

NOTICE:

Since I hope to be able to finish the definitive version very soon and have it published, and since commercial publishers will not allow the definitive version to be available freely on the web, this draft is the last version of this volume to be posted on my webpage.

The regular text and the footnotes are missing a last proofreading, revision and correction.

The footnotes involve excessive repetition because I decided they should serve the function of a glossary. The reasons for this are that often the same term is rendered in different ways according to context; that different terms are often rendered in the same way; and that I did not want the reader to have to stop reading to go to the end of the book in order to find out what was the term that was being rendered in a certain way. Therefore, before the book's publication I will have to reduce repetition in footnotes to the minimum necessary for the reader to keep track of the terminology and be able to easily find the terms that a given word is rendering without having to search throughout the book.

Also, I introduced new sections after the revision that gave rise to the version the reader has in her or his hands, which might not be in the most appropriate places of the text, and which might be moved to the most suitable place in the final revision that is still to be undertaken (in particular, in the discussions of the Second, Third and Fourth Noble Truths I introduced references to the way in which *samsāra* arises from the base-of-all that might have to be moved elsewhere)

Finally, during the last correction the word processing program failed and when I recovered the file, the italics in endnotes were no longer in italics, having been replaced by normal type. I began putting the damaged words I detected back into italics, but it would have taken too long and I had deadlines to meet, so I left most of the words that should be in italics in non-italic, normal characters

Elías Capriles

BUDDHISM AND DZOGCHEN:

*THE DOCTRINE OF THE BUDDHA
AND THE SUPREME VEHICLE OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM*

PART ONE

*BUDDHISM:
A DZOGCHEN OUTLOOK*

Composition courtesy of: Chair of Oriental Studies,
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New text produced by Elías Capriles, based on the English translation of an earlier book in Spanish by the same author, carried out by Judith Daugherty and Elias Capriles

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This book is dedicated to Khyabjes H.H. Dūdjom Jigdräl Yeshe Dorje^a and Thinle Norbu,^b who were the source of my Dzogchen practice, and to Khyabje Namkhai Norbu,^c who communicates the Dzogchen teachings in what I believe was the original way of so doing, who has diffused an ancient way of structuring the teachings that I deem to be the most suitable for our time, and from whom I expect to receive the teachings I still require. To the three of them I express my heartfelt thanks.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Khyabje H.H. Dilgo Khyentse,^d from whom I received so many transmissions and teachings and whose confidence in rigpa was a great help for my practice.

I also extend them to Khyabje Dodrub Chen^e for his empowerments,^f lungs and the discussion of Jigme Lingpa's *Sengge Ngaro*.^g

And to Khyabje Chatral Yeshe Dorje^h for an apposite surprise empowerment and for his loving care and his invaluable help when devotees of infamous gyälpo Shugtenⁱ accused me of wreaking havoc by means of black magic.¹

In Mérida, Venezuela, on May 30, 2016

Elías Capriles

^a Wylie, skyabs rje bdud 'joms 'jigs 'bral ye shes rdo rje.

^b Wylie, skyabs rje (gdung bras) phrin las nor bu.

^c Wylie, skyabs rje nam mkha'i nor bu.

^d Wylie, skyabs rje dil mgo mkhyen brtse.

^e Wylie, skyabs rje rdo grub chen.

^f Wylie, *dbang bskur*.

^g Wylie, *seng ge'i nga ro*.

^h Wylie, skyabs rje bya 'bral ye shes rdo rje.

ⁱ Wylie, rgyal po shugs ldan.

INTRODUCTION

Each time someone joined our Sunday meditation group, I felt obliged to explain the theoretical base of the practice: the Four Noble Truths; the division of the Buddhist Way into three principal Paths that Nub Namkhai Nyingpo^{a2} outlined in his *Kathang Dennga*^{b3} (which was then revealed as a *terma*^c by *tertön*^d Orgyen Lingpa), that Nubchen Sangye Yeshe^{e4} reproduced in his *Samten Migdrön*^f (unearthed at Dūnhuáng^g after having been buried for roughly a millennium),⁵ and diffused in our time by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu;^h the continuum of Base, Path and Fruit in Dzogchen Atiyoga; the three series of teachings of this vehicle; etc. In order to save time and energy, I decided to write a booklet with these explanations; however, as I proceeded, the text became longer and more complex, and at some point I realized I was writing a book. Understanding that to do so would force me to systematize my own comprehension of the teachings and fill in whichever blanks would turn up, and realizing that there were no likes to the book I was writing, and that therefore it could be very useful to Westerners interested in Dzogchen,ⁱ I decided to continue to work on it in order to make it suitable for publication.

From the moment I met my Tibetan teachers, I have given priority to practice over scholarship. In fact, when, in 1977, Chime Rigdzin Rinpoche^j invited me to study under him at Vishvabharati University in Shantiniketan, West Bengal, India, I opted for going into strict retreat in the mountains of Nepal instead, where until December 1982 I spent most of my time intensively practicing the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions^k on the basis of the teachings by H.H. Dūdjom Rinpoche^l and his eldest son, Thinle Norbu Rinpoche.^m Accordingly, my aim in writing this book is to provide a sound theoretical foundation to those who seriously want to devote themselves to the practice, and hence

^a Wylie, gnubs nam mkha'i snying po.

^b Wylie, *bka' thang sde lnga*.

^c Wylie, *gter ma*.

^d Wylie, *gter ston*.

^e Wylie, gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes.

^f Wylie, *bsam gtan mig sgron*.

^g 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun⁴-huang² [also 燉煌]; simplified, 炖煌).

^h Wylie, chos rgyal nam mkha'i nor bu.

ⁱ Wylie, *rdzogs chen* (contraction of *rdzogs pa chen po*); language of Oḍḍiyāna, *santimaha* (diacritics omitted due to unawareness of the exact pronunciation of that language); Skt. *mahāsāndhi*.

^j Wylie, 'chi med rig 'dzin rin po che.

^k Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*). Also Menngaggyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*).

^l Wylie, bdud 'joms rin po che.

^m Wylie, phrin las nor bu rin po che.

all explanations in it were structured in the way I thought most convenient for making clear the essence of the essential practice and preventing distortions in its application. However, my intellectual idiosyncrasy made me want to explain everything and to do so in ways that are normal to my mentality but which others may find abstract and abstruse, and as such difficult to follow. And, in fact, upon seeing the final product, I realized that understanding some passages of the book might be found difficult to follow by those who are not sufficiently acquainted with abstract thinking.

Nevertheless, the idea was to make the book useful to both neophytes and expert practitioners. Since neophytes and in general those who are to devote themselves to the practice rather than become Buddhologists and/or Tibetologists should not be required to memorize a great deal of terms in foreign languages, I took care of offering translations and/or explanations whenever I used a Sanskrit or Tibetan term for the first time. So that expert practitioners and scholars could find in the work a generous source of specialized information, and, at the same time, neophytes and those who have no intention to become scholars could acquire a wider, more global understanding of the book's topics, I decided to include extensive notes explaining some points of the regular text more exhaustively and relating them to other points in the teachings (often indicating why one translation was chosen instead of other, more common ones, and frequently discussing the latter's etymology and the meaning they have in philosophical and ordinary language).

It was in the summer of 1998 and as a result of a little more than a month of work, that the first draft in Spanish came forth; however, the text still needed careful polishing, and its extension was a fraction of the current version in the English language. Then, in September 1998, in Madrid, I taught a course on the Base level of the Santi Maha Sangha training designed by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Antonio Gómez, who was among those who attended the course, told me that the project seemed worthwhile and took the draft to Antonio Pacheco Fuentes, who at the time managed Ediciones La Llave (then in Vitoria, Spain), and after examination by the manager and then by the owner (noted Gestalt and transpersonal psychologist Claudio Naranjo), that publishing house offered to publish it. This led me to further improve the text, which I did during the summer of 1999; however, the publishers insisted that the book should not become too long, and that it should be ready in a short time; therefore, I was unable to polish the original Spanish language text to the degree I would have desired.

Two years after its publication in Spanish,^a I decided to translate the book into English, enlarging it and polishing it so that, while still being meant for practitioners and being useful to neophytes, it would provide more prepared practitioners and scholars with a more comprehensive explanation of the topics covered. Since at the time I was busy with other editorial projects, I posted an announcement asking for a translator. A few people replied, among whom I chose Judith Daugherty, from Oregon, USA, who in a relatively short time produced an English version of the whole book. I began working on Part One, which I expanded and polished considerably, until I realized that it would fill a whole volume. Therefore, I decided to divide the book into two or three tomes, according to the large that Parts Two and Three would reach in the English version. Though I have not yet prepared the English version of Parts II and III, and hence I do not know whether they will fit in one volume, I assume that they will be compressed together in Vol. II.

^a Capriles (2000).

This would not mean that the book will have only two volumes, for in early 2015 it occurred to me that, if when the time comes I receive permission to make public some texts on the practices of the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions^a that I have authored, I might add an extra tome, which I assume would be Vol. III and which would be a restricted circulation book (among other texts, the book in question would include the text of instructions called *The Source of Danger is Fear*).⁶

In this new version of the three parts into which the original book in Spanish was divided, which as noted above I assume will fill two tomes (which might become the first two tomes of a three-volume book), I tried to express as precisely as possible the essence of the teachings, while at the same time providing ample background information, for I had the impression that, among the Dzogchen books that had been published in the West at the time, those intended to allow the reader to understand the essence of the teaching did not abound in information, and most of those that contained an enormous quantity of facts did not weave these facts into a global vision conveying the essence of Dzogchen and showing this teaching's place in the Buddhist universe. The fact that, with very few exceptions, quotations in the book were taken from works in Western languages, was not the fruit of a preconceived didactic decision but of fortuitous circumstances.⁷

The title, *Buddhism and Dzogchen*, may seem strange, since the connection of two nouns by means of a copulative conjunction implies that the nouns refer to two separate and different things—and hence it may be taken to mean I take Buddhism to be one thing and Dzogchen to be quite another. However, this is not the case: I chose this title because of the way the work is structured:

Part One, titled “Buddhism: A Dzogchen Outlook,” is devoted to Buddhism as an indivisible system involving a set of Paths, vehicles and schools, among which Dzogchen Atiyoga is the supreme Path or vehicle. In this volume all of these Paths, vehicles and schools being discussed from the perspective of the Dzogchen teachings.

Part Two, called “Dzogchen: A Buddhist Outlook,” discusses Dzogchen from the standpoint of Buddhism, in an attempt to convey the essence of Buddhist Dzogchen.

Part Three, named “Treading the Path: One Principle and Various Practices,” on the basis of a discussion of the general principle of all Buddhist practices, describes some specific practices pertaining to the Dzogchen teachings and/or based on the principle of Dzogchen, and disserts on the integration of the Path as a whole into daily life in a way that combines the various Paths and vehicles of the Ancient (Nyingma^b) Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Part One, which together with this Introduction constitutes the present Volume, provides a global outlook of Buddhism as an indivisible whole of Paths, vehicles and schools,⁸ expressing the common ground of all of the latter, and the specificities of each of them. In particular, I emphasized the special characteristics that distinguish the Dzogchen teaching from the other Buddhist teachings and vehicles, and discussed the relationships between topics, vehicles and Paths I deemed necessary for conveying a sound intellectual comprehension of the general Buddhist Path and the specific Dzogchen Path. And since the teaching that defines the essence of Buddhism, allowing one to grasp

^a Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or Menngaggyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^b Wylie, *rnying ma*.

the reasons for Buddhist practice, and that is at the root of all Buddhist Paths, is that of the Four Noble Truths—the first one that Śākyamuni Buddha offered after Awakening—it was in terms of this teaching that I structured most of this Part One of Buddhism and Dzogchen. This I did in a *sui generis* way that resulted from relating the Buddhist teachings with my own experience, *rather than* in the traditional ways prevailing in Tibet, which describe in great details the diverse sufferings of each realm and sub-realm (and which emphasizes the particular sufferings of each one of the hells posited in the Buddhist teachings).

Although as a rule Buddhist traditions discuss the schools that flourished in the cultural milieu in which they developed, but not those that arose and/or unfolded in other cultural milieus, in our time the main cultural traits and religions of most cultural milieus *may be* known by all, and are known to scholars and practitioners, in the entire world—there being a wide diffusion of the varieties of Theravāda^a Buddhism that developed in Southeast Asia and in Śrī Laṅkā, of some of the Mahāyāna schools of China, Vietnam, Korea and Japan [among which most diffused worldwide is obviously Chán^b Buddhism], and of the traditions of Tibet, Bhutan, Mongolia and Nepal, which teach most existing vehicles and schools, but emphasize the Tantric teachings of the Vajrayāna. Therefore, rather than circumscribing the discussion of schools to those that are well known in Tibet, I am also offering brief descriptions of Theravāda Buddhism, established in Southeast Asia and Sri Laṅkā, and of most Chinese schools of the Mahāyāna, on the basis of the research and studies that I have carried out during the last decades—which are also the source of a large part of the rest of the relationships that are established in the book (some of them not very well known in the West).

The classification of the vehicles and the very structure of the book are based on the ancient division of the nine Buddhist vehicles listed by the Nyingmapas^c into Path of Renunciation,^d Path of Transformation^e and Path of Spontaneous Liberation,^f which was taught in Tibet during the First Dissemination of the Doctrine and codified at the time by Nub Namkhai Nyingpo^g and, subsequently, Nubchen Sangye Yeshe,^h and which in our time Chögyal Namkhai Norbu propagated in the West. This classification, which I deem most suitable for our age, came to us through two early Buddhist works: (1) the *Kathang Dennga*ⁱ by Namkhai Nyingpo, which during the first dissemination of the *Dharma* in Tibet was concealed as a terma^j or spiritual treasure to be revealed when the appropriate time came for it to be publicly taught and practiced, and which in the sixteenth century was revealed by tertön Orgyen Lingpa,¹⁰ and (2) the *Samten Migdrön*^k by Nubchen Sangye Yeshe, which was written after the former and which was entombed in

^a Skt. Sthaviravāda.

^b 禪; Wade-Giles, Ch’an²; Jap. ぜん (hiragana) / Zen (romaji); Korean, 선 (Seon); Viet. Thi ần.

^c Wylie, rnying ma pa: the “Ancient Ones.”

^d Tib. pong lam (Wylie, *spong lam*).

^e Tib. gyur lam (Wylie, *sgyur lam*).

^f Tib. dröl lam (Wylie, *grol lam*).

^g Wylie, gnubs nam mkha’i snying po.

^h Wylie, gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes.

ⁱ Wylie, *bka’ thang sde lnga*.

^j Wylie, *gter ma*.

^k Wylie, *bsam gtan mig sgron*.

Dùnhuáng^a from the tenth or eleventh century CE until 1908, when the expedition led by the Hungarian-British archaeologist Aurel Stein and the French sinologist Paul Pelliot explored the cave temples discovered accidentally in that oasis by a local farmer at the turn of the twentieth century.¹¹ The fact that the *Samten Migdrön*, which was spared possible later alterations by its having been entombed for so long a period at Dùnhuáng, contains quotations from the *Kathang Dennga* that exactly correspond to the relevant paragraphs of the terma revealed by Orgyen Lingpa, by the same token proves that the classification in question was established in Tibet at the time of the first dissemination of the Buddha-*dharma* (eight century CE) and attests to the authenticity of the latter—suggesting that it was the political power and cultural dominance of the Newer or Sarmapa schools that caused the Ancient or Nyingmapa Tradition to stop making use of this threefold classification of its nine vehicles and adopt the one they shared with the Sarmapa—namely the one dividing them into Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna. It was noted that this classification was resurrected in our time in the West by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who, possessing the necessary capacity, courage and uprightness, has set out to restore the teachings to their original form. In the Bön tradition there is also a classification of all vehicles into these three paths; however, I know of no evidence of its existence in the original oral tradition or in the early scriptures of that tradition, and hence one can speculate that it may have been borrowed from the early Nyingmapas—in which case its existence in Bön would be one more piece of evidence suggesting the antiquity of the way of classifying vehicles under discussion.

