforced, various delusive appearances manifest, which are like hallucinations caused by pressure on the nerves of the eyes or by disturbances in the channels due to the vital energies.

"Although various appearances from the ground manifest to a consciousness that grasps at the 'I,' they do not waver from or occur outside of that ground. As an analogy, when someone who has mastered the samādhi of emanation and transformation settles in meditative equipoise in such samādhi, various emanations appear, even though they have no ground or root and do not exist as real objects.

"O my incredible child, gradually meditate in this way, and you will become an illusory yogin by realizing the illusory nature of appearances."

So saying, he disappeared.

Teachings of Vidyādhara Dūdul Dorjé

On one occasion Vidyādhara Dūdul Dorjé spoke these words to me:

The vajra is the eternal vajra;
for its meaning, look to space itself!

Elaborating on this point, [305] he said, “Behold! This empty space is the ground of the appearances of all physical worlds and their sentient inhabitants. To provide analogies, the ground of the appearances of reflections is a mirror, for reflections are not established as anything other than the mirror. The ground of the appearances of images of the moon in water is water, for these images are not established as anything other than the water. The ground of the appearances of rainbows is space, for rainbows are not established as anything other than space.

“This space cannot be injured, so it is invulnerable. Space cannot be conquered or destroyed, so it is indestructible. Space abides as the ground of the appearances of the phenomenal world, so it is real. Space cannot be affected by good or bad qualities, so it is incorruptible. Space is unmoving and unfluctuating, so it is stable. Space can penetrate even the minutest particles, so it is unobstructable. Space cannot be harmed by anything whatsoever, so it is completely invincible.

“Since all other substances can be injured by weapons, they are vulnerable. Since they can be conquered and destroyed by circumstances, they are destructible. Since they can change into one thing or many, they are unreal. Since they can be affected by other things, they are corruptible. Since they move and fluctuate, with no enduring stillness, [306] they are unstable. They can be obstructed by certain things, and since they can be nullified by other influences, they are vincible. Such things, having the characteristic of not being established as truly existent, are empty.

“Moreover, by pulverizing coarse materials, they are reduced to particles. Decomposing these particles by a factor of seven results in molecules. The empty, partless atoms that result from decomposing these molecules by a factor of seven are characterized by not being established as real.

“If you think they existed at first but were then reduced to nothing due to being acted upon, take heed of the appearances of dreams, which are not established as real from the very moment they manifest, regardless of whether or not they have been acted upon, either by observation or by physical contact.

“Observe how appearances emerge and cease due merely to opening and closing your eyes or lowering and raising your feet. If you think it is not that the previous appearances cease and vanish as the subsequent ones emerge, but rather that the earlier ones go elsewhere, with all the former and later appearances being truly existent, look at the appearances of a dream. In particular, it is impossible for some substantial nature to exist except as something designated as a relative [truth] upon the interrelations of causes and effects. So consider this issue well.

“Well then, these accounts of space having the seven vajra qualities are presented using metaphors to show how space is devoid of movement and change due to its insubstantiality. They demonstrate how ultimate reality [307] is present as the essential nature, which is inexpressible by speech or thought and is devoid of change. It is worthwhile to apply these accounts to explanations of the distinctions between substantiality and insubstantiality and between reality and unreality. So when the moon is symbolically pointed out with a finger, you should look at the moon and not be satisfied with looking merely at the tip of the finger. If you do not decisively recognize appearances as empty by repeatedly familiarizing yourself with these points, you will not come the slightest bit closer to the path of omniscience.

“My child, endowed with the pinnacle of conscious awareness, carefully attend to this point, and by realizing all appearances as space itself, become a yogin of the uniform pervasiveness of space!”

With these words, he disappeared.

*Teachings of Longchenpa, Drimé Özer: An Introduction
in the Form of a Question-and-Answer Session for the Sake
of Developing Certainty*

By gaining a strong conviction about the above points, I understood all appearances to be empty from their own side. Nevertheless, regarding the outer appearances of the physical world, its inner, animate sentient inhabitants, and all the intervening appearances of the five kinds of sensory objects, I still thought they would be left behind when I departed for other realms, and that all sentient beings existed with their own individual mindstreams. During that period my guru, Drimé Özer, appeared to me in a dream and gave me the following introduction in the form of a question-and-answer session. [308]

He said, “O son of the family, the outer appearances of the physical world, its inner, animate sentient inhabitants, and the intervening appearances of the five kinds of sensory objects are like illusory apparitions that dissolve into the space of awareness. Accordingly, once they have disappeared into the vacuous space of the substrate, eventually, due to the projections resulting from the movements of karmic energies, there is an appearance of your own body, giving rise to a physical world, its sentient inhabitants, and all sensory appearances. As fixation arises toward them, delusion sets in. Finally, this appearing world once again disappears into the vacuous space of the substrate, like a rainbow dissolving into the sky. Then waking appearances emerge like before.”

I responded, "I think this body of mine is not a mere appearance but definitely arose from the causes and conditions of a father and mother."

He replied, "If you think your body arose from a father and mother like that, tell me: What are the beginnings and ends of your fathers and mothers, and what are their origins, locations, and destinations?"

I answered, "I believe they exist, but I can't remember them. I think it's impossible for there to be a body without parents."

He countered, "Check to see who are the parents of a body in a dream, the intermediate period, a hell realm, and so on."

Consequently, I gained a decisive understanding that this body is not established as anything other than a mere appearance. [309]

I commented, "O guru, I think that when my body is in bed covered with bedclothes and dream appearances arise, my body and the human environment remain unchanged."

The guru replied, "Examine the dream appearances of the vast outer physical world, its numerous inner sentient inhabitants, and the well-displayed intervening appearances of the five senses to see whether they are located in the head, the limbs, or the upper or lower parts of your body."

Consequently, I became certain that such was not the case.

Nevertheless, I persisted, "Guru, perhaps dream appearances arise when consciousness goes elsewhere. Then, when it reenters the body, waking appearances arise."

The guru replied, "Well, if that were so, this body would be like a hotel, in which case, identify and report to me what is the door to this hotel, as it were, by which consciousness comes and goes. In addition, you must identify where the mind is located. If the mind is located in the upper part of the body, why is pain experienced when the lower part is pricked with a thorn? Likewise, if it resides in the lower part, there would be no reason for pain to be experienced in the upper part. It doesn't make sense for it to fluctuate in size, such that a tiny consciousness enters the body through an orifice, [310] increases in size until it pervades the body, and then shrinks again as it departs through that orifice. If that were so, once awareness is separated from the material body, why wouldn't consciousness reenter the corpse after death?

"Where do dream appearances go? Do they go above, below, or in one of the cardinal or intermediate directions? Do you believe they are the same as the waking appearances of the physical world and its sentient inhabitants or different? If you believe they are the same, does sleep define their boundaries or not? If it does, then they are not waking appearances; and if it doesn't, they are not dream appearances. On the other hand, it is invalid to believe

that these appearances exist, while imagining that they are above or below, outside or inside.”

I replied, “Guru, then how is this to be decided? Where should I stand? Sublime guru, please show me.”

The guru replied, “Throughout beginningless lifetimes you have never been born; there have been only appearances of birth. You have never died; there have been only appearances of a change of place, like dream appearances and waking appearances. Regarding the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, all things that are seen as forms, heard as sounds, smelled as odors, experienced as tastes, and felt as tactile sensations are simply your own appearances arising to yourself, [311] without their ever existing, even in the slightest way, as something else.

“If you think that things exist autonomously as something else since you can directly see them with your eyes, really hold them in your hands, and experience them through your senses, consider: All the forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile sensations in a dream appear at the time to be truly existent. But from the next day onward, they have no objective existence. This should tell you something.

