



THE NYINGTHIG YABSHI
EMPOWERMENTS

GIVEN BY THE
VENERABLE YANGTHANG RINPOCHE
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TRANSLATED BY
SANGYE KHANDRO

EDITED BY
KAY HENRY
IAN VILLARREAL

YESHE MELONG

This transcript of these precious empowerments has been prepared by the Yeshe Melong Publications staff. We sincerely regret any mistakes we may have made in preparing it. Due to the nature of these transmissions, please guard the samaya carefully. We dedicate the merit of this publication to the health and long life of the spiritual teachers, to the propagation of the Dharma in the world, and to the happiness, well-being, and enlightenment of all beings. May complete auspiciousness prevail!

Yeshe Melong Publications

P.O. Box 514

Mt. Shasta, CA 96067

Tel: (916) 926-0573

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Day One: The *Lama Yangthig*

We are beginning today with the empowerments for the Nyingthig Yabshi, which belongs to the class of the originally pure Great Perfection atiyoga. As we begin, it is important to consider the common approach, which is to generate the bodhichitta and to reflect on the four thoughts that turn the mind, beginning with the contemplation upon the precious human rebirth.

When we contemplate upon the precious human rebirth, we can contemplate upon how difficult it is to obtain, by way of causes, examples, and enumerations. In fact, the precious human rebirth is obtained only through a vast accumulation of merit from the past; it is not an easy rebirth to obtain. Generally, when we think of this world, we think there are many human beings who live here, but when we consider how many of those human beings have a precious human rebirth, then we find that there are actually very few. Then, if we think about the number of sentient beings in all the six realms—and particularly those in the lower realms—and we compare that number to the number of beings who have achieved the precious human rebirth, then it is easy to see how very rare the precious human rebirth is. And then, beyond that, looking at those beings who have attained the precious human rebirth, those who actually accomplish the Dharma through that rebirth are even more rare.

There are many people who actually do have the precious human rebirth, and are attracted to Dharma and have an aspiration to practice it, but those who truly engage in the practice and accomplish it exactly in accordance with the truth or the purity of the Dharma are very, very few—very rare.

For most people, it is very easy to be distracted by worldly pursuits and to spend almost all of one's time pursuing only worldly concerns. An individual who appreciates the precious human rebirth is one who has been able to see the inherent lack of essence in cyclic existence and has, on the basis of that, been able to develop deep renunciation. Such a person thinks only about Dharma and how to practice Dharma. This is what I meant by a "precious human rebirth". That single aspiration—thinking only of Dharma and how one can practice—is very rare.

So, we must all think carefully about how difficult it is to come by our present situation. It is the result of tremendous, inconceivable accumulations of merit. It is the sign of how hard we have worked in the past.

The fact that so many of you have come here to receive empowerment is a sign of really wishing to meet with the Dharma, of having a strong aspiration and fervent regard and aspiration towards the Dharma. If this were not the case, you wouldn't be here. People don't come to receive empowerments, transmissions, and teachings unless they have a strong fervent regard and aspiration towards Dharma. So this fact alone is an excellent sign, because such an attitude—of strong aspiration and fervent regard—is very difficult to obtain.

Returning to the contemplation, by way of number, upon how rare the precious human

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rebirth is, consider that in this country alone there are millions of people, yet very few of them are interested in practicing the Dharma. And of those who are, how many of them think only about practicing the Dharma? Maybe one or two out of every hundred think this way—very few. This aspiration is very rare, and it is also extremely good. It is extremely good to apply it to your practice because, by the power of that aspiration alone, you will not have to endure the suffering of the lower realms endlessly. Just by having a strong aspiration to practice you will swiftly be able to leave the endless round of cyclic existence. The benefits of this kind of aspiration are that great.

This is particularly true in countries where it is difficult to meet with Dharma to begin with, as it is in the West. And especially so if the aspiration is to meet with the highest Dharma: the dzogchen—the Great Perfection—or the mahamudra—the Great Seal—or the teachings and practices for tsa, lung, and tige—the channels, vital winds, and essential fluids. Many of you want to know about these things, and you have a strong aspiration to practice them. This is very, very good. It is an excellent sign, because it means that you truly aspire to attain the highest realization. But, attaining the highest realization, and, in fact, even practicing secret mantra—and particularly dzogchen—is extremely difficult. However, if you can do it, it is absolutely the best. There's no doubt about it.

We can be liberated in one lifetime and one body; or at least in our next lifetime or the lifetime after that, or the one after that. This means quickly, very quickly, compared to the countless past lifetimes that we've had in samsara. The benefits of dzogchen and secret mantra are extremely great, and they come about through the power of aspiration alone. Never underestimate the power of aspiration—it has great power.

On the path of sutra one must realize the fundamental nature of emptiness. It is best to be able to have that realization; at the very least one must not misunderstand the nature of emptiness. On the path of the dzogchen, the best is to be able to actually perfect the practice. At the very least, to have the aspiration to do so also brings about tremendous great benefit. Even to simply hear the words of the teachings, to see the mandala, has the power to remove great amounts of negative karma and afflictions that have been accumulated throughout many lifetimes. Think about these things carefully, and realize their importance.

The virtuous mind that aspires to accomplish Dharma is truly marvellous. The mere fact that it has been generated is wonderful, because once we have generated it, as long as we don't lose it or let it deteriorate, if we can maintain it, then certainly we will go ahead and accomplish. However, as we are in a human body and have been born into the ordinary world, the tendency to pursue worldly goals is very strong. From the time that we were old enough to begin doing things on our own, say maybe around seven or eight years old, we became specifically involved in our worldly activities. And no one even needed to teach us how to do these things; they came to us quite naturally.

Many of you have spent your entire lives, month after month and year after year, whatever it took, pursuing your worldly goals. And you are still doing it. You never get tired of

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that; in fact, you rejoice in it. But, in spite of all your effort and all the time you spend in these pursuits, you're never satisfied by it all. You just keep wanting more. And if you come down with some kind of illness, or even if you're on your deathbed, you will still feel that all this worldly activity is perfectly O.K. because this is exactly what you enjoy doing. It's your habit, and you never tire of it. This is what your life is about.

On the other hand, think about how you feel when you spend an entire day practicing Dharma, like in a retreat situation, for example. You start complaining almost immediately. You have a headache, or your legs hurt, or you feel exhausted by the end of the day and just want to quit. You begin to feel that because Dharma practice is so difficult you probably can't do it. This is exactly how not to think.

You should maintain your virtuous mind that wishes to accomplish Dharma, and while you are accomplishing Dharma you should realize that it will be difficult. You should continue to recognize and rejoice in your opportunity so that you will be able to maintain a regular, consistent practice. Think that this mind that aspires to accomplish Dharma is like a light that you turn on in a dark house: instantly, the darkness is dispelled and everything is illuminated. In exactly the same way, if you have this virtuous aspiration, then your practice will develop from that. You must not lose your aspiration. You must maintain this virtuous mind, especially because this life is impermanent. None of us know when we will die, and we don't know what the circumstances of our death will be. We do know that the only thing we will take with us is our karma, the causes we have accumulated and their inevitable results. And at the time of that transition, only the Three Jewels of refuge will be able to help us. Therefore, it is very important to consider all these things and understand how precious is this present opportunity.

Now, some of you here are from different schools of practice within the Buddhist tradition. Some of you are Kagyu practitioners, many of you are Nyingma, and some of you are probably Sakya practitioners. At any rate, whatever school you follow, it doesn't matter—you all know the four thoughts that turn the mind. At this time, please think about these four thoughts. Review them carefully, and then generate the bodhichitta. Meditate upon the bodhichitta, which is the nature of your own pristine awareness. Meditate upon the bodhichitta essence nature of your own mind, and understand that it is this very mind that receives the empowerment. Recognize that the empowerment is received through the view of the clear light awareness of your own bodhichitta pristine awareness nature. Furthermore, consider that you will be receiving the empowerment for the sake of liberating all parent sentient beings who are equal to the limits of space, so that all of them can be established in the status of buddhahood. It is for this reason that you are here to receive the profound empowerment of the Clear Light Great Perfection—with the full intention to perform the practice for the sake of liberating all parent sentient beings. It is with this view that you receive the empowerment.

Prerequisite to the actual empowerment, and symbolic of the removal of the two obscurations, is the purification, or cleansing. Following that is the ritual offering of

the torma to the harmdoers and obstructors to ensure that there will be no obstacles to the bestowal of this

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empowerment. Following that, covering your eyes with the black eye-covering symbolizes the fact that, from countless past lifetimes until now, under the veil of your own delusion you've been unable to be aware of your own foundational buddha nature. Then, as you are about to enter the mandala, to not enter the mandala empty-handed you hold a flower in your hand as an offering to the deity. This symbolizes that you will have a direct vision of the deity, through which you will be introduced to your foundational buddha nature. The flower is a relative substance that symbolizes one's own nature, one's own rigpa. It brings together one's own nature of the mind with the pure awareness nature of the lama's mind. At this point we offer the mandala and recite the mandala offering verses.

Now, you should give rise to pure vision, which means that you should abandon your ordinary perception of your environment, your companions, and your lama. You should consider this place to be the place of the highest pure realm, the Akanishta pure realm. You should recognize that the lama, the vajra master, is either of the nature of Vajradhara or Guru Rinpoche. The companions, the vajra family of brothers and sisters gathered, are seen as male and female deities and pure awareness holders (rigdzins). It is very important that you abandon your ordinary perception and train in pure perception, pure vision, to be suitable vessels to receive the empowerment.

(Words of empowerment)

Now you are taking refuge. According to the view, not only is refuge taken internally—in the channels, vital winds, and essential fluids—but specifically it is taken in the ultimate source of refuge, which is the nature of one's own mind, which is open or empty, luminously clear, and unobstructedly compassionate.

(Words of empowerment)

Now you are generating the bodhichitta which, here, is a bit different from the way the bodhichitta is generated according to the sutra path. Here we recognize that the primordial nature of all sentient beings is buddha but that, due to the veil of obscurity, the adventitious stain of obscurations and afflictions, sentient beings are unable to perceive their own true nature. In dependence upon the pith essential instructions received through the kindness of the lama, we realize that the primordial nature of all beings is buddha. Even if you are not able to recognize that now, you must believe it to be so. With trust and confidence, generate this awareness as the bodhichitta.

(Words of empowerment)

Next, this is the protection cord, which is made of strings of five colors which symbolize the nature of the mind of the five primordial wisdoms. You wear the protection cord so that you will no longer be afflicted by the delusions or the conflicting emotions of the three realms, to protect you from those delusions. You wear it tied around the arm above the elbow, the men on the right arm and the women on the left.

Next, witness this samaya water, which is taken to indicate that one intends to maintain

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the words of honor for this empowerment. As a drop of water goes onto your tongue, you should consider that it transforms into Vajrasattva and goes down through your throat and arrives to remain in your heart.

Now, for the descent of the primordial wisdom being and blessings you must perform the following visualization. First of all, sit in the full-lotus posture with the body very straight. Allow your mind to relax and remain uncontrived, in its original place. Meditate that you are no longer aware of your ordinary corporeal body of flesh, bones, and blood but appear instantaneously as the primordial buddha, Kuntuzangpo, blue in color, the color of space. Your hands are in the mudra of meditative equipoise. You are in union with consort, Kuntuzangmo, the primordial mother. Your bodies appear lucidly, yet are empty in nature, like the appearance of the moon on clear, still water, or the reflection in a mirror: very lucid, very vivid, but transparent and of the nature of wisdom.

Then you visualize that in the center of your body are the three channels: the central channel—tsa uma—and roma and kyangma flanking it to the right and left. Next visualize, if you can, the network of channels in the places where the chakras are located, the sixty-four networks in the navel, eight in the heart, sixteen in the throat, and thirty-two in the crown. In the center of each of these chakras, or networks of channels, you visualize yet another Kuntuzangpo and Kuntuzangmo in union, surrounded by numerous, variegated-colored syllables of the vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet, the ali kali. If you can't visualize all 61 the syllables clearly, simply consider that they are present, numberless, throughout your entire body, and especially in those chakras.

Next, as I recite those syllables, listen to the sound and let that enter into you; you will have some understanding through that.

Now it is time to hold up the flower, which you will offer to the mandala. As you offer it, the flower will land at the place in the mandala where you have a karmic connection with your own particular meditational deity. As you make your offering, make a fervent prayer that your flower may meet again with your karmic deity.

(Words of empowerment)

And now the black eye-covering will be removed. At this time you should consider that, at the moment you remove it, you are freed from the lack of awareness wherein you have been dwelling for countless past lifetimes until now. The very moment you remove the eye-covering you are able to perceive your own nature.

(Words of empowerment)

We now begin the actual empowerment, which begins with the vase empowerment, of which there are five. The first vase is the central vase, the vase in the center of the mandala. Consider that it is actually Buddha Vairochana and his entire assembly of deities and that, by receiving the blessing from the vase, you immediately realize the self-arising primordial wisdom.

In the east the vase is seen as Buddha Vajrasattva with his entire assembly of deities.

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Consider that through receiving the blessing from this vase the stain of the all-pervasive foundation is removed and you realize the mirror-like primordial wisdom and assume the power of mirror-like primordial wisdom.

Next is the vase from the southern direction of the mandala, which is seen as Buddha Ratnasambhava with his assembly of deities. Consider that, as you partake of the vase water, the blessing purifies the stains that arise from mental activity. With that purification you realize the nature of equality and assume the power of the primordial wisdom of the nature of equality.

The vase from the western direction is seen as Buddha Amitabha with his assembly of deities. Receiving the blessing from this vase purifies the afflictions that have been accumulated through attachment and desire, and you realize the primordial wisdom of discriminating awareness.

This last vase, which is from the north of the mandala, is seen to be Buddha Amogasiddha with his assembly of deities. Through receiving this blessing, obscurations that have been accrued through jealousy and competitiveness are removed and you realize the primordial wisdom of fully-accomplished action. This completes the vase empowerment, with elaborations.

Now we begin the unelaborate empowerments. The common characteristic of the *Nyingthig Yabshi* is that, primarily, empowerment is bestowed directly through introductions to the nature of the mind and not a lot of different substances or materials are used to bestow empowerment. Usually the five vases will be used, and maybe images of the five buddhas. A skull with nectar will also be used, and also maybe an image of the consort. Other than these few, a lot of different elaborate materials aren't used.

The first unelaborate empowerment is the secret empowerment. For this, as before, you will visualize yourself as Kuntuzangpo and Kuntuzangmo in union, also visualizing the channels inside of your body, and the four chakras—navel, heart, throat, and crown—with a Kuntuzangpo and Kuntuzangmo yabyum in each. Then you—as the deity yabyum—will partake of the nectar from the skull and, as you take it in your mouth and it goes down into your body, it enters into the mouths of all the deities throughout your body. Then, from the point of their union nectar descends and fills your entire body. With that you are introduced to the primordial wisdom of emptiness and bliss, or blissful emptiness.

With the taking of the nectar from the skull, and through the force of the meditation upon self-nature as Kuntuzangpo in union with consort and the descent of this primordial wisdom nectar, one's impure channels, vital airs, and essential fluids are transformed into their inherent pure nature. One realizes all phenomena to be the appearance of kaya, or pure presence, and all recollection to be the self-arising primordial wisdom. Establishing the fortune of realizing this, one's own nature, we should meditate momentarily.

Following the secret empowerment is the primordial wisdom empowerment, and the only empowerment material that is used for this empowerment is the image of the

consort. This empowerment is to introduce you to the experience that you have in meditative absorption,

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which is the experience of the arising of bliss and realizing that the nature of that bliss is empty. This is what you are introduced to at this time.

For the next empowerment, you must abandon the pursuit of objective appearances and the sensory experiences of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch, and allow your mind to relax in its own nature of pristine awareness, the nature of which is utterly open and empty, luminously clear, and unobstructedly compassionate. Remain in this nature.

The nature of the mind is originally unconfused; its foundational nature is rigpa, pristine awareness. Within that nature the display of samsara or nirvana does not exist. The experience that we have of the play of samsara and nirvana—the play of happiness and unhappiness, satisfaction and discontent, the experience of the external world and its pure and impure aspects, all of this extensive display—is just the display of rigpa itself, the display of pristine awareness. Ultimately, none of these elaborations exist; they are simply unaccomplished. To recognize that all of that which arises is just the display of this empty nature is very astonishing. It's a great marvel.

Yet, even though you can be introduced to the ultimate nature verbally—for instance. I can say, “The nature of your mind is rigpa, pristine awareness; this is it, it's like this”—you don't really realize it this way. It is realized through the blessings of the lama and the faith of the disciple, through the relationship between the two, and in dependence upon the accumulation of merit and the purification of negative karma. Through the force of all of these elements you come to know what is rigpa. You are directly introduced and you have a direct perception. And that experience is inexpressible. It is your own experience, and you know it to be just that. Because this experience cannot really be expressed through words, the verbal introduction is an indication. So then, in dependence upon the blessings of the lama, the faith and pure mind of the disciple, the accumulation of merit and the removal of obscurations, one will have one's own experience—and it will be the greatest marvel of all.