Part Two of the book focuses on the Buddhist Dzogchen teachings themselves, which constitute the Supreme Vehicle of Buddhism, but which, rather than having been taught directly by the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni, were transmitted by a lay manifestation of this *nirmāṇakāya* foretold in the Buddhist scriptures, called Prahevajra¹² (in Tibetan, Garab Dorje^b), who appeared several centuries after the time of Śākyamuni in the land of Oḍḍiyāna (which according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and most Nyingma Lamas and scholars corresponds to or encompasses the Swat valley in present day Pakistan¹³). In this part of the book, the Base, Path and Fruit of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo are discussed in terms of the threefold divisions into which each of them is classified. Likewise, the three series of teachings making up the Atiyogatantra—the Series of [the essence or nature of] mind,^c the Series of space^d and the Series of pith instructions^e—are discussed, with the focus on the last of these series, which is the only one that I have intensively practiced and feel entitled to discuss in some detail on the basis of my own experience, and which in our time is the one that is most widely practiced, likely because of the incontrovertible fact that, for those in whom it works, it is most effective in this time of degeneration.¹⁴

The three aspects of the Base and the three forms of manifestation of the third aspect, which is energy,^f the three series of Dzogchen teachings, *Yantra Yoga / adhisāra*^a

^a 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun²-huang⁴; also known as 燉煌 (simplified Chinese, 炖煌).

^b dga' rab rdo rje.

^c Tib. Semde (Wylie, *sems sde*); Skt. Cittavarga.

^d Tib. Longde (Wylie, *klong sde*); Skt. Abhyantaravarga.

^e Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or Menngaggyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^f The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being nyingje [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei*¹—lit. *sadness* or *mercy*]), which is rendered as “compassion.” After

and the cycle of day and night, were discussed principally on the basis of teachings transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Venezuela (many of which I had collected in *The Path of Self-liberation and our Total Plenitude and Perfection*, which I compiled and edited in Spanish but which will not be published).¹⁵ For their part, many of the explanations of the characteristics of the different Vehicles and the differences among them provided in Part One of the book, are based on the Base Level of the Santi Maha Samgha training devised by the same Master, to which I expect the present work may serve both as a key and as a complement. In fact, the final criterion in terms of which the teachings were arranged and expounded was specifically the one followed by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and, in particular, that of his Santi Maha Sangha training. And as I have also noted, this is owing to the fact that I recognize in the teachings of this Master the way of transmitting both Buddhism and Dzogchen that corresponds to our time.

Finally, as noted above, Part Three of the book discusses the general principle of all Buddhist practice in terms of the dynamics of the *maṇḍala*, and then discusses various practices proper to the Dzogchen Path and other practices of other Paths of the Ancient or Nyingmapa^b Tibetan Buddhist tradition that are subsidiary to the practice of Dzogchen, and the combination of all practices in the cycle of day and night, which is intended to allow practitioners to turn all activities and experiences (including the second clear light^c that shines after falling asleep or dying, and, should one fail to recognize the clear light or one does recognize it but then loses awareness of it and begins to dream, the experience of dreaming^{d16}) into the Path, and which involves “carrying the six gatherings on the Path”^e—where the “gatherings” are the object, sense and consciousness of each of the six senses that Buddhism acknowledges: the five “outer” ones (namely the ones universally acknowledged in the West), and the “inner” one that is the condition of awareness of “mental phenomena.” Specific topics dealt with in this part are the practice of *Yantra Yoga / adhisāra*, the ritual consumption of meat and alcohol, the guardians and the practices related to them, and the practice of Chö (*gcod*).

Both in Part Two of the book and in some passages of Part One, the discussion of the practice of the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions—and in particular of Tekchö^f—is based on my own, direct experience of the practice. For its part, the discussion of the specific principle of Thögel,^g those points of the explanation of the four Chogzhag^a which

Awakening a Buddha continues to live solely as the function of nonreferential compassion. The Base, which is the Buddha-nature and which is what we (are) in truth, is the true, ultimate, birthless, deathless Buddha. Since the energy aspect of the Base is unobstructedness and continued manifestation, so long as experience continues to manifest through us, it is the true Buddha that is continuing to manifest experience—the energy aspect—in us, *doing so because of compassion* (even when we are unaware of this and feel “thrown” [Ger. *Geworfen*, in Heidegger’s sense] in the world). This is the reason why in the Dzogchen teachings the aspect that, following Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, I am rendering as *energy*, is called the *compassion* aspect.

^a Tib. thulkhor (Wylie, *'phrul 'khor*).

^b Wylie, *rnying ma pa*.

^c Skt. *prabhāsvara* or *ābhāsvarā*; Pāli *pabhassara*; Tib. ösel (Wylie, *'od gsal*); Ch. 光明 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *guāngmíng*; Wade-Giles, *kuang¹-ming²*).

^d Skt. *svapana*; Tib. milam (Wylie, *rmi lam*).

^e Tib. tsogdrug lamkhyer (Wylie, *tshogs drug lam khyer*). Cf. Thinley Norbu (1977, pp. 54-56; in the Shambhala ed. pp. 96 et seq.).

^f Wylie, *khregs chod*.

^g Wylie, *thod rgal*.

do not simply follow the explanations of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (such as the interpretation of the Gyamtso Chogzhag^b in the specific context of Tekchö as absolutely panoramic awareness that, nonetheless, does not preclude the pupil's movements that normally are at the root of the singling out of objects), and so on, were directly inferred from my own experience of the Thubthik^c and the Nyingthik.^{d17}

Thinking that the realizations and learning that obtain during the practice of the Series of pith instructions might serve for understanding the basic principles of other practices, in Part Two I decided to explain the Four Yogas or Naljor Zhi^e of the Dzogchen Semde in the tradition of Kham^f as a process of “panoramification” of attention culminating in the definitive surpassing of attention, exertion and practice itself, and explain the Selwe Da^g or “clarity symbol” of the Dzogchen Longde in reference to panoramic awareness, even though in order to facilitate the arising of visions of rölpa^h energy practitioners are taught to concentrate on specific points in space. Since it would be extremely unfortunate and nefarious to corrupt the teachings by introducing misinterpretations and illegitimate extrapolations, before making these explanations public, I consulted the Master Namkhai Norbu, who reassured me saying that it was fine to include them, although it would be good to indicate that they were derived from my own practice of the teachings.¹⁸

As noted above, in this English version of the book, Parts II and III will be found in Volume II, which, like the present volume, will be available to the general public. As also noted, then an extra volume might be added: Volume III, which if it were published, would directly expound teachings on the Series of pith instructionsⁱ and as such will be a restricted circulation book (among other texts, the book in question will include the book of instructions on Tekchö called *The Source of Danger is Fear* and a book of introductory practices called *Practices with Sound and Space*).

With respect to my practice, around 1976 or 1977 I attended the transmission of Düdjom Lingpa's^j Treasures and of the Düdjom Tersar^k that Khyabje Düdjom Jigdräl Yeshe Dorje¹⁹ offered in Boudhanath (Nepal). Shortly thereafter I received from Düdjom Rinpoche's eldest son, Khyabje Dungse Thinley Norbu,^m teachings on his father's book on the practice of Tekchö in mountain retreat and general counsels on how to optimize this practice,ⁿ and then, when I was about to go into retreat to practice these teachings and

^a Wylie, *cog bzhag bzhi*.

^b Wylie, *rgya mtsho cog bzhag*.

^c Wylie, *thugs thig*. Note that the “thug” (*thugs*) in “thubthik” is a synonym of the “nying” (*snying*) in “nyingthik.”

^d Wylie, *snying thig*.

^e Wylie, *rnal 'byor bzhi*.

^f Wylie, *khams*.

^g Wylie, *gsal ba'i brda*.

^h Wylie, *rol pa*.

ⁱ Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or Menngaggyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^j Wylie, *bdud 'joms gling pa*.

^k Wylie, *bdud 'joms gter gsar*: the “new treasure of Düdjom” revealed by Jigdräl Yeshe Dorje.

^l Wylie, *skyabs rje bdud 'joms rin po che, 'jigs 'bral ye shes rdo rje*.

^m Wylie, *skyabs rje (gdung bras) phrin las nor bu rin po che*.

ⁿ I am referring to Düdjom Rinpoche's *Richö labcha nyamlen martri go der jöpa drubpe chiülen* (*Ri chos bslab bya nyams len dmar khrid go bder brjod pa grub pa'i bcud len*), the official English translation of

went to say goodbye to Khyabje Dūdjom Jigdräl Yeshe Dorje and ask for his blessings, he said I had to come back the next day to receive specific private instructions for retreat from this great Master—which I earnestly and eagerly did.

Later on, vajra brother Mathieu Ricard offered me a copy of Tulku Thöndup's^a rough translation of Jigme Lingpa's *The Lion's Roar* or *Sengge Ngaro*,^b which seemed to perfectly explain some of the experiences I had gone through in the practice. Since Dodrub Chen Rinpoche was regarded as the main holder of Jigme Lingpa's lineage and we were receiving from him the lung of the Rinchen Terdzö and other teachings, I was advised to request from him private teachings on the book in question. However, he said that, rather than this, I should ask him whichever questions I had concerning the book's meaning. Though I felt I had no real doubts about it, yet I had to make some questions, I made the ones that came to my mind—and his replies confirmed my understanding.^c

On the basis of all of the above teachings, I made of Tekchö (in the context of the Thubthik and the Nyingthik) my principal practice, which I carried out intensively while I was in strict retreat in cabins and caves in the heights of the Himalayas (where I spent most of the time from 1977 until December of 1982)—concerning which toward the end of the 1970's I wrote one of the books that might become part of a hypothetical Vol. III (namely *The Source of Danger is Fear*^d) and which I have consistently tried to keep in daily life, even though this has proved very difficult since I returned to the West.

As noted in the dedication and acknowledgements, of the greatest importance to me were also the transmissions I received from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche^e in Boudhanath (Nepal) and Clement Town (HP, India), which featured the *Rinchen Terdzö*^f and other important collections of termas,²⁰ but the consequentiality of which lay mainly in the influence of that Master's imposing Dzogchen Presence (it must be noted that I received from the Master in question personalized Dzogchen teachings as well). And from Dodrub Chen Rinpoche^{g21} and Chatral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche^h I received key transmissions and lungs, as well as most useful practical advice and, from the latter, personal help as well.²²

which is Dudjom Rinpoche (1979; trans. by M. Ricard on the basis of instructions by Dungse Thinle Norbu Rinpoche and Tulku Thöndup). There is an earlier translation (1978; trans. by J. Reynolds), which was the one I initially used, even though Dudjom Rinpoche advised me not to assume all of it to be correct.

^a Wylie, sprul sku don grub.

^b Wylie, *seng ge'i nga ro*.

^c In 2015, Snow Lion published a translation of this text by David Christensen, with a translation by the same scholar of an excellent oral commentary offered by Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje (in Nyoshul Khenpo, 2015, pp. 135-215), while Shambhala published another great translation by Dungse Thinle Norbu (2015, pp. 75-88). Previously to that, Wisdom had published a translation by Sam van Schaik (2004, pp. 225-234). However, the versions on which I based my practice were a detailed, unpublished literal rendering by Tulku Thöndup that did not read smoothly but that effectively provided a perfectly sound basis for my practice (indeed, it was one of the greatest keys to its development) and a simplified translation by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (Shambhala: 1972).

^d Capriles (1989). Though I failed to acknowledge this in the book, the discussion of tensions and meta-tensions in Tulku Thöndup's version of Jigme Lingpa's *The Lion's Roar* was one of the keys both to my practice and to the book under discussion.

^e Wylie, dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che.

^f Wylie, *rin chen gter mdzod*.

^g Wylie, rdo grub chen rin po che.

^h Wylie, bya 'bral sangs rgyas rdo rje rin po che.

I am immeasurably obliged to all the above Masters for their teachings, and in particular to the late Khyabje Düdjom Yeshe Dorje and the late Khyabje Dungse Thinle Norbu for being the source of my current Dzogchen practice; to the late Khyabje Dilgo Khyentse, mainly for the above mentioned reasons; and to Khyabje Namkhai Norbu for all that was mentioned above, for the teachings I still expect to receive from him, for his repeated visits to Venezuela (in which he has always given teachings that have proven extremely suitable both for the general public and for my own person), for shepherding me over the years, and for replying to emails and answering the few questions I still had in connection to the contents of this book. (Note that the names of these Masters were here listed in the order in which I met them and received teachings and / or transmissions from them.)

On a different plane, I must also express deep gratitude to Judy Daugherty, who worked hard and against the clock in translating my *Budismo y dzogchén* into English; to Professor Rowena Hill, who carried out a careful revision of the English after Judy completed the translation; and to Carey Gregory, who revised the changes I made to the text shortly after Professor Hill's correction—none of whom, it must be noted, ever asked for pecuniary remuneration. However, in 2014—several years after Ms. Gregory's correction—I undertook a complete overhauling of the text that left hardly any sentence untouched, and hence none else than myself is to be held responsible for the English.

Special thanks are due to Elio Guarisco for the research concerning the number of levels (Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. *sa*) posited in different Anuttarayogatantras, for helping me find important phrases containing the term *khorsum* (*'khor gsum*, which renders the Sanskrit *trimaṇḍala* and which I consistently render as *directional threefold thought structure*), and the origin of the terms *drodok* and *drotakpa* (*sgro 'dogs* and *sgro btags pa*, which render the Sanskrit terms *samāropa* and *adhyāropa*); to Adriano Clemente for his help with the *Vairo Drabag*'s^a explanation of the origin of the outer Tantras; to Dr. Jim Valby for revising the Tibetan terms and to him and Edgar M. Cooke and for their valuable help with the Bibliography; to Victor Klimov for carefully proofreading an old version of the book, pointing out a key omission in the explanation of *dang*^b energy, and for other important contributions; to Jinavamsa (Mitchell Ginsberg) for proofreading a previous version of the text and making an important suggestion; and to David Meyer for having sent me his personal copy of Guenther, Herbert V. 1977 (which I needed to cite in the present book and other works). As in the case of the above Vajra sisters, none of them asked for a pecuniary remuneration.

Finally, a most special recognition is owed to Santi Maha Samgha and Yantra Yoga teacher Grisha Mokhin for freely offering me the webpage in which an old version of this book was originally published and for the wonderful—and equally free—work in preparing that webpage.²³

Elías Capriles

Mérida, Venezuela, May 30, 2016

^a Wylie, *ba'i ro 'dra 'bag*.

^b Wylie, *gdangs*.

METHODOLOGY AND TIPS FOR READING THIS BOOK

Notes

Though it would be more comfortable for the reader to have all notes at the foot of the page, the length of many of my explanatory notes made it practically impossible to place them there. Therefore, I decided to divide the notes into two classes:

(a) Footnotes, which offer the Wylie transliteration of Tibetan terms and often the Sanskrit, Pāli or Oḍḍiyāna language term rendered by a Tibetan word, or the ideograms and Wade-Giles transliteration of Chinese terms (for the regular text has terms in Hànyǔ Pīnyīn), and other information that does not justify leaving the page in order to consult an endnote elsewhere. (Among the Three Promulgations^{a24} that the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* distinguishes in Buddha Śākyamuni’s teachings, which are the basis of the Buddhist Path of Renunciation, the teachings of the First, which the Mahāyāna and other vehicles classify as Hīnayāna—which means “Narrow Vehicle”—and which include the teaching on the Four Noble Truths, make up the earliest Buddhist Canon, written in Pāli. However, in this book, except in selected passages dealing specifically with teachings of the Pāli Canon or the Theravāda, when explaining these doctrines I use the Sanskrit equivalents of the original terms, providing the Pāli original and the Tibetan translation in a note the first time a term is used.²⁵ Also note that in the case of many Dzogchen terms and phrases the original term or phrase in Oḍḍiyāna language or another Prakrit [*prākṛta*], or in Sanskrit, is unknown and hence cannot be offered; when this is the case, only the Tibetan term or phrase is offered.)