“Throughout your beginningless succession of lifetimes, you have never moved from one place to another, and you have never lived anywhere else. This condition is equivalent to appearances in a dream. If you think there is a difference in the reality or unreality of dream appearances and waking appearances, observe for yourself: From the time you were born until now, are all the dream and waking appearances of working, farming, striving, saving, and planning the same or not? If you carefully examine them without regard for their duration and quantity, you will definitely recognize that they are alike.

“Moreover, if dream appearances were unreal and waking appearances were real, this would mean that dream appearances are delusive and waking appearances are not delusive. In that case, you would have to believe that you are a sentient being while dreaming and a buddha during the waking state! If both are delusive appearances, it is pointless to distinguish one as being real and the other as unreal, [312] for something is called a delusive appearance if it appears and is apprehended as something it is not.

“Until now you have eaten enough food to fill Mount Meru and drunk an ocean of liquid, but still you are not full. You have worn a galaxy of clothing, but still you are not warm. Know that this indicates that these are mere appearances and are not established as real.

“It is a great mistake not to recognize that what appears as your body is empty and to cling to it as real. This is a consuming demon, since the efforts you make for the sake of your body eat away at the fruit of omniscience. It

is a murderous executioner, since it links one cycle of existence to the next, displaying the appearances of birth and death. It cuts your life force, since, for the sake of your body, you seek happiness from clothing and so on, and you are imprisoned by clinging to attachments and aversions that perpetuate hopes and fears; thus, your lifeline to liberation is cut. And it asphyxiates you, for it robs you of the breath of eternal bliss. Therefore, all those who cling to the objective appearances of the six kinds of consciousness are like deer that mistake a mirage for water and run to it. There is not even an iota of an essence that is established as real.

“Even though you know appearances to be empty in this way, they might remain as before, as if they were truly existent, without turning into nothing. So if you wonder why it is necessary to know this, consider: If you do not know that the essential nature of the object of meditation is emptiness, all your meditations [313] will certainly turn out to be ethically neutral.

“Furthermore, you may wonder why the mere realization of emptiness should reveal the nature of nonexistence, given that mere understanding and mere realization resulting from all other visualizations and meditations are not liberating. Moreover, if everything is primordially empty, you may think that it makes no difference whether or not you know everything to be empty. If so, consider this: Know that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and liberation and delusion come about due to the differences between awareness and unawareness and between knowing and not knowing. Realize that awareness is essential.

“Some people may think that if you can’t understand this on your own, then hearing teachings and contemplating them will be of no use. But since beginningless time you have failed to realize this on your own and have wandered in saṃsāra. Know that through studying and training you will realize emptiness, thereby gaining the view that accords with all the tantras, oral transmissions, and pith instructions.

“Furthermore, whether you realize emptiness after undergoing great hardships in studying, training, and so on, or you realize emptiness without experiencing the slightest difficulty, there is no difference in the quality of your realization. For example, whether you discover gold after undergoing great hardships or you find it under your bed without the slightest difficulty, there is no difference in the quality of the gold. [314]

“The consciousness that analytically ascertains all appearances as emptiness is called *discerning wisdom*. The continuum of subsequent consciousness that definitely ascertains saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as great emptiness is called the *wisdom that realizes identitylessness*. Once these two types of wisdom have been generated in your mindstream, there is first realization, then experience, and finally acquiring indwelling confidence. This is a crucial point.

“Moreover, if you say that it is incorrect to assert that the body and so forth are not established except as mere appearances, because if the body of someone who has realized them as empty is touched by fire or water or struck by an arrow, a spear, or a club, then pain arises, consider: Until you reach absolute space, in which phenomena are extinguished in ultimate reality, dualistic appearances do not subside; and until they vanish, appearances of benefit and harm will uninterruptedly arise. But in reality, even the fires of hell do not burn.”

With these words, he disappeared.

Teachings of Saraha

On another occasion when I had a vision of Mahāsiddha Saraha, I asked the great lord of siddhas, “By what means are obscurations purified? How are deities to be realized? By what means can one be freed of demons and obstructive beings? Please explain!”

He replied, “O great being, [315] you must counteract the faults of benefit and harm. As for so-called obscurations, ignorance of the essential nature of the ground as emptiness is called an *obscurator* and *ignorance*, and the entrenchment of such ignorance is called a *habitual propensity*. These cannot be purified by ordinary efforts, such as striving at physical and verbal spiritual practices. Rather, obscurations are naturally purified as a result of ascertaining ultimate reality by means of discerning wisdom.

“Where are all beneficial virtues of the body and speech located? Where is the storehouse in which they are accumulated? By investigating and analyzing the origin from which they arise, their location, and the destination to which they go, if you find that none of them have any objective existence, then what do they benefit? By investigating what it could mean to benefit the empty ultimate nature of mind—in terms of its exterior, interior, middle, top, or bottom—you will become certain that such benefit has no objective existence. Then you will see that there is nothing more than an accumulation of merit within saṃsāra.

“Likewise, in what cardinal or intermediate direction are the heaps of accumulated vices located? Where is their storehouse? Investigate how they harm the exterior, interior, in between, top, or bottom of the empty mind. Now if you carefully examine the streams of consciousness of people who have constantly applied themselves to physical and verbal virtues [316] and those of others who have devoted their whole lives to perpetrating evil, you will find that there is not one iota of difference between them in terms of the perpetuation of all their attachment and hostility, hope and fear. If they are

liberated, they are freed due to their streams of consciousness being freed; and if they are deluded, they are bewildered due to their streams of consciousness being bewildered. There is not even the slightest difference in terms of their streams of consciousness wandering in saṃsāra without being liberated. Therefore, virtue and vice are different merely insofar as they generate temporary happiness and suffering, but other than this, they do nothing more than perpetuate saṃsāra.

“If you do not determine the nature of virtue in this way, you will confuse the virtue of accumulating temporary merit with the path to liberation, so you will not achieve the fruition of omniscience. If you fail to determine the nature of vice, you will not know that ignorance of your own essential nature is an obscuration and the basis of delusion, so you will not recognize the cause of delusion. Consequently, you will have no alternative but to remain endlessly deluded in saṃsāra. So recognize the crucial importance of determining this.

“By investigating the initial origin, interim location, and final destination of so-called benevolent and protective gods, you will see that they have no objective existence. In which of the objects of form, sound, smell, taste, and tactile sensations appearing as sensory objects is their existence established? If you think they exist in the domain of one of the elements of the physical world and its sentient inhabitants, [317] investigate within molecules and atoms, examine the individual names and constitutions of the elements, and see how these gods could be of benefit.

“By investigating malevolent demons in the same way, you will see that they have no objective existence either. All joys and sorrows are dreamlike mental appearances, so no benefit or harm by gods or demons occurs from their bases of designation. If you think demons inflict harm, consider: Since they lie outside the domains of form, sound, smell, taste, and tactile sensations, that which is called a *demon* is nothing more than a mere name. By investigating how it can inflict harm, you will see it as not anything existent—nothing other than nonobjective and empty.

“Out of delusion, people view the upper and lower portions of the body as good and bad respectively. Since the upper body appears to be clean, they regard it as if it were a god, and since the lower body appears unclean, they regard it as if it were a demon. This results in a continuous stream of hope and fear, and due to the tight bondage of self-grasping, a continuous stream of joyful and miserable experiences arises. All these consist of nothing more than experiential appearances of saṃsāra, without even an iota of true existence as anything else. This is simply illustrated with the metaphor of a dream.

“The essential point of all this is knowing the way things exist, [318] which

dispels obstacles to meditation. After this has cleared away all obstacles of lack of conviction and distrust toward meditation, you will acquire indwelling confidence and be filled with conviction and freedom from doubt regarding the meaning of ultimate reality. Freed of the obscuration of ignorance, this will provide you with mastery over the great, continuous displays of pristine awareness.