Although sentient beings have been wandering in the three realms of cyclic existence, their primordial nature is buddha. Although they constantly experience many different types of suffering due to their reactions to objective appearances, phenomena, they still possess this buddha nature, which is their own pristine awareness nature, which is called “rigpa”. This is the mind of the Buddha, and it is our own primordial, inherent nature. Even if we are in the hell realm experiencing ourselves burning in the fires of hell, we still possess this nature. Even if we are in the hungry-spirit realm experiencing the suffering of hunger and thirst, or in the animal realm experiencing stupidity and mistreatment, we still possess this nature. Being reborn in any of the six realms of cyclic existence never changes that nature. Wherever we remain, that nature never leaves us; it is unchanging. It is utterly open and empty, luminously clear, radiant, and unobstructedly compassionate, having compassion for all beings without limit. We experience it when we are aware of it, and it is always unchanging. And when we are not aware of it we are in the state of lack of awareness, marigpa. Even if we are born in a happy place, like the gods' realms or the higher realms, the pure realms, while we are experiencing that happiness our

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nature is still rigpa, and it is still unchanging. The nature of the mind is pristine awareness, and not even a hair's worth of it will ever change, because it is the primordial nature as it is.

While we are on the path we experience the different appearances and phenomena of being on the path, such as the experiences we have in generation- and completion-stage practices. In generation-stage practice we may experience perception of the deity or a vision of the deity. In tōdgal practice we may experience seeing the variegated luminous molecules filling the space in front. Whatever our experiences along the way, throughout them all, until the path is exhausted and the ultimate result—buddhahood—is achieved, our original, primordial nature remains the same, unchanging, basic nature.

When we attain the ultimate result of the perfection of the path, which is to become buddha, to achieve enlightenment, it is that very same rigpa that we have had all along, the rigpa of the past, that becomes buddha; it is not a new experience that becomes buddha. The difference is all in awareness or the lack of it. To be lacking in awareness means to be obscured by karmic afflictions and delusions, which keep on accumulating. When the afflictions and delusions are cleared completely and entirely, there is nothing left but rigpa, the foundational buddha nature. You must recognize this nature and know that it is not ever going to be a new thing. It is the originally pure state of liberation, and it will never be other than that.

Through the practice of tsa, lung, and tige—the practices that deal with the channels, vital winds, and essential fluids—it is also possible to realize the buddha nature. The importance of this is that just now, karmically speaking, you have gotten yourselves into an impure condition. Your channels, vital winds, and essential fluids have all become impure through your lack of awareness. Through the practice of meditating upon the channels by viewing the channels within the body, along with the different networks—the chakras and so forth—and then bringing the vital wind into those channels and maintaining it, controlling it, through the practice of the large or small vase, and then moving, purifying, and maintaining the essential fluids, the impure transforms into its inherent, pure nature.

Our nature is like the sun in space: it is radiant and luminous, fully endowed with every quality to illuminate everything. Although it is always shining, occasionally clouds will arise to cover it and we won't be able to see it. We won't be aware of the sun, only the clouds. But even when the clouds are obscuring it, its qualities remain the same. So it is with our buddha nature. The essence of the sugatas is always present, yet we are unaware of it due to the clouds of our karmic afflictions and accumulations of obscurations. We simply do not see our nature and because of that we keep on compounding our predicament. When we remove the clouds, the veils of ignorance, then we will experience nothing other than the naked perception of our own nature, rigpa.

So, the path of accumulating merit and removing obscurations is not a process of creating a new situation or condition that does not yet exist through which enlightenment will eventually come. We remove our accumulated obscurations—that

have gathered like clouds—and we accumulate merit—which helps us to remove the obscurations—not to create

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something new but simply to stop being unaware and start being aware. In dependence upon the path then, we will eventually experience the full brilliance of the sun, pristine awareness as it is, and have a direct perception. This is the status of buddha; it is the place where samsara and nirvana are equal. The opposite is the place where we are always making distinctions, and as far as the nature is concerned, there is not a hair's worth of difference between the two in that the nature is always present, in either case. So in this way, to receive the empowerment, you must become aware of the nature of your mind.

You should stop making a distinction between samsara and nirvana, like putting a big space in between the two: samsara is here and nirvana is some other place very far away. Actually, the only difference between the two is the difference between awareness and lack of awareness. It is just like the difference between the palm of the hand and the back of the hand. Understanding in this way, you will come to know how it is that you can become aware of your own pristine nature. Through receiving this empowerment one is able to realize the fundamental nature of truth, and one is empowered to meditate upon the pure nature of the channels, the vital winds, and the essential fluid.

Now, stand up and bring your ankles together so that they are touching. Press your palms together at your heart and perform the following visualizations. You are in the highest pure realm. Akanishta. You appear as a red Tröma, and you are in the dancing posture. You are holding a copper driguk up into space with your right hand and a skull filled with rakta in your left hand. You are wearing all the bone ornaments and garments that Tröma usually wears, and you have a pig's head jutting out from your crown. You appear exactly as Tröma usually appears, except you are red in color. You should consider that your body is luminously clear, yet empty. In the sphere of space surrounding you, all of the vidyadhara lamas suddenly amass and dissolve systematically and gently into your body. Sit down. With your eyes look at the lama's heart and visualize that the ali kali is circling in your heart. Then everyone should recite "AH" twenty-one times.

Next, press your eyelids with your fingers. Now your ears. Now press your neck. Now press the channel under your arms right in your armpit. Now press the channel at the breast, at the nipple—the women press on the right, the men on the left. Remain in rigpa, free from elaboration. As the vase touches your crown and I recite the words of empowerment, consider that the words I am saying are coming from the vase.

(Words of empowerment)

Without explaining in detail the words of empowerment that I just recited, the essence is that you should realize that all of the experiences you have of the external world—happiness, suffering, samsara, and nirvana—arise only from your own mind, the nature of which is but the one nature of pristine awareness, rigpa, and that you can have total confidence in that.

Receiving this empowerment sows the seed for rebirth in the sambhogakaya pure realm. The words of the empowerment contain many dzogchen explanations—which I will not give all at once at this time, but will be presenting to you little by little during these next few days as

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best I can.

Next is the very unelaborate empowerment. To begin with, you should loosen a piece of your upper garment and let it hang down. Visualize the vajra master to be Chemchok Heruka, blue-black in color, extremely terrifying. He has four fangs and his tongue is rolling. He is wearing all of the wrathful garments and ornaments. Clearly visualize the heruka in this way. You also visualize yourself as the heruka, exactly as you visualize the lama in front. Then you visualize, in your crown, a yellow syllable LAM, in your forehead a blue-colored AH, and underneath your chin a yellow-colored SU. In your throat you visualize a smoke-colored KHAM, and at each breast you visualize a white HA. At the navel you visualize a red RAM, and upon the sole of each foot you visualize a green YAM. Visualize these seed syllables clearly, and understand that although they appear lucidly they have no true, inherent existence—they are empty in nature.

Then, visualizing the lama as Kunzang Chemchok Heruka, with strong faith and fervent regard directly perceiving him as such and nothing other than that, visualize that, as he recites “HUNG” very intensely, from his heart many countless HUNGS radiate. These syllables HUNG—blue in color, and boundless in number—radiate from the lama's heart and dissolve into the blue HUNG in your heart. Meditate on this. Then we will all repeat “HUNG” twenty one times, together, and then we will repeat “HA” three times.

At this point we make a white tormas offering. Everyone gathered here is meant to make this offering, and a tormas has been prepared for each of you, but, for convenience sake right now I will make the offering for all of us and then later on all of the tormas will be offered up on the roof of the building. This is done to begin the Khorde Rushen practice, which is the practice of discriminating between samsara and nirvana. When His Holiness Dodrupchen Rinpoche gives the Yabshi he is known to actually lead the disciples through this particular practice of discriminating between samsara and nirvana, whereas when His Holiness Khyentse Rinpoche gives it he only symbolically leads them through it—which is what we will be doing now.

This Khorde Rushen practice of discriminating between samsara and nirvana is an experience of the equality of all dharmas just as they are, as they are experienced. There is no good or bad, and no apprehender apprehending the experience. One is simply resting in the play of the nature of the mind, so whatever arises—discursive thoughts, feelings of happiness or sorrow, whatever—one simply remains relaxed in that nature, feeling at peace with the equality of the experience of the play of rigpa itself. The self-arising play of phenomena is experienced just as it is.

So, up to this point we have completed the empowerments for the *Lama Yangthig*, which were both with elaborations and without elaborations, and we have completed the preparatory part for the very unelaborate empowerment, which is the empowerment for the Khorde Rushen, the practice of distinguishing between samsara and nirvana.

“Ru” means the boundary. We are attempting to ascertain the limit or the boundary between samsara and nirvana. This practice is usually done in a cemetery or in an uncertain

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place to which one will just wander off. One begins the practice by simply letting whatever arises—physically, verbally, or mentally—arise as it is. All conceptual proliferations, whatever they may be, are allowed to arise and one simply does nothing with any of them. All of the worldly phenomena, all of the Dharma phenomena, speaking in different languages, or speaking about different aspects of Dharma, whatever one recalls, whatever one does, with one's speech and one's body, one just lets it come out, one just acts it out. There is no concept of "Can I do this?" or "Should I not do this? At this point one is no longer concerned with any sort of restrictions, precepts, or regulations. One becomes totally natural, acting out whatever comes up. All of the activities of the three realms, of the different classes of beings, all of it, whatever you think of, you become that and you just let it come out. You act it out to its fullest, to the point where you won't even know where the time went. You won't even know what happened. You won't know what you saw, you won't know what you heard. You will have gotten so involved with this activity of the body, speech, and mind just surfacing that you will come to a point of total exhaustion.

This point of total exhaustion, where one is simply tired, occurs when the body, speech, and mind have exhausted themselves through all the different experiences one has been having—experiences of happiness and suffering, thoughts and actions. It gets to a point where one just lets go and relaxes. In that state, one begins to realize that samsara has no meaning, that all of that which just happened is without essence. One begins to distinguish the boundary between samsara and nirvana. By just simply relaxing in that moment, one may be able to recognize rigpa, pure awareness. The idea is to come to a point of utter exhaustion and then simply relax in the natural state. It's like going back to your comfortable house and crawling into your bed and just very happily resting there. You simply rest; it's all over. In that restful state of pleasure and ease, you must recognize the nature of rigpa.

In an ordinary way, whenever we do some kind of strenuous exercise or physical labor, after a while we become exhausted and we sit down to take a break. We all know that experience of being so tired and then feeling totally blissful when we finally do sit down. Our body, speech, and mind, all at once, simply relax. In that state, which is the mind relaxing, we may tend to think that the mind and pure awareness—rigpa—are the same. And actually, in this type of practice there is a danger that one might think that they are the same. So, in the ordinary sense, when one relaxes after working hard, if one has no idea of how to recognize rigpa, then the experience isn't going to be rigpa. One will simply be in a state of a relaxed mind which is free of a lot of discursive thoughts and which is rather blissful.

Unless one knows how to recognize one's own nature of the mind, pure awareness, the experience of rigpa will not occur. The experience of mind and rigpa are definitely not the same. A person with no training will have this experience but will not be having the experience of rigpa because of being unable to recognize rigpa due to having had no introduction to it. However, you who have been introduced to your own pure awareness nature, when you relax your body, speech and mind in a state of utter bliss, comfort, and ease, then you must recognize that

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blissful empty nature as rigpa. You must recognize it at that time without grasping to it, and without feeling attracted to it with attachment; just experience the taste of it as it is, without any grasping or clinging. In that very moment you are in rigpa, in pure awareness and you must recognize it. There are many times to recognize rigpa—this is one of them. When you do recognize it you must not lose the recognition. You must maintain it.

Basically, this is the essence of the Khorde Rushen practice, which, as I have said, is the practice of discriminating between samsara and nirvana. The essential point is to experience whatever phenomena arise in the present moment—and whether they are pure or impure, simply doesn't matter. In some ways one does make a distinction between pure phenomena and impure phenomena, but with the understanding that that distinction is made from the point of view of the nature of relative truth. From the point of view of ultimate truth, they are one. So, in this state, where we can rest, simply aware of the present moment as it is, when we have exhausted ourselves to the point where we can relax in a state free of any clinging or attachment, at that moment we have an opportunity to realize the expanse of the dharmakaya. At that moment, in fact, the distinction between samsara and nirvana is the dharmakaya itself. This is really what one is meant to come to on this level of practice.

From countless past lifetimes until now we have been revolving in the three realms of cyclic existence. Meeting with the dzogchen doctrine, and especially this of the *Nyingthig Yabshi*, is truly going to be the boundary between samsara and nirvana—if we can recognize that boundary and effectively turn our back on samsara and realize what is nirvana. That can be done only through the dzogchen practice; there is really no other way.

Generally, because we do have such a fully-endowed opportunity, what we need to do in this life is see to it that we are able to reap the results that such an opportunity provides. When it comes to the wish to accomplish dzogchen, this *Nyingthig* dzogchen is really the essence of the heart of the dzogchen teachings. It is like the purest essence of gold, or the purest essence of butter. The word “nying” means “essence” or “heart”, and thig” means the “innermost drop”. Thus, “nyingthig” means the innermost essence of that which is already the essence, and this is precisely what it is. If we consider the 84,000 categories of teachings that Lord Buddha Shakyamuni presented in this world, which have all been organized into the nine vehicles, the essence of them all is the dzogchen.

In dzogchen there are outer, inner, and secret cycles, and of all of them, the *Nyingthig* is the essence. This is the Dharma that truly brings us the ultimate results in this body. Through this path it is possible to achieve perfect realization in one body and in one lifetime, due to the kindness of the great master, Longchen Rabjam: Longchenpa. Principally, in our tradition, we look to Longchenpa, who is the source of this *Longchen Nyingthig*. His name itself reminds us of the meaning.

The word “longchen” means “vast expanse”, which, according to the view of relative truth, which is the external understanding, refers to space that has no limit or boundary, and no color or shape. And according to the ultimate understanding, which is the inner point of view,

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the word “long”, which means the “expanse”, means “free from any limitation”. Specifically, this refers to the four extreme views—existence, non-existence, both, and neither—and the fact that it has no specific qualities, such as color, form, and so forth; thus, it is the dharmadhatu, the sphere of truth. And the word “chenpo” means great: the greatest. Because he was one who actualized the view greater than any other—and there will never be one who actualizes it quite like him—he is known as “Longchenpa. “Rabjam” means inconceivable noble qualities. This means that all of the enlightened qualities of body, speech, and mind have been completely developed—particularly those of knowledge, loving kindness, and potential. These qualities are inconceivable: it isn’t even possible to imagine them. This is the meaning of his name.

The dzogchen teachings were brought from India to Tibet by the great masters Bimalamitra, Lopon Berotsana, and Guru Rinpoche. After Guru Rinpoche passed to the southwest continent of the sinpos, although the dzogchen doctrine continued to exist in Tibet due to the kindness of those three having established it, it declined to some degree and it was not until later, at the time of Longchenpa, that it was revived and again propagated extensively. It is due to the kindness of Longchenpa, as well as the kindness of Longchenpa’s own root guru, the great mahasiddha Kumaradza and his guru Melong Dorje, that we have today the pure transmission of the *Yabshi*.

From Bimalamitra all the way to Longchenpa, and even up to our present time, there is an unbroken chain of lamas who have achieved the highest realization: the rainbow body, and nothing less. Some of them accomplished the rainbow body without traces. When they passed, their bodies simply dissolved into light molecules, and they were gone to the pure realms without leaving a single trace of a corporeal form behind. Some of them passed leaving only their hair and nails behind. And at the passing of others, due to their realization, a tremendous vibration of sound came from all directions of space, the earth shook, relics manifested from their bodies, and many other inconceivable signs occurred. My own lama achieved the rainbow body in Tibet; this I saw with my own eyes.

You should have no doubt that this type of achievement is possible through the power of this practice. Perhaps the deciding point is nothing other than one’s own diligence. If you are diligent, you too will achieve the rainbow body, you too will have these kinds of signs. You won’t need to pass through the bardo. You won’t need to be born again in the three realms of cyclic existence. When you die, relics will manifest from your body. The *Nyingthig* gives us this type of great blessing. Truly, the Dharma is something you need not doubt, and with this type of Dharma, you should never have a single moment of doubt about its power—but you must be diligent. You must know how to exert yourself in practice with enthusiastic effort, especially since it is at this time you have achieved the precious human rebirth so difficult to achieve. Having met with this type of powerful doctrine; if you are not diligent now, when will such an opportunity come again? Now is the time to try to get out of the three realms of cyclic existence, so that you will no longer have to experience suffering again. You have to try.