(b) Endnotes, which contain elucidations of passages of the regular text and thus nearly serve the traditional function of an auto-commentary. However, since the endnotes are often quite complex, reading them one by one during the initial reading of the book could make it hard for some readers to follow the thread of the regular text. Therefore, each reader will have to find her or his own way to interweave the two parallel texts that coexist in the work (one viable method would be to first read the regular text with the footnotes nonstop, and then read the endnotes, relating them with the passages of the regular text they supplement or elucidate).

Since this book is the result of interpreting, in terms of my personal experience of the practice, a way of explaining the whole of the Buddhist teachings that was in disuse for centuries, the correct way to relate the information contained here to that conveyed by other books on the same subject, would not be through *adding* the one to the other. On

^a Skt. *dharmacakra*; Pāli *dharmacakka*; Tib. chökyi khorlo (Wylie, *chos kyi 'khor lo*); Ch. 法輪 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎlún*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-lun²*).

the contrary, in some cases it may also be useful to *contrast* the ideas in this book with those in most other books.²⁶ Moreover, as already noted, my intent is *not* to produce an abstruse treatise incomprehensible to anyone lacking a quite broad academic background in the field of Tibetan Buddhism; contrariwise, *with an eye on the practice*, I intend to allow whoever may read this book to truly understand what the Dzogchen teachings are; how their validity is proven and their special qualities are recognized; and how they relate to our life and experience, as well as to other Buddhist systems. Nevertheless, due to my philosophical training and idiosyncratic mentality some readers could find the book's arguments difficult to follow.

Finally, I have also tried to rectify some inaccurate information diffused in some of the books published in the West about Dzogchen and the rest of the teachings of the Nyingmapa or "Old School" of Tibetan Buddhism.

Terminology and Titles of Eastern Texts

When Buddhist canonical sources and treatises were rendered into Tibetan at the time of the First Dissemination of Buddhism in the Land of the Snows, this was made by a team of translators, many of whom had become highly realized *yogīs* and accomplished scholars, who worked coordinately under the supervision of the greatest Masters. Thus, not only did they manage to render the true purport of the texts, favoring the meaning over the letter, but often they *ameliorated* the works in such a way as to make their truest and most profound sense clearer, and devised translations the etymology of which was often more accurate than that of the original terms in Sanskrit and Prakrits (*prākṛta*)—including the language of Oḍḍiyāna.²⁷ This would be the ideal way to render the Buddhist texts into Western languages and to write original treatises in these languages. However, Western translators and authors are far from being like those Tibetan translators: not only do we seldom have any genuine realization, but sometimes it even happens that we do not work under the guide and supervision of a genuine Master. Moreover, it seems that quite frequently translators are unaware of the technical senses of Western philosophical terms, and often they disregard the etymology of the terms they choose. Therefore, the latter are often clumsy and misleading.

Throughout the years I have constantly modified my translation of the different Eastern terms, keeping the focus on their various etymological and especially experiential meanings (and particularly on their truest and most profound meanings),²⁸ and by the same token on the etymologies and the philosophical and psychological meanings of the Western terms that seem to be suitable candidates to render them—all while keeping in mind the relations between the etymologies of Eastern and Western terms. Since I do not claim to be like those Tibetan translators of old, and I am keenly aware of the limitations both of current Western translations and of the terms I myself devise, as well as of my own scholarship, I am compelled to emphasize the fact that neither the terminology I use nor my explanations of the *dharma* are definitive and that both are open to change. Moreover, some—or in some cases all—of the acceptations of a given Eastern term have quite precise synonyms with which they can be soundly replaced. Thus rather than trying to establish fixed standard translations for all terms, I use the terms that *so far* I deem aptest to express the meaning I believe a given term expresses *in a particular context*, and some times may use the same term to render two different Eastern words. At any rate, it

is likely that in future editions of this book I will further modify the terminology, as the process of devising more precise terms is still going on, and I will be taking into account the feedback I may receive from my current teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and from lay readers, Tibetologists and Buddhologists.

Examples of terms that have such a wide range of meanings that greatly vary according to the context that it seems nearly impossible to devise a fixed translation for them are *dharmakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*. One could render *dharmakāya* as, say, *essential*, *empty dimension*—or, modifying the term used in Guarisco, Clemente & Valby (2013), as “dimension of Truth”^a—but then one would be overlooking the fact that the term also refers to the true condition of all of those phenomena we regard as mental (e.g. thoughts, memories, phantasies, images of the imagination). Alternatively, it would be possible to render the term as, say, *mental dimension*, but then one would be overlooking that the term also refers to the essential, empty, true dimension of all entities. And one would face a similar problem if one tries to find a fixed translation for terms such as *saṃbhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya*²⁹ and other polysemic, key Buddhist terms—this being the reason why I have strongly objected to some of the fixed translation of such terms offered by Western scholar on the past.³⁰ And nonetheless translators continue to devise their own idiosyncratic translations for Eastern Buddhist terms, often distorting their most profound experiential and philosophical meanings.

Furthermore, since the different translations and original works fail to employ a homogeneous terminology (some works leave key terms in Sanskrit or Tibetan, whereas others offer different renderings for the same terms), it may be very difficult for readers to understand correctly the various layers of meanings of the translations or treatises they are studying. Therefore, I keep the original Sanskrit or Tibetan term—according to which is best known in the West—when naming the referents of widely polysemic terms such as *dharmakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya* and so on—and hence throughout this book the reader will find quite a few words in Sanskrit and in Tibetan. However, again and again I will explain their meaning, no matter how redundant the text may become, for I do not want readers to have to memorize a long list of words in languages strange to them: as noted in the first section of this Introduction, my intent is that readers may easily understand the meaning of the explanations and relate them to their own experience and life.

At any rate, it must be noted that whenever I use terms that etymologically and/or lexicographically have a dualistic meaning in order to refer to the surpassing of dualistic delusion, I capitalize them. For example, in standard English the noun “contemplation” refers to the action of placing attention on some material or spiritual phenomenon, which is a function of the subject/object duality and the mind that, according to the Dzogchen teachings, are the very core of human delusion; therefore, whenever I use this noun for referring to the continuity of the unveiling of our true, nondual condition, I capitalize it, writing it as “Contemplation.” Likewise, “presence”^b designates an undistracted dualistic attention, as corresponds to the Platonic, etymological definition of the term, which is

^a They used “dimension of reality,” which I understand in the sense of “True dimension” or “dimension of Truth” (which I prefer, because the etymology of “reality” derives from the Latin *res-rei*, meaning “thing” or “fact,” and the Latin *rere*, meaning “to think”—and things and thinking are the dimension of delusion rather than the dimension of Truth understood as antonym of delusion.

^b παρουσία.

“being before” (in the sense of “being in front of”); therefore, whenever I use it to refer to the absence of distraction regarding the patency of our true condition,^a beyond delusion and hence beyond dualism, I capitalize it, writing it as “Presence” (and often specifying that this so-called Presence is “immediate” or “absolute” so as to make the point that in the Presence in question *sensa* are not *mediated* by the filter of concepts—which are all *relative*—and therefore are free from the subject-object duality as well). And the same applies to terms such as *Awareness*, *Truth*, *Refuge*, *Behavior* and so on: when I write them with a capital letter, I am using them to refer to the nondual condition free from delusion or error.

As to the variation in my rendering of Tibetan terms introduced in this version of this book, it must be noted that the Tibetan term rangdröl (*rang grol*) is now rendered as *spontaneous liberation* rather than *self-liberation*, and the Tibetan term *lhundrub* (*lhun grub*) as *spontaneous perfection* or as *spontaneous rectification* (according to the context) rather than *self-perfection*. The first change was due to the fact that self-liberation was often understood in an utterly wrong sense as “liberation by one’s own action” or “liberation by one’s own power” (as different from liberation from the power of another), both of which are the very opposite of what the term really stands for: a liberation that is not *caused* by any *action* and that is therefore beyond the dichotomy “power of one’s own self / power of something different from one’s own self.” The second change was due to the fact that the prefix *self* does not seem to add any new content to the concepts of perfection and perfect (unless we said “self-perfected,” but then the term would suggest that perfection, rather than being inherent in our original condition, arose at some point later on—which is certainly *not* the case), whereas the adjective “spontaneous” adds two important ideas: from the standpoint of the Base, that perfection is not the product of someone’s *action*; from the standpoint of the Path, that the term also refers to spontaneous self-rectifying processes beyond action that lead to full Awakening.

As to the term Dzogchen,^b though the term is most often translated as “Great Perfection” or “Great Completion,” I think might be more appropriately rendered as “total plenitude / completeness and perfection.” In fact, as explained in Part Two of this book, that Tibetan term is the contraction of “dzogpa chenpo.”^c “Dzogpa” means *complete, full* or *perfect*; for example, a glass of water full to the brim is “dzogpa,” but the same applies to an action that has been perfectly performed. Although “chenpo” is as a rule rendered as *great*, Dzogchen Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu^d has remarked that, in the compound term “Dzogchen,” “chenpo” does not have a relative meaning—as does the word “great,” since there may be different degrees of greatness—but an absolute meaning, as is the case with the word “total.” It is because of this that I have decided to take some license and render the Tibetan word “Dzogchen” as “total plenitude / completeness and perfection.”

As will be shown in Part II of this book, within the Base—i.e., the true, natural condition of ourselves and all phenomena^e—tradition distinguishes two or three aspects.

^a Tib. rangngo (Wylie, *rang ngo*): one’s own face or true condition.

^b Wylie, *rdzogs chen*.

^c Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po*.

^d Wylie, *chos rgyal nam mkha’i nor bu*.

^e Tib. chötham chekyi nelug (Wylie, *chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs*).

When two are listed, these are the *primordial purity* or *katak*^a and *spontaneous perfection* or *lhundrub*^b aspects. The primordial purity aspect is the Base’s emptiness,^c which consists in the lack of self-existence and substance of the totality of the Base (when the essence or nature of mind—in Tibetan, *semnyi*^d—is compared to a mirror, the primordial purity aspect is illustrated with the fact that, since the mirror is empty of fixed images, it has the capacity of reflecting all kinds of shapes and colors)^e and all forms that may be singled out within it (since they depend on the essence or nature of mind and on mental functions to appear, they lack self-existence and substance).^f And since nothing exists, appears or manifests that is external to the Base (or the essence or nature of mind), the Base (or the essence or nature of mind) may be said to be empty of extraneous substances.^g

The primordial purity aspect of the Base becomes patent both as Dzogchen-*qua*-Path and as Dzogchen-*qua*-Fruit: emptiness *qua* Path is the *direct, nonconceptual*^h and hence *nondual* realization of this lack of self-existence and substanceⁱ for a limited timespan, in the Contemplation state^j of a Dzogchen practitioner; emptiness *qua* Fruit is what manifests when the primordial purity aspect is never again concealed, for Buddhahood has been attained. The fact that the Base and the phenomena manifested by its energy (concepts that will both be explained in the regular text of this book) are empty implies that the Base contains no empty spaces or divisions—a fact that, with regard to the “physical universe,” was corroborated by the physics of our time, and that is evident in the case of the continuum of sensa—and hence that it is total plenitude. For its part, the realization of emptiness *qua* Path and *qua* Fruit involves the dissolution of the illusion of substantiality, which is experienced (so to speak) as total plenitude because a most basic

^a Wylie, *ka dag*; hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^b Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^c Skt. *śūnyatā*; Pāli *suññatā*; Tib. *tongpanyi* (Wylie, *stong pa nyid*); Ch. 空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *kòng*; Wade-Giles, *k’ung*⁴).

^d Wylie, *sems nyid*; Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*.

^e This is one of the main acceptations of the term *emptiness* in the Dzogchen teachings: the essence aspect of the Base, or of the nonconceptual and thus nondual Awake awareness called *rigpa* (Tib. *rigpai ngowo* [*rig pa’i ngo bo*]), or of the nonconceptual and thus nondual Awake self-awareness (Tib. *rigpa rangi ngowo* [*rig pa rang gi ngo bo*]), or of the primordial gnosis whereby nonconceptual and thus nondual Awake self-awareness manifests (Tib. *rigpa rangi yeshekyi ngowo* [*rig pa rang gi ye shes kyi ngo bo*]) is empty in the sense of being open to manifest any phenomenon because it is not itself a phenomenon, or to manifest any form because it bears no fixed form.

^f This means that all the phenomena that manifest in the Base or by virtue of awareness are empty of self-existence (Skt. *svabhāvasūnyatā* or *prakṛtisūnyatā*; Tib. *rangzhing*[*gyi*] *tongpanyi* (Wylie, *rang bzhin* [*gyi*] *stong pa nyid*); Ch. 自性空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴-k’ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^g Tib. *zhengyi ngöpo tongpa* (Wylie, *gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa*); reconstructed Skt. *paraśūnya*: the Base or awareness in question may also be said to involve emptiness of other substances (Tib. *zhengyi ngöpo tongpanyi* [Wylie, *gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid*]; reconstructed Skt. *paraśūnyatā* or *pararūpaśūnyatā*).

^h Skt. *niṣprapañca*; Tib. *thödräl* (Wylie, *spros bral*); Ch. 不戲論 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *pu²-hsi⁴-lun⁴*) or Skt. *aprapañca*; Tib. *töme or töpa mepa* (Wylie, *spros* [*pa*] *med* [*pa*]); Ch. 無戲論 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *wu-hsi-lun*). In properly Dzogchen terminology, Tib. *la dawa* (Wylie, *la bzla ba*).

ⁱ Therefore, this emptiness corresponds to the nonfigurative, actual, uncategorized, true absolute truth of the Svātantrika-Mādhyamaka and Nyingma Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka views (Skt. *aparyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *namdrang mayinpaï döndam* (Wylie: *rnam grangs ma yin pa’i don dam*).

^j Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* (Wylie, *mnyam bzhas*); Ch. 等引 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

aspect of the illusion of substantiality is the illusion of there being a substantial mental subject at a substantial distance from a substantial physical world, which disrupts the totality or wholeness that (is) our true condition, yielding a feeling of incompleteness—which may also be explained by saying that the feeling of being at a distance of the continuum of plenitude which is the universe / our *sensa* gives rise to a lack of plenitude. Since the *primordial purity* or *katak* aspect of Dzogchen-*qua*-Base is a total plenitude utterly free from empty gaps and the nonconceptual and hence nondual realization of the *primordial purity* or *katak* aspect of Dzogchen-*qua*-Base—whether as Dzogchen-*qua*-Path or as Dzogchen-*qua*-Fruit—is absolute plenitude, regardless of whether we consider Dzogchen as Base, as Path or as Fruit, it may be said that its *primordial purity* or *katak* aspect is total, absolute plenitude. And the symbol of emptiness is perfectly consistent with this fact, for it is the color white, which is the sum of all colors—rather than black, which is the absence of all colors. (For more details, cf. Volume II of this book.)