“This is also the root of the profound practices of pacification and the severance of māras. Do not seek any divinity other than your own pristine awareness. You will come to the decisive recognition that there are no demons other than discursive thoughts. And this recognition is indispensable for all sādhanas and rituals for dispelling obstacles. If you have such knowledge, you are certainly a great, illusory yogin who realizes all phenomena as being like illusions.

“O little one whose pristine awareness transcends the mind, teach this to your disciples and they may all become Mahāyāna yogins of this great mystery.”

Saying this, he vanished from sight.

Teachings of Vajrapāṇi

On one occasion when I encountered the glorious Vajrapāṇi in a pure vision of clear light, I asked him, “O Jina, great Vajradhara, is so-called buddhahood something I awaken to within myself, or do I need to go elsewhere to become enlightened?”

He replied, “Behold! [319] Fortunate son of the family, if you think that so-called buddhas are people who live in a vast realm, noble individuals of fine and flawless countenance, peaceful and cooling, clear and free of blemishes, handsome and attractive, consider: Who are their parents? If they were born from mothers, they would fall to the extreme of birth. If they dwell somewhere, they would fall to the extreme of having a permanent location. If they were to cease to exist, they would fall to the nihilistic extreme of disappearing. In short, nothing that has a self-sustaining, truly existent nature of arising, ceasing, and remaining has a mode of existence free of the two extremes. These appearances that seem to arise and cease are nothing more than imputations.

“Moreover, if you reify that which is authentically enlightened, you will bind yourself. If there is a real difference between the ultimate natures of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, then references to the equal mode of existence of mundane existence and the peace [of nirvāṇa] are nothing more than empty words. Many people, clinging to nirvāṇa as substantially existent, fall into the

trap of hope and fear. There are many accounts of the enjoyments in the pure realms, but if you think of their vast qualities and reify them, that still constitutes grasping at the identities of phenomena. [320] However you name them, in reality, viewing the tathāgatas as being eternal and truly existent is nothing more than viewing them as identities of persons.

“If you think a buddha has eyes, he would also have visual consciousness. As soon as visual consciousness is established, the emergence of visual appearances is inevitable. They are known as the objects apprehended by the eyes. Once such objects are established, subtle conceptual states of mind that closely hold to forms inevitably arise. These are the mental states of visual apprehension. The dualistic conceptualization of the apprehender and the apprehended is called *mind*, and anyone who has a mind is known as a *sentient being*.

“Likewise, if you think a buddha has ears, he must have auditory consciousness as well as sounds. If you think he has a nose, he must have olfactory consciousness as well as smells. If you think he has a tongue, he must have gustatory consciousness as well as tastes. If you think he has a body, he must have tactile consciousness as well as tactile sensations. And all these would be their apprehended objects. The assemblies of concepts closely holding these objects are the mental states that apprehend them. As before, whoever has a mind is called a *sentient being*.

“Regarding so-called buddhas, if it were possible for there to be buddhas who did not transcend dualistic grasping, [321] their qualities could also be transferred to sentient beings, just like the qualities of one human being can be transferred to another. If you think buddhas teach Dharma to others, then the teachers would appear as selves, the Dharma would appear as the teaching, and those who are taught would appear as sentient beings; and if buddhas were apprehended as such, they would not have even a sesame seed’s worth of qualities superior to those of sentient beings. So they would all be sentient beings.

“If you think a buddha has a pleasant environment, a beautiful form, fine companions, great enjoyments and pleasures, and no anger or attachment, and that these are the exceptional qualities of a buddha, then a buddha would be no better than a god of the form realm. So such a buddha would not be anything more than a sentient being either.

“In terms of the definitive meaning, your own ground, Samantabhadra, is called the *sugatas of the three times*. Ultimately, a buddha has never come into the world or taught Dharma. Many of the tantras, oral transmissions, and pith instructions clearly explain how the self-appearing teacher manifests to disciples themselves. Observe and realize this point.

“Furthermore, it is incorrect to think that there are other kinds of realms of saṃsāra that are established as existent, and that many sentient beings migrate from one of those places to another and successively experience joys and sorrows. If the appearance of your previous body [322] being discarded were true, whence would you obtain your body in the intermediate period? If sentient beings these days can die merely from wounds, from burns on their arms and legs, or from cold wind on a single winter’s day, then when a body is formed that experiences the heat and cold of hell realms, why doesn’t it die even though it has been boiled and burned for a long time?

“Likewise, if death can occur nowadays due to starvation for only a few months or even days, why don’t sentient beings in the preta realms perish due to being starved for eons?

“Therefore, all sentient beings in the six states of existence, as well as those in the intermediate period, manifest merely like appearances in a dream; but apart from that, they are empty and are not established as real. They are deluded due to obsessively grasping at the true existence of things that have no objective existence.

“If you determine the nature of delusive appearances in that way and realize them as not truly existent, as empty, and as having no objective existence, you have dredged saṃsāra from its depths. If you decisively understand that buddhas do not exist apart from your own ground and you acquire confidence within yourself, you will actually attain what is called the *natural liberation of a multitude of buddhas*.

“O Lord of Space, Omnipresent Vajra, determine that all the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are nonexistent and empty, and realize their nature of nonexistence.”

Saying this, he disappeared. [323]

Teachings of Dorjé Drolö

After considering it for a long time, a decisive understanding of nonexistence arose, so that I knew that all the appearances of the physical world and its sentient inhabitants are empty from their own side. Nevertheless, many kinds of emptiness seemed to be ethically neutral. At that point I had a vision of the supreme Dorjé Drolö chanting the melody of *Hūm*, which reveals saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as displays of emptiness.

On that occasion I asked, “O great and supreme special deity, although I understand saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to be empty, this emptiness seems to be without benefit or harm. Why is that?”

He replied, “O my child, Lord of Space, reduce all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to emptiness; reduce emptiness to the essential nature of reality; reduce this

essential nature to the ground of being; reduce saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to displays of this ground; and reduce the entirety of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to this very ground.

“The reflections of the planets and stars in the ocean are none other than the ocean. The physical world and its sentient inhabitants are none other than space. Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are none other than displays of ultimate reality. This unifying principle and ultimate reality are all-pervasive and all-encompassing. Understand these metaphors and what they exemplify. [324] Thus you will become a yogin who embraces saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.”

So saying, he disappeared.

Teachings of Vajradhara

Seven years later, when the dharmakāya teacher Vajradhara appeared to me in a pure dream, I asked him, “O Teacher, Bhagavān, how is one freed on the path of liberation and omniscience, and how is one deluded on the impure path of saṃsāra? May the Teacher explain!”

He replied, “O great being, listen! The distinction between the emergence of buddhas and sentient beings is the difference between knowledge and ignorance. The fundamental primordial protector, Samantabhadra, is of the nature of the four kāyas and five facets of primordial consciousness. His empty essential nature is the dharmakāya, his luminous nature is the sambhogakāya, his self-liberating compassion is the nirmāṇakāya, and his pervasive and encompassing nature throughout all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is the svabhāvikakāya.

“The *primordial consciousness of absolute space* is so called because it accommodates all phenomena; *mirror-like primordial consciousness* is so called because it is lucid, luminous, and free of contamination; the *primordial consciousness of equality* is so called because saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are displays of purity and equality; *discerning primordial consciousness* is so called because of the unimpeded nature of the primordial consciousness that knows and perceives; and the *primordial consciousness of accomplishment* is so called because it accomplishes its tasks by way of purification and liberation.

