A Word from Tarthang Tulku,

May the Blessings of the Buddha and Lotus Born Guru, Padma Sambhava, shower upon you who seek wisdom and truth eternal. May the lineage of the Nyingma masters inspire you towards Dharma realization.

As predicted by the Enlightened One, Buddha, the Dharma is taking roots in the West, in the hearts and minds of both men and women in all walks of life.

The glamors of the material world are shimmering as more and more people feel and understand the impermanency of all Samsaric dreams. Yet, we must also be aware of subtle delusions. To be a bright intellectual scholar is not enough to comprehend the vast mysterious teachings of Buddha. The heart must be open, fresh and one-pointed, enabling one to take practices and devotion as the discipline necessary to attain deeper understanding. It is very important to choose one path—and follow it—and not to think you can get quicker realization by choosing many paths, mixing all disciplines, ideas and theories together. You cannot succeed that way. Choose that which you feel is right for you and continue.

It is wonderful to see that, over the past three years, so many people are sincerely taking interest in Tibetan Nyingmapa teachings, and once having embarked upon the way, readily accepting the many disciplines according to our lineage. In varying degrees it has changed deeply the lives of whoever has been able to surrender in some way his ego and has often resulted in the curing of heavy sufferings, confusions and abilities to cope with daily life.

Buddha’s teachings are basically aimed at bringing peace and happiness in our daily lives, both for ourselves and others, and at developing compassion towards all living beings. We cannot isolate ourselves from the world to the extent that we cannot function anymore in society. We must learn the way to feel inspiration in all our activities and know, too, that we are traveling a road that eventually will lead to Enlightenment, and so we feel that it is very important that the Nyingma tradition be kept alive for the benefit of Mankind.

I would like to thank all those good people who, even though they may not share the same beliefs, have felt the importance of our work here in the United States and have given us much help, and my own students, whose devotion towards the Nyingma teachings has made this book available. May you all be blessed with peace and inspiration in the Dharma, and may whatever merit is acquired by this work be for the benefit and happiness of Mankind.

With Blessings of Triple Gem,

Tarthang Tulku, Rinpoche
Head Lama of the Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center
Introduction

FIRST THINGS FIRST
AN INTERVIEW WITH
TARTHANG TULKU RINPOCHE

Translations

THE VAJRA GURU MANTRA
THE TEACHING OF THE
ESSENTIAL POINT IN THREE WORDS

Philosophy

FACT AND FICTION IN
THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING
JUDGEMENT
SKILLFUL MEANS
ENTERING THE MANDALA

Practice

PRACTICE CLASSES
EARLY EXPERIENCES AT
PADMA LING
CENTER PROJECTS
WORDS FOR CRYSTAL MIRROR

Tashi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST THINGS FIRST</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN INTERVIEW WITH TARTHANG TULKU R</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN POCHE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE VAJRA GURU MANTRA</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE TEACHING OF THE ESSENTIAL</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POINT IN THREE WORDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACT AND FICTION IN THE EXPERIENCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OF BEING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. V. Guenther</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUDGEMENT</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKILLFUL MEANS</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTERING THE MANDALA</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRACTICE CLASSES</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EARLY EXPERIENCES AT PADMA LING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Shultz</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTER PROJECTS</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORDS FOR CRYSTAL MIRROR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudio Naranjo</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashi</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Crystal Mirror is the journal of the Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center and is published annually in the summer. The articles herein, except where otherwise noted, were composed by the Rinpoche and edited by Steve Tainer and Merrill Peterson. Art work by Glen Eddy. Cover: Senge-dong-chen-ma, the secret aspect of Padma Sambhava. Frontispiece: Amitabha, the Buddha of Boundless Light.
Gesar of Ling—the great Tibetan Bodhisattva-king, a manifestation of Padma Sambhava of whom it is predicted that he will return to the west during the Kāli-Yuga.
With the current growth of man's power over both his world and his fellow men, it is particularly desirable that this power be tempered with an understanding of man's nature, of what is possible and of what is appropriate for him. The theory and the practice of Vajrayana Buddhism are concerned in the most incisive and practical way possible with such understanding and are therefore capable of making significant contributions to the resolution of man's present problems and the realization of his potential for future growth. Attainment of these benefits necessarily depends upon an accurate understanding or, at the least, an open-minded consideration of the nature of the Vajrayana and its methods. Misrepresentations and imitations of Tibetan Buddhism do not possess its constructive power and may themselves do considerable harm. Nor do preconceptions and expectations pave the way to understanding—in this case they too might best be set aside.

The unprecedented development and practice of the Vajrayana in Tibet was perhaps largely due to the complete isolation of that country for many centuries, an ideal condition for undistracted devotion and sustained efforts on a large scale. Unfortunately, this very same isolation is probably responsible for some inapplicable attitudes and beliefs regarding the Vajrayana, which have long been commonplace. The unfamiliarity of Buddhists in some countries with the Tibetan form of Dharma has led them to distrust it, imagining that it somehow derives from shamanism or consists in the utterance of magical incantations. On the other hand, typical Western reactions either take the form that the Vajrayana is some extreme form of quietism, asceticism or renunciation, or that it is substantially the same as some contemporary Western discipline, theory, or attitude about the proper way to live. In the face of such an obviously incompatible set of notions, we can only say that the Vajrayana is dedicated to the development in man of the highest possible wisdom, and to a thorough-going incorporation of that wisdom into every aspect of life, rejecting nothing, obscuring nothing (as thinking in such terms as 'magic' tends to do). It teaches disci-
pline, selflessness, and moderation, but it is not asceticism. It emphasizes the essential purity of all things, but without advocating either hedonism or the indolent philosophy that since everything is already perfect, work toward self-development is unnecessary. People of every temperament and level of ability can practice and benefit from the Vajrayana, but it is not some kind of "popularization" or simplified course of study. It has great power to cut through all the possible obstacles to enlightenment, but it does not pretend to be an 'easy' path. It is a very pure and ancient form of Buddhism, transmitted at the cost of tremendous sacrifice by some of the greatest men of the age, from the home of Buddhism in India directly to Tibet, a country whose indigenous culture was so simple that the original Dharma could be preserved and fostered without any distortion or loss of essence resulting from cultural assimilation. Buddhism is a very subtle doctrine, which cannot be appraised or appreciated without a good deal of sincere and intelligent study. This is particularly true of the Vajrayana which, while including and proceeding from the disciplines of all other schools of Buddhism, represents the ultimate expression of Buddhism and the highest development of its theory and practice. There is nothing to be gained by superficial analyses of it or by identifying it with something else, and indiscriminate attempts to modify it may only leave an empty and powerless shell.

Although the Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center in Berkeley does not and cannot claim to fully possess the vast knowledge of the Vajrayana or to be its official representative, the Center is concerned with helping to create the appropriate conditions and foundation for the successful transmission of the Vajrayana to America. It is for the realization of this foundation in themselves that students in the Center undertake textual study and meditative discipline, and it is also to this end that the Center will endeavor to do what it can, through open seminars and other means, to make this Dharma accessible to interested members of the public.

Vajrayana practices develop an insight that penetrates to the heart of every sort of problem and situation, just as truly for the layman or family man as for someone whose interests are primarily religious. The training in psychology and epistemology, and the many varieties of sadhana practice, are productive of very high attainment, primarily because of the flexibility of this training, its sensitivity to the needs of people of every sort of aptitude and inclination. Many of the disciplines and ceremonies conducted at the Berkeley Center are directed primarily to the training of teachers, but there remain forms of meditation practice that are quite well suited to the needs of members of the general public, and which Rinpoche and the Center would be very happy to make available to serious inquirers. Meditation, if properly guided, is not a "trip" or a hobby, and is not set apart from, or in opposition to, the enactment of a vigorous and meaningful life in the contemporary world. It proceeds from what might be called the very center of life, and makes it possible to unerringly dwell in and act from that center.
We invite those who sincerely seek wisdom and the benefit of Mankind to determine for themselves the nature and extent of the value of Vajrayana Buddhism. Neither this journal nor our other publications and programs for the public could possibly suffice to reveal more than the smallest part of the Vajrayana's great depth, but we hope they will at least encourage and facilitate explorations of it.
An Interview with Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche

Spring 1972

... American young people have a true heart.
There is sincerity and there is much interest
in truth and spiritual life.

Crystal Mirror: As a Tibetan lama, one of the first teachers of Tibetan Buddhist practice in America, a husband and father of two children, an advisor and friend for a number of people, you have many difficulties to meet and many responsibilities, from the spiritual to the financial. Could you describe what a typical day is like for you?

Rinpoche: Well... We get up about 6 o'clock and then practice starts six-thirty. We practice prostrations, at the same time chanting. Also we meditate. Silent meditation over, we go to breakfast. After breakfast each individual has various jobs and practices. I meet with maybe 4 or 5 students every morning, up to 8:30. Then I go upstairs and maybe talk with family. I sometimes read or rest about a half-hour. I come back downstairs about 10 o'clock and sometimes go to the library or see to the office, books and records, answer letters...then lunch.

Sometimes visitors from far away come unexpectedly or some days we have ritual ceremonies. On weekends are the practice classes or seminars. And usually each day there are emotional problems, and business, financial problems, and I need to talk to many people plus family activities, and then...(laughing) children. Sometimes physically exhausting. So I don't need to leave the Center very often because my job is mostly here...that answers your question?

Crystal Mirror: Yes.
Vacations

_Crystal Mirror:_ Is there anything that you have been wanting to do since you came here that you haven't had time for so far?

_Rinpoche:_ Not much. I haven't had much vacation, but I don't think that's too important. It doesn't much bother me. I know about vacations and that kind of activity. When on vacation I very much like it, but I also know the end result before I go. After vacationing for one month the pleasure is gone, the happiness is just gone. But before I go I recognize this, so why should I spend this useless time?... better I do something: all the time fight, that's like...(laughing)....

Progress

_Crystal Mirror:_ Are you satisfied with the progress you and the Center have made here—are your efforts having the result you hoped for?

_Rinpoche:_ Yes. I think progress is quite good. Of course, there are many problems and obstacles...people have many doubts and dissatisfactions that I must deal with. And that's very difficult because the attitudes and concepts here are not the same. Before I can help someone, he must express his problem precisely—then I can do something, can draw a very clear picture of the situation. But this takes lots of time and talking, and there are language difficulties. There are many emotional and personality problems, and when these are settled, there are always others—financial and house problems, sickness—always something. This is a pretty big job. We have sixty people here, and there's much to do. Sometimes I get physically and emotionally tired...but if I rest and eat well, then I am again strong. It's all right, you know, because whatever efforts I make now should all be for Dharma. I didn't do as much with my Gurus as I had wished to—if I can't continue my own studies then it is best that whatever merit my body, my spirit, my life have be dedicated to the Dharma. If I can help people a little then I am happy, because I realize that fortune, name and material success are not very important. I've seen many sides of these. My family and all my relatives in Tibet were very wealthy and prominent people. My father was a very famous lama. One other lama and I shared all the responsibilities of my monastery. As I became separated from these things, they all became quite dream-like. I left my home to study in Kham for six or seven years...most of my Gurus were there. Many things happened to me during this time. Some of my Gurus were very wrathful men—their training was extremely strict. Food was scarce, I was often very hungry and alone in frightening places. I met many different kinds of
people...sometimes they were very kind and helpful, sometimes they were bandits who took everything away. Sometimes I had many servants to help me, sometimes I was alone or completely unrecognized by everyone.

I travelled great distances on foot and had to deal with many officials in various places. And after being alone for so long, suddenly all the Tibetan refugees came...we were practically a whole nation of people together. There were many problems in adjusting to the situation in India, the new language and customs. We established the university, set up jobs and began publications...we tried to encourage the young lamas in this difficult time. People were dying or starving...some were very disturbed because they had lost their family and country and fortune—they had been through many disasters. I stayed in India about ten years, and then travelled through Europe and today am here. I believe I've had much experience of Samsara and am therefore not too materially oriented. I am only interested in helping people as much as I can—this kind of benefit seems more substantial to me, and gives me the only pleasure I seek.

... As I became separated from these things, they all became quite dream-like
Drugs and Dharma

Crystal Mirror: The use of a wide variety of drugs has already caused many changes in our society. Would you comment on this trend?

Rinpoche: Many comments... Even some spiritual people say drugs are wonderful, like teacher. They say because white people are so rationalistic, the only way to approach the Dharma is LSD. Well...I feel that in following the Dharma, particularly Vajrayana, the body is very sacred, the speech is very sacred, and the mind is very sacred; like three jewels, even though we don't recognize. Chemical reactions make changes; Vajrayana requires the pure nature. So there's no drugs in Vajrayana.