Therefore, as will be shown in the Chapter on the Inner Tantras, in my translation of “Dzogchen” as “total plenitude / completeness and perfection” the terms “plenitude / completeness” may be taken to refer to the *primordial purity* or *katak* aspect of the Base, Path and Fruit of Dzogchen, whereas the term “perfection” responds to the *spontaneous perfection* or *lhundrub*^a aspect of that Base, that Path and that Fruit. In fact, *spontaneous perfection qua* Base may be taken to refer to the wondrous functioning of the universe and the ecosystem, and each and all of their parts. *Qua* Path it may be taken to refer to the spontaneous arising of visions^b of *rolpa*^c energy (a concept that will be explained in the regular text), to the way in which these visions transform the subject-object duality into conflict, and to the spontaneous self-rectifying cybernetic loops that boost that conflict to the threshold at which it may spontaneously liberate itself—in practices such as Thögel. And *qua* Fruit it may be taken to refer to the unobstructed, masterful functioning of all of an individual’s capacities that results from the irreversible dissolution of hypostasized / absolutized / reified / valorized conceptuality and therefore of the illusion of substantial duality and plurality and its evil effects—including the conceptual, dualistic self-consciousness and at the root of self-encumbering, and the illusion of separateness and the projection of evil that are at the root of evil.³¹ Thus when a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa states:^d

[The Base] (is) *primordially pure*, for it is originally uncontaminated by faults and defilements. It is spontaneously perfected, for the doors to spontaneous rectification are perfected.

In terms of my own explanation of spontaneous perfection as Base, Path and Fruit

^a Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^b Tib. *rangnang* (Wylie, *rang snang*).

^c Wylie, *rol pa*.

^d *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmol machö zogden ranjung sanggyél kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpal gongda nyengyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mol ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhag ger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan brgyud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 179.

as offered above, the Tantra’s explanation of spontaneous perfection is *qua* Path, for what it refers to as spontaneous rectification is comprises the spontaneous arising of visions^a of rölpa^b energy (a concept that will be explained in the regular text), the way in which these visions transform the subject-object duality into conflict, and the spontaneous cybernetic loops that boost that conflict to the threshold at which it may spontaneously liberate itself—in practices such as Thögel.

Finally, I was compelled to coin a set of neologisms, which must be defined and explained at this point so that readers will not be puzzled when they come upon them. Dzogchen texts often speak of recognizing thoughts as the *dharmakāya*, recognizing the true condition, essence or nature of thoughts, or recognizing the true condition of visions and experiences, etc. In such cases, Tibetan texts often use terms such as rangngo shepa^c or ngo shepa,^d which *rather than referring to that which normally we understand by “recognition”*^e—i.e., to the perception of a dynamic, analog and holistic pattern or configuration^f in terms of a static (in that it does not change during cognition), digital and fragmentary concept that as such fails to correspond to what it interprets and therefore distorts it—refer to the spontaneous dissolution of recognition and of thought in general as a nonconceptual and therefore nondual primordial Gnosis^g nakedly reveals the true condition of both ourselves and the whole of reality—namely the *dharmakāya* that, as shown below, is the true condition of the dang^h form of manifestation of energy and the mental aspect of Dzogchen-*qua*-Base, also called the nature / essence of mindⁱ³²—in the nondual Awake, undistorted awareness that in Tibetan is called rigpa.^j In these cases, so that readers are clear that I am not referring to what is usually understood by *recognition*, I coined the set of neologisms comprising the terms *reGnition*, *reGnize*,^k and so on. The antecedents and shortcomings of these terms are discussed in the note the reference mark for which is at the end of this paragraph—which also explains the reasons why I also use the terms Awake awareness, nonconceptual and thus nondual Awake awareness, absolute Presence or instant Presence for rendering the Tibetan term rigpa.³³

^a Tib. rangnang (Wylie, *rang snang*).

^b Wylie, *rol pa*.

^c Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*, which I often render as self-reGnition.

^d Wylie, *ngo shes pa*.

^e Skt. *saṃjñā*; Ch. 想 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang*³); Tib. dushe (Wylie, *’du shes*)—or, in the context of logical refutation, ngözung (Wylie, *ngos bzung*; identification, which Gelugpas apply to the identification of the negandum, which they take to be what they call the illusion of hypostatic or inherent existence and that deem to be other than the object itself—which they refer to as the “mere existent” (cf. [Chöphel & Capriles, in press](#); [Capriles, in press 1](#)). However, in some cases the Nyingmapa use *ngos bzung* to refer to what I am rendering as reGnition.

^f Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Tib. tsennyi (Wylie, *mtshan nyid*) ; Ch. 相 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang*¹).

^g Skt. *jñāna*; Tib. yeshe (Wylie, *ye shes*); Ch. 智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih*⁴; Jap. *chi*).

^h Wylie, *gdangs*.

ⁱ Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*); Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*.

^j Wylie, *rig pa*.

^k Ngo shepa (Wylie, *ngo shes pa*) or rangngo shepa (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*)—i.e. self-reGnition—or, some times, ngözung (Wylie, *ngos bzung*)—among which the latter term is quite ambiguous, for as noted in a previous footnote it is the term that refers to the Gelug conceptual, dualistic identification of the object of negation in logical refutations (what the Gelugpas call hypostatic or inherent existence, as different from a purported “mere existence” that in their view must not be refuted; cf. [Chöphel & Capriles, in press](#); [Capriles, in press 1](#)).

In particular, since the stuff of thought (i.e. that of which thoughts are “made”) is the form of manifestation of energy^a that the Dzogchen teachings refer to as dang,^b the specific true condition of which is the *dharmakāya*, most English translations of Tekchö manuals ask us to recognize all thoughts as the *dharmakāya*. For the reasons explained above, in the various Parts and Tomes of this book, instead of speaking of *recognizing* thoughts as the *dharmakāya* I will speak of *reGnizing* thoughts as the *dharmakāya*: to recognize them as such would amount to disguising as realization a more elaborate form of the ignorance and delusion that Buddhism calls *avidyā*. In fact, this is why the great Jigme Lingpa wrote in *The Lion’s Roar* (*Senge Ngaro*^c) that so long as thoughts do not manifest coincidentally with the *dharmakāya* (i.e. so long as they appear to be facts or to be true of false as a result of their reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization), “it is too early to label all thoughts as *dharmakāya*.”^d

A similar problem presents itself regarding translation of the titles of canonical sources and treatises, for the Tibetan renderings of the titles of the books translated by the scholar-yogins of the Nyingma (ancient) period were universally adopted in that language, so that all scholars automatically knew which was the canonical text or original treatise referred to by a given Tibetan title. Contrariwise, each Western translator devises his or her own translation of the titles, not only of the work she or he translates, but also of the canonical sources and treatises quoted or mentioned in that work—all without trying to find a consensus or agreement with the rest of the translators and scholars.

I am aware that for the different forms of Buddhism to become firmly established in the West, a consensus terminology and consensus titles for all canonical sources and treatises will have to be devised, but I doubt that, at least for the time being, terms and titles may be found that will be universally agreed upon by all translators and scholars. If in spite of this I devised my own English titles for the works I refer to, many readers could fail to identify the work or mistake it for the title of another book as devised by a noted translator or scholar, and I would do no more than add to the existing Buddhist Babel. Hence in most cases I opted for keeping the titles of works in the work’s original language, even though this is far from what I deem ideal. I hope in the near future a correct terminology may be established and an ample consensus about it may be reached, and translations in Western languages of the titles of canonical sources, treatises and commentaries will be universally agreed upon.

Words Within Parentheses

An awareness or gnosis that, being nonconceptual, is free from the subject-object duality, being free from hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized conceptualization and hence from the subject-object duality, cannot be awareness *of* this or *of* that. Therefore, in such cases the preposition *of* has no referent—and yet its use is required by

^a The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei*¹—lit. *sadness or mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*.

^b Wylie, *gdangs*.

^c Wylie, *seng ge’i nga ro*.

^d This is the rendering of the statement in a simplified version of the text by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1972, p. 23). Alternative translations in Thinle Norbu (2015, p. 78); Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, pp. 139 and 179: “it is premature to label thoughts as *dharmakāya*”); van Schaik (2004, p. 227).

the grammar of our languages. Therefore, throughout the regular text and notes of this book, in such cases I will follow the convention established by Sartre (1980), and place the preposition within parentheses (for a thorough explanation of this, cf. Capriles, 2007a, vol. I).

Likewise, concepts are defined by inclusion in a wider genus and exclusion of a class within the same genus (in the elementary school definition of human being as a *rational animal*, “animal” is the wider genus and “irrational” is the excluded class within that genus). Since there can be no genus wider than the true condition of all phenomena,^a Dzogchen-*qua*-Base or however we may call that which ourselves and the whole universe (are) in truth, which may comprise this true condition, and since the condition in question does not exclude anything in contrast with which it may be defined, no concept can fit it. This applies to the most general of concepts, which is that of being; to its negation, which is that of nonbeing; to “being and nonbeing” (for someone could think that this properly defines that which is becoming and hence *has not yet come to be*, yet *may not be said not to be*) and to “neither being nor nonbeing” (which contravenes the laws of the excluded middle and of noncontradiction and which, being a concept as well, cannot fit that which is not comprised in any genus and does not exclude any class). Therefore, the condition in question may not be properly said to be, not to be, to be and not to be, or neither to be nor not to be.

The same applies to nonstatic *nirvāṇa*^b or Dzogchen-*qua*-Path / Dzogchen-*qua*-Fruit, or however we call the direct, nonconceptual and hence nondual disclosure of the true condition of all phenomena or, which is the same, of Dzogchen-*qua*-Base. To begin with, the disclosure in question, being nonconceptual and hence nondual, may not be differentiated from the true condition in question. And, what may be even more significant, in this disclosure the *delusive phenomenon* called *being* does not manifest, and hence the term “being” would have no referent. Since without the phenomenon of being there can be no nonbeing, for the latter is a secondary process^c negation that is superimposed on the delusive phenomenon of being, the term nonbeing would also lack a referent. And the same would apply to “being and nonbeing” and to “neither being nor nonbeing.” (For a thorough explanation of what the *phenomenon of being* is, and of why it is a delusive appearance manifesting only in *samsāra*,^d cf. Capriles, 2007a, vol. I; for the reasons why if there is no *being* there can be no *nonbeing*, cf. the same book, and also Chöphel & Capriles, 2014).

Therefore, throughout the regular text and the notes of this book, I deal with all the verbal forms of the verb *to be* and with the noun *being* in the same way in which I deal with the proposition *of*: just as I place the latter within parentheses whenever it has no referent yet its use is required by the norms of language, I place the verbal forms of *to be* and the noun *being* within parentheses whenever they have no fitting referent yet their use is required by the norms of language.

^a Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chönyi (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*).

^b Skt. *apratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. minepai myangde (Wylie, *mi gnas pa'i myang 'das*); Ch. 無住涅槃 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúzhù nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²*).

^c Cf. Freud (trans. J. Strachey 1954).

^d Tib. khorwa (Wylie, *'khor ba*); Ch. 輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *lúnhuí*; Wade-Giles, *lun²-hui²*) or 生死輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngsǐ lúnhuí*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ssu³ lun²-hui²*).

Translation and Romanization System and Pronunciation of Eastern Names and Terms

Terms in Sanskrit—just like those in Pāli and Oḍḍiyāna language (and Arabic and Persian, if and when these languages are used), as well as those in the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn^a Romanization of Northern Chinese / Han Speech (which, since it has become standard, is the one used in this book, though I also offer the Wade-Giles in notes)—are written in italics except in the case of proper nouns, which I write in regular font style. However, Tibetan terms, when used in the regular text, are written in a phonetic approximation in regular script, with the Wylie transliteration in a footnote in italics (or, in endnotes, within parentheses after the phonetic approximation), at least the first time a term is used.

Tibetan Terms

Tibetan terms, when inserted in the regular text, are transliterated in what I deem to be a phonetic approximation to the two best known Tibetan pronunciations, in regular font style, and at least the first time a Tibetan term is used in a page or section, I offer the Wylie transliteration in a footnote in italics. When the phonetic approximation is not inserted in the regular text, at least the first time the term's translation is used in a page or section, it is offered in a footnote in regular font style, followed by the Wylie transliteration of the term written in italics. In endnotes, the first time a term is used in a note I write the Wylie within parentheses right after the phonetic approximation.

Concerning the phonetic approximation to Tibetan I am using here, in general “ö” sounds like in German (i.e. like a French “e”): molding the lips as though one were to pronounce an “o,” one pronounces an “ai” (i.e. a Spanish or Italian “e,” or a French “é”). “Ü” is pronounced like in German (i.e. like a French “u”): placing the lips as though one were to pronounce a “u,” one pronounces an “ee” (i.e. one pronounces the sound “i” in Latin languages in general). The sound of “zh” is a bit like that of a “sh,” but is much closer to that of a French “j,” that of a Slovenian or Croatian “ž” or a Cyrillic “Ж,” or that of a Buenos Aires “y.”

Like in Sanskrit transliteration, the combination “ph,” rather than sounding close to an “f”, stands for an aspirated “p,” and the combination “th,” rather than indicating a sound somehow standing between “d” and “z,” stands for an aspirated “t.” (The aspirated “ch” and “ts” are written here in the same way as the non-aspirated “ch” and “ts,” for otherwise slightly informed readers would not recognize words such as Tekchö,^b which would appear as Tekch’ö or Tekchhö, or Tsering, which would appear as Ts’ering or Tshering, etc.)

In particular, so that the English-speaking layman may imitate at least to a small extent both the pronunciation of Central Tibet and that of Kham,^c she or he must bear in mind the following: when in my phonetic spelling “y” appears after “g,” “k” or “kh,” a Central Tibetan will pronounce the syllable as a “gy,” “ky” or “khy,” but a Khampa may pronounce it as “gjy,” “kjy” or “khjy” (placing a greater or lesser emphasis on the “j” according to the varieties of Khampa pronunciation and the combination of letters). For

^a “Phonetic writing of the language of the Han people.”

^b Wylie, *khregs chod*.

^c Wylie, *khams*.

example, a Central Tibetan will pronounce the combination “ghye” as “ghye,” but a Khampa may pronounce it as “ghjye,” and a Central Tibetan will pronounce “khy” as “khy,” but a Khampa may pronounce it almost as “jee.” For its part, the letter “ä” may be pronounced as “a,” as “ai” (i.e. like a Spanish or an Italian “e,” or like a French “é”), or somewhere between the two sounds, according to the origin of the individual. (Amdo pronunciation differs from Central Tibet’s even greatly than that of Kham, but since it is rare in the West and I have no experience of it whatsoever, I have overlooked it here.) Finally, the genitive termination *a’i* was rendered throughout as “ai,” to be pronounced “ai” or “ie” according to the pronunciation of the region of Tibet one may choose to follow (“ai” in Central Tibetan, and “ie” in Khampa).

Note that whenever I place the letter “e” at the end of a word, it is because it must be pronounced rather than remain mute; its sound should be like that of a Spanish or an Italian “e,” or like a French “é.”