“The path pristine awareness that liberates you as a self-emergent buddha manifests [325] in the nature of the four kāyas and five facets of primordial consciousness. The display of the essential nature of pristine awareness— all-pervasive, extending to the limits of space, without objective existence, a great uniform pervasiveness with no ground or root—is free of conceptual elaboration, and is therefore the dharmakāya. Regarding its nature as self-illuminating, it is the sambhogakāya; regarding its unimpeded luminosity of

primordial consciousness, it is the *nirmāṇakāya*; and regarding its being the common ground of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, it is the *svabhāvikakāya*.

“Having determined the nature of the ground, the realization of the one taste of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* in the absolute space of ultimate reality is the primordial consciousness of the absolute space of phenomena. Without reducing emptiness to a mere immateriality, lucidity and luminosity free of contamination, like a stainless mirror in which anything can appear, is mirror-like primordial consciousness. The awareness of the equal purity of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* in great emptiness is the primordial consciousness of equality. The unimpeded luminosity of primordial consciousness that discerns the displays of pristine awareness is discerning primordial consciousness. By gaining mastery over pristine awareness, activities of purification and liberation are naturally accomplished, so this is the primordial consciousness of accomplishment.

“Without knowing this mode of being, many people take as their path a passive state of consciousness that does not distinguish between the mind and pristine awareness. They grasp at outer appearances as ethically neutral entities bearing their own intrinsic characteristics. [326] Inwardly, they are tightly bound by the chains of reifying their own bodies as ethically neutral and permanent. In between these two [the outer and inner], as it were, they gain stability in a mere unimpeded, luminous, and cognizant state of consciousness. However, while it is possible that this may constitute a virtue that propels them to the two higher realms of existence, they will not achieve the states of liberation and enlightenment. So this is a flawed approach.

“Authentically knowing how all the phenomena included in *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are of one taste in the nature of suchness, ultimate reality, is the *wisdom that knows reality as it is*. Even while dwelling in the essential nature of pristine awareness, the self-emergence of unimpeded consciousness that is all-knowing and all-cognizing is the *wisdom that perceives the full range of phenomena*. Although such wisdom is unimpeded, it does not merge with objects, like a drop of mercury [does not merge with soil] when it falls on the ground.

“The mind views *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* as autonomous, reifies appearances, and is unaware of the nature of existence of the ground. From this mind emerge thoughts that arise and pass, merging with their objects, like drops of water falling on dry ground.

“As a result of ignorance obscuring your own face of buddhahood of the pure ground, which has mastery over the ground of being, all the *kāyas* and facets of primordial consciousness of the natural inner glow of the ground

subside into that inner glow. [327] The outer radiance is projected externally, with the aspects of the five lights manifesting as displays of the five elements.

“Here is how this occurs: Due to the primordial consciousness of the absolute space of phenomena being obscured by ignorance, its outer radiance appears as indigo light. This is called the *inner element, great element, and quintessence of space*. Due to reifying and clinging to this light, it appears as space, and this is called the appearance of the *outer element, derivative element, and residue*.

“Due to mirror-like primordial consciousness being obscured by ignorance, its inner glow subsides, resulting in its outer radiance appearing as white-colored light. This is the quintessence of water, its great element, and its inner element. Due to reifying and clinging to this light, it appears as water, and this is its residue, derivative element, and outer element.

“Due to the primordial consciousness of equality being obscured by ignorance, its inner glow subsides, resulting in its outer radiance appearing as yellow-colored light. This is the quintessence of earth, its inner element, and its major element. Due to reifying and clinging to this light, it appears as earth, and this is its residue, derivative element, and outer element.

“Due to discerning primordial consciousness being obscured by ignorance, its inner glow subsides, resulting in its outer radiance appearing as red-colored light. This is the quintessence of fire, its inner element, and its major element. Due to reifying and clinging to this light, it appears as fire, and this is its residue, [328] derivative element, and outer element.

“Due to the primordial consciousness of accomplishment being obscured by ignorance, its inner glow subsides, resulting in its outer radiance appearing as green-colored light. This is the quintessence of air, its inner element, and its major element. Due to reifying and clinging to this light, it appears as air, and this is called its residue, derivative element, and outer element.

“Due to the condition of these lights and radiances remaining within, the various colors and appearances of the five elements manifest uninterruptedly.

“The creative power of these five bases of delusion manifests in the following ways. Due to the obscuration of the ground by ignorance, the actual substrate, which is space-like and immaterial, devoid of thoughts and appearances, is like deep sleep and fainting. Immersion in this state is of the essential nature of delusion, a vast field of ignorance.

“The arousal of the karmic energies of an eon from that state is the essential nature of envy. Due to its activity, luminosity emerges from emptiness, and this is the substrate consciousness, which is present in the essential nature of hatred. The ego-grasping that arises from it with respect to the mere appearance of the self is afflictive mentation, which is present in the essential

nature of pride. Mentation arises from this, and it establishes the potential for appearances to emerge from immaterial emptiness, thus bringing forth luminosity; and this is present in the essential nature of attachment. [329] These constitute the five essential natures arising as outer creative expressions of the inner glow.

“The essential nature of the five poisons is like fire, from which afflictive thought formations emerge like sparks.

“In this way, objects unimpededly emerge as appearances in the uniformly pervasive emptiness and luminosity of the substrate and mentation. Consequently, due to the simultaneous confluence of the movements of karmic energies as the contributing conditions and the potential of the ground for manifesting appearances as the primary cause, the appearances of various forms emerge in dependence upon the ground and without relation to anything other than the ground.

“Whatever objects emerge as appearances of form are called by mere convention *visual consciousness*. Therefore, appearing objects, which may be likened to the ocean, are called *objects*, and the appearances of forms, which may be likened to [reflections of] planets and stars, are said to be *that which is apprehended*.

“Consequently, a subtle, apprehending mental consciousness attributes names to these forms, invests them with meaning, and reifies them. Thoughts arise that cling to forms as pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral, and they are called the *mind of visual apprehension*.

“Likewise, the unimpeded objects that emerge as sounds are called *objects*, the appearances that emerge as sounds are said to be *that which is apprehended*, and the mental consciousness that adheres to them is called the *apprehending mind*. [330] As described above, these are dependently related events arising from the assembly of causes and conditions.

“Likewise, the appearances that emerge as smells are merely conventionally named *olfactory consciousness*, the appearances that emerge as tastes are merely named *gustatory consciousness*, and the appearances that emerge as tactile sensations are merely named *tactile consciousness*. But they do not actually appear to those various orifices, which is made clear by the appearances in dreams and the intermediate period.

“Some people take appearances to be the mind, and they may think that all outer appearances are discursive thoughts and really their own minds, but it is not so. This is demonstrated by the fact that appearances change from the very moment they arise, with former moments sequentially passing away and giving rise to later ones, while the mind does not take on the nature of any of these moments, which would render it nonexistent. Thus, as appearances to

the eight types of consciousness sequentially emerge in their natural order, saṃsāra fully manifests. As they reabsorb back into the substrate consciousness, they subside into the peak of mundane existence.

“In this way the whole world of appearances of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is none other than the ground of being, and it is of one taste in that very ground. As an analogy, you must understand that even though various reflections of the planets and stars appear in the ocean, in reality they are of one taste in the water. The revelation of all phenomena to be your own appearances [331] is the essential teaching of Vajradhara.”

Saying this, he disappeared from view.

Teachings of Hūmchenkāra

On yet another occasion when I met the great vidyādhara Hūmchenkāra, I asked him, “What is this array of appearances like?”

He replied, “O great being, the five kinds of sensory consciousness are like space, in which anything may emerge. Discursive thoughts are like substances and mantras used by an illusionist, such that illusion-like arrays of appearances arise due to their simultaneous conjunction. Consciousness that closely attends to them is like a spectator.