Many students talk to me and say, "...Well, if I didn't take LSD, I might not be here." Maybe true, that's maybe true. Anyway, since they joined the Center, if I have the power, I say don't take drugs.

In some aspects maybe drugs bring a little understanding, more liberalness, openness, friendliness. But those who take drugs, they are...I'm sorry...they're lost, they're desperate. They cannot take care of themselves; the mind is like "ah-ah" beaten with all kinds of pressures and they cannot survive without drugs. Many of the young people are lost; they have not very good friends. Their family does not take care of them, and society doesn't care about them; too much individuality, struggles, power and all kinds of problems. They take all kinds of drugs to take this away.

But my advice is, once someone has experience, they may have realization and not need to continue taking drugs, especially one who understands some meditation. If he has faith, that will take care of him. For instance, some of our students took many heavy drugs, such as heroin, for many years; now there's no problem...even Western medicine cannot cure. I think more and more trust in Dharma is very good... This is my comment.

Sexual Attitudes

Crystal Mirror: Do you think that prevailing sexual attitudes in this country cause special problems for Dharma study?

Rinpoche: Yes...Sexual problems are very much a problem here, as compared to Tibet. But I think the young people have some sort of understanding, experience. They have quite a lot of experience.

Sex is mostly a mental problem, not really a physical problem. If you create more images or ideas, that makes more excitement, then sexual desires are created. If you control your mind and fantasies, not much sexual desire arises; or likewise if you have very much experience.
Some countries have a very big problem, more than America, because they cannot have sex until age 21. Then after marriage you can have it, but marriage is within the family; you cannot have a love-marriage. But in America they go here and there, all different times, many changes—all kinds they have tasted. So they have not much fascination. In some countries they have tremendous fascination—"How is it?" But someone who has tasted, maybe not so. Sex is getting old and sometimes you get tired.

Crystal Mirror: Do people ever think you're a demigod?
Rinpoche: What do you mean 'demigod'? ... like a demon?
Crystal Mirror: No...
Rinpoche: You mean like God?
Crystal Mirror: Yes.
Rinpoche: Well, some people may have that kind of vision, internal dream. They may think many things, but that's their own fantasy.

Crystal Mirror: At what point in a person's spiritual progress does he really need a guru, and why?
Rinpoche: Some people who have attained realization through something like art, music or possibly drugs, who have become totally liberated may not necessarily need a guru. But those people are very rare. Most people though, I think, can benefit very much from instruction. Traditionally within Buddhism a guru is usually necessary.

But a qualified guru is difficult to find. In Tibet they say, "Do.med.yul.la.kyuk.gyu; na.do.mu.pen.ka.med."... If dogs are barking and threatening you and there are no rocks available, then you throw clods of dirt or whatever you find. So, even though a properly qualified guru is not existing, we need to pretend. That's the situation.

Crystal Mirror: You are trying to establish a firm basis for Vajrayana Buddhism in this country. How compatible is this form of Buddhism with America's culture and people?

Rinpoche: Buddhism was first introduced into this country from Japan. Maybe ten years ago it was very popular. But many people told me Americans are now more interested in Vajrayana.

I think Vajrayana has much color and exciting teachings; philosophy, rituals and much creative activity. It seems Americans like that, particularly the young people. So I think it can very possibly work here.
This is a time characterized by many social, economical and political problems and it sometimes seems futile to attempt finding any solution. Do you agree with this?

Rinpoche: Yes... All these social and political problems are based on, I think, human suffering; such as desires and ego struggles, individual emotions, ignorance... these principally. I don’t think that politically or socially we can improve the situation. But I believe that individually each individual needs to strive to understand and communicate with other people, to share. Such as, here in this house we have less expenses than if we lived as individuals separately, and more important is communication and understanding each other, not fighting.

Politically... well I think it is important to keep friendship and to accept, like among friends and families, within groups or communes. For instance, if someone is very hurt or emotional one day, if the moodiness is very high, then he needs to be given consideration because he is like that—that day. You need to accept him that way, to understand...

Politically we cannot make everything perfect, one person cannot do this, unless maybe he is a great Bodhisattva. Maybe somebody has a good idea, but when trying to solve the problem, the solution is not quite right, still something is missing... because we are human, so we cannot give the answer. Basically as individuals we can live simply, without confusions; understanding and satisfaction—that’s how life should be: That’s as I believe....

Crystal Mirror: You have been in a number of countries. Why did you choose to teach in America, and specifically Berkeley, California?

Rinpoche: I have been in Paris, England, Scotland, New York and various states. Well... I chose to stay in America.

Many people don’t like America. They say it’s like a child, a new country, materialistic, pollution and big problems, a violent country. They say Americans are only interested in sex and dope. But I feel that Americans—particularly young people, I found, American young people have a true heart. There is sincerity and there is much interest in truth and spiritual life. So, I have much hope.

Tibet no longer exists, so the traditions, teachings as passed through many generations, the translations, the work of very, very many years... this is almost lost, it needs to be preserved. I think Tibetan Buddhism is very suited to America, because Americans need Dharma; there is suffering and dissatisfaction.
They are looking for a happier life and asking questions. I think the Buddha Dharma can be the answer.

Before I first came here no one knew the Vajra Guru Mantra, or had heard of Padma Sambhava. But since I came to America there are lots, I may say hundreds of people praying the Vajra Guru Mantra. Also they understand what Vajrayana means, very basically. So my most encouraging experience has been in America. Particularly, this area has, in some ways, many radicals, many terrible things happening; but on the other hand, there are lots of smart people, and many open people. Some may ask why do you come to the worst place, California—particularly Berkeley? But I think it is important that I am here. The experience—we've been three years here—is all right; I believe everything is fine; I think that's O.K....
The Vajra Guru Mantra

Excerpt of a translation from the Tibetan

Introduction

The Buddhism of Tibet is remarkable for the great variety of practices it offers to those who elect to travel the path to liberation from the sufferings of human existence. Among these various practices the use of *mantra* forms an important part; so much so, in fact, that Tibetan Buddhism is known as Mantryana, the mantra-vehicle. Properly used under competent guidance, *mantra* constitutes an effective instrument for dispelling the ignorance on which our anxious lives are founded and leads the practitioner to a realization of the true nature of the mind. *Mantra* is not a form of magical incantation, but rather a scientific method of bringing the mind into harmony with high levels of awareness and of reopening avenues of communication which otherwise remain closed.

The *Vajra Guru Mantra*, which is the subject of this text, is the *mantra* of the illustrious founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Padmasambhava. It is deemed especially beneficial for these troubled times as it has great power to calm the tensions and anxieties so common to our age. If, sitting quietly, one concentrates one's complete attention on one's own voice slowly chanting the *mantra*, the worry and distress which continually enturbulate the mind will gradually subside and one will slowly be suffused with a deep calm. With practice skill will be acquired to extend the period of peaceful concentration, thus creating a respite from fears, doubts and other painful mental distractions. As this serenity is developed and expanded, the mind will gradually attain the placidity of the surface of a still pool. From this calmness awareness will arise and the self-nature of mind will be realized.

To traverse this path, an element of faith is required. Not a blind, uncritical acceptance but an openness, a willingness to search and discover for oneself that wisdom which has been maintained and transmitted by a continuous tradition of superior minds extending back thousands of years. Buddhism has always maintained the self-evidence of its truths to those who will seek within themselves critically, persistently and intensely. Examination is the path whereby realization will be attained. The power of *mantra* will be revealed to him who with patience, sincerity and trust follows the time-honored teachings.
Homage to the Lama, the Yidam and the Dakini

The Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal spoke:

I, Yeshe Tsogyal, who am a mere woman, having made an offering of a vast mandala outer, inner and secret to my Guru, now make this request. O Master Padma Sambhava, please grant to us, we who are the people of Tibet, your unending aid and assistance in this present life and in all future lives. There has never been before, nor will there in the future ever come forth again a boon as great as yourself. I have no doubt that even I who am a mere woman shall be given your sadhana which is itself like a pure and precious nectar.

I see that there will come a time in the distant future when human beings will possess fickle intellects and ever changing opinions. They will be very excitable, impatient, and excessively prone to violence. They will cling to heretical views regarding the Holy Dharma. In particular, they will slander and belittle the Doctrine of the Supremely Secret Mantras. At that time, for all sentient beings, the three great evils of disease, poverty, and warfare with terrifying weapons will greatly increase. In particular, there will come a time of terrible suffering for Tibet and the Tibetan people when troubles, just as when a nest of ants is broken open the ants swarm out, will spread with great devastation across the three regions of China, Tibet and Central Asia.

You, O Guru, have proclaimed many skillful means for curing these ills. But for the people of those future times there will be no time nor opportunity for the practice of sadhana. Only a very few will even have the desire to practice. On every hand disturbances and distractions will be
Yeshe Tsogyal—the princess who became Padma Sambhava’s foremost disciple at the time of the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet.

exceedingly strong and powerful. Human beings will be unable to agree among themselves. Even the materials necessary for puja and the preparations for sadhana practice will be incomplete. In such evil times, it will be extremely difficult to avert or reverse those trends. In such times as those, O Guru, if one should rely solely on your sadhana which is the Vajra Guru Mantra, what benefit and advantage shall come from this? For the sake of those future beings with inferior intellects who are devoid of deep spiritual understanding please tell us.

Then the Great Master spoke:

O faithful daughter, what you have said is very true. But in such future periods of time as those, it is still certain that from practice there shall come forth benefits both immediate and ultimate for all sentient beings. I shall conceal the eighteen kinds of Termas, such as earth-treasures, water-treasures, rock-treasures, sky-treasures and so on, which will contain countless numbers of sadhanas and secret teachings. In those evil times, the skillful methods of those who possess good karma and the auspicious coincidence of events (rten 'brel 'grig) are exceedingly difficult to accomplish. Such times are characterized by the exhaustion of whatever merit sentient beings may possess.
Nevertheless, if at such places as the twenty-four Great Places of Pilgrimage, or in the temples and villages, or on the peak of a great mountain, or on the shore of a great river or in the uplands and lowlands which are inhabited by gods, demons and ghosts, should anyone who possesses the secret vows and mantras, or monks possessing the vows of the Sangha, or even a layman of devout faith or a woman of good character, having intensively cultivated the intention to attain enlightenment, should any of them be able to repeat the essence of the Vajra Guru Mantra one hundred times or one thousand or ten thousand or one hundred thousand or one million or one hundred million times or as many times as possible, the resulting power and benefits shall be inconceivable to the human mind. And in all the directions of space—disease, poverty, warfare, hostile armies, civil strife, famine, dire prophecies and ill omens—all these evils shall be averted. In every direction, the good fortune of healthy cattle, abundant crops and rain in its season shall come. In one’s present life, in all future lives and in the narrow difficult passage of the Bardo, to the superior person I shall speak to him in his dreams. And it is certain that they shall, having perfected gradually the paths and stages, enter into the land of Camaradvipa as Vidyadhara both male and female.

If one but repeats the mantra uninterruptedly one hundred times a day, he will come into the thoughts of others appearing in a favourable fashion. There will come to him effortlessly abundant food, wealth and good fortune. If one repeats the mantra as many as one thousand times or ten thousand times and so on, he shall gain control over the minds of others, and it is certain that he shall attain power and blessing. If one repeats the mantra one hundred thousand or ten million times or more, he will accumulate all the power of the Three Worlds and gain control over the Three Realms of Existence. Gods and demons shall become his servants and he shall attain without any impediment whatsoever the four Magical Rites. He is then able to help immeasurably all sentient beings as much as he desires. If one is able to count as many as thirty million or seventy million, then all the Buddhas of the three times of past, present and future shall always be with him. Indeed, he shall be identical with me. All the gods, rakshasas and fierce mountain deities shall promise to listen to his commands and obey him, accomplishing whatever he entrusts to them.

The superior person will in this very life attain the Rainbow Body. The intermediate person will on the occasion of the Chi-khai Bardo realize the clear light of self-illumination (‘od-gsal). Even the inferior person, once having seen my face in the Bardo, will be delivered from the arising of appearances (which normally appear there), and having been reborn in Camaradvipa, he shall give immeasurable aid to all sentient beings.

The Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal further requested:

O Great Master, we thank you for such a great boon of vast and immeasurable power and benefit. But for the sake of future sentient beings,
please expound briefly in *sutra* fashion the immeasurable power and benefit of the commentary on the mystic syllables of the *Mantra* of Guru Padma.

Then the Great Master spoke:

O daughter of a noble family, that which is called the *Vajra Guru Mantra* is not only my name, but represents the very heart of vital essence of the *Yidams*, the four types of Tantras, the Nine Vehicles and the eighty-four thousand sections of the Dharma. This *Mantra* is complete and perfect for it is the very essence of all the Buddhas of the three times, of all the *Gurus*, *Devatas*, *Dakinis* and *Dharmapalas*.