Sanskrit Transliteration

As to the Sanskrit transliteration, to begin with, it must be noted that vowels may have a long or a short pronunciation, and that the long sound—which is twice as long as the short one—is indicated by placing a dash over the vowel (ā, ī, ō, ū). The final vowels *e*, *ai*, *o* and *au*, rather than being pronounced as *e*, *ai*, or *o*, are pronounced as long sounds even though they do not have the diacritical dash mark, and the final *a* is in most cases mute. A dot placed under certain letters indicates the cerebral sound, which is made by pointing the tip of the tongue towards the top of the head as the sound is produced (in the case of the *ṛ*, this makes it sound almost as *ri*). There are three sibilants, distinguished from each other by diacritical marks: the acute accent placed over an *s* (ś), indicates the palatal *s*, which is pronounced as *sha*; the dot placed under an *s* (ṣ) indicates the cerebral *s*, which is pronounced with the tongue placed towards the top of the head, which it occurs to me would be similar to the sound of a *ssh* (somehow between *s* and *sh*); finally, there is the dental *s*, which bears no diacritical mark and is pronounced as an English *s*. A dot placed above the guttural *n* (ṅ) indicates it should be pronounced as the Portuguese *õa*, in which the sound *n* is replaced by the nasalization of the preceding vowel. The tilde placed over the palatal *n* (ñ) indicates it must be pronounced as a Spanish *ñ* (i.e. as a French or Italian *gn*, a Catalan *ny*, a Portuguese *nh*, etc.). The final diacritical marks are the dot placed under the letter *h* (ḥ), which is known as *visarga* and indicates an echo of the preceding vowel (which is only sounded at the end of a stanza and not in mid verse), but which I have omitted in this book, and the dot placed above the letter *m*, indicating a sound known as *anusvāra*, which for general purposes may be ignored and hence is as a rule omitted in this book. The last aid to pronunciation is the use of the aspirate sound employed with most of the consonants; among the gutturals, for example, there is *kh* and *gh*, where the *h* indicates that the *k* or *g* should be aspirated; among the palatals there is *ch* and *jh*, in which the *h* has the same function as in the case of the gutturals; etc. It must be noted that in citations I keep the spellings of Sanskrit the authors cited chose, even though in other occasions I replace their translations for the ones I have adopted here.

Hànyǔ Pīnyīn Transliteration of Northern Chinese (Han Speech)

The correspondence between Roman letters and sounds in this system is often *sui generis*, as it tends to occur with transliteration in general. To begin with, the aspiration distinction between *b, d, g* and *p, t, k* is similar to that of English (where the first and second sets are also distinguished by voicing), but differs from that of French. *Z* and *c* also have that distinction; however, the first may sound to the untrained ear as similar to “dz” and the second similar to “ts.” From *s, z, c* come the digraphs *sh, zh, ch* by analogy with English *sh, ch*. Although this introduces the combination *zh*, which tends to be roughly as in Tibetan, it is internally consistent in what regards the way the two series are related, and reminds the trained reader that many Chinese pronounce *sh, zh, ch* as *s, z, c*. In the *x, j, q* series, the Pinyin use of *x* is similar to its use in Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, Basque and Maltese—i.e. like a more sibilant and softer “sh”—and the Pinyin *q* is akin to its value in Albanian, as both Pinyin and Albanian pronunciations of the character may sound similar to a *ch* to the untrained ear. Pinyin vowels are pronounced in a way that is similar to that of vowels in the Latin languages. As to the tones, these are:

The first tone (Flat or High Level Tone) is represented with a macron (ˉ) added to the pinyin vowel: ā (ā) ē ī ō ū ū Ē Ī Ō Ū Ū

The second tone (Rising or High-Rising Tone) is denoted by an acute accent (´): á (á) é í ó ú ú Á É Í Ó Ú Ú

The third tone (Falling-Rising or Low Tone) is marked by a caron or háček (ˇ). It is not the rounded breve (˘), though a breve is sometimes substituted due to font limitations: ǎ (ǎ) ě ĭ ǒ ŭ ŭ Ě Ě Ĭ Ŭ Ŭ

The fourth tone (Falling or High-Falling Tone, which, besides, is shorter than the former) is represented with a grave accent (`): à (à) è ì ò ù ù À È Ì Ò Ù Ù

The fifth tone (Neutral Tone) is represented with a normal vowel without any accent mark: a (a) e i o u ü A E I O U Ü

I will not discuss here the pronunciation of initial and final clusters of letters that represent single sounds—or that of medial sounds, for that matter. Information on this, and further instructions on the pronunciation of Pinyin phonemes in terms of English approximations, are given in Wikipedia’s Pinyin entry, to which I direct the reader who wants to attempt to achieve a more precise pronunciation.

Quotations from Tibetan and Sanskrit Texts

In some of the quotations from Tibetan texts and Tibetan translations of Sanskrit texts included in this book, so that the reader may verify the meaning of the passage cited, I refer to at least one of the sources in English where it appears. However, for the sake of homogeneity, self-consistency and clarity I use the terminology adopted in this book, trying to make the translation close enough to the one in the indicated sources as to allow the reader to identify the passage. In such cases, the indication of the source reads, “corresponding yet not identical translation available in...”

Reiterations and repetition

The reader will find reiterations and repetitions. Part of them are due to the fact that I apply what Alan Watts called the “goldsmith technique” of hitting repeatedly on the same point or on nearly the same point, as this helps assimilate the ideas conveyed.

PART I

BUDDHISM

A DZOGCHEN OUTLOOK

CHAPTER I

THE BUDDHA ŚĀKYAMUNI, THE TEACHINGS HE TRANSMITTED ON THE *NIRMĀṆAKĀYA* LEVEL, AND THE FORMS OF BUDDHISM CURRENTLY EXISTING WORLDWIDE

In writing this book, my basic interest has been to allow the reader: (1) to realize, in her or his own experience, how the ordinary human condition to be pervaded by lack of plenitude, discomfort, disappointment and suffering; (2) to discover the cause of this problem; (3) to get an idea of what happens when both the cause and the problems it yields are uprooted; and (4) to understand the ways in which this uprooting may be achieved, and in particular to understand the way of Dzogchen and the reasons why it is the most effective to that aim, at least for people with the necessary capacities. In short, my interest is practical rather than theoretical. However, this first chapter has to offer a panorama of the different kinds of Buddhism currently existing in our world and outline the way they developed, so that the reader may place in perspective the rest of the book, which is based on a very specific type of Buddhism. So I excuse myself for beginning the book with a rather technical, theoretical chapter.

There is consensus among present day historians that the proto-Indo-Europeans, Kurgans or Aryans were rustic warriors who initiated their expansion from the Caucasus (most likely from a strip of land extending from a small stretch of the Western coast of the Caspian sea to a longer stretch of the northern shores of the Black sea) or other nearby regions,³⁴ and occupied Northern India around 1,500 BD^a (even though some contacts between them and the peoples who were already established in India may have already taken place beginning around 2,000 BC.)^{b35} By then, the Indus valley hosted the peaceful and egalitarian Harrapan civilization—whose language was related to the Elamite^c and whose spirituality seems to have involved nondual doctrines and body-celebrating practices of spiritual liberation and mystic communion—had thrived for many centuries.³⁶ For their part, in the heights and slopes of the Western Himalayas peoples speaking Tibeto-Burmese languages³⁷ that seem to have had had a close relationship with the Harrapans and whom I suspect were the source of the latter's' spiritual doctrines and practices had been long established.³⁸

On the basis of the *Rg Veda*'s description of battles between the Indo-Europeans (“peoples with skins the color of wheat”) and dark-skinned settlers of India, and of the arguments whereby Mortimer Wheeler substantiated his theory that the marks on thirty-seven skeletons found in different places in Mohenjo-Daro showed that the people who left those skeletons behind had been killed, it was asserted that the Indo-Europeans confronted and overpowered the Harrapans. However, when Kenneth Kennedy thoroughly examined those skeletons in 1994, he found the marks on the skulls that Wheeler took for evidence of warfare to have been actually caused by erosion^d—and no other remains appeared that

^a Ceruti & Bocchi (1993), Beckwith (2009), Bryant (2011), etc.

^b This assertion is based on the genetic studies reported in Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi & Piazza (1994), and in works such as Renfrew (1987) and Mukherjee, Nebel, Oppenheim & Majumder (2001).

^c This has been “demonstrated” by David McAlpin; cf. Bocchi & Ceruti (1993).

^d Bryant (2001).

would lend weight to the hypothesis of a direct destruction of the civilization in question by warring proto-Indo-European invaders.

The theory that the Harrapan civilization was extinguished because the inhabitants of its towns abandoned them voluntarily caused historians to hypothesize that urban life had come to a halt for some time in the Indian subcontinent. However, David Gordon White cited research by scientists that, he claimed, “emphatically demonstrated” that Vedic religion is partially derived from the religion of the Indus Valley civilization.^a And in fact, current archaeological data suggest that the material culture called Late Harrapan may have persisted until at least ca. 1000–900 BCE and that it was partially contemporaneous with the Painted Grey Ware culture.^b Harvard archaeologist Richard Meadow showed that the late Harrapan settlement of Pirak thrived nonstop from 1800 BCE to the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great in 325 BCE—thus substantiating the influence of the old civilization on the Indian culture and religion that developed after the proto-Indo-European invasions.^c At any rate, it is clear that the Indo-Europeans prevailed over the peoples that were previously established in the Indian subcontinent, imposing their religion on them—even though it seems that later on, as it frequently happens, the spirituality of the conquered gradually infiltrated the religion of the conquerors.

In fact, the prevailing view is that the proto-Indo-European worldview and religion were dualistic, antisomatic and anti-erotic, sexist and casteist. They were at the root of the orthodox *darśanas* or systems of tenets that posited a substantial dualism between soul and nature, and revealed a brazen sexism, a blatant antisomatism, and a strong revulsion against the erotic and the sexual—such as the couple consisting of the Sāṃkhya of Kapila and the Yoga of Patañjali, and the one consisting of the Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika. And of the first three *Vedas*, which did not feature either nondual views or mystical Communion—among which the *Rg Veda* justified warfare against the Harrapans as well as the cast system. On the other hand, as John Marshall’s^d analysis of the art of the Harrapan Civilization³⁹ suggested, the latter’s worldview and spirituality was Śaiva and therefore nondualistic, celebratory of the body and its impulses (which were used to achieve a state of Communion in the disclosure of the true condition of all human beings and all other phenomena) and egalitarian—politically, for no figures of kings appear in Harrapan art, as well as socially, economically, sexually and concerning gender issues. On the basis of this view, it is natural to conclude that current Indian spiritual systems arose as Harrapan spirituality gradually infiltrated Indo-European religion, and that the nondual pre-Indo-European spirituality and worldview began to surface in the teachings of Buddhism, the mystical Monism of the *Atharvaveda*, the *Vedānta Sūtra* and the *Upaniṣads*.⁴⁰

In fact, on the basis of recent historical research some scholars have concluded that the *Upaniṣads* could not be older than the historical Buddha,^e whereas on the basis of other recent findings other authors have asserted the Buddha’s story to have been shown to be the oldest religious story in India, and other religious-philosophical traditions to have arisen at

^a Lawler (2008).

^b Knipe (1991).

^c Lawler (2008).

^d John Marshall (1931, pp. 48–78).

^e Cf. Bronkhorst (1986). In a posterior book the same author (Bronkhorst, 2007, p. 358) claimed that “In the middle of the third century BC, it was Mazdaism, rather than Brahmanism, which predominated in the region between Kandahar and Taxila.”

a later date and to have then reconfigured themselves so as to make their followers believe they were older than, or at least as old as, Buddhism.^a In fact, according to the authors in question, Brahmanism had not yet become established in India at the time of the historical Buddha, and the latter's teachings, rather than reactions to the tenets of Brahmanism, would have been reactions against the tenets of early Zoroastrianism,^b which would have come to prevail in Gandhāra and Sindh and which would have been common lore in Magadha, where the historical Buddha purportedly attained Awakening. These authors also assert Brahmanism to have resulted from the influence of Zoroastrianism.^c

However, above it was suggested that the Harrapans had a (probably nonreligious) spiritual philosophy, which most likely was Śaiva and as such nondualistic, celebratory of the body and its impulses and egalitarian. If it were correct that this spirituality surfaced in the earliest Buddhist teachings, as well as in the *Atharvaveda*, the *Vedānta Sūtra* and the *Upaniṣads*, then it would be clear that it was reborn with different degrees of contamination by dualism. The point is that casteism, sexism, antisomatism and revulsion against eroticism and sexuality cannot be manifestations of a truly nondual philosophy and religion, for these attitudes are based on—and hence confirm, sustain and intensify—a belief in the purported hypostatic, inherent otherness and unworthiness of certain phenomena.

Christopher Beckwith^d claims that there is no evidence that the teachings offered by the historical Buddha involved all of the beliefs and norms of behavior that are found in the Pāli Hīnayāna and Sanskrit Canons—i.e., in what he refers to as “normative Buddhism.” What is a fact, however, is that none of the Canons in question were codified until long after Śākyamuni's decease. At any rate, the Pāli Canon (the earliest Buddhist Canon, which will be briefly discussed below)—seems to have assimilated some of the dualistic and antisomatic prejudices of Indo-European origin ubiquitous among ordinary Indians. And the *Upaniṣads* obviously integrated *all* of them: sexism (they take for granted the exclusion of women from spiritual practice and fail to condemn the *satī* or ritual immolation of widows by jumping into the funerary pyre of their husbands or by other means), casteism (only high caste males could devote themselves to the spiritual quest), and antisomatism and revulsion against eroticism and sexuality (spiritual practitioners had to become *brahmacārins*). And if this view were correct, the truly nondual spirituality and mysticism of Communion would have surfaced in their pure, body-celebrating, egalitarian form in the

^a Cf. As Beckwith (2015) notes, in Ghosh's (ed. 1990) survey of Indian architecture/sculpture, no Jaina figures are registered prior to the so-called “Indian Middle Ages,” except for one mentioned by B. Lal, which in his view is untenable because of the attributed date. Mette (1995), in spite of being pro-Jain, acknowledges that there are no significant remains of early Jain art. For a résumé of these claims and their sustentation by different scholars, cf. Beckwith (2015).

^b Beckwith (2015) notes that Herodotus lists the Gandhārans among those who fought on behalf of the Persians (because of their having been conquered by them); for further, weighty evidence showing Zoroastrianism to have prevailed in Gandhāra and Magadha, cf. Briant (1996: 50, 777-8, 370); Bronkhorst (2007: 358) and in general Bronkhorst (2007, 2011).

^c Beckwith (2015: 9 et seq.). Bronkhorst (2007) claims that the ideas of *karma* and rebirth, which do not appear in the *R̥g Veda*, appeared in Indian thought at the time of the Buddha because he lived in the area of “Greater Magadha” (roughly the Ganges basin) where the ideas were native to the region. However, as will be shown below, the Himalayan-Harrapan influence should not be discarded.

^d Beckwith (2015, passim).

Tantrism,^a and in particular in Buddhist Vajrayāna Tantrism and Dzogchen^b — which according to the records developed in the country known as Oḍḍiyāna.⁴¹

The latter is not surprising, for it was to be expected that the practices and doctrines of the peoples on the heights and slopes of the Himalayas and the Harrapans would have retained a purer form in the regions that were *not* conquered by the Indo-Europeans, in the places where Brahmanism did not prevail, and to a lesser extent in the underground oral traditions of places where Brahmanism prevailed (in India proper, the *Purāṇas* retained the pre-Indo-European lore, yet minted it in the dualistic mold of Indo-European ideology so as to turn it into the common currency of the Hindu unillustrated populace).⁴²

According to official Buddhist records, the Buddha Śākyamuni (“Sage of the Śākya [clan]”) was born prince Siddhārtha Gautama and lived in the sixth and fifth centuries BC (on the basis of those records his lifetime has been dated 563-483 BC⁴³), after Brahmanism had already consolidated, the caste system had been successfully imposed, and the mystics called *ṛṣi* or *Seers* had codified the early *Upaniṣads*. However, as noted above, there is no evidence that religious and philosophical systems other than Buddhism had consolidated at the time of Śākyamuni—whether he lived as dated by tradition or centuries or decades after that, as unorthodox scholars are suggesting.⁴⁴ More strikingly, some scholars have claimed that the historical Buddha was a Saka (an Eastern Scyntian) rather than an Indian prince and have sought in Scyntian thought the roots of the Buddha’s teachings.^c According to this theory, rather than Śākyamuni or “Sage of the Śākya [clan]” the historical Buddha’s title could have initially been Sakamuni or “Sage of the Sakas”—which would have become Śakamuni in Gāndhāri *prākṛta* (a term that, however, as the same authors acknowledge, is unattested in genuine Mauryan inscriptions) and later on, in Sanskrit, would have become Śākyamuni.^{d45} According to this view, at a later time he would have been presented as an Indian prince in order to make his teachings more palatable to the Indians.