After receiving these empowerments, these transmissions and explanations, you are

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authorized to practice the two practices of *trekchöd* and *tödgal*. In these *Yabshi* transmissions are many different *tödgal* transmissions for the practice, and you must try to do these practices after you have received the transmissions. There are many lamas who come to the West and who are in the West now who are qualified to teach you these practices. You should try your best to learn them while you have this body and this opportunity. It is not through worldly wealth or worldly fame that you are going to be able to transcend this world—even though this is what many people, mistakenly, think. You will only accomplish this through diligence in Dharma practice. Now that you have this chance, really try to do it

Now you need to remove an upper garment and join your palms together at your heart. I will then ask you the question, “Child, son or daughter, who are you?”, and then I will tell you the answer. Next you will offer the mandala, and this particular mandala offering is a bit different from the common mandala offering. It is the offering of five precious substances: jewels, grain, smells—like perfume or scented water—medicine, and flowers. Each of the offerings has its relative result and its ultimate result. The ultimate result of offering jewels is to actualize the five primordial wisdoms; the relative result is to become fully-endowed with worldly possessions, with those things that are necessary and useful in the world. The ultimate result of offering grain is the achievement of the status of the five kayas, and the relative result, the worldly result, is to eradicate famine. The ultimate result of offering scented water or sweet smells is the ability to see the nature of the great, originally pure state, and the relative result is the clearing of the impurities in one’s sensory abilities, meaning one’s sense organs and the objects of their perception. The ultimate result of offering medicine is to be liberated from samsara, and the relative result is to be liberated from illness or disease within samsara. The ultimate result of offering flowers is that in the future one will be reborn in the five states of light, which means reborn in the five buddha realms, and the relative result is to have fully-endowed wisdom.

So stand up and let your upper garment down. Put your palms together at your heart. Touch your ankles together so that your feet are firmly together and look at the lama’s heart with unwavering concentration. Do not allow your mind to wander. Repeat, “AU, AH, AH...” Now in this same posture turn to face the east. As I am speaking, send your mind into the eastern direction of space. Then, check to see, “Is there a place to go?” and “Is there a goer?” Then you will turn to face into each of the remaining cardinal directions, and engage in the same mental process. With your mind, look far away in the sphere of space, and then investigate: “Where is the place to go? Where is the goer? Is there a goer? Is there a mind going?” Finally, sit down and remain in the empty nature of the mind for a moment.

Next you will look into space three times. As you look at the voidness, recognizing that space, in fact, has no limitation, you will perceive it with the eyes, but with the mind you should perceive pure awareness, which you will recognize to be the empty nature of the mind, the dharmakaya: the empty, utterly open nature, which is luminously clear and radiant, the radiance and the emptiness indivisibly one. Recognize now the union of the emptiness and the

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clarity to be pure awareness.

Sit in the full-lotus position and remove your upper garment. Visualize in the space in front five suns, the central sun and four surrounding. As you view them, they gradually begin to rise, higher, higher, higher, and eventually they just dissolve into space, disappearing. These five suns symbolize the five primordial wisdoms: mirror-like wisdom, the wisdom of equality, the wisdom of discriminating awareness, the wisdom of fully-accomplished action, and the wisdom of the sphere of truth. Visualizing them rising higher and higher and then dissolving into the space symbolizes dissolving into the expanse of the three kayas and into the expanse of the great dharmakaya. This indicates that one will no longer return to cyclic existence.

Now, I will stand and, facing each of the four directions in turn, with my left leg extended and my right drawn up, I will press my eyelids with my index fingers. The right leg drawn up indicates the attachment to the three realms, and the left leg down indicates the passing to nirvana. Pressing the eyes symbolizes that it is through the visual perception that primordial wisdom arises. This corresponds to the practice of tōdgal wherein the experiences of the visions of the tigles in the space in front are actual visual experiences perceived through the eyes. Then I will say “AH” three times, and this symbolizes the unborn sphere of truth. ‘

Now, look up into space directly.

As I move my finger in space in front, consider that the finger symbolizes the chain of light molecules that appear in the space in front in the tōdgal practice. The eyes looking directly into space directly—both the lama’s eyes and the disciples’ eyes—symbolize the gaze that is used in tōdgal practice. Then I say the words “the space is vast”. This indicates the sphere of truth; it refers to the experience that arises when all confused perceptions have been arrested and only primordial wisdom appears or arises. At first, in tōdgal practice, that experience, that appearance, is seen as the pure presence of the deities, the kayas in the space in front, and the light molecules, but it is still relative phenomena. When that is exhausted into the nature of truth—into the dharmata itself—and dissolves into that expanse, it is then and only then that the dharmakaya, or the dharmata, is realized.

Now you will be shown a mandala which is comprised of a mirror with five different mounds of variegated types of grain arranged upon it. The mounds of grain symbolize the support and the supporting, indicating that everything in samsara and nirvana is interdependent. Samsara is dependent upon nirvana. The empty nature of the mind is dependent upon its radiant clarity. A dharmas are interdependent upon one another; all are supporting one another: There is that which supports and that which it is supporting. This is the nature of all dharmas. The mirror symbolizes the foundational ground which is the original purity, the sphere, and that is like the sphere of truth, the dharmadhatu. The mounds upon the mirror symbolize the spontaneous accomplishment that emptiness is not a blank voidness, that clarity is spontaneously accomplished from emptiness, and that that spontaneous accomplishment is primordially inherent within the nature itself.

In fact, this is the basis for the support, the foundation, in the context of foundation,

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path, and result. The path is the practice of tōdgal, and in tōdgal practice the support for the mind is the heart, and the heart is the very center of the body. Whether we look at the body horizontally or vertically, the heart is in the center, in the middle. It is the support for the mind, and it is also the place where the mind remains. This precious heart is also symbolic of the self-arising radiant pure awareness, which is the result of the tōdgal practice. In tōdgal practice one assumes the three postures and employs the different gazes that correspond to the postures. One considers the heart, which is the support for the mind, and then the channel. There is a channel that runs up from the heart organ, behind the lungs and up, which connects directly to the eyes. This is not the central channel, with which you are already familiar, but another, different channel coming up from behind the heart connecting to the eye organ. It is through this channel that the pure awareness actually comes through and appears in the space in front. When it appears in the space in front, one sees many different molecules of light, tiny molecules of light surrounding and connecting. This is just simply the seeing of one's own mind in the space in front, which occurs on the path.

The result of this “seeing” is a progression of successive states of realization, of which there are four. These are the four visions of tōdgal: first of all, the direct perception of the nature of truth, then the increasing of that experience, then the total measure of the experience of pure awareness, and finally the exhaustion of the experience into the dharmata. When these four visions have been realized and perfected, then, ultimately, all dharmas are exhausted into the nature of truth, into the dharmata itself. This result is also the ground which was the object to begin with, the sphere of truth; it is dependent upon the ground, the sphere of truth. This is an explanation of the mandala.

The benefits of receiving this empowerment, which is the very unelaborate empowerment, is the ultimate realization of the dharmakaya. Generally, this means the utter purification of the five poisons—lack of awareness, aggression, pride, attachment, and jealousy—and specifically it means the utter purification of all nonvirtues accrued through the mind—craving, ill will, and incorrect view. Other benefits include actualizing the entire mandala of the wrathful deities which, externally, is the pure realm of the blazing ring of primordial wisdom fire situated above the three-kaya pure realms, and, internally, is in the hollow center of the brain. In fact, the mandalas of all of the five buddhas are within our own body: in our secret place, navel, heart, throat, and crown.

So, the result of receiving this empowerment is that one will be able to have the power of actualizing these deities. Also in having received this empowerment, ideally one may be set free in the bardo. Through receiving this empowerment the seed for liberation from rebirth in the three realms is planted, and with diligent practice enlightenment can occur in this very lifetime.

Now we will begin the extremely unelaborate empowerment. Again, to begin with we will first make the mandala offering (which, as before, is different from the common mandala offering). As I recite the words, you should consider the meaning and offer the mandala to the mind. As you don't know the words, think that I am your representative.

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Without any mental wandering, you must look directly at the heart of the lama. When the lama asks you the question. “Where is your mind?”, you simply recognize the nature of the mind. Now, in this recognition of the nature of the mind, objective appearances—which means not only visual phenomena but also sounds, smells, taste, and touch sensations—are experienced, but one does not grasp to them. Experiencing all appearances, simply remain in your own pure awareness nature, which is luminously clear and just as it is. There should be no dualistic grasping to the object or clinging to the subject. Simply remain comfortable in your own natural place, and that place is beyond thought and beyond expression and is none other than the dharmakaya.

Now we will receive the descent of the primordial wisdom blessing. We will be entering the nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, and dharmakaya mandalas, and we must assume the corresponding postures.

First, we will enter the nirmanakaya mandala. To begin with, face the east assume the snow lion position and the elephant gaze. Consider that you are going to Vajrasattva’s pure realm, the pure realm of Manifest Joy: Ngonpar Gawa’i. This pure realm is extremely pleasing and wondrous. You should consider that Vajrasattva is actually there, and that he is blue in color and in union with consort. By simply recalling their names, feel certain that they are present in the space in front, surrounded by a vast retinue of buddhas and bodhisattvas who are all showing the Dharma. With your mind in a state of luminous clarity, and with fervent regard, you should give rise to a very strong wish or aspiration to go this pure realm, and you imagine that you jump there like a snow lion. You can actually make a physical motion with your arms and body like you are going to jump in that direction, but it’s really more that you imagine with your mind that you are jumping there like a snow lion. So, allow the mind to be in its own nature, rigpa, which is the way of dzogchen, and maintain the gaze of the elephant, which is looking straight ahead. Place the soles of your feet together and spread your legs so your knees are out. Tuck your fingers and place your fists on the ground behind your ankles. Sit with your back very straight, perched like a lion. If you cannot maintain the posture perfectly, it O.K.; just do the visualization. Meditate upon yourself as the snow lion.

Next you will get into the elephant posture. Facing the southern direction, you kneel down, tuck in your legs, rest your elbows on the ground, and hold your chin in your hands. At this time, with fervent regard, you generate the strong aspiration to go into the pure realm of Ratnasambhava, who you clearly see in the space in front, golden in color, in union with consort, surrounded by a retinue as vast as the atomic molecules in space. There are inconceivable numbers of them pervading throughout every direction. Here, Ratnasambhava is receiving teachings on the nature of truth from Kuntuzangpo, and then he, in turn, is giving the teachings on the nature of the mind to his retinue. These are all teachings explaining the nature of the mind: from where the mind arises, where it goes, and where it remains. So, sitting in the elephant posture, and maintaining the snow lion gaze—which is gazing upward—you generate the strong aspiration to join Ratnasambhava and his retinue. Then, like a tiger, you jump into

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this pure realm.

Next, face to the west and assume the rishi posture. Sit with your feet together, the soles of your feet planted on the ground, and your knees up. You can wrap your arms around your legs, holding yourself up. Maintaining this posture, give rise to the aspiration to go to the western pure realm, the pure realm of Buddha Amitabha. In the space in front, clearly see Buddha Amitabha in his pure realm, red in color, in union with consort, wearing precious jewels and ornaments and garments. surrounded by an assembly of buddhas and bodhisattvas as vast as atomic particles filling every single bit of space. In this place the Dharma teachings are being propagated unceasingly. With the strongest aspiration to go there, and with a mind that is luminously clear and open, aspiring only to go there, focus upon that and gaze with the wrathful gaze, which is from side to side. Then, flying like a garuda, you arrive there.

Now, facing to the north, assume the vulture's posture. Sit, crouching, with your hands behind your back, like a vulture sits. The pure realm of the northern direction is the pure realm of Buddha Amogasiddha, called "Leirab Dzogpa", the pure realm of Perfectly Complete Activity. Consider that this pure realm is extremely beautiful and pleasing, exceedingly wondrous, completely endowed with all of the inconceivable signs of wonder. In the center of it dwells Buddha Amogasiddha, green in color, in union with consort, wearing jewels, surrounded by a vast assembly of buddhas and bodhisattvas gathered like atomic particles in space. In this pure realm the sole activity is the unceasing propagation of the teachings of the Clear Light Great Perfection—that and only that. With the strongest, fervent wish to be there, to go there and receive those teachings, assume the vulture's posture, maintain the gaze of Vajradhara—which is eyes looking up, bulging, then think that, like a bolt of lightning, you arrive there.

This empowerment, which, symbolically, indicates one's entrance into these four pure realms, is actually the introduction to the fact that all the mandalas are nothing other than one's own self-arising pure awareness. One's own self-arising pure awareness is the entrance to the mandala. You must recognize that the mandala is within your own being, within your own presence. As you practice the foundation of trekchöd and the path of tödgal, if you are unable to perfect them, at least, then, through the habits you establish, you will be able to be reborn in one of these pure realms. Don't think that all this we've just done—these postures and visualizations and so on—is like some kind of child's game, just pretend. It has its reasons, and they are very profound. Through establishing these habits in this lifetime, in the future you will be able to be reborn in the nirmanakaya pure realms—which pervade throughout all directions of space—and from there you will be easily liberated.

Never think that there is no reason for the different postures and meditations that we perform in the empowerment. This is the initiation into the very path practiced by the hundreds and thousands of beings who achieved the rainbow body in the past. In fact, this is the only path for achieving the rainbow body. By placing one's body in the dharmakaya posture of the snow lion and gazing at the mandala of the sun, in the daytime, and generating the tödgal

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vision, one sees molecules of light, images, and so forth. By placing one's body in the elephant posture in the night and gazing at the moon, by generating the tödgal vision, one sees the different molecules of light and different visions of images. By sitting in the rishi posture at night and gazing at the light of a butter lamp or a candle, one generates the tödgal vision and, through that, one is able to realize the actual practice, the profound path of tödgal.

The path of tödgal is very, very swift; it doesn't take a long time to bring its results or to bear its fruit. But, it must be preceded by establishing a firm foundation in the view of trekchöd. Then, with the trekchöd view as the foundation, one will practice the path of tödgal and, through it, achieve the rainbow body. And achieving the result is not a matter of one or two years—it is more like a matter of six months of practice to achieve the actual accomplishments. This is done by using, or awakening, the four lights of tödgal the light of the chain of molecules, the light of the fully-pure sphere, the light of the empty bindu, and the light of the self-originating wisdom. By activating these four lights, or lamps, one is liberated, and this is certain. So you should have strong faith and pure vision, pure perception, as you are introduced to this most profound path. Do not take it lightly.

During the next few days you will be receiving more explanations about some of these points. These teachings will come slowly, slowly. There is time because that is the nature of the *Nyingthig Yabshi*. It is not a transmission that involves a lot of different empowerment substances and stages, which is the kind of transmission you may be more accustomed to. Essentially, it is an introduction into the dzogchen view, and that is precisely what you will be receiving. This completes the entrance into the nirmanakaya mandala.

Now, for the sambhogakaya mandala, you must sit in the full-lotus posture and gaze directly out up into space. Generate the strong wish to go to the sambhogakaya pure realms situated in the four directions. Having a fervent wish to go there, think that your mind actually travels there. In the pure realm, Gyen Yongsu Ködpa, which is the pure realm of the natural display of the five primordial wisdoms, the light of the five primordial wisdoms completely pervades every molecule of space of that realm. It is completely filled with rainbow light rays that are all equal, evenly distributed and unmoving. In the very center of this is Buddha Amitabha, surrounded by a boundless assembly of perfected beings, hundreds and thousands of them, filling all directions of space. They are all teaching the introductions to the nature of the mind, explaining how to recognize rigpa and remain in the play of rigpa itself. So, sitting in the full-lotus posture, and maintaining the elephant gaze—which is straight ahead—and with the strong, fervent regard to go there, consider that, like a snow lion, you spring and arrive there immediately.

This completes the entrance to the sambhogakaya mandala, and now we will enter the dharmakaya mandala. For this, you sit in the snow lion posture. Then, first you gaze up, then down, then to the right, then to the left and finally straight out in front. As you gaze straight out in front, recognize the primordial wisdom of the naked awareness emptiness, emptiness awareness. This is the dharmakaya. It is empty, and luminously clear. Although emptiness and

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clarity are spoken of as two, you should make no distinction between them. They are not different; they are one and the same.

Furthermore, the nature of the mind should not be obstructed by discursive thoughts or conceptual proliferations as they arise. These should be recognized as only the display of pure awareness, the arising of pure awareness, and be seen like waves that arise from the great ocean and then sink back into it. They are just the play of the dharmata, the display of pure awareness. Don't follow them. Don't apprehend them as an apprehender. Don't contrive them. Relax in your nature. You have no other business in anything else. Just remain comfortably in your own nature. The mind, with its discursive thoughts, will arise, yet its nature is only pure awareness. Do not follow it, but just observe its nature to be nothing other than naked emptiness awareness—awareness emptiness. Recognizing that nature, then there is no need to be attracted to or grasp hold of concepts or appearances. even though they continue to arise as the display. Maintain only awareness itself; be concerned with nothing else.

Sit in meditation posture with a straight back and the chin slightly down, breathing naturally. Then, press your right eye with your right hand, and watch the space in front with your left eye. Allow the mind to remain in dharmakaya awareness. Recognize the nature of the mind to be empty, luminously radiant and clear, and absolutely unobstructedly compassionate. Do this again and again.

Up to this point then, you should recognize that the nature of pure awareness is empty, clear, and unobstructedly compassionate, and that awareness and emptiness are nondual. This is the essence of the Great Seal, the mahamudra. According to atiyoga, the nature of pure awareness is inherently of the nature of the clear light five primordial wisdoms, and this awareness, this clarity and this emptiness, is nondual.