If one should ask what marks the cause of this perfection, then let him listen well and fix it firmly in his mind. Let him repeat the mantra again and again. Let him write it down. Then let him instruct and explain its meaning to all sentient beings of future ages.¹

**OM AH HUM**

**VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM**

As for *Om*, *Ah* and *Hum*, they are the supreme essence of the Body, Speech and Mind. *Vajra* is the supreme essence of the *Vajra* Family. *Guru* is the supreme essence of the *Jewel* Family. *Padma* is the supreme essence of the *Lotus* Family. *Siddhi* is the supreme essence of the *Karma* Family. As for *Hum*, it is the supreme essence of the *Tathagata* Family.

**OM AH HUM**

**VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM**

As for *Om*, it is the perfection of the *Sambhogakaya* which embodies the Buddhas of the Five Families. *Ah* is the perfection complete and unchanging of the *Dharmakaya*. *Hum* is the perfection in the space before one of the *Guru*, who is the *Nirmanakaya*. *Vajra* is the perfection of the divine assembly of *Herukas*. *Guru* is the perfection of the divine assembly of *Guru Vidyadharas*. *Padma* is the perfection of the divine assembly of *Dakinis* and *Shakinis*. *Siddhi* is the vital energy (*prana*, *srog*) of all the Wealth Gods and Treasure Lords. *Hum* is the vital energy of all the *Dharmapalas* without exception.

¹ The drawings which follow are the eight manifestations of the Guru from wood blocks cut in Derge, East Tibet.
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

As for Om, Ah and Hum, they are the vital energies of the three types of Tantras (Father, Mother and Nondual, respectively). Vajra is the vital energy of the two sections called the Vinaya and the Sutras. Guru is the vital energy of the two Abhidharma and Kriya Tantra. Padma is the vital energy of the two Upaya Tantra and Yoga Tantra. Siddhi is the vital energy of the two Mahayoga and Anuyoga. Hum is the vital energy of the Atiyoga.
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, all obscurations which derive from the Three Poisons will be purified. By Vajra all obscurations which derive from hatred will be purified. By Guru all obscurations which derive from pride will be purified. By Padma all obscurations which derive from greed will be purified. By Siddhi all obscurations which derive from envy will be purified. By Hum all obscurations which derive from the defilements (klesas) will be purified.

Guru
Urgyan Dorje Chang
"The Almighty Guru from the Land of Urgyan"
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, one will obtain the Dharma \( \text{ka} \)ya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. By Vajra one will obtain the Mirror-like Gnosis (\( jn\)ana). By Guru one will obtain the Gnosis of Sameness. By Padma one will obtain the Discriminating Gnosis. By Siddhi one will obtain the All-Accomplishing Gnosis. By Hum one will perfectly attain all that derives from Gnosis.

Guru
Padma Sambhava

"The Guru who has Issued from a Lotus"
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, one will control gods, demons and men. By Vajra
one will control such hostile spirits as Gandharvas and fire spirits. By Guru
one will control such hostile spirits as Yama and the Rakshasas. By Padma
one will control such hostile spirits as water sprites and air spirits. By Siddhi
one will control such hostile spirits as Yakshas and powerful demons. By
Hum one will control such hostile spirits as Planetary Genii and Earth-Lords.

Guru
Shakya Senge
"The Guru who is the Lion of the Shakya Clan"
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, one will attain the Six Perfections. By Vajra one will realize all the magical rites which are peaceful. By Guru one will realize all the magical rites which increase prosperity. By Padma one will realize all the magical rites of overpowering enchantment. By Siddhi one will realize all the magical rites of worldly success. By Hum one will realize all the magical rites which are terrifying.
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, one will counteract the magical influences of both Lamas and Bonpos. By Vajra one will counteract the hostile influences of the nemesis of the gods. By Guru one will counteract the hostile influences of gods, rakshasas and nature deities. By Padma one will counteract the hostile influences of minor worldly deities and demons. By Siddhi one will counteract the hostile influences of Nagas and Earth-Lords. By Hum one will counteract all the hostile influences of gods, demons and men.

Guru
Dorje Drolod
"The Immutable Guru with Loose-hanging Stomach"
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, one will vanquish the militant hosts of the Five Poisons. By Vajra one will vanquish the militant hosts which derive from hatred. By Guru one will vanquish the militant hosts which derive from pride. By Padma one will vanquish the militant hosts which derive from greed. By Siddhi one will vanquish the militant hosts which derive from envy. By Hum one will vanquish the militant hosts of gods, demons and men.

Guru
Senge Dra-dog

"The Guru who Teaches with the Voice of a Lion"
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, one will obtain the siddhis of body, speech and mind. By Vajra one will obtain the siddhis of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (Yi-dam zhi-kbro). By Guru one will obtain the siddhis of the Vidyadhara Guru. By Padma one will obtain the siddhis of the Dakinis and Dharmapalas. By Siddhi one will obtain siddhis both ordinary and supreme. By Hum one will obtain all conceivable siddhis.

Guru
Padma Gyalpo

"The Lotus-King Guru who is Untouched by Faults"
OM AH HUM
VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM

By Om, Ah and Hum, one will transmigrate to the Primordial Realm. By Vajra one will be reborn in the Realm of Manifest Happiness which is in the eastern direction. By Guru one will be reborn in the Fortunate Realm which is in the southern direction. By Padma one will be reborn in the Realm of Great Bliss which is in the western direction. By Siddhi one will be reborn in the Realm of Infinite Peace which is in the North. By Hum one will be reborn in the Realm of Emptiness which is in the Center.

Guru
Lodan Chog-sed

"The Guru Possessing Wisdom and Best Desires"
The Teaching of the Essential Point in Three Words

Homage to Manjushri

The understanding of commoners is remiss.
Recognition itself is not disclosed by words.
Upon reverting one's self from allurement, grasp the refinement of task.
Doing thus, the facticity of mind is recognized.
Thought-formation is not bound by tenseness.
Likewise the fundamental continuity is self-contained,
Since action, exertion and the matrix of purposeful grasping do not exist.
Doing thus is the continuing meditation.
Because the realm of voidness is like the clouds,
All the various thought-formation are swells
When complacent through lack of benefit or injury.
Doing thus is the self-liberation.
This is the teaching of the essential point in three words.
By experiencing inside, one understands.

Set down by Mi-pham Nam-par Gyal-wa
on the third day of the month in the Fire-Monkey year.
Herein is Contained
An Explanation of
The Teaching of the Essential Point in Three Words

Homage to the Lama.

“The Teaching of the Essential Point in Three Words” sets down in very concise form the means by which self-liberation is attained. This is explained in three parts: the ground, the path and the fruit.

The ground is threefold. One must realize that the understanding, knowledge and teachings of ordinary, worldly people do not indicate truth. They are a deviation from truth. One must realize that awareness cannot be revealed or recognized in or through language—that recognition of reality is through experience. One must realize that in order to gain experience, attraction towards worldly pleasures and concerns must be abandoned and one must perfect the work of gaining liberation. Upon accomplishing these, one gains insight into the fact of mind recognition. The essence of the ground is the facticity of mind.

The path is threefold. One must not become tense, tight or bound but remain loose, calm and free when thoughts appear, when disturbances arise, when discursive thought occurs. One must continue unwaveringly because the fundamental continuity cannot be disturbed, cannot be affected by thought-formation and, like an island, is self-contained and timeless. One must realize the nonexistence of deeds, of effortful trying and of the source from which come all determined attempts to seize upon and hold any thoughts. Upon doing so one learns the method of prolonged meditation. The essence of the path is the absence of the matrix of purposeful grasping.

The fruit is threefold. One recognizes that the emptiness of reality is not really different from the cloudedness of thought-formation. One recognizes that the process of thought-formation is like waves in the ocean. One recognizes indifference to these waves, knowing the mind to be empty of real entities. Thus the robber-like thoughts find nothing to steal and the helpful thoughts find no one
to assist. Whereupon is found release from the cause of Samsara; thus is attained the great self-liberation. The essence of the fruit is self-liberation.

Such is the teaching of the crucial point in three words. Those alone who gain recognition through experience can truly understand the great mystery.

May all beings attain the great self-liberation.

By the grace of Tarthang Tulku, this has been completed on the Full Moon in the first month of the Iron-Pig year.
It is customary to contrast fact with fiction and, in so doing, to introduce and perpetuate an arbitrary evaluation which is rather detrimental since it favours muddled thinking, based on wishfulness, instead of clarity of vision. The persuasiveness of the words 'fact' and 'factual' is due to the failure to distinguish between 'immediately apprehended' fact, independent of concepts, and 'described' fact, brought under concepts and presented in propositions. To use propositions is to have a theory formulated through them, and having a theory makes one prone to indulge in fancies and fictions. Thus, to confuse theory or 'described' fact with 'immediately apprehended' fact, because of the magic that issues from the word 'fact', is a serious error which, unfortunately, is very common. Strictly speaking, 'immediately apprehended' fact can only be immediately experienced and known as such. Words cannot convey it; at their best they can merely point to it and stimulate us to find in our own immediate experience what the words are intended to point but. It is here that the limitation of language is most conspicuous, because most of our words refer to the postulates of common sense rather than to immediately apprehended facts.\(^1\)

It would seem that there is general agreement that immediacy forms the basis of all subsequent inquiry. What is not always noted is that this immediacy is paradoxical in nature; it is both something—a presence, and nothing—not a presence of some thing. In other words, the presence comes to our observation and immediate inspection as a presentation, not as a presence or presentation of some possibility or some thing which may be said to subsist apart from its presentation, but as a presence which is the possibility, the something itself. Moreover, in the same way as presence is not a presence of something, it is also not a presence for somebody, because presence encompasses both awareness in itself and awareness

---

1. The belief of common sense in tables, chairs, mountains and trees existing as public, material, external objects continuing to exist even if nobody is observing them, is a mere belief which is not based on immediate experience or pure fact. For a further discussion of this problem see F. S. C. Northrop, *The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities* (Meridian Books, New York), pp. 40 ff.
Experience of Being

of something by someone, the someone being as much an abstraction or description as the something. Because of the paradoxical nature of presence we can focus our attention either on the something—the presence, or on the nothing—the-not-being-some-thing. The danger is that, in so doing, instead of staying with the presence, we approach either aspect with abstract conceptual presuppositions and slip them underneath or behind the presence and pretend that it is now the appearance of this or that, or that we dismiss it as ‘non-existent’. In either case we merely construct a theory to suit our whims which have little to do with the immediately present, for ‘existence’ and ‘non-existence’ belong to postulationally proposed and only indirectly and deductively verified theory.

Conceptual knowledge tends to block our initial vision by introducing an element of restriction, deliberation and falsity that militates against the completeness of true vision which is forever fresh, vibrant, emotionally and spiritually satisfying, supremely beautiful, and which carries with it a feeling of absolute freedom. Vision, properly understood, does not mean to see something behind or apart from what is presented to it, but to see ‘what there is’ as valuable in its own right and, for that reason, also intrinsically good, beautiful and desirable. In other words, terms such as goodness, beauty, and even completeness are not to be understood as judgments and hence as fictions, but as pointers to something that can be experienced and of which these terms are but feeble attempts at description. Emphasis on the immediately apprehendable and on immediate experience as the bed-rock on which we begin to build our earthly existence has important consequences, for we can go through life as corpses shrouded in the fictions of our own making (which are therefore also our unmaking) or as vibrant personalities radiating life and making everyone ‘feel good’ in our presence.

The following text\(^2\) by ’Jigs-med gling-pa illustrates the importance of immediate experience which, in an attempt to convey something of its dynamic character, is spoken of as ground, path and goal inseparably related to, if not identical with, each other:

\(^2\) Gnas-lugs tshig-kang.
The Ground as presence is (in its presence) independent of propositions, and the presentation of it is to be intrinsically aware (of it), which is the existential experience of being (chos-kyi sku, dharmakaya). The Way has never been blocked by purposiveness and effort (of action), and its openness is the absolute freedom (of being).

The Goal is not something that can be reduced (to some postulate or other) but is the starting-point (of our existence), and when it is present in its totality it is relaxation and repose; when it has freely risen it is the stirring of intrinsic awareness; when (as) intrinsic awareness it stays with the percept, it is the wider horizon of meaning; and when it disappears as something to be looked at, it is the primordial reach of Being.

Presence in genuineness is the existential experience of being (dharmakaya); its emergence as cognition is the enjoyment of being through empathy (sambhogakaya); and when presence and (its) flash-like conception are not two entities there is manifested being (nirmanakaya), and this is called 'intrinsic awareness (through) the three patterns of existential experience.' Not to believe in the presence as something but letting it be; not to concretize the flash-like ideas which tend to be arresting, and not to follow up conceptually (this) freedom (of being) which is radiant with light, is called 'spontaneity (of) the three patterns of existential experience.'