At any rate, the *ordinary* traditional story of the Buddha Śākyamuni’s spiritual strife and Awakening—i.e., the one that views the story of the Buddha as progressively moving from the relative to the absolute condition⁴⁶—is most significant regardless of its historic veracity or lack of it. It tells us that astrologists had predicted that the purported princely member of the *Kṣatriya* caste would become a *Cakravartin*—a term that may refer either to a universal monarch or to an Awake sage who reintroduces to the human world the doctrines and practices leading to Awakening^e after these have disappeared. Since his father was a king, the latter obsessively tried to avert the arising of spiritual interests in the little prince in order to get him to extend his kingdom into an empire and become a political *Cakravartin*, and hence his parents raised him the way they believed fittest to preclude him from reflecting on the meaning of life or engaging in a spiritual quest: they kept him entertained by making him unceasingly engage in sports that by the same token were a training to make of him a great warrior, they glutted him with pleasures, and they insulated him from the hardships of life. However, in spite of this—or perhaps to a certain extent

^a *Ibidem*.

^b Wylie, *rdzogs chen*; the complete word is Dzogpa Chenpo (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chenpo*).

^c Beckwith (2015); Baums (2009); Bareau (1987).

^d Beckwith (2015, pp. 1 et seq.; also appendix C)

^e Skt. and Pāli, *bodhi*; Tib. changchub (Wylie, *byang chub*); Chin. 菩提 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *pútí*; Wade-Giles, *p’u²-t’i²*); Jap. *bodai*. Though the etymology of the Sanskrit term requires it to be rendered as Awakening, and the term’s sense corresponds to this etymology, it and its equivalents most often translated as Enlightenment.

because of this⁴⁷—Siddhārtha Gautama came to experience an unremitting sensation of existential lack, an overwhelming feeling of missing the point and a haunting uneasiness—thus realizing the inherently suffering character of the human reality. And this realization compelled him to engage in a search for the meaning of human existence and for the way of putting an end to that lack, that missing the point, that uneasiness, as well as the recurrent suffering to which all human beings are subjected, not only in himself, but in others as well.

This search led him to leave home, abandoning his wife and newborn child, his five hundred secondary consorts, his royal dishes, his choice luxuries and his royal privileges, in order to wander as a mendicant ascetic seeking suitable spiritual preceptors. The two gurus among the many who, according to the story, were offering their services in India at the time, and whom, on account of their purported higher spiritual attainments, he successively followed, regularly entered some of the highest fabricated, produced, contrived, intentional, conditioned, configured, and /or compounded^a meditative states. However, it did not take long for the royal ascetic to realize that the liberation he was pursuing was not to be found in such feats, for all that is fabricated, produced, contrived, intentional, conditioned, configured, and/or compounded is impermanent and prone to beget suffering, and hence could not provide either his own person or the countless beings embraced by his compassion with a definitive solution to the “problem of life.” The future Buddha Śākyamuni would have to find for himself such definitive solution, which, as he was quick to realize, could only lie in the nonfabricated, unproduced, uncontrived, unintentional, unconditioned, unconfigured and / or un compounded.^b

To make a long story short, after many vicissitudes, the mendicant prince sat down under the Bodhi tree and decided not to get up again until Awakening would dawn on him. It is said that Māra, the demon, representing the principle of confusion and deceit in the human mind, sent a host of demons to terrorize him and his daughters^c to seduce him, but the future Buddha remained impassive and then entered a deep absorption in which there were neither ideation nor a subject-object duality,^d yet was not the Awakening he sought. When the morning star arose, its presence Awoke Siddhārtha Gautama from his absorption, into the true condition both of his own self and of the whole of reality: he had become the Buddha or “Awake One” of our era.

Instead of claiming that he had discovered a hitherto unknown truth, Śākyamuni said he had found the truth “of the *ṛṣis* (Seers) of antiquity.”⁴⁸ According to the traditional story, intent on preventing deviations like the ones he observed in his teachers, the Buddha dissociated himself from the Vedic tenets and taught a new doctrine that made it clear that all that was fabricated, produced, conditioned, contrived, intentional, configured and /or

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^b Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c Skt. *apsarā[h]*; Pāli *accharā*; Tib. *chu kyemo* (Wylie, *chu skyes mo*); Ch. 天女 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *tiānnǚ*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien-nü*). Actually, the *apsarās* are not daughters of Māra; in Brahmanic mythology, they are *dancing heavenly nymphs* (their name means “between [the clouds’] vapors”), consorts of the *gandharvas*, who are heavenly musicians that feed on odors and who live in an illusory city.

^d The absorption was a type of *kunzhi lungmaten* (Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*): a state that technically pertains to *saṃsāra* but in which *saṃsāra* is not actively functioning (since there is no subject-object duality there can be no acceptance, rejection or indifference, and thus it is as though the wheel had momentarily come to a halt).

compounded, was impermanent^a and capable of yielding suffering: sooner or later it would dissolve and hence, rather than offering an irreversible salvation from suffering, it would become a new source of suffering. Therefore, the definitive liberation he sought and finally obtained could lie solely in the uncompounded, unconditioned, unoriginated, unborn and uncontrived, which alone was not impermanent. He put forward the negative concept of *anātman*, *nairātmya* or *ātma nāsti*,^b thus negating true existence, not only to the individual soul or *jivātman*, but also to any universal God or substance⁴⁹—thus contradicting a pivotal, prevailing religious concept, which according to tradition was the Vedic concept of *ātman* (soul or self), but which Beckwith and others^c have identified as the supreme Zoroastrian god. The negative concept in question was effective to prevent the deviation into which his teachers had incurred, which lay in taking a pseudo-totality as object and then identifying with it in order to obscure the delusive subject-object duality,^d thereby coming to believe this to be the direct unveiling of absolute reality. This deviation, however, would have been furthered by the *Upaniṣadic* understanding of all entities as being comparable to utensils made of clay, and of their true reality as the clay common to all of them rather than the distinctive features of each,⁵⁰ but not by the supreme Zoroastrian god—a fact that seems to undermine the theories put forward by Beckwith and others. Furthermore, if Vedic limitations were already in place, he transgressed them, for in the order he founded he admitted individuals of all castes and of both genders.

At any rate, no matter what was it that the Buddha was reacting against, there is no doubt that if we view Buddhism as a religion, it is a fully separate and independent one. However, as shown by the following excerpt from the *Kālāma Sutta*^e (a canonical source belonging to what the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* referred to as the First Promulgation or *dharmacakra*), its critical attitude is more proper to philosophy:

Do not believe in the strength of traditions, however much they may have been honored for many generations and in many places; do not believe anything because many people speak of it; do not believe in the power of sages of old times; do not believe that which you yourselves have imagined, thinking that a god has inspired you. Believe nothing that depends solely on the authority of your teachers or priests. After investigation, believe that which you yourselves have tested and found reasonable, and that is for your good and that of others.

THE THREE PROMULGATIONS, THE MAHĀYĀNA OR “WIDER VEHICLE,” AND THE CHINESE AND TIBETAN SCHOOLS

^a Skt. *anityatā*; Pāli *anicca*; Tib. *mitakpa* (Wylie, *mi rtag pa*); Chin. 無常 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúcháng*; Wade-Giles *wu²-ch²'ang²*; Japanese: *mujō*); Korean: 무상 *musang*.

^b Pāli, *anatta*; Tib. *dagme* (Wylie, *bdag med*); Ch. 無我 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwǒ*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wo³*).

^c Beckwith (2015).

^d Skt. *grāhyagrāhikavikalpa*; Tib. *sungwa dang dzinpai nampar togpa* (Wylie, *gzung ba dang 'dzin pa'i nram par rtog pa*); Ch. 所取能取分別 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *suǒqǔ néngqǔ fēnbié*; Wade-Giles, *so³-ch³'ü³ neng²-ch³'ü³ fen¹-pieh²*). The duality in question may be called by the Skt. *grāhaka-grāhya* (Tib. *zungdzin* [Wylie, *gzung 'dzin*] or *dzinzung* [Wylie, *'dzin gzung*]); *viṣayi-viṣaya* or *artha* (Tib. *chöchen* [Wylie, *chos can*] - *yül* [Wylie, *yul*] or *dön* [Wylie, *don*]) and *dharmīn-jñeya* (Tib. *chöchen* [Wylie, *chos can*] or *yülchen* [Wylie, *yul can*] - *sheya* [Wylie, *shes bya*]).

^e Skt. *Kālāmasūtra*.

The Mahāyāna’s *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* classified the teachings that Śākyamuni Buddha taught on the *nirmāṇakāya* (i.e., physical) level, either directly from his mouth or through the mouths of the great bodhisattvas,^a into the renowned “three Promulgations of a cycle^b of teachings^{c,d}”. The First Promulgation,^e which commenced with the sermon found in the *Dharmacakrapravartanasūtra*,^f in which the Four Noble Truths were expounded, is the source of the totality of the teachings of what the Mahāyāna calls the Hīnayāna, and the canonical texts gathered in the Pāli Canon, though accepted by the Mahāyāna as genuine teachings of the Buddha, are regarded by the various schools and streams of the Ample Vehicle or Mahāyāna as having a provisional meaning^g and thus requiring interpretation. Obviously, this is not the opinion of the schools the Mahāyāna classified as Hīnayāna—including the Theravāda, based on the Pāli Canon, which is the only one of those schools that continues to exist in our time—for according to all of them the canonical texts belonging to this Promulgation were the only ones the Buddha Śākyamuni ever taught.

In the Second Promulgation, which took place at Vulture’s Peak, near Rajghir, in what nowadays is the Indian state of Bihar, Śākyamuni Buddha, as a rule speaking through the higher bodhisattvas accompanying him, taught the *Prajñāpāramitā*: the discriminative wisdom leading from “this shore” (*samsāra*) to the “other shore” (Buddhahood).⁵¹ Some texts remark that Śākyamuni knew that his immediate disciples in the Buddhist order, who had taken the vows of monks and nuns, were *śrāvakas* or “listeners”—i.e., had the lower kind of Hīnayāna capacities—and thus would have experienced *panic* before the teachings proclaiming the absolute emptiness^h of self-existenceⁱ (i.e., absolute insubstantiality) of all phenomena and hence would have been scared away from the *dharma* by the Mahāyāna’s *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, with their absolute, thorough conception of the emptiness. And that this was the reason why in the First Promulgation he had to teach a watered down, relativized notion of the emptiness of self-existence of all entities, and had to leave the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings in the custody of the *nāgas*, for them to be revealed later on by the Mahāyāna mystic and philosopher Nāgārjuna⁵²—who according to most Western

^a As will be shown in a section near the end of this volume, most of the Mahāyānasūtras were not spoken by Śākyamuni but by the great bodhisattvas, who spoke thanks to Śākyamuni’s empowerment.

^b Skt. *cakra*; Pāli *cakka*; Tib. khorlo (Wylie, *'khor lo*); Ch. 輪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *lún*; Wade-Giles, *lun*²).

^c Skt. *dharma*; Pāli *dhamma*; Tib. chö (*chos*); Ch. 法 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³; Jap. *hō*).

^d Skt. *triparivartadharmacakrapravartana*; Tib. chökhör [rimpa] sum (Wylie, *chos 'khor [rim pa] gsum*).

^e Skt. *dharmacakra*; Pāli *dharmacakka*; Tib. chökyi khorlo (Wylie, *chos kyi 'khor lo*); Ch. 法輪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎlún*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³-*lun*²).

^f Pāli *Dharmachakkappavattanasutta*; Tib. Chökhör korwai do (Wylie, *chos 'khor bskor ba'i mdo*); Ch. 轉法輪經 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhuǎnfǎlún jīng*; Wade-Giles, *chuan*³-*fa*³-*lun*² *chīng*¹).

^g Skt. *neyārtha*; Tib. drangdön (Wylie, *drang don*); Ch. 不了義 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùliǎoyì*; Wade-Giles, *pu*⁴-*liao*³-*i*⁴).

^h Skt. *sūnyatā*; Pāli, *suññata*; Tib. tongpanyi (Wylie, *stong pa nyid*); Chin. 空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *kòng*; Wade-Giles, *k'ung*⁴; Jap. *ku*). Note that the Taoist and Chán concept of 無 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wú*; Wade-Giles, *wu*²; Jap. *mu*), seems to bear some similitude with the Sanskrit *sūnya* and with the Dzogchen concept of the essence or ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*) aspect of the Base or zhi (Wylie, *gzhī*) (cf. Capriles, 2007a, Vol. I). However, the Sanskrit and the Tibetan are rendered into Chinese as 空 (*kòng* / *k'ung*⁴ or *kōng* / *k'ung*¹); for example, 大空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dàkōng*; Wade-Giles, *ta*⁴-*k'ung*¹) renders the Skt. *mahāsūnya* and the Tibetan tongpa chenpo (Wylie, *stong pa chen po*).

ⁱ Skt. *svabhāvasūnyatā* or *prakṛtisūnyatā*; Tib. rangzhingyi tongpanyi (Wylie, *rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid*)—except for Je Tsongkhapa, who preferred rangzhingyi madrubpa (Wylie, *rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa*); Ch. 自性空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade-Giles, *tzü*⁴-*hsing*⁴-*k'ung*⁴; Jap. *jishōkū*).

scholars lived at the beginning of the Christian era (according to most Western scholars, around the second century AD).⁵³

In the Third Promulgation, which occurred in Malayagiri⁵⁴ (Sri Laṅkā), Vajrāsana (presently Bodh Gaya) and Vaiśālī, Śākyamuni taught *sūtras* that, rather than positing a self-existing, external material world and setting out to discuss the nature of that world, emphasized the practice of *yoga* and all that had to do with mind and experience. As I have noted elsewhere (Capriles, upcoming definitive edition in print of electronic publication 2004), these *sūtras*, rather than putting forward a merely intellectual theory of reality, based themselves on Śākyamuni’s Awakening and yogic experience in order to provide a sound basis for effective yogic practice. This is the reason why, generally speaking, those Tibetan Schools that stress learning, scholarship and dialectics over and above yogic practice, such as the Gelugpa^a, regard the canonical texts of this Promulgation as having provisional meaning^b and those of the Second Promulgation as having definitive meaning,^c whereas the Schools that emphasize yogic practice over and above learning, scholarship and dialectics, such as the Nyingmapa^d, regard them as having definitive meaning and those of the Second Promulgation as having provisional meaning—or, in some particular cases, view both as having definitive meaning.

However, I have always noted that *all* texts, whether they may be correctly said to have a provisional meaning or a definitive meaning, have a provisional meaning when compared with the primordial gnosis that nonconceptually and hence nondually reveals the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena—so that from this standpoint all expressions in terms of words have a provisional meaning, and only the state of rigpa,^e inconceivable^f in terms of concepts or symbols and inexpressible in words, has a truly definitive meaning—and also that *in each of the three Promulgations*, some *sūtras* contain teachings of a more “inner” character, whereas others emphasize teachings of a more “outer” character.⁵⁵ Then recently I came upon a passage from a Tantra revealed by tertön Dūdjom Lingpa that states precisely this fact:^g

... the teachings for the sake of disciples consist of (1) the signless *dharmakāya*, which is the ultimate of definitive meaning,^h and (2) discussions of names and objects as if they existed with their own characteristics, by which you are trapped in the cage of signs, and which have relative, or provisional, meanings.ⁱ

The First Promulgation and the Schools Based on It

^a Wylie, *dge lugs pa*.