In attempting to ascertain the originally pure ground, pure awareness itself, you may feel that you want to reject, or abandon, or arrest your lack of awareness, your confusion, through the application of method and wisdom, but this is not at all necessary. In this process you don't apply method and wisdom, you simply allow the lack of awareness to naturally clear. Lack of awareness means ignorance, delusion, conceptualization, discursive thought formations, emotional conflicts, whatever. Without making any effort to clear it, or arrest it, just allow it to be, and it will naturally clear itself.

At this stage of practice, all of the nine vehicles of the path of Dharma, all of the different traditions, all of the different philosophies, all of the different progressive stages of development, all of the different accomplishment practices, all the things we need to accomplish, do not exist any more. We experience only the great drop, or the great circle, the tige, which is free from elaborations and limitations. Its nature is the great nature of being separated, or set free, from limitation. It has no particular characteristic, or color, or shape, or nature, per se. It has no limitations whatsoever. In tōdgal practice, the appearance of the molecules in the space in front, which actually are one's own inner nature appearing outside of oneself, are one taste. What one sees in the space is the direct perception of one's own nature

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within. Ultimately, the experience, which in Tibetan is called the “tiple nyagchig,” is the experience of the one circle, the one tiple.

Now there is a section for rejoicing. In having received this extremely unelaborate empowerment, ideally, if you practice what you have just received, you will attain liberation in this life, if you don’t, then surely you will be reborn in one of the four nirmanakaya pure realms, from which you will easily achieve liberation. Thus, now is the time to rejoice and partake of something delicious, it is a time to celebrate!

With this we have now completed one of the empowerments in the *Yabshi—the Lama Yangthig*, and we will now begin the preparations for the Khandro Yangthig. The preparation will be given tonight, and the actual empowerment will be given tomorrow.

Now, join your palms together and hold your flower with your fingers. Visualize yourself as Vajrasattva, and consider that there is a drop in the three centers. Then, visualize that from the four directional pure realms—east, south, west, and north—all of the vidyadhara lamas, meditational deities, dakinis, protectors, and so forth come forward, boundless in number, vast as snowflakes in a blizzard, and dissolve into the crown of your head and down into your heart.

When you receive one of the tooth sticks that is being passed around, you will offer it into the mandala, and make a fervent prayer to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas to please bestow the spiritual attainments upon you. The tooth stick serves as the symbolic indication of what siddhis, spiritual attainments, you will develop through your practice. When you offer this stick into the mandala, if it lands in one of the four directions, then your spiritual attainment will be a little small, a little weak, if it lands above or in the middle, then it will be the supreme spiritual attainment. If it comes back towards you, facing you, then this is considered to be not so good, and you should do it again. However, if it is a flower that you are offering into the mandala and it comes back towards you, that is considered to be good.

Now the protection cords will be given. The men should wrap it around the upper left arm and the women around the upper right arm. This is symbolic of clearing all of the obstacles.

Now the kusha grass is being passed out. Place the long piece of grass in your bed parallel to your body, and the short one beneath your pillow, perpendicular to your body. Then, before you go to bed, you should make prostrations and pray very fervently to the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, and especially to your own meditational deity to show you a sign in a dream. This sign will indicate whether your practice will be pure or not, whether there will be obstacles to your life, or whether there will be virtue or nonvirtue. Or you can just make prayers to have a very lucid dream. Then, when you go to sleep, you should sleep in the sleeping-lion’s posture.

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Day Two: The *Khandro Yangthig*, the *Khandro Nyingthig*, and the *Zabmo Yangthig*

As we begin today, everyone should give rise to the bodhichitta and establish pure vision, pure perception, as you have already been taught. You should consider that you are in the highest pure realm, and that all the vajra brothers and sisters present here are dakas and dakinis. It is extremely important that you generate the bodhichitta and establish this pure vision. I won't explain anything about this at this time because the empowerment has many stages that require a lot of explanations, and we must have time for all of that. So we will proceed. Please cover your eyes with the black eye-covering.

Next, I will be reciting some words that you will repeat after me. Basically, you will consider that the lama is inside the mandala, and, as you are still outside, you are supplicating to be allowed to enter. You supplicate the deities within the mandala, requesting them to please bestow the empowerment upon you.

As the samaya water comes to you, take it in your right hand. Usually, when you take a liquid, you should take it in your left hand, and solid things, eatables, you should take in your right hand, but the samaya water you take in your right hand.

Now, for the descent of the blessing you should do the following: Sit in the seven-point posture of Buddha Vairochana, and with single-pointed concentration visualize the Buddhist swastika in your heart. Upon this is a moon disk, and in the four directions—where the arms of the swastika extend—are the syllables HA, RI, NI, and SA. Below all of that is the syllable YAM, which transforms into a wind mandala. When the wind mandala begins to blow upwardly, it causes the syllables (HA RI NI SA) to turn in a counter clockwise direction. From this spinning wheel of mantric syllables, light rays radiate boundlessly into the four directions—east, south, west and north—invoking the enlightened intentionality of all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, vidyadharas, and dakinis—of all the realized beings who reside in the four directions. They all come forward, boundless in number, and they gently dissolve into the visualization in your heart.

Now you will offer your flower into the mandala, and as you do, you should make a prayer that your flower may land at the place in the mandala that corresponds with your own particular meditational deity. To make your offering, and your supplication, you will go to each of the four directions of the mandala. You will stand at the eastern gate, at the southern gate, at the western gate, and at the northern gate, and you will pray to the meditational deity to make the connection known. Repeat the words of offering and supplication after me.

Now you can take off the black eye covering. This black eye covering symbolizes being in a state of ignorance from countless past lifetimes until now. When you remove the eye covering you are able to see the mandala, and you will be introduced to the mandala. I will explain who the deities are and what their meaning is, and I will explain the meaning of the different symbology. I will show you the different drawings and images and explain what they represent. I will introduce you to your own rigpa, your own pure awareness nature.

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While I now read the words of the empowerment text, which here contain an explanation of what the mandala looks like, you should look at the mandala. This explanation also includes oral introductions and direct transmissions which you will hear, and because of having removed the eye covering, you are now able to perceive this.

We have come to the stage of the empowerment where the disciples are actually within the mandala and will begin receiving the empowerments. Here you must meditate upon yourself as the deity—which will be the deity where your flower fell in the mandala. If you don't know exactly which deity that is, then it might be O.K. to just think of your body as generally being the five buddhas.

At any rate, you should know that the five buddhas correspond to the pure aspect of the five aggregates. Buddha Vajrasattva, in the eastern direction, corresponds to the aggregate of form. It is a fact that we have a particular form, a presence or bodily form that appears, and that form, that appearance, is recognized to be Vajrasattva. So when we see bodily form, we see it as Vajrasattva. The aggregate of feeling, which is the experience of pleasure or unhappiness, bliss or suffering, is recognized as Buddha Ratnasambhava. The aggregate of recognition, which is the cognitive state that is able to discern between good and bad and that has various concepts, conceptual proliferations about the objects of its perception—form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and so forth—is understood to be Buddha Amitabha. The aggregate of reaction—which is the situation that we are in this world where we are accumulating wholesome and unwholesome actions (karma), the reactions to the other aggregates—should be recognized to be Buddha Amogasiddha. Consciousness itself which possesses the eight groups that correspond to visual, auditory, mental activity, and so forth, and which is the basis for all the different cognitive states, is understood to be Buddha Vairochana. In some systems, Buddha Vajrasattva and Buddha Vairochana are also interchangeable, so sometimes we will recognize Vajrasattva to be the pure aspect of the aggregate consciousness.

At this time, if you don't know exactly where your flower fell in the mandala then perhaps you should consider yourself to be Buddha Vairochana. In general, since your body is a collection of the five aggregates, it is, in fact, the five buddhas. You should recognize it to be so, according to the explanation you have just received. Meditating upon yourself as your particular karmic deity at this time also corresponds to your future practice of meditating upon the generation- and completion-stage practices, of your practice of the deity through which you will achieve your accomplishment.

Place your flower upon the crown of your head. From this point onward you must meditate upon yourself as the meditational deity of your karmic connection. Now, to receive the blessing of the vase, visualize yourself as Vajrasattva, white in color, with a white OM in your crown. Recognize that this vase, which is from the center of the mandala, is also Vajrasattva. Consider, without any doubt, that it contains Vajrasattva's blessings. As you receive the blessing of the vase, consider that it purifies all your negative karma and obscurations, and transforms the delusion of hatred into mirror-like primordial wisdom.

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Receiving this empowerment corresponds to the transformation of one's ordinary aggregate of form into the nature of Buddha Vajrasattva, and the transformation of one's ordinary element water or blood into Dakini Mamaki. The natural essence of Dakini Mamaki, and all hatred and aggression, are liberated in the mirror-like primordial wisdom. It also creates the auspicious link that will bring about one's future liberation as Buddha Vajrasattva.

Now you should visualize yourself to be Buddha Amitabha with a red syllable AH in your throat. Receiving this empowerment purifies all of one's negative karma and obscurations accumulated through the speech and gives the blessing of enlightened speech. It transforms the aggregate of recognition, as well as the conflicting emotions of attachment, into the primordial wisdom of discriminating awareness. It transforms the ordinary element of heat or fire into Dakini Gö Karmo. It establishes the auspicious link that will bring about one's future rebirth in the Lotus Pure Realm, from where one will be able to work effortlessly and ceaselessly for the sake of liberating all beings.

Now, the mind empowerment. For this, you visualize yourself to be Buddha Vairochana. You are blue in color, and there is a blue syllable HUNG in your heart. Visualizing yourselves accordingly, from the heart of the lama boundless light rays radiate, invoking the pure awareness of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas in the ten directions. Like snowflakes in a blizzard, they all come forward, countless in number, and dissolve into the HUNG in your heart

In all other empowerment it is common that there be a name empowerment for the five buddhas, and this particular section of the empowerment is the name empowerment section. At this point a specific name is given to each of the disciples—but for these Yabshi empowerments those names will be given out on the day of the Zabmo Yangthig. Each one of you will receive your own name at that time. For the time being, your name is that of the buddha you are visualizing, so at this point it is Buddha Vairochana.

When you do receive your actual karmic name, receiving it immediately removes all of the obscurations of your mind that have been accumulated through your own mental activity. Receiving this new identity also changes your body. It changes your identity entirely—you become Buddha Vairochana. The aggregate of your consciousness is transformed into Buddha Vairochana. Consciousness, or mind, is like space, and the essence of space, the nature of space, is Dakini Ying Chukma. One realizes that consciousness and space are also the dakini, and this is the transformation of the conflicting emotion of delusion itself into the sphere of truth, the dharmata. This also plants the seed of the auspicious link that will result in one's future rebirth in the pure realm of the Desheg Buddha family, from where one will be able to work for the welfare of sentient beings ceaselessly.

Now is the noble qualities empowerment. Visualize yourself as Buddha Ratnasambhava golden-yellow in color, in union with consort, with a golden-yellow-colored syllable TAM in your navel. From that syllable boundless light rays radiate into the ten directional buddha realms invoking all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, dakas, and dakinis, and all the blessings of the

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enlightened beings who dwell there. They all come forward, countless in number like snowflakes in a blizzard, and dissolving into the golden-yellow TAM In your navel, they bestow upon you all of their blessings and loving kindness.

Having received the noble qualities empowerment, consider that you are now wearing the crown of the Five Dhyani Buddhas. All your obscurations accumulated through body, speech, and mind have been removed and all the noble qualities of the buddhas have been bestowed upon you. The aggregate of feeling has been transformed into Buddha Ratnasambhava: all one's experience of feelings of happiness and suffering and so forth are the experience of Ratnasambhava. One's ordinary elements of earth and flesh—of which one's body is composed—has been transformed into the nature of Dakini Sangye Chenma. The conflicting emotion of pride has been liberated into the primordial wisdom of the nature of equality. The seed is sown for the auspicious link that will result in one's future liberation in the pure realm of Buddha Ratnasambhava. Having obtained all of the knowledge of the noble qualities of all the buddhas, one will work ceaselessly for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Now, for the concerned activity empowerment, visualize yourself as Buddha Amogasiddha, green in color, holding either a sword or a bell—either one is O.K. In your secret center visualize a green syllable AH. From that syllable, boundless light rays radiate into the pure realms, invoking the buddhas, bodhisattvas, dakas, and dakinis—all the enlightened ones who reside there. They all come forward, countless in number like snowflakes in a blizzard. Dissolving into the green AH in your secret place, they bestow upon you all the blessings of enlightened body, speech, mind, noble qualities, and concerned activities.

When the bell touches your head, it removes all your negative karma accumulated through body, speech, and mind and establishes the blessings of the Buddha's enlightened concerned activities that are enacted through enlightened body, speech, and mind. The aggregate of reaction is transformed into self-nature as Buddha Amogasiddha, and one's ordinary element of wind or air is purified into its nature, which is Damtsig Drolma. This liberates the conflicting emotion of jealousy into the primordial wisdom of fully-accomplished action. It also establishes the auspicious link that will result in one's future rebirth in the buddha realm of Amogasiddha, from where one will be able to engage in unimpeded concerned activity for the welfare and benefit of all sentient beings.

Now the empowerment for the primordial buddha, Kuntuzangpo. Visualize yourself as Kuntuzangpo holding a vajra and bell crossed at your heart. Then consider that the realization of the lama's mind comes and dissolves into your mind. In our case, don't think that it is my realization that is merging with your mind but rather that it is my root guru's realization merging with your mind. This empowerment gives you the power to realize that the unborn nature of the mind is the dharmakaya, and to experience all of your impure perceptions as the nature of the three kayas.

These empowerments you have just received have bestowed all the blessings described, and this next empowerment is given to stabilize these blessings so they will remain firm. These

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are the images of the Five Buddhas. While there is an extensive explanation of the meaning here, I will condense it. Essentially, the Five Buddhas are all contained within one's own presence, within one's own being, and furthermore, because all other buddhas manifest from these five, all buddhas are contained within one's own body, one's own being, as the five aggregates: form, feeling, recognition, reaction, and consciousness. Then, within the body, they reside in the five chakras: the chakra of great bliss in the crown, the chakra of utilization in the throat, the chakra of truth in the heart, the chakra of manifestation in the navel, and the chakra that upholds bliss in the secret place. These chakras are actually the pure realms of the buddhas. There is no need to think that these buddhas reside in the east, the west, the north, or the south; they are within one's own being. And the nature of each of the ordinary elements within the body—earth, which is flesh, water, which is blood, fire, which is heat, wind, which is breath and space, which is consciousness—are the five consorts of the Five Buddhas. The Five Buddhas and their consorts are in union because they are both contained within one's body, one's presence.

Although there are many different explanations about this, the main point is that once one has entered the path of secret mantra and calls oneself a yogin, a yogini—a naljorpa—one should not have ordinary perceptions about one's body, viewing one's body to be made of ordinary elements: ordinary flesh and bones and blood, ordinary aggregates, ordinary conflicting emotions. One should see one's body to be that of the buddhas and the consorts, and understand that it naturally appears as such. This is what is meant by pure vision. Pure vision is just simply seeing the nature as it truly and purely is.

Now for the samaya, which I will give you. In general the samaya is to establish pure vision, to practice pure perception. The samaya that corresponds to the body relates to the body of any living being, whatever it might be: You should never ever harm any living creature for any reason whatsoever—not even the tiniest little insect. If you are practicing pure vision you won't see it as just an insect that doesn't matter, because with pure vision we establish the awareness that the essence of all living beings is that of a buddha. Since each and every living being is by nature a buddha then of course we will never want to harm them. Harming them would contradict our view entirely. This is extremely important because, from the point of view of Dharma, all living beings are really our Dharma family because they are all buddha. We are all buddha, this is our nature, and even those sentient beings we don't know or have any immediate relationship to are, in a distant sense, our Dharma family, our spiritual brother or sister, so we must respect them.

As for the samaya that corresponds to the speech, in general, it goes without saying that, as disciples, we should never contradict whatever our vajra master tells us. With regard to sentient beings in general, we should never disrespect them or speak badly about them. If we are holding pure vision, meaning that we are seeing all sentient beings as buddha, seeing their buddha nature, understanding that their essence is buddha, we will never disparage them verbally. We will respect them as buddhas and speak kindly to them, especially those who have entered the Dharma path. All those who are on the path of Buddhism are spiritual relatives,

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and especially those who have taken Vajrayana empowerments together, entered the path together, and specifically received the empowerment from the same lama are like vajra twins, children of the same parents born at the same time. We should never, ever speak even a single bad word about anyone who is such a close spiritual relative, a vajra brother or sister. Furthermore, we should realize that the natural sound of the elements is the sound of the Buddha's speech and that the sound that we hear coming from animate beings is the sound of the Buddha's speech. We should never develop any anger toward or feel any aversion or become irritated by any sound.

As Vajrayana practitioners, we establish pure vision by seeing all form as the deity, hearing all speech or sound as mantra, and recognizing all thoughts arising to be the play of primordial wisdom and nothing other than that. The samaya of the mind is to abandon all nonvirtue, without exception—even the smallest nonvirtues. We should never think that even a small nonvirtue is O.K. just because it is tiny. In fact, tiny nonvirtues can accumulate and result in a great accumulation of nonvirtue. We must consider even the smallest nonvirtue to be great, and we must abandon it from the base.