Vision is independent of apathy and excitement about 'non-being'; contemplation is to be conceived in 'non-being'; and enactment has nothing to do with the concretization of 'non-being'. (All three aspects together refer to what) is called the integrated personality.

The free-rising concepts are (the manifestation of) intrinsic awareness and to preserve the continuity of this awareness is to lose the wider horizon in the crucible (of the knowable). If it is termed a post-concentrative awareness it is a fixation, but not the resolution of conceptuality in the freedom of the existential experience of being. It has to be eradicated forthwith and completely. In intrinsic awareness which has always been independent of propositions, such designations as vision, contemplation, enactment as well as the belief in (them) being something, disappear completely.

Nothing more is necessary than to let one's cognitive capacity alone and not to stray from it, (that is) not to become a partisan to positive or negative or indeterminate ideas and not to know how to distinguish between the rising (of ideas) and (their) freedom (of being).

There is then no need to have one's doubts dispelled by seeking out hundreds of sages, thousands of saints, ten thousands of interpreters and scholars, hundred thousands of instructors, and millions of learned treatises.
The central theme of this text, small but rich in content, is the experience of Being and how to retrieve it out of the maze of fictions in which man tends to lose himself. By Being we understand that which 'really' is, not that which 'seemingly' is or that which appears to us and makes us harbour opinions (not knowledge) about it. Being is not 'something', that can be contrasted with or related to some other 'thing', it is ever present as pure fact about which, as has been shown beforehand, nothing can be said. Being as pure fact (ngo-bo) is present or comes to us as an actuality (rang-bzhin), to which we respond (thugs-rje), not in the sense that Being unites 'what there is' into a unity of being, nor as letting that which is proceed out of it as if first there is 'Being' and then there are 'bits' of being. Being is always present in its totality and any modification as 'being this or that' does not imply any loss of Being. Being 'neither increases nor diminishes' is a recurrent statement. As pure fact Being is synonymous with Awareness, and the awareness of Being (rig-pa) differs from the subjective opinions (sems) that deal with such postulates as 'existence' and 'essence' and attempt to make Being either 'causally dependent' or 'existentially dependent' on the subject, thus falsifying the pure fact of Being by reducing it to to some fiction and taking the ego as the centering point around which the perceptual and cognitive experience is organized. The pure fact of Being and its presence in and as the awareness of it is termed 'dharmakaya' when emphasis is on the experience itself, and 'ground' (gzhi), when the pure fact becomes the topic of discourse; for, as we would say, we start from 'facts' (but unfortunately end up with fictions).

It is from this idea of Being as pure fact that the idea of freedom acquires meaning. We will not be able to grasp this meaning when we allow ourselves to conceive of Being as having a static quality. In view of the fact that Being as pure fact implies the awareness of it and that awareness is an act, Being can be said to be both static (as fact) and dynamic (as its awareness). It is in this latter aspect that Being becomes synonymous with freedom. That is to say, freedom is the 'way' of Being, and, while the way may be terminated by coming to a dead end which is the fictions that block our vision and prevent us from going onwards, this termination does not affect the freedom of Being, but only the effect of its operation. Although we may use the phrase 'coming to a dead-end', we must be cautious not to take it literally. Being, which we have seen is not something that can be defined by postulates such as beginning and end, has, properly speaking, no 'beginning' as there is nothing before Being, and it also has no 'end' since 'to have an end' would mean that the possibilities of Being as manifested in its 'way' (of operation) would have exhausted themselves. Hence the so-called 'end' or 'goal' is not a 'finality', but is the constant renewal of the possibility inherent in Being in its totality.

The incipient renewal, although stated to be a state of relaxation and repose, is not a state of apathy, but the necessary precondition for the emergency of

---

3. Being presenting itself in its totality is technically known as gzhi-snang. This conception has been developed by the rNying-ma-pa thinkers who with their interest in the metaphysical problems of Being go beyond the limited epistemological interest of Indian Buddhism.
Saraha-he who has shot the arrow of non-duality into the heart of duality

a free-rising awareness whose attention remains within the perception, letting its continued gaze pass from one aspect of perfection to another, and, in so doing, discovering new riches of Being. To the extent that the beholder becomes more and more aware of the fact of Being, he also comes closer to his very being. The world perceived and he as its perceiver become more and more like each other as both dissolve and fuse in the pure fact of Being, a process that is often illustrated by the analogy of ice melting or water being poured into water. As is stated by Saraha: 4

First appearance is experienced as an open dimension.
This is like knowing ice to be water.
Then, without the appearance of images ceasing,
Openness fuses indistinguishably with the feeling of bliss,
This is like ice dissolving in water.
Lastly, when the image dissolves in the imageless and this in the unborn,
Only absolute bliss remains as all has fused indistinguishably.
This is like ice dissolved in water.

4. Kayakosa-amrta-vajra-giti. The Sanskrit (or Apabhramsa?) text has been lost and only its Tibetan translation under the title sKu-i mdzod 'chi-med rdo-rje'i glu is available.
Ah! This is the self-validating intrinsic awareness. Do not deviate from it. Things and no-things are a fetter to your Buddhahood. Without differentiating between the world and the self-sameness of Being, Let your mind in genuineness be alone. Know this to be like water poured into water.

This perception of Being is indistinguishable from the experience of Being which, it is agreed, offers the highest degree of pleasure or bliss. To perceive Being is synonymous with 'how it feels to be'. This feeling of being, as a genuine presence, independent of any concepts and beliefs or judgments about it, is termed ‘dharma-kaya’, which, in abstract terms, we can translate as the ‘existentiality (sku) of being, of what there is (chos). The awareness of it is like a cognition (shes-bzhin) but lacks the reification in concepts, since it stays with and enjoys the feeling of being. This enjoyment of being is termed ‘sambhoga-kaya’. It is another aspect of Being, its existentiality (sku), indicating the dynamics of Being that come to us as feelings of joy and satisfaction (longs-spyod). As such it mediates between Being as such and the individual’s self-expression which means that Being has taken on concrete form and meaning, not that a person has succumbed to the whims of the ego and its postulates. The concrete form of Being is termed ‘nirmanakaya’, which is existentiality (sku) in activity (spurul). In other words, the feeling of complete harmony with (sambhoga-kaya) Being (dharma-kaya) leads to perfect action (nirmanakaya). The person in such a moment is fully himself and yet completely non-self, because in this state of integration the disturbing interferences by the ego have ceased and spontaneity has set in. Spontaneity is a term for the self-creativity of the personality; it differs from the busybodying of the ego which has a dulling effect and diminishes the capacity for being.

The integrated personality has vision, but the content of the vision is not some thing. If it were, there would no longer be vision, but a person would ‘see things’, a phrase which aptly illustrates the blockage of vision and the state of being trapped in one's own fictions. All that can be said about the content is that it is ‘nothing’ (med), but this nothing is not a spectre of emptiness, a frightening ‘void’, but the fertile womb of possibilities. Therefore also ‘vision’, unlike the feeling of emptiness, has nothing to do with apathy or boredom, on the one hand, nor, on the other, with the desperate attempts to get away from it by keeping oneself busy all the time by looking for new excitements, in order to conceal from oneself the feeling of futility. Actually, the ‘nothing’ in the vision is, precisely because of its not being ‘something’, this possibility for renewal and revision of the world and of oneself. As a consequence

6. Mi-pham in his Gnyug-sems skor-gsum 11 35a (ed. by Tarthang Tulku) clearly elaborates the difference between med as infinite possibilities and the mere nothing (med-rkyang) of postulatory thought.

50 Crystal Mirror
of the vision, the person sinks and loses himself altogether in an ingenuous contemplation of it through which he creates a new image before modifying it by concepts. Contemplation is a creative act and is therefore likened to the moment of conception in the womb of possibilities which are as yet nothing. All this has importance for the answer of the question 'how are we to live'. It implies to act, to mould one's life (spyod-pa) by guiding it (gom-pa) through real insight (lta-ba). To act therefore is to act on the basis of pure fact and the possibility it offers, not according to a set of rules which are always problematic. Ethics, if equated with a system of symbols and sanctions, becomes unethical and pointless as it necessarily must be blind to the infinite possibilities of Being. This does not mean that 'anything is permissible', but that any moral action must be based on what really is, and what really is, is revealed through insight.

Concepts (intellectually found) and images (perceptually found) are the forms for understanding the world as well as ourselves. They carry with them the feeling that we touch only the surface and suggest that something more is behind the appearances, just as the ripples on a lake make us look for its depth. But in the very act of looking behind the phenomena we lose the wider vision by becoming oblivious to the fact that reality is always surface and depth together, and clinging to the one or the other aspect can never provide the feeling of freedom which we yearn for and which is present only in the experience of Being, into which no division must enter. Such an experience is 'what counts'. Life seems to flow freely and its free flow is tremendously enriched. It does not mean to be without thoughts and to vegetate in a state of proverbial blankness of mind; it signifies that the images and concepts do not come between us and the world but help us as friends to understand more of it, and since they are but the free play of Being, their free movement is like a snake's smooth unwinding of its coils, going its way unhindered and unobstructed, finding nothing to become attached to like a thief in an empty house, for the pure fact of Being can never be appropriated.

7. As the text points out, first we must have a vision (lta-ba) to which we attend imaginatively (i.e., forming an image of what we have imagined) (gom-pa), and then enact this vision by living it (spyod-pa). The unity of vision, imagination and enactment is the 'goal' (bras-bu) which simultaneously remains the starting-point (gzhis).

8. The analogies presented here go back to the teaching of Vimalamitra, one of the early Indian scholars active in Tibet. See George N. Roerich, The Blue Annals I. 191f.
To have an understanding of the Dharma, to really experience its essence, is to have clear insight into the nature of one’s self, and the relation of that self to the world, both as it’s perceived and as it is per se. The Tibetan tradition of Dharma is possessed of a vast number of methods for the achievement of this insight, including yogic practices, ceremonies, philosophy, mantras, meditation, visualizations, art and music—all are commonly employed, and all have their particular value. There are many people who are concerned with understanding themselves and who are interested in the nature of the outcome of these many spiritual practices, but are not inclined to the actual performance of such practices. For at least some of these people, a direct and sustained attack on the question of the status of the “self,” conducted by introspection and analysis of one’s own thoughts and experience, might have quite surprising, and rewarding results. We are not here espousing either undisciplined, unchanneled thinking, or the adoption of some philosophical theory...for our present purpose both of these would only further obscure the real object of our investigation, and would likely lead to an increase in confusion and anxiety, or to complacency. Rather, we are recommending a middle path between these, a process of analysis which is guided and directed to a certain purpose, but which never departs from what is immediately and concretely given. There are many examples and varieties of this method of analysis in traditional Buddhist practice, ranging from specific themes for contemplation to the well-developed epistemological tradition founded by Dignaga and the dialectic of Nagarjuna. The line of analysis we present here will follow these in character.

To begin this, a given person—say, “Jones”—might simply ask “Who is Jones?” This question should be repeated and considered, seriously and intensely, again and again. Anyone who tries this will undoubtedly discover that this is not such an easy and straightforward thing as he may first have supposed, but still, certain obvious replies do present themselves. Jones might answer “Me” or “I am.” But of course the question then is “What do you mean—how is
that an answer?” Jones might venture that he has offered us a judgment, and while there is a good point in asking him who the “me” or “I” is, it is even more pertinent to ask: “Who made this judgment?” While Jones is considering this question, we should ask him, “And now, Jones, who is analyzing or judging this judgment?” This will lead to further considering and judging. If in each instance we inquire about the subject or agent behind the activity that is currently going on, we are left with an infinite regress, but perhaps no new information regarding the agent. We must then ask how these judgments come about, what is their nature and how do they work? It is important that this questioning, analyzing and answering do not take on the manner of purely hypothetical or theoretical inquiries. If, therefore, Jones responds that judgments are—and follow from—conceptualizations, that judgments manifest themselves through consciousness, that judgments involve recognition and discrimination, he must then be forced to ground these suggestions in terms of specific elements of his experience by such questions as: “Why are these things so, why do they happen as you say and not differently?”

Jones may suggest that judgments by definition depend upon such particular processes as he mentions, but such a resource is not allowed him by the guidelines of our analysis unless he can identify and describe the referents of these process-names in his experience, at which point all the questions we asked about judgment must be met again concerning “recognizing,” “discriminating,” etc.—what do they depend upon, how and why do they arise as they do? If Jones further explains
the determinants of his judgments and the particular course they follow by reference to his unique disposition, personality, memories and ideas, the analysis requires consideration of such problems as: "What is that disposition? What causes it to arise, to take the form it does? Is it in thought, in consciousness—where does it reside? Does it completely dominate the mind's functioning? If it is not self-originating, are its causes also on the level of consciousness, or elsewhere? What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for its formation? If uncaused, how can it have a position? How does it provide a basis for experience and judgment?"