^b Skt. *neyartha*; Tib. drangdön (Wylie, *drang don*); Ch. 不了義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùliǎoyì*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-liao³-i⁴*).

^c Skt. *nītārtha*; Tib. ngedön (Wylie, *nges don*); Ch. 了義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *liǎoyì*; Wade-Giles, *liao³-i⁴*).

^d Wylie, *rnying ma pa*.

^e Wylie, *rig pa*; Skt. *vidyā*; Pāli *vijjā*; Ch. 明 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *míng*; Wade-Giles, *míng²*).

^f Skt. *acintya*; Pāli: *acinteya*, *acintiya*; Tib. samye (Wylie, *bsam yas*) or samgyi mikhyabpa (Wylie, *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*); Ch. 佛學辭彙 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxué cíhuì*; Wade-Giles, *fo²-hsiueh² tz’u²-hui⁴*).

^g *Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorjei nyingpo* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje’i snying po*). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. III, p. 115).

^h Skt. *neyartha*; Tib. drangdön (Wylie, *drang don*); Ch. 不了義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùliǎoyì*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-liao³-i⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *nītārtha*; Tib. ngedön (Wylie, *nges don*); Ch. 了義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *liǎoyì*; Wade-Giles, *liao³-i⁴*).

The first teaching of the Buddha—which initiated what the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* constitute the first “Promulgation of a cycle of teachings”,^a was that of the Four Noble Truths, expressed as follows in the Pāli Canon: (1) Human life is characterized by *duḥkha*^b: dissatisfaction and suffering. (2) The cause of *duḥkha* (i.e. dissatisfaction and suffering) is *trṣṇā*^c: a basic craving that is called *kāmatrṣṇā*^d when it takes the form of craving for pleasure, *bhavatrṣṇā*^e or thirst-for-existence in the case of the basic compulsion to assert, confirm and maintain oneself as an inherently existent, important, separate individual, and to fill the concomitant sensation of lack, or *vibhavatrṣṇā*^f when—for example in practitioners of Buddhism—this thirst or craving turns toward self-annihilation in static *nirvāṇa*^g. (3) If the cause of dissatisfaction and suffering is uprooted, the latter come to an end in *nirvāṇa*, which involves the cessation of the basic craving that is *trṣṇā*, and of the dissatisfaction and suffering that issue from that craving.⁵⁶ (4) There is a way leading to this end, which is *mārga*^h: the Path for putting an end to our basic craving, and therefore to dissatisfaction and suffering, by extinguishing all of these in the attainment of *nirvāṇa*.

As noted above, the teachings of this Promulgation contains the canonical sources of all of the schools that the Mahāyāna classes under the heading Hīnayāna or “Narrow Vehicle”—including the Theravādaⁱ⁵⁷ (“Adhering to the [doctrine of the] Elders”), which is the only school of this vehicle existing independently in our time and which prevails in a vast area of Southeast Asia (including Laos, Kampuchea, most of Myanmar and Thailand, and part of Vietnam) and in part of Sri Lankā. As will be shown below, in Tibet and its ambit of cultural influence, the doctrines of two Sanskrit schools of the Hīnayāna—the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika, which no longer exist as independent schools—have been taught until our days as part of the *curricula* of Buddhist philosophy in Tibetan Buddhist schools that do not adhere to the Hīnayāna.^{j58}

The aim of the Hīnayāna is the attainment of individual liberation with respect to the *duḥkha* (dissatisfaction and suffering) that is the First Noble Truth and to the *duḥkha*-ridden existence known as *saṃsāra*^{k59} or “cyclic existence” (a concept that will be

^a Skt. *dharmacakra*; Pāli *dharmacakka*; Tib. chökyi khorlo (Wylie, *chos kyi 'khor lo*); Ch. 法輪 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎlún*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-lun²*).

^b Pāli *dukkha*; Tib. dugngäl (*sdug bsgal*); Ch. 苦 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *kǔ*; Wade-Giles *k'u¹*; Jap. Rōmaji, *ku*; Korean, *ko*).

^c Pāli *taṇhā*; Tib. sepa (Wylie, *sred pa*); Ch. 愛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *ài*; Wade-Giles, *ai⁴*; Jap. *ai*; Kor. *ae*).

^d Pāli *kāmatanḥā*; Tib. döchagkyi sepa (Wylie, *'dod chags kyi sred pa*); Ch. 欲愛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yùài*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-ai⁴*).

^e Pāli *bhavatanḥā*; Tib. sidpai sepa (Wylie, *srid pa'i sred pa*); Ch. 有愛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuài*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ai⁴*).

^f Pāli *vibhavatanḥā*; Tib. mepai sepa (Wylie, *med pa'i sred pa*); Ch. 有愛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuài*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ai⁴*).

^g Pāli *nibbāna*; Tib. myangdé (Wylie, *myang 'das*) or *myangan[le] depa* (Wylie, *mya ngan [las] 'das pa*); Ch. 涅槃 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *nieh⁴-p'an²*); Jap. *nehan*; etc.

^h Pāli, *magga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); Ch. 道 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles, *tao⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *Sthaviravāda*; Tib. neten depa (Wylie, *gnas brtan sde pa*); Ch. 上座部 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shàngzuòbù*; Wade-Giles, *shang⁴-tso⁴-pu⁴*).

^j If I complete and publish the definitive version on paper of my book *The Four Philosophical Schools of the Sūtrayāna Traditionally Taught in Tibet: With Reference to the Dzogchen Teachings*, it will feature a review of the two schools in question.

^k *saṃsāra* is both Skt. and Pāli; Tib. khorwa (Wylie, *khor ba*); Ch. 輪迴 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lúnhuí*; Wade-Giles, *lun²-hui²*) or 生死輪迴 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngsǐ lúnhuí*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ssu³ lun²-hui²*).

explained later on), to be achieved by means of the cessation of the basic craving that it regards as the Second Noble Truth and of the concomitant illusion of being a substantial, separate individual. This is one of the reasons why later codifications—namely the scriptures of the Second and Third Promulgations—and all the schools based on them referred to the Buddhism taught in the First Promulgation and the schools based on it as the Hīnayāna or Narrow Vehicle, designating themselves as the Mahāyāna or Ample Vehicle: that the latter emphasize the fact that, rather than being centered mainly in a selfish search for personal liberation with respect to suffering, practitioners must give precedence to working for the liberation of the totality of sentient beings (in fact, it is said that the *bodhisattva*, who is the archetypal practitioner of this type of Buddhism, refuses to enter *nirvāṇa* for as long as all other beings have not entered it). The second reason is that the latter privilege the nature of intentions over that of human acts, and hence the individual has a greater freedom of choice and responsibility.⁶⁰

Indivisible from the above is the fact that, whereas the Hīnayāna seeks a *nirvāṇa* that is often a passive condition such as the state called *nirodhasamāpatti*,^a in which no thoughts arise and in which there is no subject-object duality (for the subject-object duality results from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought), the Mahāyāna seeks an irreversible nonstatic *nirvāṇa*^b that is endowed with the special capacity called Buddha-omniscience^c that has the power to supremely benefit sentient beings. Some Mahāyāna scriptures, emphasizing the idea that the Fruit of the Hīnayāna is no more than an individual liberation from suffering and hence from transmigration, claim that the Fruit in question results from fully neutralizing passion delusive obstructions,^d emphasizing the fact that the Fruit of the Mahāyāna is perfect Buddhahood, which involves a consummate capacity to help others and results from fully neutralizing cognitive delusive obstructions^e—and thus making the point that the Mahāyāna goes much further than the Hīnayāna. However, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter, many Mahāyāna canonical sources and treatises assert all forms of Hīnayāna *nirvāṇa* to be, not a final resting place and a definitive freedom from *samsāra*, but a provisional resting place from which one will have to be reborn in order to enter the Mahāyāna Path from its inception if one is ever to reach final release—which is only offered by the nonstatic *nirvāṇa* of the Mahāyāna.

And the above is for its part indivisible from the fact that, whereas the Hīnayāna negates the existence of an independent, unitary “I” or soul, it asserts the latter to be no more than an illusion produced by the interaction of five aggregates^f—which are *form*, or *material form*;^g *mental sensation / feeling*, or *sensation / feeling in general*;^a *recognition*, or

^a *nirodhasamāpatti* is Skt. and Pāli; Tib. gogpai nyomjug (Wylie, 'gog pa'i snyoms 'jug); Ch. 滅盡定 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, mièjìndìng; Wade-Giles, mie⁴-jīng⁴-ding⁴).

^b Skt. *apratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. minepai myangde (Wylie, mi gnas pa'i myang 'das); Ch. 無住涅槃 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, wúzhù nièpán; Wade-Giles, wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²).

^c Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa); Ch. 一切種智 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, yīqièzhǒng zhì; Wade-Giles, i¹-ch'ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴).

^d Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Pāli *kilesāvaraṇa*; Tib. nyön[mongpai] drib[pa] (Wylie, nyon [mongs pa'i] sgrīb [pa]); Ch. 煩惱障 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, fánnǎozhàng; Wade-Giles, fan²-nao³-chang⁴).

^e Skt. *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli *ñeyyāvāraṇa*; Tib. shedrib or shechai dribpa (Wylie, shes [bya'i] sgrīb [pa]); Ch. 所知障 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, suǒzhīzhàng; Wade-Giles, so³-chih¹-chang⁴).

^f Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandha*; Tib. phungpo (Wylie, phung po); Ch. 蘊 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, yùn; Wade-Giles, yün⁴).

^g Skt. and Pāli *rūpa*; Tib. zug (Wylie, gzugs); Ch. 色 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, sè; Wade-Giles, se⁴).

perception; ^b *habitual mental formations or impulses that move the mind*; ^c and *consciousness, or apperception*^{d61}—and it views consciousness (the last of the aggregates) as consisting of a succession of instantaneous events of consciousness, each of which has no duration whatsoever *yet exists absolutely or ultimately*. Likewise, concerning “material objects,” it implicitly negated their independent, unitary existence by reducing them to aggregates of self-existing infinitesimal particles, yet it viewed these particles as *existing absolutely or ultimately*.⁶² The Mahāyāna, on the contrary, negates the hypostatic, inherent, absolute or ultimate, independent, unitary existence of infinitesimal particles. And those Mahāyāna Sūtras that posit instants of consciousness explicitly negate that these instants exist in a hypostatic, inherent, absolute or ultimate, independent manner. In fact, emptiness of self-being^e or absence of an independent self-nature^f is not circumscribed to human individuals or realized solely by showing what we take for a unitary “I” to be an illusion produced by the interaction of the five aggregates, for the Mahāyāna makes it clear that also the entities in which we experience no subjectivity and which in our time we experience solely as object, are utterly empty of self-being or independent self-nature.⁶³

Pāli Schools Based on the First Promulgation: The Theravāda School

According to the accounts of the evolution of the Buddhist tradition based on the First Promulgation, eighteen different Schools arose through successive divisions of the original trunk of that tradition. Vinītadeva—who according to Damien Keown (2003, p. 84) relied too much on earlier Sarvāstivādin works—tells us that the first division gave rise to four schools: the Sarvāstivāda, the Saṃmitīya, the Mahāsaṃghika and the Sthavira, which then subdivided.⁶⁴ However, Bhāvaviveka, following the Sthaviras, tells us that the first division was twofold and offers a list of the schools that sprung from those two that does not at all coincide with Vinītadeva’s—whereas the *Mahāvamsa*, a Ceylanese Theravādin chronicle, on the basis of the same first initial twofold division reported by the Sthaviras and Bhāvaviveka, offers a totally different list.^g At any rate, not only is the Theravāda School not included in any list of the eighteen original schools of Buddhism based on the Pāli Canon (First Promulgation); the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika schools that will be briefly reviewed below are also absent in all of them—even though the latter two are recorded in all extant Tibetan sources, as well as in all modern Indian sources.^h

The Theravāda purportedly developed in the Sthavira (also called Mahāsthavira or Āryasthavira) School, having been founded by Moggaliputta Tissa in the “Council of the Pāli School” that King Aśoka allegedly urged him to organize and that finally convened around 244 BC.⁶⁵ It is asserted that the Council Moggaliputta Tissa summoned excluded the monks opposed to his theses, whose views were refuted in the *Kathāvatthu* (ascribed to

^a Skt. and Pāli *vedanā*; Tib. tsorwa (Wylie, *tshor ba*); Ch. 受 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou*⁴).

^b Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. dushe (Wylie, *'du shes*); Ch. 想 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang*³).

^c Skt. *saṃskāra*; Pāli *saṅkhāra*; Tib. duche (Wylie, *'du byed*); 行 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng* Wade-Giles, *hsing*²).

^d Skt. *viññāna*; Pāli *viññāṇa*; Tib. namshe (Wylie, *rnam shes*) or nampar shepa (Wylie, *rnam par shes pa*); 識 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shí*; Wade-Giles, *shih*²).

^e Skt. *svabhāvaśūnyatā*; Tib. rangzhinggyi tongpanyi (Wylie, *rang bzhing gyis stong pa nyid*); Ch. 自性空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkōng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴-k'ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^f Skt. *nairātmya*; Tib. dagme (Wylie, *bdag med*); 無我 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwǒ*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wo³*).

^g To see these lists, cf. Cornu (2001 pp. 175-176).

^h Including Radhakrishnan, S. (1923 / 1929).

him, but of unknown authorship, this book was subsequently incorporated to the Theravāda *Abhidharma*). In Ceylon, the Mahāvihāravāsīn / Mahāvihāravādīn monks adopted the new doctrine. Later on, the Theravāda purportedly divided into the Mahīśāsaka (from which according to some accounts the Dharmaguptaka sprung) and the Kāśyapīya.

Since neither the Theravāda, nor the eighteen earliest schools of Buddhism, were ever taught in the Land of the Snows, they are not recurrently mentioned in Tibetan texts. In particular, even though the former has a less realistic view of infinitesimal particles than most Sarvāstivādīn or “realistic” authors or groups of authors, doxographers—including modern Indian ones such as, for example, Radhakrishnan (1923 / 1929)—often classify it among the latter.

According to this school, “physical” entities are made of infinitesimal particles, but these infinitesimal particles, rather than being static units existing in a concrete and discrete manner, are dynamic processes. For its part, all that is “mental” is constituted by indivisible mental factors or events, which according to this school—and contrarily to the Vaibhāṣika view—are not in diametrical opposition to the “physical” world. Finally, like all Buddhist Schools, it asserts the individual or “self” to be nothing more than an illusion produced by the interaction of the above-listed five aggregates.^a

The Theravāda posited two types of space: the one that manifests between solid bodies and the space that is perceived in meditation. The second type of space is neither a reality nor an abstraction having no correlate in experience. The *Atthasālinī* (a treatise attributed to Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghoṣa [fifth century C.E.] which comments on the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*^b [First Book of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*^c]) states:

The infinitude of space is a sphere in the sense of being a basis for a meditative experience with all the psychological functions that sustain it or that somehow support it.

The reader interested in further exploring the Theravāda is directed to the English language publications of that school,^d which will no doubt be more faithful to its views than whatever a practitioner of other Buddhist traditions may write about it.

Sanskrit Schools Based on the First Promulgation

Though the extant texts of the First Promulgation are best known in their Pāli form, there are Sanskrit versions of many of them, and not all of the philosophical schools that the Mahāyāna categorizes as Hīnayāna either based themselves on Pāli texts or wrote their treatises in this language, for some of them had the whole of their literature in Sanskrit—and yet all of the eighteen schools into which early Buddhism subdivided were based on the same principles, which are the ones expressed in the Pāli Canon and which contrast with

^a Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandha*; Tib. *phungpo* (Wylie, *phung po*); Ch. 蘊 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yùn*; Wade-Giles, *yün*⁴).