Also, we should see the mind of all beings to be buddha and we should do our best to always develop and increase the bodhichitta and be of whatever benefit we can to sentient beings. The samaya of the body is to meditate upon one's nature as the meditational deity by practicing generation stage. The samaya of the speech is to repeat the mantra of the deity, even if it just one time. We must repeat mantra as best we can, as often as we can. The samaya of the mind is to meditate upon the completion stage, which is to enter into the state of meditative absorption.

The following are some of the benefits of keeping the vajra samaya: By maintaining the samaya of the body, one will always be born in a body that is able to accomplish the purpose of sentient beings. One will be able to work for the benefit of sentient beings, one will have a long life free from illness, and one will become enlightened. Or, one will be reborn in a body that has the major and minor marks of realization, which means that one has the ability, the power and control, to work for the purpose and welfare of others. By keeping the samaya of speech, gods, spirits, and humans will come close to us, listen to us, and assist and befriend us. They will come under our command. Also, we will have the power of speech and the power to compose whatever is necessary to benefit others. One will receive the blessings of the natural gift of composition, which will ripen into one's future accomplishment of the sixty branches of melodious speech of a realized being. By keeping the samaya of the mind, one's loving kindness and compassion for others will become deeper and deeper, enhanced to the degree that one will truly be of benefit to others. Also, one will have the ability to generate and remain in the state of samadhi, meditative absorption, and one's meditative absorption will deepen. One's understanding and realization will bear the fruit of the accomplishment of the two states of primordial wisdom knowledge: the understanding of everything as it exists from the relative point of view, and the wisdom knowledge of knowing the nature of things as they exist from the

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ultimate point of view. These are some of the benefits of maintaining the samaya.

Now you should visualize that you suddenly appear as the primordial wisdom dakini, Dorje Phagmo. In your navel is a source of dharma, which is an inverted pyramidal-shaped vortex, red in color. In the very center of it is an extremely subtle Phagmo appearing just like yourself, the size of a single grain of barley. Visualize this with single-pointed concentration, particularly the miniature Phagmo in the center.

In the nature of rigpa, which is one's own pure awareness nature, samsara and nirvana are both unaccomplished. Everything is simply the nature of the sheer luminosity of great bliss. Failing to recognize this nature, one's body composed of the four elements has come to be, and one does not recognize that the body is buddha. But, in fact, all the perfected buddhas pervade throughout the entire body, and they remain, specifically, within the power spots or chakra centers of the body. In the crown is Vajrayogini in union with consort, in the throat is Ratna Khandro in union with consort, in the heart is Sangye Khandro with consort, in the navel is Padma Khandro with consort, and in the secret center is Karma Khandro with consort. They are always present. In fact, one's entire body of aggregates and constituents is the abode, the dwelling place of countless dakas, dakinis, buddhas, and bodhisattvas who remain there, inseparable—even though ordinary sentient beings don't see them because of failing to recognize their own nature.

Now, for the next, brief meditation, please sit in meditation posture. As you partake of the nectar you will receive, you should consider that it enters your central channel and then fills your entire body, and you experience the generation of the great primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness. You should bring the air up from below and down from above and hold it in the navel center and meditate.

Recognize that this state in which you are remaining is free from concepts and is the union of bliss and emptiness. It is the secret nature of the mind of all the buddhas. This empowerment removes negative karma and obscurations accumulated through the speech. Furthermore, you are now required to rely upon the five meats and five nectars. However, probably none of you will have the opportunity to rely upon the actual substances, but you can fulfil this requirement by making use of the mendrup, which is the Dharma medicine that has been specifically accomplished and blessed as mendrup, because these ten substances are all contained in the mendrup. So, it is very good in the early morning, as soon as you wake, before eating or drinking anything, when your channels are empty, to eat some mendrup. Doing this will fulfil the requirement you have just been given to rely upon the five meats and the five nectars. You are also authorized now to practice tsa, lung, and tige—the practice of tummo—which is the practice of sucking the vital air up from below and bringing it down from above and holding it, and through that, then, igniting the mystic heat and melting the tige and so forth. Through this practice you will be able to accomplish, or ascend to, the ninth bodhisattva level. This empowerment establishes the connection that will result in your being able to achieve the ninth bhumi and also, as a perfected buddha, to enact all of the concerned

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activities of the enlightened ones without exception.

Now, cover your eyes. Visualize yourself as Dorje Phagmo. From the heart of the lama, countless Dorje Phagmo's systematically and gently dissolve into your heart.

Now, visualize yourself as Havagriva in union with consort, Dorje Phagmo. Meditate for a moment, holding the vital air, sucking up from below and bringing down from above, and recognize the nature of great bliss. This completes the wisdom empowerment.

Generally, in the practice of Dharma, there are three categories of training or precepts: the pratimoksha, the bodhisattva, and the vajrayana. The best is to take either novice or full ordination, and then move on to embrace the bodhisattva and vajrayana vows. Thus, one becomes a vajra holder of the three categories. This is the best. Otherwise, if one is not going to take ordination, one must at least take the bodhisattva precepts; these must precede the vajrayana words of honor. So first one must take the bodhisattva precepts, and then one takes the Vajrayana words of honor, and then it may be appropriate to have a sangyum, secret consort, if one is so inclined. This applies to someone who has very strong desire. The buddha and Guru Rinpoche made this category and gave special permission to practice with a secret consort and experience the four joys after one has received the secret empowerment. This is one of the great methods for accomplishing buddhahood. And to practice this method, which is a method for those with great desire, one must receive the secret empowerment. You have just received that, as well as the wisdom empowerment, so you are fully authorized to practice on this level of practice if you want to rely upon a consort. However, if you are going to use this type of method, you must be extremely careful about maintaining, or guarding, the law of cause and result. You must watch your actions very, very carefully. Through this method—which is one of the great methods—the profound Dharma is accomplished.

Now sit in the seven-point posture and perform the following visualization to receive the ultimate word empowerment. Visualize a red Buddhist swastika in the space just outside the point between your eyebrows and in front of your forehead. It is spinning swiftly in a counter clockwise direction. Consider that as it spins it invokes the lamas, meditational deities, dakas and dakinis, who come forward like massing clouds in space and then dissolve into you.

For a moment, remain in your own awareness nature without any contrivance or creation. Gaze to the east up into space. As we did yesterday when we stood and looked in the four directions and gazed out into space, we look to see if there is a place to go and if there is a goer. Even if you think you go somewhere, there is no one going. Even if there were a place or an object to travel to, it would be created by the mind. The mind itself is of the nature of emptiness, free from limitation; it has no true inherent existence—no color, no shape, no form: no characteristics. As everything arises from the mind, everything is of that same nature. Nothing at all has any true inherent existence and is simply of the nature of emptiness free from limitations.

Now feel that the Five Buddhas are actually present in the space in front, and meditate upon that. This object that you think is in the space in front—the Five Buddhas—although you

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consider it to be there or think that it is there, it is not really there. It is only the display of your own mind, your inner mind appearing outside. It is no different from the dream you had last night.

Listen to the sound of the bell. In this next section you will be introduced to different sounds, both pleasing and displeasing. You will also be introduced to different pleasing and displeasing smells, and different tastes—is it sweet or is it sour?—different physical sensations—is it soft or is it rough?—and different appearances of form—is it beautiful or is it ugly? You are introduced to the idea of the object being attractive or repulsive—to recognize how the mind is always moving back and forth between the two extremes. Actually, the object itself, which is the basis of one's mental reaction, has no true inherent existence at all. The entire experience is nothing other than the mind, the mind's perception of the object: this is what you have to realize. You have to abandon the concept of good and bad. The reason for this empowerment is to abandon your concepts. When different feelings arise in your mind—like attachment and aversion—you should allow them to develop and meditate on them. All of the many feelings you have are arising from your mind. The object from which they seem to be arising are no more real than the reflection of the moon in water.

All concepts arise from the expanse of the mind. Similar to the waves that well up in the vast expanse of the ocean, they dissolve back into the source from which they came. They simply dissolve back into the mind. There is no other place for them to go.

This completes the empowerment to recognize the display of pure awareness.

Now, meditate that the eight manifestations of Guru Rinpoche and all of the great lineage lamas, the mahasiddhas of India and the dzogchen lineage holders of Tibet, appear in the space surrounding and dissolve into you. Put your palms together above your head. Think that your body is about sixteen years of age, that you are extremely attractive and pleasing, and that there is a white syllable OM in your crown. Then consider that from the Akanishta pure realms, boundless buddhas and bodhisattvas come forward and dissolve into the OM. Furthermore, visualize that there is a red syllable AH in your heart, and that in the space in front are boundless manifestations of Dorje Phagmo, who come forth and then dissolve into the AH in your heart. Then, visualize that in your heart is a blue syllable HUNG, and that in the space in front is your root guru, all the lineage lamas, and boundless buddhas, and bodhisattvas, and that all of them dissolve into the HUNG in your heart.

Next we have a series of visualizations. First of all, visualize yourself as Dorje Phagmo, and then imagine that countless emanations of Dorje Phagmo appear in the space in front and then dissolve into you. Then, visualize yourself as the eight manifestations of Guru Rinpoche—Pedma Gyalpo, Senge Dradag and so forth—and consider that they arise in the space in front and then come forward and dissolve into you. Through these many different lamas having dissolved into your body, you have established the potency for experiencing both temporary and ultimate bliss.

Next, you visualize your body to be the white syllable OM which radiates light.

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Visualize in your throat a red, four-petalled lotus and in its center a red syllable AH, from which light rays radiate. Then one's body transforms into the syllable AH, which also radiates light, and phenomenal existence becomes filled with AH. Then, visualize a blue syllable HUNG in your heart upon a four-petalled lotus. From this, light rays radiate, and one's body transforms into HUNG, from which light rays radiate to completely fill phenomenal existence. Then visualize a golden syllable TRUNG in your navel upon a four-petalled red lotus. Light radiates, and one's body transforms into TRUNG, from which light rays radiate, and phenomenal existence becomes filled with TRUNG. In your secret place upon a four-petalled lotus is a green PHET. Light rays radiate, and your body transforms into PHET, from which light rays then radiate, and all of phenomenal existence turns into PHET.

This is the *Yig gi Khorlo* empowerment, which is the empowerment for the chakra syllables. Receiving this removes the mental stain that is caused by the conflicting emotions of ignorance, anger, pride, desire, and jealousy, and the result is that one will achieve the mundane and supreme spiritual attainments.

This completes the second aspect of the *Rigpa'i Tsalwang*, and next is the *Khandro Dönwang*. Visualize yourself as Hayagriva in union with consort Dorje Phagmo. Consider that your body is entirely filled with countless dakas and dakinis, and from them light rays radiate into the four directions invoking all the dakas and dakinis who reside in the twenty-four power spots and the thirty-two places. They all come forward, countless in number, and dissolve into your five chakras: crown, throat, heart, navel, and secret place. As before, recognize the Five Dakinis as indistinct from the nature of your own mind: they arise from the mind.

The *Khandro Yang Thig* empowerment is over and now we will begin the *Khandro Nying Thig*. As this *Khandro Nying Thig* is almost identical to the *Khandro Yang Thig* I will just go straight through it without giving explanations.

(Words of empowerment)

Now we will begin the *Zabmo Yang Thig* empowerment. This empowerment is quite similar to the *Lama Yang Thig* which was given on the first day. Some of the words are a little bit different, but the meaning is essentially the same.

As we begin, you should all give rise to the bodhichitta by generating the motivation to establish all parent sentient beings equal to limitless space in the status of buddhahood. This should be the only reason why you wish to enter the empowerment mandala of the clear light Great Perfection. You should have the full intention to practice for the purpose of liberating all of parent sentient beings without exception. Furthermore, your practice must be mingled with the three purities, or it will have no essence. The three purities are: the preparation—which is generating the bodhichitta—the actual practice—which is performed with nonconceptual awareness—and the dedication of merit in conclusion.

When we consider the preparation, which is the bodhichitta, there are three approaches. Ideally, a practitioner with superior sensibility will seal his (or her) nonconceptual awareness with the view of mahamudra and maha ati, or the union of the two. Practicing with that view is

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considered to be superior, the very best, because the intention is superior. Actually, with this view, whatever one practices, whether it is generation-stage or completion-stage practice, whether it is tsa, lung, and tige practice—whatever—one will recognize the essence of the practice to be of the nature of pure awareness. With this view, one's practice becomes sublime. A practitioner of middling sensibility will see the practice and all phenomena to be illusory, or like a dream, and will not hold on to it, knowing that none of it has any true inherent existence. The practitioner of inferior sensibility will, at least, be undistracted by objective appearances and able to carry out his accumulation of virtue from beginning to end. Even if one's goal is to accumulate a single round of OM MANI PADME HUNG on the mala, then in the beginning one motivates oneself to do that with concentration, so that all the way through, until the one round has been completed, one concentrates single pointedly, without any mental wandering, upon the objective one is trying to accomplish. So, you should consider these three approaches and determine which one is the best for you.

As for your actual practice, if you can do it according to the secret mantra, which is recognizing that all sentient beings primordially possess the buddha nature, then you will actually be combining both paths of sutra and tantra in your practice.

At the end of our practice, we must instantly dedicate the virtue and merit we have accumulated so that it will not be exhausted. We must not wait at all. We must immediately dedicate it to the enlightenment of all parent sentient beings by thinking, "I offer the root of all the virtue I have just accumulated to all sentient beings for their liberation."

Furthermore, when we dedicate, our dedication must be free from the four causes that exhaust the merit. The first cause is to forget to dedicate our merit if we don't dedicate our merit, it can all be destroyed in a single moment, instantaneously, due to the power of any one of the five conflicting emotions, particularly that of hatred. A single instant of hatred has the power to completely exhaust or eliminate all of one's accumulated virtue. It's just like what happens when a drop of water falls on a red-hot iron rod: in exactly the same way, the virtue instantly sizzles and just evaporates. Remembering that, we should all be very careful about dedicating our virtue, because if we don't, as soon as even a single conflicting emotion arises—particularly hatred—it will exhaust all of our accumulated virtue. Hatred is very powerful.

The second cause is to dedicate improperly or incorrectly. That would be to dedicate for the sake of some worldly success, fame, or profit in this life, or to have a higher rebirth still in cyclic existence, for example, to be reborn as a god or as a powerful human being, someone like a Chakravartin ruler or some other kind of person with great authority and power. All of this is incorrect dedication.

The third cause is to dedicate to impress others. For instance you might make abundant offerings of butter lamps or other types of offerings, yet in your mind you have the feeling that you want to make these extensive offerings so that others can see how much you are able to offer. You're really only dedicating your virtue for the purpose of impressing others, so that they

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will think that you are a very generous person.

The fourth cause is to regret one's accumulations. This would be to feel, after having first accumulated a virtue, that you shouldn't have committed that virtue, and to have some regret about it. That will also destroy your virtuous accumulation.

Through any of these four ways, one's entire accumulation of virtue and merit, that one has worked very hard to accumulate, can be immediately exhausted. Therefore, you should consider how important it is to be free from these defects and to accumulate virtue purely and dedicate it instantly.

If you are a practitioner of superior sensibility, in that you are able to unite the view of mahamudra and maha ati in your practice, then, without wavering from that view, you will simply dedicate in the view; this is excellent. Otherwise, if you are a practitioner of middling sensibility, then, ascertaining the nature of emptiness by recognizing that the accumulation of virtue that you just completed has no true inherent existence, you will dedicate it in the awareness of emptiness. It's like seeing the reflection of form in a mirror. If you do not understand either of these two, then you may dedicate according to the example of the great buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past. This type of dedication, which is quite common is to pray in the following way: "Just as the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past dedicated all of their merit and virtue for the sake of the liberation of all sentient beings, so too shall I. Following their example, emulating them, I shall dedicate my merit accordingly." This type of prayer is also excellent.

If we dedicate our virtue and our merit in this way, they will continue to increase until enlightenment is reached. Whatever our spiritual endeavour might be, if we dedicate it purely and properly, then the merit will just continue to increase and develop all the way to liberation itself—even if it is just the simple practice of repeating the mani mantra. Our merit will never be exhausted if we dedicate it with the bodhichitta intention; it will be with us until we are liberated. However, virtue that we accumulate without the bodhichitta is easily exhausted, especially because it cannot increase. It's an accumulation that will eventually be overpowered by a conflicting emotion. So you should keep this in mind, and you should try to unite the two paths of sutra and tantra by applying the three purities to whatever spiritual endeavour you set out to accomplish. With all this in mind, at this time please listen carefully to the empowerment and receive it as best you can.

Visualize that you are offering the mandala, and I will recite the verses of offering.

Now you will repeat the words of the refuge vow. This refuge is uncommon, in that we take refuge in the five pure airs. Considering one's body which is composed of the chakras and the different branch channels, one takes refuge in one's channels, subtle air, and essential fluid. All of the many channels in the body, including the chakras and the central channel that they are all connected to, are considered to be the refuge of the Sangha. The essential fluid, which both males and females possess, is considered to be the refuge of the Dharma. The pure vital air is the pure essence of the five airs, each one of which corresponds to one the five elements.