Again and again we must ask how, what, and why, and even more fundamentally: "How do you know that?"

There is a point to all this. What each person calls his "self" is actually the result of uncritical, even naive, identification with many layers and levels of sense impressions, feeling tones, and data which has never been considered from more than one point of view, or perhaps never considered at all. By accepting and identifying with unverified information, and by doing this without even noticing it, we may be imposing limitations on ourselves that are unnecessary and harmful. By clinging to the results of this process of identification, by anxiously protecting and defending what may well be inappropriate and unstable structures, we may be generating a type of activity that is behind much of the misery of the world. But by carefully examining the status of each belief we have about ourselves, we may extricate ourselves from many confining and unneeded identifications. It is quite possible that the result of this process of analysis, if pursued with sincerity
and vigor, might be the discovery of an alternative to these false identifications, the discovery of "a new place to stand." From this new vantage point, everything might look very different. Concentrating on the activity of judging, probing its causes and conditions, its nature and manner of operations, we delve deeper and deeper into this ever-present aspect of the mind. Gradually, after much questioning, we may develop the clarity and insight to not only become disabused of many naive and commonplace beliefs, but may also begin to perceive the judging activity itself to be somewhat insubstantial and dream-like. All our usual ideas about the discriminating faculty, its source, its foundation, its meaning and its role in obtaining knowledge—we may feel obliged to abandon all such notions. Seeing with new sight, we may "look" everywhere and discover that nothing with the characteristics we usually attach to judging and thinking is to be found, anywhere. Thus, brought to the point by this analysis at which we definitely perceive our old views of ourselves and our world to be fabrications, to have no support and no power to explain what needs to be explained, the mind surrenders and opens.

This experience of liberation won't occur if the analysis is conducted merely as a philosophical game or pastime...we must plunge into it, holding back no part of ourselves from the field of inquiry. It is precisely this effort and this exposure that the ego usually will not allow. The dualistic mind of samsara, the resulting grasping and the feelings we have about our personalities all make us afraid of this transcendent effort, afraid of disappearing in some kind of bottomless void. Might we not go crazy? Might we not lose something precious? The fear of going crazy binds us to the delusions of our ordinary mind, keeping us crazy. The fear of losing something prevents us from attaining our birthright—the realization of our own true nature. There is no loss and no mental instability in this realization. Enlightenment does not consist in being "spaced out," in withdrawing from the real world, or in laughing at everything. The Lord Buddha, who encouraged minute and thorough-going analyses of the "self," was not a careless or irresponsible person, and would not have recommended something that disorients people and makes them unfit to live life fully and well. With realization, we and the elements of our experience do not disappear into some void, but instead acquire an entirely new significance. Everything is richly transformed.

Confusion, pain and fear are typically very prominent in one's life. Ultimately, the only solution is to cut them at their source, to face them rather than to run in the face of them. Buddhism maintains that these conditions derive from a lack of understanding that is basic to man's present state, but that is also remediable. In particular, the remedy offered by analysis consists in playing the game of samsara against itself, in giving the mind a chance to indulge in the generation of more fictions, but only at the expense of eventually forsaking them and standing revealed in its undisguised state. We stand to lose nothing except our fear. There should be no concern that with the fear some other, more precious, aspect of ourselves might be swept away as well—there are all too many forces and conditions characteristic of our samsaric existence that will prevent the awakening afforded by this analysis from fully and irrevocably changing us...analysis

Philosophy
can only offer the beginning of clear vision, vision which must then be constantly attended to and acted upon in order to attain complete Enlightenment. If we do not aspire to Buddhahood, we should not worry that this practice will bestow it upon us in spite of ourselves. First we should strive for self-knowledge—how could this deprive us of anything we might have? Following this we may decide what is really valuable to us, what we wish to achieve or to preserve unaltered. It should, however, be kept in mind from the very beginning that efforts toward self-perfection seek only to cut through bondage... with the realization of freedom, there is no need to leave any place, go anywhere or renounce anything.

The unremitting effort and the confrontation with the fact of our inability to find any real substance or foundation for the mind's discriminations—these have been described as the prerequisites for the breakthrough to realization. Usually the fulfillment of these conditions is thwarted by laziness or the ego-fears and grasping mentioned above. However, it may also happen that the experience of the second prerequisite is rationalized away by such assertions as “Well, of course, you can't explain the elements of your experience by appeal to those very elements—that's perfectly natural. If you want an explanation, you must turn to some philosophical or psychological theory.” Another variety of rationalization might claim that the inability to ground or account for the elements of experience is a consequence of the “fact” that you are those elements, or that “you” are a result of the same generative agency, perhaps the brain, as those elements are, so that in either case the ultimate source of these phenomena is something that you necessarily will never be able to examine and experience directly. These are here labelled as rationalizations because the first makes an unwarranted assumption about what explanations are in general and about what sort of explanation we in particular are seeking, the second makes improper use of what are essentially scientific working hypotheses, and they both prejudge what in fact might be found by this analysis of consciousness. This proposed analysis involves an attempt to achieve a new understanding of ourselves, and many people have in fact succeeded in this attempt. Objections to conducting the analysis, which do themselves already depend upon assumptions about what “we” are, only beg the question. To uphold assumptions, which were originally made by scientists to fit particular data in a particular experimental context, in order to bar access to other directly verifiable perceptions, is to be inappropriately restrictive and unscientific. And perhaps ultimately, what is in question here is more than merely one kind of data as opposed to another. For analysis, as for all the other practices of Buddhism, the goal is of quite a different order and character than the tools and techniques. What is being sought is not some novel kind of experience, nor explicitly statable propositions, nor theories which more or less fit certain data, but absolute conviction. This conviction consists in and manifests itself as a way of being, and is the result of a perfect synthesis of insight and action. Of the many ways to develop these qualities and this synthesis, someone may find analysis to be a good way to begin. Its explanation is simple, but its practice requires the subtlety to slip past false or irrelevant solutions.

56 Crystal Mirror
Search for your "self," but do not stray from yourself.

If the search leads to elements or components of your experience, see if they are really "elements"—are they fundamental, or irreducible, or independent?

If you appeal to some organismic or psychological system, again consider if this is the basic or atomic level of your being. Also consider whether the system is in you or is rather a theoretical reconstruction of "you." If you explicitly offer such a theoretical or hypothetical model as an answer, take into account the limitations and tentative nature of such explanations. The intention behind the formulation of these models does not usually include their being used in such contexts as this, nor does their accuracy or appropriateness for some purpose exclude the possibility of there being another way for you to experience yourself in your aspect of being, perceiving and acting in the present. This experience is not only possible, but absolutely necessary, if man is ever to live meaningfully and in harmony with his needs and capacities.

If you complain about the demands that this analysis makes upon you, and question why you should ever be expected to find an "answer" that can actually be experienced or recognized as being you, consider, on the other hand, why you should ever voluntarily accept anything less.
A growing interest in the spiritual path among Westerners has led many to inquire into the religious disciplines of the East. Although some have mistakenly concluded that all religions are the same, it is important to recognize the profound differences in the initial view and practices followed, both of which determine the final result.

Many have investigated the Nyingmapa and wonder about the reasons and logic behind its practices. They see indulgence in daily life, attendance at universities, formation of businesses, much philosophy, prostrations, rituals and so forth. There seems to be no significant difference between this kind of activity and that of ordinary people.

The change is internal, not external.
The Nyingmapa realize that exchanging one state within samsara for another, however superior and free of problems the latter state may be, is no real improvement, all states being impermanent and equally unreal. They do not seek liberation based on the duality of samsara as undesirable and nirvana as different therefrom and thus desirable. Their initial view is nondual. They see that one must understand the world in which we find ourselves, not seek another one which is somehow transcendent or beyond our present experience.

Likewise they do not superimpose a moral code, proclaiming that if such is followed, a higher level of existence can be attained. Rather they stress the understanding of karma and action—real knowledge and insight as the basis for natural morality. Thus true understanding becomes the ethical code, not arbitrary ideas of good and bad accepted out of fear or blind faith.

Within meditation, the practice does not attempt to burn, destroy or uproot the disturbances and obscurations which occur. Neither does it attempt to hold to some islandic awareness nor let the mind fly with thoughts. The Nyingmapa pierce to the heart of experiences where lie their beauty and power. In reality, obscurations are unobscured; concepts and words have no meaning; whatever presents itself before the mind is indicative of Dharmakaya. Disturbances have not the power to disturb. Their power bolsters meditation as meditation saps their energy. That which rules the sentient beings, becomes necessary as the means of becoming enlightened.

This philosophy is of no value unless practiced; divorced therefrom, it is only an intellectual pastime. The method is to balance both theory and practice, having recognized that theory alone is unproductive, and likewise that practice alone leads not to the highest realization.

The rituals and prostrations integrate action and awareness. The engagements and responsibilities of worldly life are the fuel of meditation. The Nyingmapa do everything because they do not want to do anything. Thus is seen the great difference between this discipline and others which try to escape to some quiet place, or forget about life's problems, or stop worrying to be happy, or shut out sense experiences, or any of the other manifold practices followed in the hopes of gaining liberation.

Such an approach obviously makes life much easier and more natural because it does not demand a radical external change. Being free of the residues of cutting, destroying and escaping, the result is uncontrived.
Ceremonies have been used to many different ends by most of the peoples of the world, and have been accorded varying statuses by both their proponents and their detractors. Certainly they are held in low esteem by the contemporary Western world—when, that is, they are even remembered. This current situation of almost uniform disinterest or disapproval is not only an historical anomaly, but is perhaps not necessarily in man's best interests, and not completely justified by any actual facts. If some ceremonial action has lacked genuine understanding, or if what little insight it may have had is best replaced by that of 20th century science, this is not to say that all ceremony must be devoid of sense, or even that it must be unscientific. If some rituals are ineffective and based mostly on wishful thinking, it still remains possible that others might possess supreme power and utility. The Vajrayana is very much a science of man, and its rituals, which represent the very essence of that science, are intended to produce results which are both concrete and profound. If one wishes to test this claim, the Vajrayana invites him to prepare, mentally, physically and emotionally, and then to experience for himself the excellence of the wisdom and methods of Buddhist Tantrism.

Even if the possibility of such experience is granted, there remain two common sorts of reservations concerning them. One is that these ceremonies and this experience are too "other-worldly," while a second has it that they are too "worldly." That is, some people are concerned that tantric rites embody some essentially unrealistic or even escapist tendency, while others already practicing (or affecting) some yogic or meditative practice may consider them as a departure from "true mysticism," as being childish props or crutches, as unnatural or indicative of low spiritual attainment. But Vajrayana ceremonies are the instantiation of a wisdom and a compassionate and appropriate action that are very vigorous and eminently practical. Their performance requires unparalleled mastery of meditative techniques, and represents the culmination of all mystical strivings and insights. Solitary and formless meditations are very common in Vajrayana practice, and if ritual sadhanas had no special virtue or advantage of their own, the Vajrayana would not bother to employ them.
The sadhanas are intended to remedy man's alienation from the "totality" of things, from the source of his life and his significance. Part of the context for the specific direction these sadhanas take is provided by Mahayana Buddhist philosophy, but much of it derives from secret tantras concerned with the energies constituting the play of the universe, and their presence and analogous play within the microcosm called "man." In attempting to reveal the connection between the human and what is often called the "divine," the sadhanas are always scheduled in order to take full advantage of those moments during which action will have the most appropriate result. The essential feature of these times is that certain energy configurations obtain within the body that harmonize in a particular way with the forces operant on other levels and magnitudes, and that this harmony can be nurtured into a virtual unity by rightly directed action. This aspect of the sadhanas lends a special esoteric significance to Padma Sambhava's promise.
that He would come to those performing His sadhana on certain dates, and also to the activity common to all Vajrayana sadhanas of externalizing, by means of visualization, what is usually considered part of the inner workings of human existence, and similarly internalizing those perfections and characteristics called "divine," leading ultimately to meditation on the interpenetration and identity of these apparent poles of Reality.