“Thus, all substances that are offered and donated are like illusory substances. The approach of the illusion-like yoga is to dissolve them into emptiness with purifying mantras, and then use enriching mantras to immeasurably increase the appearances of these offerings to the six senses of the objects of worship, so that they are well pleased. Further, by means of the illusion-like yoga, you generate appearances like a city of gandharvas to emanation-like sentient beings; and by transforming these dream-like appearances, you liberate and guide them and so forth, and by so doing you gain mastery over the great yoga of illusion.

“No matter how many planets and stars are reflected in a lake, [332] the reflections are encompassed within the water itself. No matter how many physical worlds and their sentient inhabitants there are, they are encompassed within a single space. And no matter how vast and numerous are the appearances of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, they are encompassed within the single ultimate nature of mind. Observe how this is so!

“The ultimate nature of mind, which is called the *sugatagarbha*, is a uniform pervasiveness uncontaminated by faults. For example, even if it were possible for space to be filled with buddhas, there is uniform pervasiveness in that there is no object that could be benefited by their primordial consciousness and sublime qualities. And even if there were autonomous sentient

beings throughout the whole of space, there is uniform pervasiveness in that there is no object that can be harmed by them.

“The ground dharmakāya, the sugatagarbha, has no place, object, or agent of origination, so it is free of the extreme of origination. Since it transcends any time of cessation and any agent that ceases to exist, it is free of the extreme of cessation. Since it is invisible even to the eyes of the jinas due to not falling to the extreme of real existence, it is free of the extreme of permanence. Since it is the universal basis of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, without being totally nonexistent, it is free of the extreme of nihilism. Because it is beyond all locations, objects, and agents of going, [333] it is free of the extreme of going. Since no location, object, or agent of coming is established as real, it is free of the extreme of coming.

“In the expanse of the ground sugatagarbha, all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear distinctly and individually; like [reflections of] planets and stars in the ocean, they are free of the extreme of unity. However the modes of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise, they are of one taste in the ground sugatagarbha; just as the planets and stars reflected in the ocean are not other than the ocean, this is free of the extreme of diversity. Since it does not fall to any of the eight extremes of conceptual elaboration, its uniform pervasiveness is unsullied by faults.

“Further, it is empty in that it transcends the categories of above, below, the cardinal and intermediate directions, intervals, and time. It is empty in that it is all-pervasive and all-encompassing. There is outer emptiness in that all outer appearances cannot be established as bearing substantial characteristics or as being truly existent. There is inner emptiness in that your own inner mind transcends having any ground or root. There is the great uniform pervasiveness of nonexclusive emptiness in that between the outer and inner, there is no dualistic differentiation of the apprehended and the apprehender. This is emptiness as a door of liberation.

“The ground dharmakāya, the sugatagarbha, is free of signs that can be expressed in words, it transcends metaphorical approximations, and it is devoid of anything that could be actually demonstrated. This is the absence of signs as a door of liberation. [334]

“Regarding ultimate reality, the sugatagarbha, or ‘the sugatas of the three times,’ the notion that this is a result of merely practicing physical and verbal virtues, and that it entails going to some other realm and being liberated there, is to think that the panoramic sweep of all-pervasive space is an object or agent of coming and going. This is an extremely confused and muddled notion!

“What is the path? It is holding to your own place within yourself. What

is realization? It is truly knowing your own essential nature and mode of existence. What is liberation? It is simply your own awakening to your own essential nature. It is utterly deluded to grasp at anything else as the state or location of liberation and to strive for that. Ultimately, since there is not even a goal to aspire for, this is the absence of aspiration as a door of liberation.

“O my child, Faculty of Pristine Awareness, you will not be liberated merely by my talking and your hearing like this. Investigate and analyze the nature of that which has already been explained. Let experience arise from the depths, stabilize your continuum of conscious awareness, and then teach fortunate people who are suitable vessels. By transferring my Enlightened View Lineage to individuals who practice single-pointedly, there is no doubt that they will soon achieve liberation.” [335]

Saying this, he disappeared.

Teachings of Mañjuśrī, the Lion of Speech

On another occasion when I encountered Mañjuśrī, the Lion of Speech, in a meditative experience of clear light, I asked him, “O Teacher, protector of the world, although I have correctly ascertained how all appearances of the physical world and its sentient inhabitants are nothing other than my own appearances, please reveal to me whether or not the distinct names and pure realms of all the buddhas are established as autonomously existent objects.”

The teacher replied, “O great being, listen! The qualities of precious spontaneous actualization constitute the inner glow of the ground dharmakāya, the sugatagarbha. With this as the basis, the displays of the buddhafi elds and the male and female deities, together with their palaces, are naturally perfect in the ground itself—and this perfection is wisdom. Presenting them as existing in other realms is skillful means. The perfection of their sublime qualities in the ground itself is ultimate, while explanations of their existing in other physical worlds with their sentient inhabitants are relative. Moreover, the spontaneous actualization of the ground itself as displays of the kāyas and facets of primordial consciousness is the definitive meaning. All explanations of the buddhafi elds and the names of male and female deities and so on [336] as entities with real characteristics existing in other realms constitute provisional meanings.

“The following are presentations of the ultimate as relative, in accordance with the ways of saṃsāra. Here is how all the jinas are subsumed within the five kāyas: The great ultimate reality of the uncontrived, naturally present existence of all phenomena included in the world of appearances of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as the ground absolute space, the great emptiness, is called

dharmā. Due to the unimaginable range of dispositions and specific faculties, there is an unimaginable range of entrances to the path, experiences, and goals to be achieved. Their natural presence is called *kāya*.

“The natural perfection of the displays of the spontaneously actualized *kāyas* and facets of primordial consciousness as enjoyments is called *sambhogakāya*. The displays of emanations that are none other than the ground, without any mental activity of thinking to send forth emanations, are teacher *nirmāṇakāyas*, created *nirmāṇakāyas*, living-being *nirmāṇakāyas*, and material *nirmāṇakāyas*. The consciousness that grasps at the self is like a container of water, and the sublime qualities of the absolute space of the *sugatagarbha* are like the planets and stars in the sky. When these occur simultaneously, emanations as dependently related events appear to be of four kinds. In reality, the physical world and its sentient inhabitants are none other than displays of the three *kāyas*.

“The aspect of the essential nature [of the *sugatagarbha*] as emptiness is called *dharmakāya*, the aspect of its nature as spontaneous actualization is called *sambhogakāya*, [337] and the aspect of its distinct appearances is called *nirmāṇakāya*. Moreover, the ground itself is the essential nature of all of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and in this essential nature everything is of one taste, so it is called *svabhāva*; and because all sublime qualities and facets of primordial consciousness are assembled in an aggregate, as it were, it is called *kāya*.

“Since [the ground of being] is unchanging throughout the three times and does not transform into any other essential nature, it is called *immutable*. Since it cannot be injured by anything else, it is called *invulnerable*. Since it cannot be destroyed by itself or anything else, it is *indestructible*. Since it is the universal basis of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, it is *real*. Since it cannot be contaminated by good or bad qualities, it is *incorruptible*. Since it is devoid of movement, it is *stable*. Since it can penetrate even the subtlest cognitive obscurations, it is *unobstructable*. Since it cannot be overcome by any object or condition, it is *invincible*.

“Thus, the nature of existence of the ultimate, indestructible *vajra* is imbued with four pledges: It is impossible for sentient beings to realize it, apart from those beings who possess the necessary karma and good fortune. Once it has been realized and put into practice, it is impossible for you not to acquire indwelling confidence in it. When confidence is acquired, it is impossible for you not to be liberated. As for the extent of your liberation, it is impossible for you not to become enlightened.

“The natural presence of these five *kāyas* in the ground itself is ultimate, while explanations of them as being distinct [338] constitute the relative path of skillful means.