There is the earth air, the fire air, the water air, the space air, and the air. The purest, most subtle essence of these five airs, as they move through the five chakras—particularly through the heart and lungs—is the natural essence of the five primordial wisdoms. This essence is so extremely subtle; it's like a horsehair that is split into a hundred parts. This is actually the five primordial wisdoms. There is not a single place in the body where it does not pervade. Although it is principally within the central channel, the main channel, it pervades throughout the entire body and is considered to be the refuge of the Buddha. Thus, we have the inner refuge of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. This is also to recognize the primordial purity of the conflicting emotions. It is only because of the sudden arising of adventitious obscurations that veil their view, their vision, that sentient beings do not see the primordial nature, but when that veil is lifted and they can see, they know that the nature is originally pure and unstained. This nature is the three kayas: the body is the Sangha, the speech is the Dharma, and the mind is the Buddha. This is the way to take ultimate refuge by recognizing that the channels, the winds, and the essential fluids are primordially pure and are in essence the three objects of refuge.

On the path of secret mantra—of which we are all practitioners—then surely we will practice, or are practicing, the path of tsa, lung, and tige: the path of the channels, the vital winds, and the essential fluids. This is the path of transforming the impure channels, winds, and fluids into their inherent nature, which is pure. In this practice, it is essential to maintain the correct physical posture, which is placing the body in a correct way so that the it is straight and not bent over, because our channels have become bent and crooked due to our posture being incorrect. By sitting upright, in a correct posture, the channels align themselves correctly, and when they do, then the movement of the vital air flows through them without any blockage. Furthermore, the vital air then brings the essential fluids through the channels without any obstruction. Thus, if the channels are straight, the wind and the tige—the essential fluid—are also straight, so it is important to maintain a correct posture.

Next then, we will first visualize the central channel, tsa uma, which is in the center of the body, and the two channels to its right and left, roma and kyangma. Then, we visualize the different chakras and the network of channels. It is important to meditate upon all of this very well. Through the course of this type of meditation on the channels we will be able to transform the impure channels into their inherent, pure nature, which is to understand the nirmanakaya. The pure channels are the nirmanakaya, which is also synonymous with the sangha. Through the force of this practice, recognizing this, we establish the state of the nirmanakaya.

Next, in this practice, is the tige, the essential fluid, which also must be purified. Essentially, there is male tige and female tige: the white corresponds to the male and the red to the female. These are the essence seeds that we acquired from our parents at the time of conception. When we practice tsalung, we visualize them within our body. The essence seed for the male, which has taken on the shape of an inverted syllable HAM, is in the crown chakra. The essence seed for the female, which looks like the English syllable A without the slash across the middle, is in the center of the navel chakra. According to Nying Thig, this essence seed is

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called the “ahshad” and according to *Mam Cho* it is called the “ahtung”.

In this way then, we practice the meditation upon the tige, focussing upon this ahshad in the navel, and this then ignites the tummo, the mystic heat. The tummo then blazes up, from the ashad, up and through the central channel, and this causes the male seed—which is the white bodhichitta, the HAM in the crown—to melt and descend. We then experience the descent and ascent of the essential fluids through the chakras. This type of meditation, which is the meditation upon the causal, relative bodhichitta, is also a way for establishing buddhahood. Thus, in dependence upon the relative bodhichitta, we come to realize the ultimate bodhichitta, which is the ultimate nature of tige, the mind of bodhichitta. Through that, we establish the mind of the buddha, because buddha is established only in our mind. Thus, the wind or lung, the vital air, must be established in our mind.

There are many different types of vital air—both pure and impure—that one makes use of in the practice of lung. Just now, because you have an abundance of the experience of the impure air, you must practice to transform it back into its inherent, pure nature. You do this by holding the air properly, according to the instructions for holding the small vase, the large vase, and the gentle vase—all of which are different ways for holding the air. Through this then, you can untie the knots in the channels so that the pure air can flow through them unobstructedly. Right now, the impure air is very strong, and it flows strongly throughout the body. You need to reverse that by learning how to hold the air so that you can control and channel the pure wisdom air and make it stronger rather than allowing it to remain as weak as it is at the present time.

In the course of one day, for a young and healthy person in normal circumstances, the movement of the wind in and out of the body occurs 21,600 times. At this stage, for you most of that movement is the movement of the impure air. Very little of that movement is the movement of the primordial wisdom air. So you need to transform the impure air, and you do that by performing the practice of lung, by performing the corresponding meditations and by holding the air and learning to control it. In this way you will be able to give rise to the primordial wisdom air and increase it, rather than having it be weak and out of control with the impure air taking precedence.

This is the main practice that is performed in anuyoga, and, through this we realize the sambhogakaya. Through this, we recognize that the tsa, lung, and tige, in their primordially pure state, are the ultimate source of refuge. In this practice, and in the practice of considering the five conflicting emotions, the five delusions, to be the five primordial wisdoms, we always consider the three kayas—nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, and dharmakaya—and the fourth kaya as well—the svabhavakaya—and even five kayas. This is the five buddhas. So, we have all these different categories and different ways to relate them to our practice but it is important to not think of them as being separate from one another. It is crucial to understand that, although though they are spoken of as being distinct, they are but one nature.

Anyone who claims to be a practitioner of secret mantra must realize that all of these

apparent distinctions are but different names for the same thing and are not distinct. Even though we consider that the nature of the five delusions is the five wisdoms, we must bring them together as one. If we continue to think that the five delusions are bad, and the five wisdoms are good and pure, and that because of that we need to change the bad to the good, then again we are giving rise to the conceptual distinction between good and bad. On the path of tantra one needs to avoid this. One needs to see that the five delusions and the five wisdoms are one and the same—nothing else.

When we consider the five classes of beings in cyclic existence, we see the three lower realms—the hell realm, the hungry-spirit realm, and the animal realm—and the higher realms—the titan realm, the deva realm, and the human realm—and we see them is ordinary classes of beings. In fact, they are not different from the five buddhas; they are the five buddhas, the expression of the five buddhas. A vajrayana practitioner must see it this way; if not it is really not suitable to claim to be a ngagpa, a Vajrayana practitioner. Furthermore, regarding all these various realms of existence, a person who is really practicing the vajrayana, one who truly carries the view, will see all these realms as the five pure realms. Such a person, when looking at the hell realm, will see it as the Eastern pure realm, whereas an ordinary person will see it as the hell realm. Or, an ordinary person will think that this pure realm is very far away. Such a view is incorrect and unsuitable for a vajrayanist. You must know that they are the same. You must stop making distinctions. You always have two in your mind: good and bad. This dualistic view is what must be changed. And if you cannot realize that just now, that's O.K.; but at least you must believe that this is true and know that one day the time will come when you will truly realize it. In the meantime, you must maintain the confidence of knowing that this is really true.

In general, we can apply this understanding to the concept of existence throughout the three realms. In this world of ours, which is the world of samsara, the world of cyclic existence, according to the path we are taught—whether we believe it or not—that there are three realms: the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. We believe that these realms are actual places where beings go when they take rebirth. But from the vajrayana point of view, these three realms are the actually the three-kaya pure realms and nothing other than that. The desire realm is the nirmanakaya pure realm, the form realm is the sambhogakaya pure realm, and the formless realm is the dharmakaya pure realm. Furthermore, these realms relate to one's body. One's body is the desire realm, one's speech is the form realm, and one's mind is the formless realm. So, these realms are not in any way separate from oneself.

This is the way you should practice vajrayana: with a pure view that sees the one nature, the oneness of all things, that brings all things together into one nature—not with a view that always sees opposites, distinctions. Think about this slowly and carefully, and apply it to your practice. In this way you must train. And this is training is somewhat like training to generate the bodhichitta. We say “generate the bodhichitta”, and in the same way we must train to really be able to practice tantra.

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Once you have established yourself as a vajrayanist, one who is upholding the path of tantra, then it is really no longer suitable to maintain views that are maintained only on the path of sutra, especially if you claim to be a practitioner of dzogchen. Even if you cannot realize these points just now, you must maintain the view and establish the habits that will bring you to realize the truth of this. Thus, you can carry your motivation in such a way that you will be able to maintain the correct awareness, which is unlike the awareness of any other common approach—referring specifically to the view of seeing the nature of all things as one, not two. In tantra, we must realize the nature, not the distinction. We must establish that view, and then allow it to increase and unfold, to the extent that it is never obstructed or suppressed.

For example, you may believe that the sun and the moon exist in the space outside of yourselves but, in fact, they are the view of your own white and red essence seeds. Due to the condition of having the white and red essence in our body, we see the sun and moon outside of ourselves. The perception we have of the external object arises in dependence upon what is within. For example, in the course of a lunar month, on the fifteenth day of that cycle, which is the day of the full moon, the white seed is in the brain and the red seed is in the navel. Then with the waning of the moon, by the thirtieth day of that cycle the white seed has dropped and the red seed has risen, and they come together in the heart. Then they gradually work their way back to their respective places—the white to the crown and the red to the navel. Thus, we have the external perception of the solar and lunar cycles, there is a cycle of every fifteen days and, through that cycle, we have the lunar experience and the solar experience as our outer perception.

While, according to worldly science, there are all manner of explanations for the movement of the planets and so on, according to the tantric view the explanation is very different. By understanding that objective appearances are merely the perception of the motion of one's own wind and fluids within the channels, one will be able to begin to establish the habits that will bring about the understanding of the tantric view, the tantric path, and its results. Thus, with the correct understanding and motivation, with refuge alone one can realize the view of tantra.

Now you will repeat the vows of the bodhichitta. You should generate the aspiration to give rise to the awakened mind to practice the four visions of tōdgal (the direct perception of the nature of truth, the increasing experience of the nature of truth, the full measure of the actualization of pure awareness, and the exhaustion of all dharmas into the dharmata, the nature of truth). Generate the aspiration that you will realize these four visions for the sake of establishing all sentient beings in that same level of realization.

The blessing, or protection cord symbolizes the five primordial wisdoms, and wearing it symbolizes that one is protected from the five conflicting emotions and experiences instead the five wisdoms.

Now, you should sit in the full-lotus posture. Visualize yourself as Kuntuzangpo in union with consort Kuntuzangmo. Visualize the central channel and the four chakras, and all of

the branch channels, and then visualize that the channels are completely filled with the vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet, the ali kali. Also visualize within the channels throughout your entire body a multitude of tiny, miniature Kuntuzangpo yabyums just like yourself. Hold the vase by bringing the air in and down, pull it up from below, and hold it in the navel center. Without any mental wandering, hold the air and meditate in this way.

Now you will be given a name, and you must use it from now on. At this point you should be viewing the entire celestial palace mandala. What is occurring at this time is that up until now you have been wearing the eye covering which, as I already explained, symbolizes the fact of not perceiving one's own pure awareness nature, which has become stained by the veil of one's own ignorance. Then, through his great kindness, the lama will clear that veil of ignorance, that lack of awareness, and this occurs when he waves the golden sceptre. At this moment you will take off the eye covering and you will then have a direct perception of your own rigpa, your own pure awareness nature, and you will see the secret mantra mandala.

The lama's golden sceptre symbolizes the lama's pith oral instructions, the essential instructions that you have received. When you take off the eye covering then, because of having received the pith oral instructions, you are able to have a direct perception of pure awareness. Externally, you will see the celestial palace, and as you view it, you will recognize that the entire external appearance is contained within your own body and is perfected within your own mind. Essentially, everything that we view objectively—all external phenomena—must be brought back into the mind itself, where it is perfected.

For example, let us consider some of the symbolic indications for the external appearance of the palace: The fact that the center of the celestial palace mandala is circular symbolizes the one tige, the one circle, which is the ground of the dharmata, the nature of truth. The essential characteristic of the nature of truth is that it is completely void of the need for any remedial force or antidote, which means that it is completely void of any kind of contrivance. The ground is as it is and is to be left as it is; it cannot be contrived or purified or changed in any way. The fact that the palace is square in shape and has four corners symbolizes the fact that the four elements are of the nature of pure light and are indivisible with the pure essence of the vital air as well. In this way, when you see the celestial palace, you should recognize that each and every one of its aspects is a symbolic indication of the pure awareness nature of one's own mind. As you perceive it just now, this is exactly how you should perceive it.

What you will be hearing next is a description of the symbolic indications, the meaning of the symbolism behind the different materials and substances within the mandala, particularly with reference to how they correspond to the pure nature. The purpose of this is simply to illustrate the importance of establishing the vajrayana view. When you see all the different materials in the mandala, like the peacock feathers, crystals, umbrellas, victory banners, and so forth, you shouldn't see them as ordinary materials. You should understand that they are symbolic indications of the

pure, inherent nature of the mind, which you should then recognize through those symbolic indications. For example, the five vases symbolize the

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five buddhas, which is one's own inherent nature, and the five little skirts or the ornamentation on the vases symbolize the five consorts.

So, I will just read through the description without going into any kind of explanation about it. Even if you don't know the meaning behind all the different materials, the main point is to abandon ordinary perception and give rise to pure perception. You should all be seeing one another as male and female deities—and this doesn't mean only those of you here, but in general all of your Dharma brothers and sisters too.

Now, as I recite the syllables of the following mantra, understand that those syllables are actually within the different channels in the different places in the body. Then, as you receive the blessed water, you will place it upon each of those places, and this brings in the blessing to those syllables in those places.

Now, to explain briefly the essential meaning of the vase empowerment you have just received: The five vases correspond to the five places, and you have touched the blessed water from the vases to the five places, blessing the channels and the chakras in those places. And within those channels are the syllables which you just heard me recite. Right now, all those channels are knotted and gnarled because of your obscurations. So when the blessed water from the different vases enters into the various networks of channels, all of the obscurations in those channels are purified. Through this blessing and purification then, the primordial wisdom channels open up and the syllables within the channels are revealed. As a result of this empowerment, you will be able to perceive the syllables in the channels, which will give you the power of composition, the ability to write about Dharma and elucidate the meaning of Dharma in a way that will be of benefit to others.

Now we will begin the empowerment of introduction through metaphor. Listen carefully, for you will be asked several questions. To begin with, consider the following questions: “In the sphere of space, do you see the precious wish-fulfilling jewel of the sun and moon? In the space do you see the rainbow captured by the lasso of wind? Do you see the wish-fulfilling jewel in the ocean riding the crystal horse in the mandala of the sun and moon? In the city of the five elements, do you see the soldiers of the six classes going to the peak of Mt. Mehru? Do you see the crystal man trapped in the jail of the narrow passageway of the three realms?” “By circling the three realms instantly, do you see the man sleeping in his own home?”

The answer to the first question, the first metaphor—“In the sphere of space, do you see the precious wish-fulfilling jewel of the sun and moon?”—is that the display of one's own pristine awareness appears as the external sphere of space. We usually consider space to be external, something outside, but in this context the term, “the sphere of space”, refers to one's own rigpa, one's own pure awareness nature, which is free from any elaboration or limitation. Thus, the “sphere of space” refers to the inner space of rigpa. The “wish-fulfilling jewel” refers to the external appearance, which is the self luminosity, the display, of pure awareness, that appears to be in the external space. This is somewhat like the sun and the light which comes from it: the sun corresponds to the space and the light that comes from it—which

illuminates the world—is the jewel. So, in the context of this first metaphor, rigpa is the space, and the natural light of space which illuminates everything is the display of rigpa, and this is what is meant by “wish-fulfilling jewel”.

To understand what is being indicated here, it is necessary to understand, something about the four lights of tödgal. The first light indicates the place where the mind remains. Through the practice of *ju nei dro sum*, which is the practice of investigating to determine the place from which the mind arises, the place where it remains, and the place to which it passes, we come know that, ultimately, there is no mind to be found, but, from the relative point of view, we consider that the mind remains in the heart. In tödgal meditation then, the first light is the light of the heart. The second light, which refers to the mind, is the light of the pure wisdom channel. This pure wisdom channel is connected to the heart and runs up behind the heart and lungs close to the spine, and then comes up with the roma and kyangma into the skull, and then comes down around and goes directly into the actual eye organs. So this second light refers to the light of this pure wisdom channel. What we perceive externally, phenomena that seem to be outside ourselves, is perceived through the connection of this channel with the heart, which is rigpa, pure awareness. Thus, pure awareness is actually viewed externally, and that view actually comes through this channel.

The third light refers to what we see externally, which is the light of the stainless sphere. Again, this indicates space—but do not mistake it and think that it means space in the ordinary sense.

In the practice of tödgal, we assume the three postures, and employ the different gazes. After practicing for some time, truly, and correctly, with the posture and the gaze and the meditation exactly as they should be, one will be gazing at the space, looking and looking, and the space will appear very clear, without a single cloud. Then, suddenly, as if a curtain had been parted, a brilliance and a clarity that had hitherto not been perceived will be perceived. This is sheer luminosity, and it is not the space that one usually perceives: it is the light of the stainless sphere. In this, one perceives the basis, which is the foundational tige. This is the meaning of the “wish-fulfilling jewel”, and it is called “Kuntuzangpo ground tige”. It is the essential foundation of the primordial Buddha, and it appears as the light of the stainless sphere. So in the question, “In the sphere of space do you see the precious wish-fulfilling jewel of the sun and moon?”, sun and moon refer to the two eyes, because it is through that path of the light of the pure wisdom channel connected to the light of the heart which is viewing the light of the stainless sphere that one is then able to experience the essence of the foundation of Kuntuzangpo through the eyes.