To the Mahayanist understanding of the true status of both samsara and nirvana, the Vajrayana adds a precise knowledge of the situations and conditions leading to each of these states, as well as the skillful means needed to act according to this knowledge. Vajrayana sadhanas therefore not only include all the tenets of Mahayana Buddhism, but also give these principles new dimensions and applications. Understanding "yoga" as referring to a way of integrating wisdom and fitness of action, it becomes yogically possible, by mastery of formed and formless meditation and of the psychic centers of the body, to achieve a concrete and dynamic instantiation of what would otherwise remain only noble ideals. Far from being merely an ethical code of conduct external to man and followed only by grim determination, the Six Perfections may be realized to be an integral aspect of Reality. The practice of "producing the thought of enlightenment" becomes yogically significant and efficacious. Similarly the confession of past, present and future transgressions is implemented by a knowledge of the virtual immediacy and accessibility of all these conditions of the three times within one's present human "body-mind," and by methods of transmuting these karmic defilements. The practice of "taking refuge" is given a significance which is both more esoteric and more natural as it becomes oriented toward Guru Rinpoche (Padma Sambhava) who is ultimately experienced as being identical with ourselves. The traditional "dedication of merit," upon the aspirant's realization of—and attunement to—the Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya, greatly transcends any mere pious wish or sentiment and becomes joyous and limitlessly effective action on behalf of all sentient beings. And it is one of the special excellences of the Vajrayana that it complements the comprehension of all phenomena from the point of view of the Dharmakaya (this being the common ground of all forms of Mahayana Buddhism) with specific techniques for developing the realization of these two responsive and other-oriented Kayas. With this development, the career of the Bodhisattva becomes quite realistic and completely integrated with one's every motion, and expression, however simple or mundane. Buddhism is concerned less with erecting a religious edifice than with appreciating and living in accord with primordial Reality. The very essence of Buddhism and the very pulse and flow of Reality are to be found within the mandalas of the Vajrayana sadhanas.

A mandala is essentially a manifestation of some especially significant facet of Reality in such a way as to capture both its being-in-itself and its self-expression—the way or ways it reveals itself. The surroundings of the radiative center are recognized to be intrinsically beautiful, and are understood not as the constituents of the central quality but rather as its emanations. By contemplating these emanations, one may come to a better understanding of that from which
they derive...in this case they, taken together, act as the sensible conveyances of the central point. On the other hand, by realizing that they are the conveyances of this point or feature, that they are nothing over and above it, one refrains from placing incorrect evaluations on them and appreciates them as being both _shunya_, or "nothing special," and as "divine"—as not lacking any of the perfections of unqualified Reality. We thus learn to accept and even welcome the phenomena of our world, rather than taking them for granted, or shunning them, or greedily grasping for them. In this way, by extending the mandala's relevance to every aspect of our life and the perceptual world, not only does the mandala surround its center or _bindu_, but it completely surrounds ourselves as well. The mandalas are essential to Vajrayana sadhanas, and the point of sadhanas is to do work on one's self. Such work requires certain tools, ingredients and conditions, including awareness and acceptance of the human being as he actually is (instead of as he might like or imagine himself to be). Within the mandala is everything required for effective sadhana, since everything comprising the world, in its dual aspects as samsara and nirvana, is contained there.

To "enter" a mandala, either physically or as a totally internalized step or visualization, is a very significant act. The participant's entire being is there, his thoughts, his feelings, his perceptions are all fully there and actively engaged. The meditant has no "private" part that is somehow held back or kept dormant. One's lineage, initiations, intelligence, past devotion, mastery of types of samadhi and certainly the karmic hindrances that one has acquired are all operant and explicitly taken into account. Sadhanas turn everything to their purpose. What is required, then, is not an abandonment or departure from the common elements of life, but only the surrender of our childish notions and evaluations of these elements. We surrender them in order to see, to "re-cognize," to be born anew into the world.

This process of reintegration occurs precisely when one reinstates himself and the constituents of his experience by perceiving them (and him) to be mandalas in their own right, and to comprehend the place these have in the larger mandala. Each individual sensory faculty and also all of them together, each type of sense object and all collectively, as well as the interaction of the senses and their objects—all these are understood to partake of the mandala character. This is similarly true for the chakras and the system they form, for the five _skandhas_ (psycho-physical parameters of perception) and for their corresponding (non-delusive) five Wisdoms: Such understanding on the part of an advanced practitioner of a sadhana does not involve a reconstruction of, or projection onto Reality. It is not an imposition of an arbitrary point of view or interpretation on everything, and does not result from great strain or effort. Rather, it is a realization of what is and always has been the case. There are many mandalas. In each case, to see something in its mandala-form is, inevitably, to be drawn to its center, where resides Guru Rinpoche in one of His many aspects. In being led to Him and to this insight, we are led back to ourselves. Thus understanding ourselves, we cannot fail to understand everyone else. The natural expression of this understanding is—_action_.

Philosophy 63
Clearly, these sadhanas are directed to a most sublime purpose. To assist in the achievement of this purpose, the Vajrayana possesses and employs many methods. The ceremonies are rich in sights and sounds. The practice includes simultaneous textual recitation, mantra chanting, visualizations, "formed" and "formless" meditations. It is well known that mantras have a kind of open-ended content...their effects and their significance changes and deepens with practice. This is equally true of the visualizations. Each one of these is designed to convey and refer to devotional attitudes, traditional elements of Buddhism, yogic practices and philosophical precepts, as well as to various meditative attainments, obstacles and remedies. The chanted texts are similarly laden with meanings and evocations on many levels. Given the wisdom to understand the point and the nature of these various practices, they do not remain separate and isolated. After all, these techniques are also essentially shunyata, and their differences and boundaries tend to dissolve. Furthermore, in the Vajrayana, "formed" meditations do not include an obsession with static, superficial prop-like structures, and "formless" meditations are far from requiring a neurotic clinging to vacuousness. The energies of all these sadhana practices converge and produce one-pointedness.
If these activites are successful, a transformation should be effected which is all-embracing and very subtle. One's own efforts become inseparable from punya sambhara, or skillful means, as these are personalized by and emanate from a central figure of the mandala. With the wisdom that perceives the voidness of these efforts and of this mode of Being, there is the further perception that nothing need be transmuted, that there is not transmutor and no transmuting. The acceptance and rejection of phenomena is transcended. Lessons and realizations are also recognized as being empty. In being transcendent and complete in itself, this experience should nevertheless not be regarded as an inactive or unresponsive smugness...it is luminescent, and not limited in its scope by being a “possession” of the meditant. While on one level we seek to purify and consecrate ourselves and our world, on another level we may understand that there has never been a departure from purity. Coincident with a ritual emphasis on external beauty is an appreciation that such beauty simply mirrors and points to the intrinsic beauty of everything. This aesthetic appreciation does not employ a cognitive duality or bifurcation into perceiver and object, and is much more than an ecstatic stupor. The bliss or ecstasy involved here is a central feature of Reality and not a subjective experience by a swollen or intoxicated ego. The sadhana’s influence depends on a continuous flow and interchange...there is no experience that may be stopped or damned up by one's self. Within the mandala, one is a center without being a center of gravity. There is beauty and there is ecstasy, but these are not prematurely terminated or limited by a “self.” In the same way, there is limitless understanding...all is shunyata or “empty,” and this is true in precisely the sense that there is nothing which is ultimately such as to block our awareness and comprehension, nothing to serve as a basis for grasping, selfishness or delusion. A complete and effective dedication of merit becomes easy when one has realized a “body” or way of being that is, inherently, totally radiative and unself-conscious. This “body,” the Sambhogakaya, is equally present and immediate for all beings—to attain to it is to annihilate all isolation, barriers and distance between ourselves and others.

The power of the sadhanas derives from the Sambhogakaya. Their goal is also the Sambhogakaya. The particular techniques, both individually and as functioning together, are all manifestations of this kaya, which is Reality in its presentation and operation as spontaneous communication and responsiveness. In entering the mandala, we expose ourselves to the Sambhogakaya influence. Perhaps at first we are not aware of it, but it nevertheless touches us at some deep level, helping us to open ourselves more, to be more receptive. The Sambhogakaya stimulates and awakens each person in the way most appropriate to him, putting him in touch with his own participance in this communicative mode, encouraging his reciprocal empathetic response to the energies of the sadhana. The more he responds the more open he becomes, the greater his capacity for receiving this influence, which in turn makes possible a still greater and more appreciative engagement. All one’s accumulated knowledge and initiations enhance his sensitivity to what is taking place and thus increase his ability to participate. At a certain point
this cyclical process mounts to a breakthrough in which one may fully realize
the *Sambhogakaya* action. This takes time to achieve, for the spiritual path is
a long one. One may be a simple person seeking protection from the ravages
of samsara, or perhaps may be striving for self-perfection, or for the benefit of
others. However one begins, he need not fear. Since the path never departs from
this genuine mode of Being and being-for-others, there is little danger of going
astray.

The Vajrayana recognizes that man feels estranged from Reality and that he
desires deliverance. It also recognizes that from another point of view this feeling
of estrangement and the process of deliverance are only part of Reality's play.
Vajrayana sadhanas incorporate the kinds of action and self-expression that are
appropriate to each of these points of view. Man-as-suppliant and man as being
totally fulfilled both take their place within the mandala. When, at the end
of each of the sadhanas, the identity of these two is recognized, the only natural
response would seem to be one of reverence and joyous celebration. That is what
happens.
Practice Classes

Meditation Class

Whatever ideas and expectations a beginning student at the Tibetan Center may have, the Rinpoche consistently bases the work of the meditation classes on an analysis of the contents and limitations of the student’s own mind (of which his expectant fancies are merely examples). Only by extensive work on this level can an absolutely solid foundation be laid, this being the essential prerequisite for the performance of more advanced practices, the power of which could only be destructive in the absence of such a foundation. Furthermore, the Rinpoche often emphasizes that just as work must begin at the level of the mind as it is, so too, in a more esoteric sense, does all work ultimately find its end and fulfilment there.

The way of the Vajrayana and of meditation is not an idle or whimsical one, and requires of its adherents great strength and seriousness of character. Rinpoche’s discussions leave no doubts about the magnitude of this undertaking or of its importance for all sentient beings. For the Vajrayana is dedicated to the alleviation of the misery of the beings in samsara, and his analysis of the situation which is, after all, our own, shows it to be a vicious and desperate one. We are strongly and unquestionably attached to our body and its habits. This attachment, in conjunction with a naive interpretation of the significance of sensory data and of the way it is received and ordered, give rise to the ego, to identification with this ego or “I.” Reality suffers a distortion with the genesis of this “I,” a thorough-going split into the duality of “I” and “other,” which in turn leads to endless grasping, a principal and dreadful characteristic of samsara. In giving a detailed explanation of this process, Rinpoche stresses that this grasping is insatiable and futile. The “I,” the “other” and the possibility of “possession by the ‘I’” are shown to be illusory. The mind’s chronic mobility, or more accurately, its inability to rest and remain still, further preclude any chance of its grasping being satisfied. In speaking of the misery caused by these strivings and illusions, Rinpoche forces the students to appreciate the great efforts required by the Vajrayana for success by its aspirants and for the sake of all other beings, and to become aware of their own narrow perspectives and self-oriented purposes, none of which are conso-
Chen-Pa—the most highly renowned of all Nyingma Lamas

nant with the practice of Vajrayana Buddhism. Students are brought to a painfully acute awareness of the vast karmic momentum that the Wheel of Life has accumulated in its turnings, and of the weariness and boredom that these must inspire in anyone appraising them (even supposing that he could overlook the suffering generated by this movement). Rinpoche relates this general picture to the students’ own lives and practice, reminding them of the need for discipline and vigor, of the viciousness of their habits and preciousness of time and their present opportunity for progress, both of which slip away all too easily. He makes it clear that all commonplace strivings, speech and thoughts can only add to karmic bondage, and at the same time he cautions against over-reactions towards escapism, quietism or retreat into some lifeless and unnatural “nirvana,” which, after all, are still products of attachment. Such discussions as these indicate the need for, and proper significance of meditation, of the appropriateness of taking refuge in Padma Sambhava, Guru Rinpoche, as being ultimately our own true nature.

And so the students undertake the practice of Vajrayana meditation. In doing so, they typically meet with the difficulties and pitfalls posed by discouragement, confusion and by preoccupation with some small part of the overall character of meditation. The meditation classes are intended to help students past these obstacles. To counteract the first of these Rinpoche speaks encouragingly of the beauties of the goal of meditation and emphasizes the importance of strong but
effortless concentration. He anticipates and marks out paths that lead to being "lost," and points out that ultimately feelings of discouragement derive from the error of trying to do or get some specific thing, which is the essential notion behind the second obstacle, confusion, as well. Students feel confused to the extent that they're concerned with getting specific directions or meditative techniques, with their (which is to say, their egos) achieving some sort of subjective experience, or with attempts to "understand" some kind of "answer." They have not yet abandoned the mistaken subject-object division of reality and so cannot attain to the untroubled and natural state of meditation. Rinpoche directs the students to clarify these obscurations and encourages them to expand and deepen their insight (vision) so that they may perceive that their meditation is not some possession belonging uniquely to them but is rather a realization of the shared participance of all beings in a pure and unified awareness. He repeatedly points out that if the practice does not lead to the experience of an unselfish love for others, then it is nothing but an empty form or ostentation. A student's first exploratory attempts at meditation are usually narrow or one-sided.... Rinpoche tries to correct and balance them. The meditation he teaches is not some specialized and isolated practice, but is rather a comprehensive way of life, central to all activity.