“In accordance with beings’ obsessions with families, here is the basis for speaking of the families of deities: Since the ground of being is such that the defilements of habitual propensities are cleansed in absolute space, it is said to be *cleansed*. Since the facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities are naturally fulfilled, it is said to be *fulfilled*. Since it is imbued with the seven vajra qualities, it is called the *vajra family*. Since it is the origin of all kāyas and facets of primordial consciousness, it is called the *jewel family*. Since it is not sullied by faults or defilements, it is called the *lotus family*. Since it thoroughly accomplishes enlightened activities, it is called the *karma family*. The term *family* refers to the respective associations embraced by each one.

“The following are teachings on the five buddhafi elds, presented in accordance with people’s obsessions with land: Ghanavyūha [Compact Display] is so called because of the spontaneously actualized, compact density of sublime qualities in the absolute space of the ground. Abhirati [Higher Joy] is so called because it is imbued with great joy that is not created by any object, condition, or agent. Śrīmat [Endowed with Glory] is so called because it is imbued with a glorious bounty of facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities. Sukhāvātī [Land of Bliss] is so called because it is imbued with the taintless primordial consciousness of bliss and emptiness. Karmaprasiddhi [Perfection of Excellent Deeds] is so called because it brings to perfection all actions of purification and liberation.

“The term *field* refers to absolute space, and the term *realm* indicates that it is none other than that absolute space. [339]

“Since the sublime qualities of the ground cannot be measured, it is called *immeasurable*, and since it fills all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, it is called a *palace*.

“When the natural glow of the omnipresent absolute space of the ground is made manifest by all-pervasive great wisdom, all the facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities of the domain of the ground sugatagarbha are illuminated. Because [the ground] is imbued with the seven indestructible vajra qualities and is free of wavering and movement throughout the three times, it is an immutable vajra. Because it is the source of all the dharmas of the path and fruition, and because it is imbued with a bounty of sublime qualities, it is called a source of jewels. The illumination of the ground is limitless, so it is boundless illumination. Since all authentic aims naturally emerge within it, it is said to accomplish aims.

“Since all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear in the manner of coming and going in the true vajra, the space of emptiness, this is called Vajraḍākinī. The self-emergent aspect of all the facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities, which are like a treasury of jewels, is

Ratnaḍākinī. The aspect of freedom from all attachments is Padmaḍākinī. The self-emergence of actions of the spontaneously actualized kāyas and facets of primordial consciousness—not performed with deeds or accomplished with effort—is Karmaḍākinī. Since the afflictive and cognitive obscurations are cleansed in the absolute space of phenomena, [340] and the facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities are naturally brought to fulfillment, it is called Buddha; and since all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear in the aspects of coming and going in the expanse of the space of great emptiness, it is called ḍākinī.

“Thus, the manifestation of the ground dharmakāya, the sugatagarbha, the great reality that totally pervades saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, is the ground pristine awareness, which is the great freedom from extremes; and all ultimate sādhanas are synthesized as follows:

“Self-mastery—through your conviction that the ground pristine awareness is the synthesis of all the [Three] Jewels—is the ultimate, unsurpassed, real taking of refuge in the nature of existence.

“Throughout the course of beginningless lifetimes, you have grasped at true existence and have fixated on objects, causing you to become very small minded. Now, having come to a decisive understanding of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as continuous displays of the one pristine awareness, the scope of your mind is expanded. This is the most sublime of all methods for generating bodhicitta.

“The dualistic mind that grasps at the apprehender and the apprehended is the great demon of conditioned existence that causes you to wander among the three realms of saṃsāra. With discerning wisdom, expel this into emptiness devoid of objects.

“The experience of the wisdom that realizes identitylessness is the wheel of protection of bodhicitta, which cannot be vanquished or destroyed.

“The descent of the great blessing of primordial consciousness, pristine awareness, into the darkness of ignorance [341] constitutes the actual descent of blessings.

“With the realization of how appearances arise as ornaments of pristine awareness, the arrays of naturally occurring sensory experiences become offerings.

“The transformation of the substrate into the dharmakāya is the enlightenment of the primordial ground of being. The actualization of the wisdom that knows the nature of existence [of that ground] just as it is, along with the all-knowing and all-illuminating wisdom that perceives the full range [of phenomena], is the synthesis of the mysteries of all the jinas and jinaputras.

“The assembly of haughty guardians of the teachings represents the path

of skillful means for your initial realization; the array of bodhisattvas represents the path of skillful means for the mastery of the eighth bodhisattva ground and higher; and the array of buddhas and buddhafields represents the path of skillful means for manifest buddhahood.

“Explanations of the ignorance of the substrate as Maheśvara and of all the configurations of thoughts that arise from it as the eight classes of guardians of the teachings, dharmapālas, gods, and demons are expressions of skillful means.

“The appearances of creative expressions of great primordial consciousness emerging of themselves from the manifestation of the dharmakāya, the primordial ground of being, are classified and presented as paths of skillful means, and the manifestation of ultimate buddhahood is the sādhana. All sādhanas and maṇḍalas are synthesized and perfected in this. [342]

“The invitation consists of manifesting the essential nature by transforming all phenomena of the three realms of saṃsāra into displays of the one great ultimate reality.

“Holding your own ground within yourself, without movement or change within the three times, is the request to remain.

“When you encounter your own face as the dharmakāya—the primordial ground of being, the sovereign view—your experience of great wonder is the homage of encountering the view.

“The display of phenomena as ultimate reality is the great offering.

“The wonder and confidence upon truly perceiving the mode of existence of the Great Perfection of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is the actual praise.

“The individual, distinct appearances of various phenomena are arrays of the enlightened body. Their spontaneous perfection and actualization is the display of the enlightened speech. Primordially pure absolute space, free of the extremes of conceptual elaboration, is the display of the enlightened mind.

“The qualities of realizing how the displays of the kāyas and facets of primordial consciousness are spontaneously actualized, without being sought after, include mastery over the four kinds of enlightened activity; and these are characteristics of the pristine awareness of the Great Perfection.

“Know that the four empowerments are likewise simultaneously perfected in the enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities within yourself.

“Thus, truly knowing and realizing the nature of perfection is certainly the Great Perfection. As a result of failing to know this, [343] you have wandered in saṃsāra in the past. Although perfection is primordial, it has been obscured by ignorance. This is like water that is naturally liquid freezing into

a solid, and like having no relief from poverty due to failing to recognize gold and jewels.

“Ultimately, the facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities of the ground sugatagarbha are perfected as creative displays of this ground. Explanations of them as individual supporting maṇḍalas and supported deities are presented as skillful means to guide disciples who grasp at things as permanent in ultimate, effortless absolute space, and they depend on relative paths entailing effort. Therefore, using the three essential points of luminosity, purity, and emptiness, those disciples are led to the fruition of supreme absolute space.”

With these words, he disappeared.

Teachings of the Lake-Born Vajra of Orgyen

On yet another occasion, I met the glorious Lake-Born Vajra and asked him, “O Omnipresent Lord and Primordial Protector, why are there teachings on the generation and accomplishment of buddhafi elds, celestial palaces, and deities?”

He replied, “These worlds that extend throughout space are the outer rūdra of the reified view of the self. The remedy for it is the purification of buddhafi elds created from emanated light. Inwardly, grasping at your dwelling place, possessions, and body [344] is the inner rūdra of the reified view of the self. The remedy for it is meditation on celestial palaces and deities. At all times and in all circumstances, the cohesive, uninterrupted latent consciousness of that which appears as a self called ‘I’ is the secret rūdra of the reified view of the self. This is the common thread running through all appearances and mindsets of saṃsāra. The remedy for it is firmly holding to divine pride.

“If they do not know these vital points, some people disregard the visualizations of the stage of generation and the maintenance of divine pride and apply themselves to verbal recitations alone. Some people practice while reifying the deities and buddhafi elds. But since it is impossible to achieve enlightenment in those ways, recognize these vital points.”