The fourth light, which is the light of the wisdom gate, is the two eyes. Through the light of the wisdom gate one experiences the first of the four visions of tödgal practice: the direct perception of the dharmata. Then, from that, the other three visions arise. The second vision is the increasing experience of that direct perception, the third vision is rigpa, pure awareness, reaching its ultimate limit, its fruition, which leads to the fourth vision, which is the exhaustion

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of all dharmas into the nature as it is, into the dharmata. In the experience of the first vision, which is the direct perception of the nature of truth through the light of the wisdom gate, one perceives the mind externally—and this is an aspect of dzogchen practice that is specific only to dzogchen and is considered exalted. It is the fact that the mind or rigpa can be seen outside, perceived externally, and what is seen are the two other lights or visions. One will experience the light of the empty tige, which is like seeing a single molecule, a single circle, and then a chain of molecules. Of these two visions that are seen in the external space, it is the latter, the vision of the chain of molecules, that is actually pure awareness.

Now, the second indication or question was, “In the space do you see the rainbow captured by the lasso of wind?” Again in the context of the tödgal practice, the “rainbow” refers to the light of the empty tige, which is perceived in the expanse of space. “Captured by the lasso of wind” refers to the practice of holding the air—either bumchen or bumchung—in the correct posture, for tödgal. Through this, when one becomes motionless, or comes to in a motionless state, the vital air relaxes and becomes like a lasso. One will then be able to ascertain the empty tige, motionless in the space.

Now, the third indication or question is: “Do you see the wish-fulfilling jewel in the ocean riding the crystal horse in the mandala of the sun and moon?” The “ocean” refers to the heart, the clear light primordial wisdom heart. So, in the ocean, which is the heart, is the wish-fulfilling jewel, which is rigpa, pure awareness. Thus, in the ocean of the clear light in the center of the heart is the jewel light of one’s own radiance. “Mounting the supreme crystal horse” refers to the light channel: the light of the wisdom gate, the wisdom channel, that comes up through the two eyes. The “mandala of the sun and moon” refers to the two eyes, to the visual, visionary experience that one perceives through the eyes. Thus, mounting the supreme crystal horse of the light channel and riding it in the mandala of the sun and moon, meditating upon the ever-increasing experience of vision, one is able to understand the meaning of this indication.

After meditating for a long time (months and years) on the vision of the direct perception and experiencing the increase of that visionary experience, one will see a single molecule, a single tige. Later one will see three, and then later five, and then, as one’s vision gradually expands, that increase of the experience becomes the third vision of tödgal, which is when rigpa has reached its limit or its full measure. One may then see an image of the body or presence of Vajrasattva, then Vairochana, and then eventually all five buddhas are perceived appearing directly in the space. When this experience occurs, one should have total confidence that this is the third vision.

The fourth question is: “In the city of the five elements do you see the soldiers of the six classes going to the peak of Mt Mehru?” The “city of the five elements” refers to the seed or potency of the five elements that we possess. These elements are actually the five primordial wisdoms. The ordinary perception of these five elements is the perception of the six realms. If the body and mind comprised of the ordinary five elements exist, then one will perceive the boundless appearance of the six realms, all of which is only one own projection, one’s own

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phenomena. “The soldiers of the six classes” refers to the mental body of the six classes as one’s own appearance. This is the motion of war, the disturbance or the war of this misconception. “Going to the peak of Mt. Mehru” refers to the confused mind, the creator of the six realms. As soon as one has fallen into confusion, then the entire phenomenal projection of the six realms arises, with all the various attendant conflicting emotions of happiness and sadness and inconceivable experiences of suffering. Thus, all of this motion of the confused mind is the war, and all of the various experiences, of pleasure and pain and so forth, are the warriors, the soldiers—this is like what soldiers experience. As, traditionally, Mt. Mehru is considered to be the support of our world system, the metaphor of Mt. Mehru is used to refer to the grasping mind of attachment to this phenomenal existence: the grasping attachment of the confused mind is the support for the experience of the six realms.

Then we are asked the question: “Do you see the crystal man trapped in the jail of the narrow passageway of the three realms?” The “crystal man” refers to the self-radiance of primordial wisdom, *rigpa yeshe*, which is not separate from the three doors. I have already explained how the three realms are contained within one’s own three doors of body, speech, and mind. Thus, “the crystal man trapped in the jail of the narrow passageway of the three realms” refers to self-radiance trapped in the three doors. Through *tödgal* practice then, by maintaining the postures and the gazes, self-radiance is seen as the display of the measure of pure awareness.

The last question is “By circling the three realms instantly, do you see the man sleeping in his own home?” By circling the three realms, through the *tödgal* practice, within the body—which is likened to a city of five lights—one experiences the spontaneous accomplishment of the self-appearance of the eight entranceways. These are the eight spontaneous accomplishments, and this is the subject of an entire teaching in itself, which I cannot go into at this time. Of the eight spontaneous accomplishments, six of are impure and two are pure. This is the experience of the inner dissolution of the empty form of the warriors of the six classes arriving at the precious, spontaneously accomplished inner sphere of the peak of Mt. Mehru. In this experience, the originally pure ground and spontaneous accomplishment are brought together. Spontaneous accomplishment dissolves into the originally pure ground. At this point one no longer sees the images—the *kayas*—or the primordial wisdom light in front. Everything becomes exhausted into the *dharmata* itself.

The “inner sphere of the peak of Mt. Mehru” refers to the exhaustion of all dharmas, all phenomena into the nature of truth. The confused mind of concepts and their counterparts are arrested; and primordial wisdom’s self-appearance, which is referred to as “the man of the three doors,” is instantly liberated. This is what is meant by “circling the three realms”. By stirring the three realms of *samsara* from the depths, like the light of a crystal condensed within it, the visions, appearances, light, and bodies are all dissolved into the spontaneously accomplished sphere; and this – the *dharmakaya* experience – is like going to one’s own house to sleep, unmoving from the original foundation where all confusion is pure and where all

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confused concepts have become exhausted or arrested in this immutable place of original purity. This is what is meant by “Do you see the man sleeping in his own house?” That is the fourth vision of tōdgal.

The entire meaning of tōdgal is contained within the experience of the four visions: the direct perception of the nature of truth, the increasing experience, the total measure of the arising of rigpa, and the exhaustion of all phenomena into the nature of truth. To experience this it is necessary to receive the true instructions on how to practice, and then, stage by stage, follow through with the practice and actually accomplish it. Then, at the time of your death you will not have to leave your body behind—it will dissolve. And that result is entirely up to your ability—or lack of it—to practice. So, this is something you need to learn to do, and then slowly begin to train in it.

Now we have come to the unelaborate section. To begin with, remove your upper garment, press your palms together at your heart, and gaze at the heart of the lama. Visualize that in your own heart is a mala of the all kali encircling your heart. Next, you will recite ‘AH...’, and you should consider that your body becomes filled with white AHs. At this time you will use your new name. When I recite AH you will say your name, and consider that all of the AHs dissolve into your four chakras. Then I am going to come and press your eyelids, and at that point you will visualize that your entire body is filled with the consonants. Then visualize that your body is filled with white OMs and that light rays radiate from them, and then the entire universe becomes filled with white OMs.

Now visualize HUNG and I will come around and press the left nipple of the males and the right nipple of the females. Remain in equipoise momentarily. And consider that the words I am reciting are actually coming from the vase.

Now this is the very unelaborate section. You should let the upper garment down, and visualize the lama to be blue in color with fangs, trident, and bone ornaments. In the crown is a golden syllable LAM, in the forehead a blue AH below the chin a golden SU; at the throat a smoke-colored KHANG, at the two breasts a golden LA and HA; at the navel a red RAM; and at the soles of both feet green YAMs. Then visualize in the heart of the lama a blue syllable HUNG from which light radiates into the hearts of the disciples. This is the same as in the earlier section when the tormas are offered to begin the *Korde Rushen*.

Now, stand up, take off your upper garment, press your palms together at your heart, and stare into the lama’s heart. Face to the east and feel that you are going to the eastern pure realm. Ask the question, “Self, is there a goer?” Now face to the west and look into space. You can put your upper garment back on, and sit in the full Lotus posture. As before, visualize the five sun mandalas in space: visualize them rising gradually higher and higher and then dissolving into space.

Now, to complete the empowerment, is the extremely unelaborate section. Just look directly into the heart of the lama without any distractions. Assume the snow lion’s posture and generate the fervent wish to go to the eastern pure realm, the Pure Realm of Manifest

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Joy(Ngonpar Gawa'i). Now assume the elephant posture and gaze into the south with the aspiration to go straight into the southern pure realm. Now sit in the rishi posture facing to the west, and you will be going to the western pure realm. Now sit in the vulture's couching posture and face to the northern pure realm. Now turn around and sit in the full lotus posture, which represents going to the nirmanakaya pure realm. Now generate the aspiration to go to the sambhogakaya pure realm. Now sit in the snow lion's posture with the aspiration to go to the dharmakaya pure realm. Sit normally, tuck your chin down a little bit, look out and gaze upward, and stop the motion of your wind a little bit. With your right hand, press the channel above your right eye, like this, and look into space with your left eye. Now you can put your hand down. Now look down. Now look to the side—the men to the right and the women to the left. Now the extremely unelaborate empowerment is finished and this concludes the empowerments for today.

Because this is the profound path, if one has the power to persevere with diligence in the practice, then in one lifetime liberation will be achieved. Otherwise, if one does not have quite so much diligence, then at best one will definitely be liberated in the bardo, the intermediate period, or at least after one or two lifetimes. Having met with profound path, you should feel extremely happy: you should rejoice and celebrate on this account. The pressing on the different channels—the eye channel, the ear channel, and so forth—was done to suppress the impure channels and to open the pure channels of primordial wisdom so that the pure awareness and the spaciousness can arise through that opening of the wisdom channels. This is necessary to practice tödgal—they are aspects of the tödgal path.

(Final words of empowerment)

The empowerment is complete, so now you can go home and be happy.

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Day Three: *the Bima Nyingthig*

We will now begin with the *Bima Nyingthig* empowerment. This *Bima Nyingthig* empowerment is very similar to the Lama Yangthig, and, in fact, His Holiness Khyentse Rinpoche has said that the *Yabshi* is considered to be complete even if the *Bima Nyingthig* is not bestowed. In other words, it is O.K. to not give the *Bima Nyingthig*, but I will give it so that you can receive the complete transmission. I will give it in a concise way though—so it will not take us long today—and I will try to give explanations as best as I can.

In general, within the *Yabshi*, although the wording of the various empowerments is different from empowerment to empowerment they are all arranged in pretty much the same way. As we begin today, and as you have been instructed every day, you should generate the bodhichitta. You should aspire to receive this profound empowerment of the clear light dzogchen for the purpose of establishing all parent sentient beings in the state of buddhahood. You should receive the empowerment with the full intention to perform the practices of clear light ati yoga to accomplish your prayer, your aspiration, to benefit all parent sentient beings who are equal to limitless space. So with this aspiration, and having generated the bodhicitta, you should then recognize the five endowments: the endowment of the teacher, the place, the Dharma, the time, and the assembly. You should train in pure vision and in that state of pure vision you should listen carefully to the stages of the empowerment.

Now, visualize the four chakras in your body, and with awareness of the tsa, lung, and tige (the channels, vital winds, and essential fluid), go for refuge.

And now, to receive the bodhichitta vow, recall the four visions of tōdgal, the of practice: the vision of the direct perception of the dharmata, the vision of the increasing experience, the vision of pure awareness having met its fullness, and finally the vision of the exhaustion of all dharmas into the dharmata.

Next is the descent of the blessings. For this, everyone please sit in the seven-point posture, and carefully visualize the four chakras and the network of channels within the body. Within these channels, visualize all of the syllables, and all the different molecules of light (tigles), as well as miniature Kuntuzangpos and Kuntuzangmos in union, completely filling your body within the channels. You should also hold the vital air as you have been taught—by sucking up from below, bringing down from above, and maintaining it.

(Words of empowerment)

Now you should visualize in the space in front a beautiful jewelled throne upon which is a lotus, sun, and moon seat upon which appears the condensed essence of all buddhas: Buddha Vajrasattva. Meditate upon Vajrasattva in the space in front. He is white in color, with one face and two hands, and is holding a vajra and bell. He is surrounded by a vast assembly of lineage lamas. With single-pointed concentration, without any mental wandering, pray to these lineage lamas over and over again. Then, through the force of your prayer. Vajrasattva

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transforms into five-colored light rays which dissolve into you, and self-nature and the deity become one.

Next, visualize your body to be a single white syllable AH. Maintaining this awareness, recite “AH”. After this, consider that the immediate environment in all the surrounding space becomes completely filled with AHs—they are simply everywhere. Then visualize that the Sanskrit vowels and consonants (the ali kali) also appear, and that all of these syllables—the AH and the ali kali—condense into an orb of light which then dissolves into you, and you enter into a state of nonconceptual awareness. “AH, AH AH...”

Now you will perform the same visualization using the syllable OM. First visualize that your body is a single OM, and then repeat “OM” many times, and visualize that countless OMs fill all directions of space. All of these syllables eventually dissolve into an orb of light which then dissolves into you, and you enter into nonconceptual awareness. “OM, OM, OM...”

Similarly, now visualize your body to be a large blue HUNG. As you repeat “HUNG”, phenomenal existence fills up with HUNGS, which later dissolve and absorb back into you, and you enter into nonconceptual awareness. “HUNG, HUNG, HUNG...”

Now meditate momentarily upon the fundamental nature of emptiness of the great perfection. Allow body, speech, and mind to enter into that awareness.

Next is the extremely unelaborate empowerment. Sit straight and allow your mind to relax in its natural place. Focus upon the lama without any mental wandering. Assume the snow lion posture and face to the east with the aspiration that you are going to the eastern pure realm of Vajrasattva. “AH, AH, AH...” Now face to the south in the elephant posture with the aspiration to travel to the pure realm of the southern direction. “AH, AH, AH...” Now sit in the rishi posture facing west with the aspiration that you are going to the western pure realm. “AH, AH, AH...” Now face to the north in the vulture’s posture with the aspiration to go to the northern pure realm. “AH, AH, AH...” Finally, sit in the full lotus position in meditative equipoise with the aspiration that you are going to the central pure realm.

You have now received the empowerments of the Yabshi. In the dzogchen, other than this, there is no greater cycle of empowerments to be received. The doctrine of the clear light great perfection atiyoga is the essence of the atiyoga, and all of it is contained in the *Yabshi*. When it comes to dzogchen, there is nothing that is not found in the Yabshi. Generally, if one wishes to practice trekchöd and tödgal, there are many other cycles that one can practice—like the *Nyingma Gyud Bum*, and others. Due to the great kindness of the omniscient Longchenpa, we have the *Yabshi*. Because the dzogchen is so concise in the *Yabshi*, the *Yabshi* is considered to be an easier method to relate to. The essence of the teachings are contained in it in such a way that one is able to correctly establish the view, the meditation, and the conduct, and then achieve the ultimate results very swiftly if one goes on to practice. This is a practice that one can embrace for life; and having met with it, basically there is nothing else that one need search for as far as the achievement of enlightenment is concerned. There is nothing more profound than

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the Yabshi.

Long ago, in the very beginning, way before there were even the names “samsara” and “nirvana”, when, in fact, neither of these two distinctions even existed, there was Kuntuzangpo yab-yum, one’s own nature, which is nothing other than the state of perfected buddhahood. And dwelling in that originally pure awareness nature were the six specific dharmas of the dzogchen, the display of that pure awareness, which are the five buddhas and their consorts dwelling in the dharmakaya, and the manifestations of Vajrasattva as the sambhogakaya. The realization of the nature of the mind, of that which is Kuntuzangpo, was naturally self-originating as Vajrasattva through the blessing of the manifestation of the body, speech, and mind of enlightened awareness. Not a single word was necessary. Vajrasattva simply self- originated with all of the blessings of the original nature as the display of that nature.

Then Vajrasattva appeared in the blazing charnel grounds to the nirmanakaya Garab Dorje, and by way of verbal indication he gave these teachings of the pure awareness nature, the perfected nature, to Garab Dorje. Thus, Garab Dorje is considered to be the human being who opened the door to the atiyoga in this world.

Then, by way of direct introduction to the dharmata, Garab Dorje passed the teachings on to Lobpon Shiri Singha. In that transmission the pure awareness nature was directly perceived at the very instant it was introduced. Lobpon Shiri Singha then passed this introduction on to Lobpon Padmasambhava, Guru Rinpoche. This transmission took place by way of just remaining in the fundamental nature as it is without a single thought, idea, or any aspect of mental activity, free from mental fabrications entirely. In that state of awareness it was passed directly into the mind of Guru Rinpoche.