The practice of the Vajrayana proceeds by making, in an ever-increasingly profound sense, the goal to be the path. With great care, Rinpoche prepares
the student's foundation in his own primordial nature, cultivating his readiness for advanced practices which lead to complete liberation. The lectures consist more in instrumental concepts and devices intended to give guidance toward the goal than they do in the imparting of "facts." Each student in his meditation practice is like the boy who tried to collect both salt and sugar on the same plate—he put the salt on one side, turned it over to accommodate the sugar on the other side, and turned it over again to show his master the salt. Both were then lost. One perfection or aspect of the meditation is repeatedly lost at the expense of securing (or admiring) another one. Rinpoche helps to stabilize the student in all aspects of the meditation so that he may attain to a state which is beyond all characterizations, which cannot be described by any specification of virtuous qualities. Integral to this state is the recognition of it as Reality—it is not merely a (particularly desirable) state, nor is it something that may be greedily clung to in distinction or preference to more commonplace perceptions. It could never be taken as an alternative to the conduct of everyday life, but only as the most vitalizing and meaningful element of such conduct.

Yoga Class

Youth is carefree, life without problems. But, being impermanent as if a dream, it changes and passes away. And so with all phases of life. Experiences, without exception, become no more than memories, recollections, their flavor
lost, never to be regained. We work very hard our whole lifetime, and finally what have we acquired? Only memories, nothing lasting, even the most enjoyable, exciting, pleasurable, peaceful experiences are gone. So much time we spend only to exist— for food, clothes and a place to sleep; for entertainment we become so involved, but nothing substantial results. All our activity produces troubles; the joy of newness is followed by the sorrow of age. Continually joy gives way to sorrow. Having seen this situation clearly, we become aware that life, though interspersed with enjoyment and happiness, contains many problems, conflicts, unpleasant experiences. That which we hope to be beautiful and to bring us satisfaction we discover to be riddled with flaws. This condition which inspired Buddha to renounce his kingdom and found Buddhist philosophy, motivates our spiritual journey.

Buddhists recognize the spiritual course as threefold: the Hinayana, the Mahayana and the Vajrayana. In this age characterized by materialism, strong desires and revolution of ideas, the Vajrayana is of supreme value, for its approach to man's situation is very direct. Its focus is raw natural truth. Its results are immediate, thunderbolt-like. This teaching is very rare and precious, hard to meet with and difficult to practice.

Confronted by confusion and dissatisfaction, driven by desire and ignorance, many seek the security of renunciation and escape. They hope for an absorption free of these influences. But complete destruction of all defiling passions and
ignorance is a very long process, requiring thousands, millions of lifetimes. We don't have that much patience. We are anxious and impatient. We need this Vajrayana which is swift and takes but one lifetime. The Vajrayana requires desires, lust, ignorance, hatred, delusion, anger, pride and so forth. These are the necessary prerequisites for its practice.

What is this doctrine? How is it practiced? What is the view, the understanding? How can it be realized? We need knowledge.

Knowledge is as infinite as the stars of the sky, yet the most valuable, the most useful, the supreme knowledge is knowledge of our own mind.

First we need to examine our situation, outer and inner. We must recognize the workings of our own mind. What is this mind which desires objects, hates enemies, is jealous of others, proud of itself and ignorant of its own nature? How does it work? Why does it chase after unobtainable goals in vain pursuit? How can the mind be observed, where can it be found, how can it be known?

Through meditation and constant awareness we can see the mind at work; it manifests itself in anger, lust, laziness, in strong will. The mind projects out through the six senses. It jumps from object to object, running here-there seeking satisfaction. Like an untamed horse, its action is rough, and like a circle, without beginning or end. On and on it goes, action producing more action, thought producing more thought, desire producing more desire. Dazzled by the six sense
objects, it runs hither and thither. This mind can never grasp its desired object, it can never understand itself.

Nevertheless, the mind can be understood. It is not necessarily a cause of pain and suffering. Purified of defilements, the mind is naturally and primordially intrinsically aware. Throughout the three times it is timelessly at rest, yet performs acts out of compassion.

But mere philosophical understanding of the nature of mind is completely inadequate to liberate one in the Bardo. We need to practice. So we do prostrations. We take refuge and the Boddhisattva vow. We make offerings, acquire merit and do rituals. Correct practice transforms, transmutes all outer, inner and secret meritorious action into a priori awareness.

But this too does not protect completely. They say that understanding and practices are like a patch; after a while it will come off. We must gain total comprehensive realization—the transcendence of all dualities in the Dharma, the realm of the great vastness wherein appearance and reality are integrated inseparably, the great perfection itself, profound, deep and secret because accessible to the few, the all encompassing center where a priori awareness and Being play eternally.
Introduction

The following notes are reflections on my first month's experiences as a student at the Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center. On March 17, I came to Berkeley from my home in Washington, D.C. to explore the methods of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. In describing my first month of experience with these practices, I will use psychological language which is perhaps

---

1 James Shultz received a Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree from Chicago Theological Seminary in 1964 and a Ph.D. in Human Development from the University of Chicago in 1968. He was a full time staff member working with human potential and human relations programs at National Training Laboratories—Institute for Applied Behavioral Science (NTL-IABS) in Washington, D.C. Since 1970 he has been a free lance organizational and psychological consultant.
as good as any language in trying to describe subtle inner experiences—at least I'm more accustomed to using such language.

In preparing to write this article, I recalled many "peak experiences" or significant events too numerous to mention. Since Padma Ling involves food, housing, work projects, study and various types of meditation there were many experiences which were not especially "mystical" but involved taking a new perspective or attitude on daily life. Meditation as I was taught to practice it by Tarthang Tulku, is an increased level of conscious awareness within all activities of body, speech and mind. Explicit meditational activities (group meditation, prostrations, chanting, visualization, silence at meals, private meditation) set a style and habit of awareness which then generalized as implicit meditation to all life activities. Explicit and implicit meditation are mutually reinforcing.

Some Generalizations about Early Experiences

By living in a high state of awareness one naturally learns thousands of little details about psychological processes. In other words, the right kind of meditation would be a good way to teach most of the topics covered by a typical Western psychology course (Psychology 101). This experiential learning is unforgettable and can be consolidated later by rational analysis and verbalization. Even when you transcend analysis at the time of direct experience, the mind, when concentrating, tends naturally to "photograph" the experiences so that some time later you can, if you so desire, categorize, theorize, make inferences, relate one experience to another and see patterns and trends. In terms of fields of psychology, the main area of learning is perception. You prove to yourself quickly that the mind filters reality, including all sense data. You begin to take responsibility for the interpretive role of your mind, realizing that you perceive only what you attend to and only within the mood, attitude and categories which make up your mental set. This learning is greatly enhanced by the environment at Padma Ling which provides regularity of the situation. Without some constancy and simplicity of environment one would not be convinced of the role of his mind; i.e., the effects of mind can be rationalized as external, environmental effects. In "scientific" language, you could say that Padma Ling creates a "controlled experiment." Since the chants, the meals, the object of visualization, the sitting position in meditation, the people are all relatively constant, when things appear to change quickly and drastically it just has to be due to your mental set. In addition to perception, other areas of learning on psychological topics are: the dynamics of attention, projection, defensiveness, alienation, memory, mental strain (learning to be aware of tension and stress in the mind), fantasy, sexuality, body movements in relation to feelings, the operation of the five senses, emotions and emotional conflicts.

By keeping an open, high awareness mind one can quickly have a number of therapeutic experiences, making dramatic progress on some deep and long standing emotional problems. If
you stay with a high state of awareness and don’t repress or block the things
the mind delivers, then previous experiences and psychological troubles will
naturally surface, dreams will be remembered, etc. The emotions are watched
as an unfolding drama. After a while, by simply listening to and watching these
mental processes, emotions work themselves through or get transcended through
the natural healing powers of mind. During my graduate work, I spent several
years as a participant in group and individual therapy and later led encounter
and therapy groups. I noticed two contrasts between typical therapeutic processes
and meditation: (a) meditation seems faster, perhaps because in a photographic
meditative attitude the mind seems to process hundreds of things all at once
consciously with accuracy and without abstracting them as you do when verbaliz­
ing. (b) meditation doesn’t compound the problems by tinkering with them,
imAGining new problems and subproblems, analyzing the history or future, etc.;
rather the relaxed meditative mind lets the problems run their course on their
own terms and then dissolves them in a larger awareness. By way of illustration, one perceived major emotional problem for me was the sudden death of my sister when I was 14 and she 12. In meditation, I became deeply aware of my sister—seeing my experiences in the present tense rather than mediated through concepts and ex post facto interpretations. Then, to my surprise, I remembered also my older brother who died of rheumatic fever at 6 when I was 4. Until this moment, in therapy, dream analysis, etc. I had not been able to remember him, but in meditation I saw his face, associated his face with the faces of my 4-year-old son, my sister, then my own face. Left alone for five minutes, my mind transcended long standing defenses and categorical walls set up on the surface of the mind. By transcending these walls, emotional conflicts were lessened and depth experiences were brought into harmonious relationship.

The role of the teacher was central but not unduly mystified or dependency creating. Tarthang Tulku was central by helping me to discover his quality of mind (Buddha-mind) within me as a self-sufficient operational reality. Each breakthrough or learning seemed to establish itself rather quickly and securely and I needed help only for new roadblocks or new stages. His role was central especially when I was blocked in some self-imposed dichotomy, often where I
was tied up in knots trying to follow my self-imposed, preconceived ideas or expectations about the “Teaching.” For example, I was worried around Easter time about the integration of the Judeo-Christian heritage with Buddhism. I was assuming—unnecessarily—a conflict between the Christian-derived concepts and practices and the Nyingma concepts and practices. I became disturbed when, at moments of seeming purity of meditation, my mind mixed up the sounds of “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” with “OM AH HUM.” Rinpoche helped me recognize that Nyingma teachings are generic to all advanced psycho-spiritual experience of human beings, not the exclusive property of one historically defined ethno-religious group, and not necessarily in conflict with the prevalent Western traditions.

The withdrawal of senses from their objects as in visualization, brings the senses under conscious control and heightens sensory awareness and perceptivity. Perhaps for the first time in one’s adult life, the meditative experience makes it legitimate to see things, touch things, smell things even though the things are clearly products of one’s mind (to see with the eyes closed and to hear in a silent room). To the common sense American mind this might imply “losing touch with reality” but the opposite is true. Temporary withdrawal of the senses from objects seems to have four results: (a) to give the sensory mechanisms practice and to create leverage on perceiving the object world; (b) to remind one that the perception of the so-called objective world is always mediated through the senses, thus reminding us to keep our glasses cleaned and ears unplugged; (c) to allow the mind a wider range of clear perception by reducing mental agitations and allowing perception to function more like photographic memory than like self-conscious linear thinking; (d) to heal the senses from the barrage of overstimulation in Western society.

The body becomes more healthy by concentrating on holistic development rather than by concentrating on body work per se. As a byproduct of concentrating on mental relaxation and with good food and exercise (prostrations, physical labor, etc.) my body felt light weight, less tired, and stronger. For example, I was surprised to find I had lost nearly 20 pounds of excess weight. The thought of “dieting” had never occurred to me. This suggests that preoccupation with the body may sometimes block bodily functioning and development.

The experiences of personal development in Nyingma do not tend to inspire self-satisfaction or pride. Even though progressing beyond the wildest dreams of various Western “self-improvement” schemes, progress in Nyingma makes you aware mainly of the strength of the method (Vajrayana), the small amount of progress compared to the potential, and the small relevance of narrowly defined “personal” happiness when others are suffering. As your personality-cognitive-emotional structure is capable of receiving it, visions unfold of the potential of mind as an appreciative, fully functioning, open system located in our bodies in one sense but also beyond bodies and clocks among all people.
Conclusion

One can only hope that all of us—especially in the United States where we have such organizational and scientific power at our disposal—can increasingly follow the simple, timeless culture-free advice of Tibet's great yogi, Milarepa:

Within the Temple of the Bodhi Hill, my body,
Within my breast, wherein the Altar is,
Within the chamber topmost and triangular within my heart,
The Horse of Mind, moving like the wind, doth prance about,
What Lasso must be used to catch this Horse?
And to what Post must It be tied when caught?
What Food is to be given It when hungry?
What Drink is to be given It when thirsty?
In what Enclosure is It kept when cold?
To catch the Horse, use, as the Lasso, Singleness of Purpose;
It must be tied, when caught, to the Post of Meditation;
It must be fed, when hungry, with the Guru's Teachings;
It must be given to drink, when thirsty, of the Stream of Consciousness
It must be kept, when cold, in the Enclosure of the Voidness.