With these words, he disappeared.

Teachings of Ekajaṭī

On yet another occasion, when I had a vision of the Lady of Absolute Space, Ekajaṭī, I asked, “O sole grandmother of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, what is the name of this yāna that is displayed in the secret space of the Lady of Absolute Space, the great emptiness of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa?”

She replied, “O mother’s little boy, I have fully granted you the Enlightened View Lineage of the Buddhas, which is like providing you with a body. I have reared you, as though suckling you with mother’s milk, with the Symbolic Lineage [of the Vidyādhara]. I have fostered your wisdom by providing you with the heartfelt advice of the Aural Lineage [of Ordinary Individuals]. [345] Revealing this to all those fortunate disciples who are connected to it by way of their karma and prayers is meaningful.

“My name is given to the king of all yānas. All sounds express my name. The essential secret—this perfected display as the unsurpassed space of the mother ḍākinī—has numerous synonyms, but I say they are included in seven names.

“Since this Dharma involves two great kinds of secrecy, it is called *secret*. Since it protects you from the dangers of concepts of the self and engaging with its characteristics, it is called *mantra*. It is called the ultimate, indestructible *vajra*. Since the sublime qualities of all paths are distilled in it, it is called *yāna*.

“Since it is present as the ultimate mode of being of all phenomena, it is called *reality*. Since it is the foremost of all that is to be realized, it is called *ultimate*. Since it is purified of all faults and stains, it is called *pure*. Since it fully embraces all kāyas, facets of primordial consciousness, and sublime qualities of the path and fruition, it is called *full*. Since it is the basis for the emergence of everything appearing as various displays of purity and equality, and since it is present as the sole life force of the three vajras, it is called *citta*, or heart—that is, mind.

“It is the *perfection* of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Since it synthesizes and unifies all the yānas, it is the universal basis of all yānas and is therefore called *great*. [346]

“Since it transcends all the edges and corners of concepts, it is called *bindu*. Since saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are of one taste in bodhicitta, it is called *sole*.

“Since the nature of pristine awareness, the sugatagarbha, is lucid, luminous, and free of contamination, it is called *clear light*. Since it is imbued with the seven indestructible vajra qualities, it is called *vajra*. Since it abides as the distilled essence of all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, it is called *essence*.

“Since all phenomena of *saṃsāra and nirvāṇa* are fully *embraced and consummated* in the nature of the sugatagarbha, it is called the *consummation of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa*.

“Since it is free of birth, death, aging, and degeneration, it is called *youthful*. Since it does not breach the periphery of spontaneous actualization, it is called *vase*. Since it is like an accumulation and compilation of all facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities, it is called *kāya*.”

With these words, she disappeared.

With that general explanation having been presented, I shall give a more specific account of the manner in which all sublime qualities of the paths of the nine stages of *yānas* are perfected.

Śrāvakas are so called because they see that everything that appears as a self, which is the basis of grasping at “I” and “self,” is devoid of inherent nature. Pratyekabuddhas are so called because they realize all outer and inner things solely as dependently related illusory appearances. Bodhisattvas are so called because for them, the power of realizing emptiness arises in the nature of compassion, effortlessly subsuming all aspects of skillful means and wisdom. [347]

The sublime qualities of these three *yānas* that lead you away from the origins of suffering are perfect, such that the higher approaches subsume the lower ones.

In *kriyā* tantra, you please the deity by means of austerities and ritual purifications. In *upāya* tantra, you achieve *siddhis* by oral recitations and *samādhi*. In *yoga* tantra, there is the *yoga* of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* in which you witness the blessings of absolute space, devoid of characteristics, within the great *maṇḍala* of the *vajra*, absolute space.

All the sublime qualities and functions of these three *yānas* that evoke pristine awareness by means of austerities are perfect and complete within the single, coemergent absolute space of your own inexpressible mind, the essence of *siddhis*.

All the qualities of the father tantra, *mahāyoga*, are pure from the very beginning in the supreme *dharmakāya*, ultimate reality endowed with seven attributes, or the indivisibility of the two higher levels of truth.

In orally transmitted *anuyoga*, the son of the union of primordial being and the *maṇḍala* of spontaneously actualized primordial consciousness is great bliss, in which appearing phenomena are perfected in great purity and equality in the *maṇḍala* of *bodhicitta*.

The nature of existence of the Great Perfection is clear light, in which the precious, spontaneously actualized appearances of the ground of being [348] and phenomena naturally arise without bias or partiality in the one absolute space, which has no periphery or center. All such appearances, undifferentiated like gold and its glow, are simultaneously subsumed in the *dharmakāya*—unchanging pristine awareness, the great freedom from extremes—and the absolute space of the ground of being, the *sugatagarbha*. These individual accounts are presented simply for the sake of leading disciples stage by stage.

Teachings of Śrī Siṃha

On another occasion when I encountered the king of vidyādharas, Śrī Siṃha, I asked, “O Teacher, please show me the path of the Great Perfection.”

He replied, “The Great Perfection is the great, universal basis of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the great absolute space in which saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, and the path are perfect and complete. Knowing its mode of being is the view. Gaining mastery over this great, original, primordial ground, you awaken and expand within yourself, which is meditation that is devoid of a referent. This is like a drop of water merging with the ocean, becoming the ocean without modifying it. It is like the space inside a vase merging with the space outside it, such that it expands infinitely into space without modifying it.

“Although there is no outer or inner with respect to the ground of being and the mind, self-grasping superimposes boundaries between outer and inner. [349] Just as water in its naturally fluid state freezes solid due to currents of cold wind, likewise the naturally fluid ground of being is thoroughly established as saṃsāra by cords of self-grasping.

“Recognizing how that is so, relinquish good, bad, and neutral bodily activities, and remain like a corpse in a charnel ground, doing nothing. Likewise, relinquish the three kinds of verbal activity and remain like a mute; and also relinquish the three kinds of mental activity and rest without modification, like the autumn sky free of the three contaminating conditions. This is called *meditative equipoise*. It is also called *transcendence of the intellect*, for by relinquishing the nine kinds of activity, activities are released without doing anything, and nothing is modified by the intellect. In the context of this vital point, you will acquire great confidence within yourself.

“Moreover, at all times while moving about, sitting, shifting positions, and engaging in oral recitations and mental activities, without losing the perspective of the view, regard appearing phenomena as being like illusions. Without losing the confidence of meditation, be consciously aware of the nature of phenomena. Without allowing your conduct to become careless, properly devote yourself to the four kinds of activity. This is the natural liberation of meditation that transcends the intellect. [350]

“As for the vital point of conduct, do not go astray in your conduct due to your view, thinking that ‘Everything is emptiness, so however I behave, I will not be contaminated by faults.’ Avoid nonvirtues of the body, speech, and mind as if they were poison. Serene, subdued, and conscientious, behave as if you were entering the presence of a supreme judge.

“On the other hand, if you fixate on other virtues of the body, speech, and mind as if they were of the utmost importance, this will overwhelm the

authentic view and meditation. If you spend your whole life merely accumulating merit within saṃsāra, it will be as if you were bound with chains of gold. Without overemphasizing proper conduct at the expense of the view, be like an unconquerable snow lion standing proudly in the snow.

“Furthermore, if you follow after those who say that you must cultivate compassion in some other way, even though you have realized the view of emptiness, this will be like someone who has water but seeks moisture elsewhere, like someone who has fire but seeks warmth elsewhere, or like someone who has wind but says coolness must come from somewhere else.