When Guru Rinpoche came into Tibet he met with Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal. Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal made a great ganachakra feast and 100,000 dakinis assembled. Knowing that Guru Rinpoche, because of his indications, held the *Khandro Nyingthig* transmission, Yeshe Tsogyal formally requested that he bestow upon them all the blessing of the *Khandro Nyingthig*. Guru Rinpoche was very pleased that she had made this request, and he granted her request. So at this time, to the gathering of hundreds and thousands of dakinis, the *Khandro Nyingthig* was revealed by way of verbal indication and symbolic indication.

At this same ganachakra feast, King Trisong Detsen was present, along with his daughter, Longchen Pema Latrentsal, and it was there that she passed away. At that time, Yeshe Tsogyal rose to speak and said that samsara has no essence, that everything is impermanent. Gun Rinpoche also spoke about impermanence, and made many prophecies about future events. Then he wrote the syllable HRI on Longchen Pema Latrentsal’s heart, and said her name. Thus, her consciousness was summoned back, and she came back to life. Again he gave the empowerment, transmissions, and teachings, and he predicted that, after many lifetimes, this *Khandro Nyingthig* would be revealed in the world at the appropriate time for the benefit of liberating the sentient beings who would have the karmic affinity with it at that time. Many lifetimes later, Longchenpa was born, and it was Longchenpa who revealed the

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transmissions of the Khandro Nyingthig.

As for the Bima Nyingthig, when Guru Rinpoche was at Samye Monastery with King Trisong Detsen, they invited 500 of the greatest Indian pandits to come. Of all of these, Bimalamitra was considered to be the greatest. When he came to Tibet, he brought the teachings of the clear light atiyoga and bestowed upon Guru Rinpoche and the twenty-five disciples the teachings of the *Zabmo Nyingthig*, the profound teachings in the *Nyingthig* cycle, and many other teachings. These teachings were then buried as termas. Bimalamitra later went to China, to the Riwo Tse-Nga, the Five-Peaked Mountain, and he died there. At the time of his passing, he prophesied that he would be reborn each hundred years, and he was later reborn as Longchenpa.

So, while Longchenpa is well known to be the emanation of Pema Latrentsal, King Trisong Detsen's daughter, he is also considered to be an emanation of Bimalamitra. Thus, in his compiling of the *Bima Nyingthig*, because he is an emanation of Bimalamitra, this material comes out of his own mind—some of it are the very termas he revealed as Bimalamitra. In fact, if one should want to receive the teachings that Bimalamitra presented in Tibet, they can all be found in the Bima Nyingthig; there is nothing missing. Furthermore, because there had been some breaking and deterioration of the samaya with the passage of time, Longchenpa, knowing this, revealed these works again. He then revised them, re-collected them, and made a new version. So we can consider this new version of Longchenpa's to be the most authentic.

Longchenpa's guru was the great mahasiddha, Kumaradza, and Kumaradza's guru was Melong Dorje. All of these gurus are masters of the highest dzogchen realization; they accomplished nothing less than the rainbow body. Literally, they dissolved their bodies into clear light. Such is the power of the *Nyingthig* doctrine.

Longchenpa is the owner, or holder, of the *Nyingthig*. He actually received it from his teacher, Kumaradza, who gave him the entire Nyingthig teachings without exception. The day before Longchenpa and Kumaradza met, Kumaradza dreamt that a beautiful bird was coming to him. This bird was unlike any other bird he had ever seen or even heard of. It was completely astonishing in all its aspects and characteristics. It was surrounded by a vast retinue of thousands of other birds. Then, all of the birds flew off into space into the four directions, taking the Dharma with them.

The next day, when Longchenpa arrived, when Kumaradza saw him he was immediately filled with happiness, and he told him straight away. "You are going to be the holder, the owner of the *Nyingthig* doctrine. You will carry it into all directions of space. You will propagate it extensively."

He then gave him all of the teachings. He gave him everything that was in his mind; it was like pouring the contents of one vase into another. Longchenpa became filled with everything that Kumaradza knew. Then, in accordance with the command of his guru, he compiled all of those teachings into the volume known as *Lama Yangthig*. He then compiled the essence of those teachings into the volumes known as *Zabmo Yangthig*. So this is the origin for the

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four empowerments that you have received, and it is all due to the great kindness of the omniscient Longchenpa.

From Longchenpa there are many great dzogchen lineage holders who have passed the transmissions down over the centuries. All of them were great realized beings who went off into retreat in uncertain places to practice. Also due to his kindness, Longchenpa composed many commentaries and explanations on the meaning of these essential texts to enable practitioners in the future to have explanations for their study and practice.

Longchenpa's birth was unlike that of an ordinary human being; he was born just like the buddha that he is and was. He was born into the family lineage of Gyalwa Chöyang, one of the 25 disciples. Right after he was conceived, his mother dreamt that a white snow lion with two suns at the point between his eyebrows entered her womb and she was told that this was the upholder of the doctrine. Later, before he was born, the primordial wisdom dakini, Remati, appeared to her in the form of a black woman holding a sword, and she told her, "A being is going to be born to you who will be the upholder of the doctrine of the dakinis." And then she disappeared. The mother didn't know whether this being that had appeared to her had been a human or a god, but it was definitely a true appearance that she experienced.

On another occasion, after Longchenpa's birth, his mother was out working in the fields and she was caught in a sudden downpour. In her confusion, she ran back to her house but she forgot to bring her child, the infant Longchenpa. Just a little bit later, the same black woman holding a sword came to the house, and she was carrying the child. She scolded the mother and almost struck her with her sword: "You don't care about this child who is the upholder of the dakini's doctrine?" She returned the child to her and then disappeared. Thus, the dakinis protected and upheld Longchenpa as a child and even while he was in the womb.

By the age of five he was extremely learned; he was skilled in all the sciences and knowledge without even having to study. When he was 16 years old he had a vision the dakini, Yangchenma. She told him that without training or study he would come to know everything naturally and spontaneously. Yet still he went everywhere to study; he studied both Nvingma and Sarma; he trained in all the different schools and studied with many different teachers learning as much as he possibly could.

Also when he was 16, the dakini Yangchenma held him in her hand and, for seven days took him and showed him the different pure realms. She took him to the peak of Mt. Mehru and to the god's realm, where he had inconceivable experiences. When he was 27 he met his guru Kumaradza. and at that time the expanse of his realization awakened, and there was nothing that he did not know. After that he had visions of each and every one of his meditational deities, both peaceful and wrathful, with their entire retinues of dakinis, dharmapalas, and so forth. All of them, without exception, appeared to him directly, one by one, just like one human appearing to another, and gave him transmissions and instructions. This is how it was for him for each one of his visions and experiences. Yeshe Tsogyal herself appeared to him directly, and whenever Longchenpa and his disciples would gather to have a ganachakra feast, she would

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actually come, and she would be the chödpen and all the students would be able to see her. Not only that, Mamo Ekadzati would also come and attend the ganachakra and all the students would see her too.

In this way the blessings of Longchenpa are truly inconceivable. Beyond all trace of doubt, he is the true holder of the *Nyingthig*. Because we are practitioners of dzogchen, he is our unmistakable object of supplication. He is incomparable, unlike any other. All of these emanations have told him that, more than any other dzogchen lama, he is the greatest. He has been authorized again and again by Guru Rinpoche and Bimalamitra, who continue to appear to him to give him spiritual authorization and authority. Surely, if we supplicate him, we will not be mistaken.

Many miraculous signs occurred throughout the course of Longchenpa's life. At one time a temple that he had built fell down, and he was rebuilding it. At the time of performing the suppression, the demons jumped out, and he transformed himself into Guru Drakpo, the wrathful Guru Rinpoche. The experience was so frightening that some of his students just fainted on the spot, but others were able to have faith and receive the vision of seeing the actual Guru Drakpo. Therefore, as Longchenpa is the greatest upholder of the *Nyingthig* and dzogchen, we should pray to him unceasingly in order to be able to accomplish our practice since we all aspire to accomplish the dzogchen. When he passed into nirvana, many wondrous signs manifested: for two months rainbows appeared in the space unceasingly, there were earthquakes, gods and goddesses appeared in space, different musical instruments and flowers rained down from the heavens, and the smell of incense permeated the atmosphere. It was astonishing.

Usually, it is considered to be harmful to the rainbow body transference for it to occur in a great gathering; it is apparently meant to occur in a more private way. But, as Longchenpa was preparing to pass into the rainbow body, Bimalimitra and Ekadzati both appeared and requested that, for the sake of sentient beings, he gather the disciples in a vast assembly and give them his final teachings and transmissions, that he once more display his miraculous concerned activity in a great gathering rather than transfer to the rainbow body in solitude. And this is what he did. He did not transfer into the rainbow body, although he certainly could and was ready to do it. Nonetheless, at the time of his passing he had all of the other signs of accomplishment that are just as great and just as high.

Thus, to have made a connection with such a teacher by receiving these empowerments, you should truly rejoice. You should always make offerings to Longchenpa, on a regular basis. You should prostrate to him and supplicate to him. You should meditate upon him above the crown of your head. If you do this, then it is certain that, through his grace and kindness, the different signs of experience and realization on the path will arise and develop.

When king Trisong Detsen's daughter died, the king was very upset, and Guru Rinpoche gave him some well-known advice concerning the essencelessness of samsara and the impermanence of cyclic existence. Truly, this is something that we should think of, always.

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Samsara has absolutely no essence at all—wherever one is born in the three realms, it is just like that. So, as Dharma practitioners, you must begin to see that the attachments you have to your loved ones, your wealth, your endowments, your possessions, and so forth, are truly without any essence at all.

It is so easy for you to be partial towards those you are close to, particularly to your relatives because they are your relatives: You think, “My parents, my mother, my father, my sisters, my brothers, my uncles, my aunts, all of them—they are mine. They are my family.” You feel tremendous attachment to them, and you grasp to them because you feel you are one, one group, one family, one group of relatives. You like to see them as much as you can, and you are happy when you see them, and you have a lot of happy times with them. This is all just fine while it lasts, but inevitably the happiness of being together leads to the sorrow of separation. No matter how great or strong your attachment and attraction may be to your group of loved ones, in accordance with the truth of impermanence, the time will come when you must separate, and that time is totally unknown. And just think about those of us who have come together here, now. Many of us, a few days ago did not even know each other. Some of us came from India, China, and other far off places, and before this lifetime even, maybe some of us came from the hell realm, the gods realm, or other realms. In fact, our past lives are unknown to us. The fact that we have come together now as a group, as a Dharma family for these few days, is due to the winds of our karma.

All of our karmas are different, and our coming together here, now, is like a great wind that arises in the fall, blowing up all the leaves and moving them in all directions and then passing, and all the leaves land and settle in new places. The winds of karma have blown us all here for a short time, and when they blow again, our gathering will be dispersed and we will all separate. We will all move on to other places according to the winds of our own karma. This is how it is.

It is just like this with our parents and relatives, with our friends, with our Dharma families; all groups, all gatherings, are impermanent. When they will end, we do not know. When we will die, we do not know. We know we will die; the time of our death is unknown to us. Where we will go when we die, we do not know. We do not even know to what realm we will go. Those to whom we are so attached now, will not be seen anymore after they have died. We will not know where they have gone, and even if we might see them after they have taken rebirth, we will not recognize them. We will not even have the capability to know who they are. This is the nature of all compounded things: they are impermanent, and it is always like this.

As a Dharma practitioner, it is extremely important to realize these truths. You should contemplate upon impermanence again and again so that you can abandon all attachment to this world, because all of the difficulties that you endure in this world in pursuit of your worldly activities will not benefit you spiritually. You spend most of your life trying to get ahead, trying to secure comfortable shelter, enough food to eat, and clothes to wear. But just think about it: you already had those things a long time ago, yet still you were not satisfied. So

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you continued to spend all of your time in these same pursuits. Because you can never be satisfied, the cycle is unending. That is why these pursuits will not bring any benefit.

I am not saying that you should give up caring for yourself give up making sure that you have food and clothing and shelter, because, of course, you need these things. What you do need to give up is your inability to be satisfied. You have to start being satisfied with what you have, and recognize that, as a Dharma practitioner, when you have provided for your food and clothing and shelter, on the worldly plane that is enough, and that you should then devote yourself to your Dharma practice. Spending so much time pursuing worldly goals, careers, wealth, being attached to your status and position—this is all just the round of cyclic existence. It is meaningless, pointless, and it brings you no benefit at all.

For the most part, you cannot be like the great lamas of the past and just give it all up and go off to some isolated wild place and meditate. But what you can do is to begin to train your minds so that you can be satisfied with what we have. You can train to lessen your strong attachments to your family and your loved ones and to your groups—to all of those that you think belong to you—and you can meditate more upon impermanence. You can spend much more of your time practising Dharma rather than always postponing your Dharma practice, rather than putting it off for some later time, as though there was always going to be a later time for you to get around to practise.

The essence of Dharma is to tame the mind; this is the teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha taught 84,000 categories of teachings, all of which are condensed into the nine vehicles, or the three vehicles, and are contained in the Tripitaka: the vinaya, which is taught to subdue desire, the sutra, which is to subdue anger, and the abhidharma to subdue delusion. Thus, within the Dharma there is a teaching to subjugate any emotional conflict. You must study and learn, and see how you can incorporate these teachings into your lives; on a daily basis, to subdue your emotional conflicts, if you have been practicing Dharma for some time, and you see that your desire and attachment have definitely decreased, then you know that the Dharma is working for you because it is taming your mind. On the other hand, if you have been practicing Dharma for some time and you find that you are just the same as you were when you started, then something is wrong, because the Dharma is meant to bring you benefit, if this is the case, then you have to check up on yourself. You have to examine your mind and your Dharma practice. If you are truly practicing Dharma, there can be no way that there will not be some progress, and this progress occurs within your own mind. You should become more humble and have fewer reactions and fewer attachments. You will actually become a very humble and gentle person.

Even a lama will have to check up on this. A lama is an object of veneration, an object of prostration, an object of offering, an object of praise. Allowing all of this to happen, while it is happening the lama should think, “Well, they are prostrating to me, they are praising me, they are making offerings to me. So what do I have that is worthy of that veneration? Am I able to live up to this veneration I am receiving? Am I a suitable object to receive offerings and

prostrations? What are my qualities? Are my qualities great enough for that?" Lamas should always check and see in this way. Is it so or is it not? And if it is the case that it is not, then the lama should do something about the situation.

Basically, as Dharma practitioners, you should always try to take a humble position. This is especially true because, even if you try to be in a high, exalted position or try to be wealthy or try to have some fame or profit or glory, even if your fame is as vast as space, still in samsara the only thing that can really bring you some happiness and satisfaction is to have good health, enough food to eat, and people around you that you enjoy and so on. All the other things that you grasp for do not even really bring you happiness; in fact, they are meaningless. If you can have a healthy and happy life until you die, that is about all you can expect out of cyclic existence. So why keep grasping and reaching for even more?

Think on these points, and examine your minds to see if you are really approaching the path in a pure way or not. Determine, for yourself, whether you are really practicing the Dharma.

(Ganachakra feast)

Now the entire *Yabshi* is complete, and I will speak about the samaya. You have now all become vajra brothers and sisters in the deepest sense, and I consider myself to be a close vajra friend, a member of the same secret mantra family with all of you. From now on, you should consider that you all have the closest possible relationship in Dharma, which is that of having entered into the secret mandala together. You are all, truly, the closest of relatives. You should always keep your samaya with each other. You should never have a nonvirtuous thought for even one of your vajra brothers and sisters, nor should you ever have ill will or hold incorrect view toward any of them.

Secret mantra is precisely that: secret. This path is meant to be practiced in secret; it is not meant to be practiced in public places, out in the open, like in the middle of the city, downtown. All of the teachings you have been given for tōdgal, including all the different postures and gazes, must be kept secret. These are meant to be practiced by you and you alone, in an isolated environment. You are never to show them to anyone else, especially not ever publicly. Even if you are practicing in your home, you must never let your family members view your practice, particularly the secret postures and gazes. If you allow the secret to become open, the spiritual attainments will not be accomplished, they will instantly vanish. Understand that secret means secret, and that goes for all of the practices that fall under the category of secret mantra.

So, all of you, please keep your samaya, keep the secrets, and follow the laws of cause and result. In fact, if you are really following the law of cause and result, all of the precepts and words of honor are condensed into that and contained in that observance. If you can maintain that, basically you will be able to maintain everything. Wherever you go and whenever you meet one of your vajra brothers and sisters of this mandala, you should always feel very happy to meet. You should love each other and never having any type of an incorrect view or

bad thought about each other. Please go home tonight and, with great happiness in your hearts, feel extremely joyful that you have had this opportunity to receive these empowerments. Furthermore, carry the thought of the impermanence of this occasion. As with every occasion of gathering, there must also be separation.

By the winds of karma, we have gathered here for a few days, and now it is time to separate. When we disperse, we will all go in different directions. Please keep in mind the truth of impermanence, the infallible law of cause and result, and the precious human rebirth with its eight freedoms and ten endowments. Please have the intent to always extract the essence of this precious rare opportunity, this precious human rebirth that we have been able to attain. I hope that you will all keep these thoughts in your hearts.

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