As long as the Horses of our minds and emotions run untamed and unrecognized we will continue to use our flesh and blood to create undependable heavens and painful hells for ourselves and all other beings.
Center Projects

A Country Monastery

It is important that the Vajrayana be accessible and responsive to all people concerned with the problems, suffering and significance of life. The Berkeley Center was established to bring the experience of the Vajrayana to bear on these issues, to meet people in the midst of life's many ups and downs and to work together with them toward mutually satisfactory goals. Consequently, this is an excellent environment for a student to begin his spiritual training in, as it requires of him great strength of character and purposefulness, flexibility and the capacity to relate his understanding of the Dharma to the situation at hand. However, the successful transmission of the Vajrayana to the West requires more than this willingness to work with the community and this initial process of tempering each student. The more advanced stages of the training involve very vigorous and uninterrupted practice. Space and facilities are needed for many more lamas to live and teach, and to preserve the vast technical literature essential to understanding the Vajrayana. In order to make maximum practical use of this understanding, the Center also plans to create an institute which will train Western psychologists in relevant psychological techniques and insights of the Nyingmapa lineage. To properly implement these plans, a complex monastic community, capable of supporting Dharma study at a variety of levels and degrees of intensity, is needed.

The Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center will be striving to establish such an environment within the next few years. After searching extensively for an adequate site, we have located a beautiful, reasonably priced 1,480-acre ranch near Laytonville, California. The setting is ideally suited for our needs—five miles west of Highway 101 and only three hours' drive north from the Bay Area. The land provides one-third open meadow with extremely fertile soil, adequate to fulfill the growing requirements of a large rural community. The remainder is rolling hills and pockets of wooded area. Water is plentiful, with
year-round springs and a general water table close to the earth’s surface. Improvements include one six-bedroom house, which will provide a temporary temple. The Pacific Ocean is twenty-five minutes westward and the climate is temperate.

The need for this project is great. The creation of such a center will benefit many thousands of people and will encourage the development of a balanced, integrated way of life. The transplantation of Tibet’s spiritual and psychological achievements and approaches will provide methods enabling men to transcend temporal suffering and to fully comprehend what life means and what must be done about it. To this end, Tibetan lamas and their families will be brought to the monastery to live, work and teach. The interaction between Eastern and Western cultures will be given a unique opportunity to mature, with an emphasis on creative explorations and exchanges.

The community is conceived of as a small village. A major construction will serve as a spiritual growth center and will offer seminar and live-in programs of varying length to the public. Facilities will be set aside for a permanent psychological institute. The monastery will provide a spiritual facility to train those who aspire to learn the highest esoteric Nyingma teachings. Smaller retreat huts will be built for those in the final stages of this practice. (To be
ordained as a Lama in the Nyingma tradition, an aspirant must complete introductory practices, attain certain levels of meditation, and remain three years in solitary retreat.) Ideally the monastery will sustain an American-Tibetan community to interact materially, culturally and spiritually, and will foster the development of those who must keep this ancient lineage alive, first by mastering it, and then by imparting the full depth of their experience to people in other places and situations.

The financial element is favorable considering the nature of this enterprise, the utility of the land, and the competitive availability of living sites. The ranch can be purchased for $350,000 with $80,000 down and terms which best fit our circumstances. We will need to build five major buildings to facilitate our plans and feel an additional $100,000 will begin this work. This sum is quite large, but we are ready to take on the responsibilities which this opportunity entails. If you can envision and respond to the need for a community of this kind, please join with us so that together we can create the positive energy necessary to bring this dream to fruition.

Dharma Press

Tibet's almost complete destruction and ravaging in 1959 has threatened the survival of the literature and teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, to the extent that, unless the books are printed and the teachings passed on to this generation of students, Tibet will become just another ancient, dead culture of interest only to historians and archeologists.

Having recognized this danger and immediate need, Dharma Press was established by Rinpoche during his stay in India for the purpose of publishing sacred Tibetan texts, books in English on Tibetan Buddhism, and reproductions of Tibetan art. In the United States this work was continued and in three years 3 Tibetan books, 5 English books and numerous images have been published including 20 "4-color process" thankas. All printing has been done with the use of equipment lent for each specific project. Recently a great opportunity has presented itself in the form of a donation by the Miehle Company of a Harris 2-color 43"x65" offset press, one of the largest such presses made. Its size has necessitated the leasing of a large warehouse in Emeryville, California, and the incurrence of a $3,000 moving expense.

The acquisition of this press has made it foreseeable that Tibetan texts now endangered can be preserved and that Center publications can be printed efficiently and relatively inexpensively. By way of illustration, the first issues of the Crystal Mirror required 55 passes through a small press and 175 man-hours to print. This issue of the Crystal Mirror required 5 passes through our press and 12 man-hours to print. A 250-folio Tibetan book can be printed on 4 sheets of paper as opposed to 63 sheets on a smaller press.
Although the press is a great boon to our efforts, it is also a great burden. The rent, insurance, maintenance and utility costs are over $1,000 each month. For this reason and in the hopes of being able to help support a country monastery, we are engaging in commercial printing. Such a full-scale printing operation requires the purchase of a densitometer, plate-making equipment, a hydraulic cutter, a process camera, an electric fork lift, a folder and a smaller press, representing a total cost of $40,000-$50,000. In addition, paper, ink, plates, negatives and chemicals are needed. It is hoped that this equipment, or the financial backing to purchase or lease it, will be donated. Otherwise their expense must be added to the many other difficulties currently facing us. If you can give us any assistance by way of donations, technical advise or job offers, please do so.

Our ability to save Tiber's sacred literature, constituting thousands of books, depends on our keeping and supporting this press. We need your help. Without it, the profound philosophy and Tantras of the Vajrayana may be completely lost within the immediate future.

Tibetan Nyingma Institute

In response to the interests and needs of those in the behavioral sciences and the helping professions, the Tibetan Nyingma Psychology Institute has been founded. The integration of Nyingma insights and spiritual methods with the
Western psychological tradition is a basic aim of the Institute. Although drawing from the Nyingma tradition, the TNPI is eclectic and open. The primary goal of the Institute is to help people find happiness, wisdom and compassion through basic research and training in the application of the Nyingma psychospiritual traditions to American needs.

The TNPI plans to purchase a house in Berkeley to serve as its main facility through which programs and services will be sponsored. Major among the envisioned programs are six-day workshops for helping professionals. These workshops will provide new methods and concepts for use by counselors, clergy, social workers, psychologists and teachers. The Institute plans to offer weekly courses on a 10-week quarterly basis. Course topics include: Introductory Nyingma Psychology; Psychology of Meditation; Imagery and Dreams; Emotions, Sense Experiences and Emotional Conflicts; and Karma Processing. Four-and-one-half-day seminars for the general public are presently being sponsored on three basic topics: Upa Yoga, Karma Processing and Vajrayana Visualization and Meditation.

In addition, the Institute will provide short-term residence to encourage growth and development among groups, work teams and couples. Ongoing individual and group consultations will pursue meditation and as regards the resolution of
emotional conflicts and the problems of everyday life. TNPI plans to implement field work in consultation in the form of lectures and demonstration projects.

As it expands, the Tibetan Nyingma Psychology Institute hopes to open branches in the major cities of the United States in order to bring the insights of the ancient Nyingma tradition to bear on the problems and needs of the most affluent, technologically-advanced nation in the world.

Phoenix

In ever-increasing fulfillment of its dream to preserve the Nyingma tradition in America, the Center has opened the Tibetan Nyingma Institute of Phoenix. The Phoenix Institute is dedicated to the preservation of the ancient Tibetan tradition and culture through integration with Western ideals and accomplishments. It is auspicious that Phoenix be the site for such a Center inasmuch as Phoenix itself was reborn as a city on the ruins of ancient civilizations, reminiscent of the phoenix bird which arose from its own ashes.

The Phoenix Institute has been organized under the guidance of the Rinpoche, Tarthang Tulku, by a group of thirty individuals who have been on the spiritual path a long time. A store, known as Tibetan House, has been opened to sell Dharma and metaphysical books. The Rinpoche will conduct monthly seminars and give scheduled talks. In addition, regular meditation sessions are being held.

Thus the dream of many Phoenicians joins the dream of the Rinpoche in establishing a permanent Phoenix Center and helping preserve Tibetan culture.
Positive love into negative love,
Nirvana into Samsara,
The Triple Jewel into the three evil roots

when accepted emptiness becomes rejected emptiness,
when emptiness is not loved, but there is longing for fullness.

Love is All-there-Is
and
Nothingness.

and these are the two Faces of the Same Reality.
Father and Mother
of Samsara-child.

Head-down we plunged as gandharvas
Into the dark cataclysm of pain
and we plunge until we rise.

After falling into the earth and dying
Doesn’t the seed rise toward new seed in heaven?

Perhaps Samsara was an act of love, then?
A sacrifice of falling?
Perhaps the illusion of a sacrifice.

All this I am learning from you, Rinpoche:
love
Sunnyata
and knowing illusion as illusion.
Bearer of the Blessing
teacher of emptiness
that reflects our play of shadows.

drop of Padmasambhava
Crystal Mirror
and most ordinary person

This I have learnt from you:
Compassion
Peace
and naturalness

and I have learnt how I have not yet learnt them.

Thank you.

Claudio the orange tree
in early spring.
Attached to the fragrance of the blossoms
Still fearing and hoping for the fruit.
Our efforts have enjoyed the loving and selfless support of many people, many Dharma Patrons. This page is inadequate to enumerate and describe the variety of services and resources contributed to the Center’s work, but we are nevertheless deeply grateful to everyone who has shared in the work, and we therefore wish to say Thank You. May the merit of these activities be dedicated to your happiness and spiritual growth.

FOUNDING PATRONS

Natasha Greenlee
Phoenix, Arizona

French (Dorje) Moore
Los Angeles, California

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Robert Byrne
Berkeley, California

Dr. & Mrs. F. Sims Pounds
Tempe, Arizona

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Carter
Hayward, California

Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Pounds
Scottsdale, Arizona

Mr. & Mrs. Ralph V. DeSerio III
Berkeley, California

Judy Rasmussen
Berkeley, California

Donna Egge
Berkeley, California

Mr. & Mrs. Neils Rasmussen
Los Angeles, California

Mr. Norman Green
Marina del Rey, California

Judy Robertson
Berkeley, California

Mr. & Mrs. Phil Gronquist
Berkeley, California

Robert Russo
Berkeley, California

Rachel Petty Lunt
Phoenix, Arizona

Joel Shefflin
Berkeley, California

Paula Margolis
Berkeley, California

William Wright
Berkeley, California

Mrs. Pauli Woodbury
Berkeley, California
SPONSORS

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bass
Berkeley, California

Mr. & Mrs. Glen Eddy
Berkeley, California

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Hammett
Berkeley, California

Patrick McCarthy
Berkeley, California

Mr. & Mrs. Glen Eddy
El Paso, Texas

James McGrath

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Hammett
Berkeley, California

Cladio Naranjo
Berkeley, California

DONORS

Tope Adewusi
Berkeley, California

Robert D. Anderson
Charlotte, North Carolina

Fred Berry
Berkeley, California

Winona Cromwell
Hemet, California

Sylvia Derman
Berkeley, California

Mrs. Ruth Fellhauer
Huntington Beach, California

Marti Franco
Nuevo Laredo, Mexico

Antoinette Grant
Oakland, California

Joyce D. Hoard
Monterey Park, California

Lama Foundation
San Cristobal, New Mexico

Nancy Lee Logan
El Cerrito, California

Dr. & Mrs. Earle Marsh
Sausalito, California

Prof. Leo M. Pruden
Providence, Rhode Island

James Shultz, Ph.D.
Washington, D.C.

Dr. & Mrs. Mark Sheflin
Santa Barbara, California

Mr. & Mrs. E. Ernest Ulsh
Santa Cruz, California

Harriet L. Warkentine
Wasco, California

Dr. Alan Watts
Sausalito, California

SERVICES

Robert Nyles, M.D.
Stanley Shores
Virginia Sutton
Llewellyn E. Thompson II, Esq.
Mr. & Mrs. E. Ernest Ulsh
Martin Watten

ARTISTS

Mimi & LaSandra
Dr. Alan Watts