“The decisive ascertainment of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as great emptiness is the unsurpassed bodhicitta—the compassion of viewing saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as displays of purity and equality. [351]

“Even though you have correctly identified and recognized the vital points and nature of the view and meditation, if you decide that this alone is sufficient and then fixate on mundane activities, it will result in wasting your life in various activities of attachment and aversion. By so doing, all your view and meditation will be overwhelmed by delusive activities of saṃsāra.

“Appearances of meditative experiences occur when your mind and consciousness shift in unprecedented ways. Pleasurable, soothing experiences of bliss propel you to rebirth as a god of the desire realm. Vivid experiences of luminosity propel you to rebirth as a god of the form realm. A nonconceptual sense of vacuity, in which awareness is withdrawn in an unconscious, blank, unmindful state like deep sleep, propels you to rebirth in the four dimensions of the formless realm. Lacking any knowledge of the view of emptiness, you may determine that the mind is empty merely in the sense that it is not established as something substantial. Resting the mind single-pointedly in this state of vacuity is a view that propels you to the peak of mundane existence and to rebirth as a god who lacks discernment.

“Moreover, outer upheavals include various apparitions appearing to your senses, such as visions of gods and demons arising as bad omens. Inner upheavals include the occurrence of various illnesses and pains in the body. Secret upheavals include random mood swings. If you are aware of the deceptive flaws of all of these and come to a decisive understanding of them, [352] they will vanish of their own accord. If you cling to their true existence and obsessively fixate on hopes and fears, they can become life threatening, resulting in psychotic episodes, fits, seizures, and so on. Succumbing to fixating on them as divine and demonic appearances causes meditative adepts to degenerate into being merely ordinary.”

With these words, he disappeared.

Teachings of Zurchung Sherap Drakpa

On yet another occasion, when I encountered Zurchung Sherap Drakpa in the Blazing Volcano Charnel Ground in the self-appearing, actual Akaniṣṭha, I asked, “O guru, please grant me practical instructions that are your heart essence expressed with few words but comprehensive meaning.”

He replied, “O you who have assembled accumulations, prayers, and karmic momentum for incalculable eons, listen! If you wish to ascend to the state of omniscient buddhahood, please your guru, with constant admiration and reverence, in all your activities. Continuously cultivate affection and pure perception regarding your friends. With heartfelt compassion for sentient beings, strive for liberation and the state of omniscience. Constantly bearing in mind the impermanence of all composite phenomena, [353] abandon mundane activities and dwell in a state of inactivity. This is the unsurpassed quintessence of all Dharmas.

“Three vital points are offering service to the sublime guru by not squandering his practical instructions; honoring your samayas without hypocrisy, as the life-principle stone of the gods and guardians; and devoting your whole life to the Dharma, so that you know there is nothing left unfinished at the time of death.

“Guarding your samayas and vows as if they were your own life force is the vital point to prevent contemplatives from degenerating into ordinary people. Cultivating contentment with regard to sensory pleasures is how to not get caught up in negative objects. Recognizing that saṃsāra has no essence is how to cut through the fixations of attachment and aversion. Recognizing that mundane activities are never finished and accomplished, that they are like lines of smoke from an incense clock, is the pith instruction for bringing activities to a close.

“First you gain knowledge in reliance upon training. Then you gain experience in your own mindstream and realization by means of investigation and analysis. But liberation is not achieved merely by such knowledge and realization, just as hunger is not satisfied if you have food but don’t eat it. Just as darkness does not appear once dawn has broken, when you have given up the nine kinds of activity, [354] you acquire stability within yourself due to the power of meditation. When there is no fragmentation of the panoramic sweep of pristine awareness, indwelling confidence is acquired within your own pristine awareness.

“Still, that by itself will not bring you to enlightenment. When phenomenal appearances have been extinguished into ultimate reality, there is an infinite expansion into the great, all-encompassing sphere of the absolute

space of phenomena, devoid of even a trace of the appearances and mindsets of saṃsāra. You have then reached the state of liberation.

“Within this experience, even the subtlest of cognitive obscurations have been utterly cleared away, and mastery is gained over great primordial consciousness that knows reality as it is and perceives the full range of phenomena. So you achieve buddhahood in the dharmakāya, which is like space, and the three kāyas arise as displays of uniform pervasiveness.

“Son of the family, the defining characteristic of the mind is ignorance of the ground of being, with concepts subject to origination and cessation emerging as its creative displays. The defining characteristic of pristine awareness is the realization of the ground of being, with a great, atemporal state of relaxation as its creative display. The ground pristine awareness is knowing the mode of existence of the ground of being. The path pristine awareness is lucid, clear consciousness, free of contamination, by which you experience ultimate reality. All-pervasive pristine awareness, in which these two aspects are simultaneously conjoined, is the Great Perfection.

“The term *mentation* refers to the consciousness that experiences all appearances that emerge as apparitions of thoughts. The term *mental consciousness* refers to the unimpeded avenue for the six objects that emerge as appearances. [355] The *ground wisdom* correctly knows the nature of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to be great emptiness. The *path wisdom* is the identification of unadulterated, open, unimpeded consciousness. The simultaneous conjunction of these two is called *pervasive wisdom*.

“The unimpeded avenue for appearing objects that emerge as sensory appearances is called *conditioned consciousness*. Thoughts that reify these appearances as things are called *karmic energies*. With the conjunction of these subtle and coarse aspects of mental consciousness, saṃsāra is thoroughly established. The *primordial consciousness that knows reality as it is* correctly knows the nature of ultimate reality, the sugatagarbha. When the mode of existence of suchness, ultimate reality, is actualized, unimpeded, all-knowing, all-cognizing awareness is the *primordial consciousness that perceives the full range of phenomena*. The uniform pervasiveness [of these two] is called the *originally pure primordial consciousness of equality*.

“An ethically neutral state results from the influence of ignorance of the ground of being. Various karmic energies move within the space of the substrate, like various dreams appearing during sleep, and this is the basis and root of the whole of saṃsāra. Within the wide-open clarity of ultimate reality, free of the extremes of conceptual elaboration—the great purity and equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—[356] all appearing phenomena are the spacious dharmakāya, Samantabhadra.

“Son of the family, all reflections of the moon and other things in water are displays of the water and are none other than water. All unmoving and moving things in the physical world and its sentient inhabitants are displays of space and are none other than space. All of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa consists of displays of the one ultimate reality and is none other than ultimate reality.

“Thus, when the great depth and luminosity of the ground dharmakāya is actualized, its essential nature is the dharmakāya, the purity and equality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; its manifest nature is the saṃbhogakāya, replete with the facets of primordial consciousness and sublime qualities; and the nirmāṇakāya is self-illuminating compassion, free of obscuring veils. Its displays are called *ultimate*.

“Ignorance of the essential nature of the originally pure ground of being is the substrate. Appearances arise from its radiance and displays of mental factors arise as its creative expressions, and they are called *relative*.

“Having recognized in this way the nature of all displays, encompassments, and uniform pervasiveness, you simply rest in ultimate reality and come to certainty in the natural abiding of great, intellect-transcending, spacious, vacuous, ineffable ultimate reality. Until great, omniscient primordial consciousness is attained, practice with intense, unflagging enthusiasm. Adhere to this supreme vital point!” [357]

With these words, he expanded into the absolute space of ultimate reality.

This text was written in response to heartfelt requests by Pema Lungtok Gyatso and Khyenrap Gyatso, two tulkus who have been connected to me over many lifetimes by their karma and prayers. I, Traktung Dūdjom Dorjé Trolö Tsal, codified this from the treasury of the vast expanse of apparitional displays. The ḍākinīs prophesied that sixty-eight sublime individuals would serve as custodians of this Dharma. By the command of the great Orgyen, this was the first occasion on which auspicious circumstances came about [for these teachings to be written down]. My own sublime son, the outstanding scholar Sönam Tenzin (Dodrup Rinpoché), carefully edited the manuscript.