^b The title of this text is in Pāli.

^c This is the Pāli name of this *piṭaka*.

^d For example, those published by the Maha Bodhi Society in Calcutta, India; those published in the countries in which the Theravāda prevails; and the growing number of those published in the West.

those proper to the Mahāyāna. One of those eighteen schools was the Āryasarvāstivāda^a—namely “adhering to realism,” even though originally it was not as realistic as it came to be with the passing of time—from which developed the two Hīnayāna schools of tenets that since the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet until our days have been taught uninterruptedly in that country among students and practitioners of the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna: the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika tenet systems.

Therefore, among all philosophical and meditative traditions that the Mahāyāna classes as Hīnayāna, most Tibetan teachers and scholars are familiar with only these two. In particular, the Pāli scriptures and commentaries were unknown in Tibet; the *Dhammapāda*^b itself came to be known in Tibet only after scholar-lama Gendün Chöphel produced a Tibetan version of it in the first half of the twentieth century, and until the diaspora of the mid-twentieth century the relatively few Tibetans who were aware of the existence of the Theravāda^c School—the only School and system of tenets of the Hīnayāna that did not disappear as independent ongoing schools having their own adherents—had a very vague idea of its views and practices (if they had any at all).

To offer an exhaustive account of the tenets and practices of the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika Schools is beyond the scope of this book, and, moreover, it would be utterly useless, since many books in Western languages discuss them, and I myself would discuss them if I find the time to complete the definitive version on paper of a work in progress that I had to interrupt (Capriles, 2004). However, a very brief summary of these two schools may be outlined as follows:

The Vaibhāṣika School

The Sanskrit name Vaibhāṣika derives from the fact that it is the school of “those who adhere to the *Vibhāṣa*,” for it is based on the two great Sarvāstivāda Commentaries to the Abhidharma, which are the *Vibhāṣa*^d and the *Mahāvibhāṣa*.^e This school accepts the Abhidharma as the word of Buddha, for they hold it to have been authored by *arhats*^f (realized ones in the traditions that the Mahāyāna classes as Hīnayāna) and therefore assert all that is contained in it to have been unerringly distilled from the sermons of Śākyamuni collected in the *sūtras*. For their part, the Tibetan translation of the term^g etymologically means Proponents of Particular Substances—which is applied to them due to their asserting the phenomena of the three times (past, present and future) to exist as discrete, concrete

^a Tib. [Phagpa] Thamche yöpar mawa (Wylie, [’phags pa] thams cad yod par smra ba); Ch. [聖] 說一切有部 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, [Shèng] Shuōyīqièyǒu bù; Wade-Giles, [Sheng⁴] Shuo¹-i¹-ch’ieh⁴-yu³ pu⁴ / [聖] 薩婆多部 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, [Shèng] Sàpódūō bù; Wade-Giles, [Sheng⁴] Sa⁴-p’o²-to¹ pu⁴).

^b Skt. *Dharmapāda*; Tib. *Chökyi tsigsu chepa* (Wylie, *chos kyi tshigs su bcad pa*); Ch. 法句經 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *Fǎjù jīng*; Wade-Giles, *Fa³-chü⁴ ching¹*).

^c Skt. Sthaviravāda; Tib. Neten depa (Wylie, *gnas brtan sde pa*); Ch. 上座部 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shàngzuòbù*; Wade-Giles, *shang⁴-tso⁴-pu⁴*).

^d This title may be rendered as “Detailed Explanation.”

^e This title may be rendered as “Great Detailed Explanation.”

^f Skt. *arhat*, *arhan* or *arihan*; Pāli: *arahant* or *arahā*; Tib. drachö (Wylie, *dgra bco*); Ch. 阿羅漢 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *ālúohàn*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-luo²-han⁴*], often shortened to 羅漢 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *luóhàn*; Wade-Giles, *luo²-han⁴*]).

^g Tib. chedrak[tu] mawa [nam] (Wylie, *bye brag [tu] smra ba [rnams]*), or simply Tib. chemar (Wylie, *bye mar*).

particular substances,^a and which is appropriate to designate the school, for Sarvāstivāda (which as noted above means *adhering to realism*) was the term applied to all the schools of tenets that, like the Vaibhāṣikas, posit a plurality of substances. The substances that the Vaibhāṣikas posit are of two kinds: (1) material, which consist in the indivisible particles of the four obstructive elements that according to them constitute all physical bodies, which are separated from each other by the sole *nonobstructive* element, which is space,^b and do not disaggregate because they are drawn and held together by *karma* or wind,^{c66} and (2) mental, which are the indivisible moments of consciousness they posit. Most essentially, their realism consists in the fact that they hold the indivisible particles they posit to exist *materialiter*,^d *substantialiter*^e and discretely, without depending on cognition. Finally, their lineage of monastic vows, which has the only one that exists in Tibet, common to all Tibetan Buddhist Schools, is that of the Mūlasarvāstivāda^f—a school that, according to the Chinese monk Yījīng,^g was an offshoot of the Sarvāstivāda, but which according to the Tibetan Sakya Master, Butön,^h used the name as an homage to the Sarvāstivāda because the latter was held to be the “root” (*mūla*) of all Buddhist schools.ⁱ

The Sautrāntika School

The Sautrāntikas—i.e., the followers of the Sūtra School—seem to have quit the Āryasarvāstivāda School in Kashmir around 150 BC. Their name responds to the fact that they rejected the Abhidharmapitaka of the Sarvāstivādins and its doctrine of the “all is” and thus adhered solely to the Sūtrapitaka. They were also called Dārṣṭāntika, meaning Exemplifiers, because they taught the whole of their doctrines by means of examples. The Sautrāntikas were of two different classes: (1) Those who followed the *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu and hence adhered to Abhidharma-based treatises and negated the existence of nondual self-awareness and awareness (of) consciousness,^{j67} thus being partly similar to the Vaibhāṣikas—especially in their conception of the two truths (namely the relative and the absolute), and in their positing indivisible elementary particles and instants of awareness. However, their particles differed from those of the Vaibhāṣikas in that, though they were supposed to be external to human experience, they were asserted not to exist *materialiter*: they held them to be the same as space,^k for both were viewed as no more than notions—which explains how was it possible for them to negate the intervals between particles propounded by the Vaibhāṣikas, and yet assert these particles not to touch each other (even

^a Tib. dzekyi chedrab (Wylie, *rdzas kyi bye brag*).

^b Skt. *ākāśa*; Tib. namkha (Wylie, *nam mkha'*); Ch. 虛空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xūkōng*; Wade-Giles, *hsü¹-k'ung¹*).

^c Skt. *vāyu*; Pāli *vāyu* or *vāyo*; Tib. lung (Wylie, *rlung*); Ch. 風大 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fēngdà*; Wade-Giles, *feng¹-ta⁴*).

^d i.e. materially.

^e i.e. substantially.

^f Tib. zhi tamche yöpar mawa (Wylie, *gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba*).

^g 義淨; Wade-Giles I⁴-ching⁴ (635–713 CE).

^h Wylie, bu ston rin chen grub (1290-1364). Butön, renowned Sakya Master and historian, was the eleventh Abbot of Shalu Monastery.

ⁱ Cook (1992 p. 237).

^j Both self-awareness and awareness (of) consciousness are referred to by the Sanskrit terms *svasaṃvedana* and *svasaṃvitti(h)*, by the Tibetan term rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*) and by the Chinese terms 自證 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-cheng⁴*) and 自覺 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-chüeh²*).

^k Skt. *ākāśa*; Tib. namkha (Wylie, *nam mkha'*); Ch. 虛空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xūkōng*; Wade-Giles, *hsü¹-k'ung¹*).

though they are perceived as touching, like the pages of a book),⁶⁸ and shows them not to have been realist. And (2) the reformed, who adhered to logic and, since they followed the *Pramānaviniścaya* by the epistemologist and logician Dharmakīrti, posited what is usually rendered as nondual self-awareness and awareness (of) consciousness,⁶⁹ as well as two kinds of entities or objects: (a) ontological objects, which were the ones that were made up of elementary particles and which were held to be ultimately existent but ever-changing and in this sense impermanent, and (b) epistemological objects, which were held to be unreal but unchanging and in this sense permanent; since in perception the former are always understood in terms of the latter, knowledge is erroneous:^b it involves the error^c of taking the epistemological objects, which are mental constructs for physical, extended, effective sensory configurations / patterns / collections of characteristics^d—or, which is the same, for physical entities.

The Second and Third Promulgations and the Schools Based on Them

According to the *Samḍhinirmocanasūtra* and *Śrīmālādevīsīmhanādasūtra*, which are the *sūtras* that posit the three promulgations described above, the Second Promulgation teaches emptiness as an antidote to the substantialism that plagues the Hīnayāna, whereas the Third is intended as an antidote to attachment to emptiness for those beings who, under the influence of the Second Promulgation *sūtras* and related literature, became attached to the notion of emptiness. Moreover, it is the *sūtras* of the Third Promulgation that, among all of Three Promulgations *sūtras*, show most clearly that the Fruit of Buddhahood is not something to be produced, created, contrived, conditioned or compounded, for it is those *sūtras* that teach show our true condition to be the Buddha-nature,^e so that Buddhahood as the Fruit of the Buddhist Path is no more than the uncreated, unproduced, uncontrived, unconditioned, uncompounded, irreversible discovery and rectification of the Buddha-nature. Because of all of this, the Third Promulgation was the one that conveyed the most definitive Buddhist teachings and as such was the “highest” ones among all three.

Schools Based on the Second Promulgation

Uma Rangtongpa

The *Collection of Mādhyamika Reasonings*^f by the incomparable Master Nāgārjuna and the writings of the latter's direct disciple, Āryadeva—in which they interpreted Second

^a Skt. *svasaṃvedana* or *svasaṃvitti*[h]; Tib. rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*); Ch. 自證 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-chēng⁴*) / 自覺 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-chüeh²*).

^b Skt. *viplava*; Tib. lepa (Wylie, *bslad pa*); Ch. 迷亂 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *mílǜàn*; Wade-Giles, *mí²-luan⁴*).

^c Skt. *bhrānti*; Tib. trul (Wylie, *'phrul*); Ch. 亂 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *luàn*; Wade-Giles, *luan⁴*).

^d Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Tib. tsennyi (Wylie, *mtshan nyid*) ; Ch. 相 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹*).

^e Skt. *tathāgatagarbha* or *sugatagarbha*; Tib. desheg nyingpo or dezhin shegpai nyingpo (Wylie, *de* [bzhin] *gshegs* [pa'i] *snying po*); Chin. 如來藏 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúláizàng*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-lai²-tsang⁴*) / Skt. *buddhata*, *buddhadhātu* or *buddhatva*; Tib. sangyekyi kham (Wylie, *sangs rgyas kyi khams*); Ch. 佛性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxìng*; Wade-Giles *fo²-hsing⁴*). Takakuso (3d. ed. 1956) gives *Buddha-svabhāva* as the Sanskrit for “Buddha-nature.”

^f Skt. *Yuktikāya*; Tib. [Uma] *Rigtsog* (Wylie, [dbu ma] *rigs tshogs*).

Promulgation *sūtras*—gave rise to the Uma Rangtongpa or Emptiness of Self-Existence^{a70} Mādhyamaka⁷¹ philosophical schools, which were further developed by a series of scholars and Masters over the centuries (even though long time passed between the life of Āryadeva and that of the next Mādhyamika philosopher, Buddhapālita). With the passing of time Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva came to be referred to as Mādhyamikas of the Model Texts,^b due to their being the authors of the original texts of the School.

The *sūtras* of the Second Promulgation stressed the fact that an essential aspect of the unawareness *cum* delusion that Buddhism called *avidyā*^c lay in taking the insubstantial to be substantial, the dependent to exist inherently, the relative to be absolute, and so on. Intent on clarifying the nature of this delusion, in many treatises the Mādhyamika Masters explained emptiness as the lack of self-existence and substance of all phenomena, including the phenomena that are human individuals and have consciousness and the phenomena that lack consciousness and only appear as object.⁷²

All Mādhyamikas of emptiness of self-existence^d acknowledge subject and object to be co-emergent appearances / interdependent arisings,^e yet some subschools of this branch of Mādhyamaka do not explicitly concern themselves with the problem of the oneness or plurality of consciousness. However, all Mādhyamikas in the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism and many in other non-Gelug schools agree that the mental subject that seems to be at a distance from its objects is a mere appearance produced by the reification of the most subtle of thoughts (which, however, is posited in Third Promulgation Sūtras and in the Tantras), the name of which I render as *threefold directional thought structure*,^f and which conceives a subject (a perceiver, agent, thinker, etc.), an object (of perception, of action, of thinking, etc.), and a process in between (a perception, an action, a thinking, etc.). In fact, according to Nyingma Mādhyamaka in general, that which we experience as an individual consciousness is no more than an ever-arising, ever-dissolving appearance produced by, and a differentiated function of, the play of a single, universal, primordial, nondual Awake awareness: in the single essence of mind / nature of mind,^g which has been compared to a mirror and with a LED screen (the former simile is traditional, whereas the second is one I introduced in order to complement and balance the traditional one),⁷³ manifold streams of

^a Skt. *svabhāvasūnyatā* or *prakṛtisūnyatā*; Tib. rangzhanggyi tongpanyi (Wylie, *rang [bzhing gyis] stong [pa nyid]*) (Tsongkhapa preferred rangzhanggyi madrubpa [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa*]); Ch. 自性空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade–Giles, *tzü⁴-hsing⁴-k’ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*). The Wylie for Rangtongpa is *rang stong pa*.

^b Tib. zungchimoī umapa (Wylie, *gzung phyi mo’i dbu ma pa*). They were contrasted with the partisan Mādhyamikas (Tib. chogdzinpaī umapa (Wylie, *phyogs ’dzin pa’i dbu ma pa*).

^c Pāli: *avijjā*; Tib. marigpa (Wylie, *ma rig pa*); Ch. 無明 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wú míng*; Wade–Giles, *wu²-ming²*).

^d Tib. Uma Rangtongpa (Wylie, *dbu ma rang stong pa*), which may be rendered into Sanskrit as Svabhāvasūnyatā Mādhyamaka or Prakṛtisūnyatā Mādhyamaka.

^e Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; Tib. tendrel or tenching drelbar (Wylie, *rten [cing] ’brel [bar]*); Ch. 因緣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīnyuán*; Wade–Giles, *yin¹-yuán²*).

^f Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum [Wylie, *’khor gsum*]; Ch. 三輪 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *sānlún*; Wade–Giles, *san¹-lun²*].

^g Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*); Ch. 心 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīn*; Wade–Giles, *hsin¹*). Note, however, that this Chinese term also renders the Skt. *citta* and the Tib. sem (Wylie, *sems*), which are defined in contrast with *cittatā* or *citta eva*, and with semnyi (*sems nyid*), respectively.

consciousness^a manifest, each manifesting an ever-arising, ever-dissolving illusory mental subject that seems to be the possessor (or sometimes the victim, etc.) of the reflectiveness and motility of the energy^b of the nondual Awareness that the mirror or LED screen illustrates. At any rate, all Mahāyāna Buddhist systems agree that the appearance of a mental subject at a distance from what is experienced as object is a gross delusion. (A more detailed discussion of this will be postponed until the section in which that discussion will be most pertinent.)

On the other hand, all subschools of this branch of Mādhyamaka are concerned with the deconstruction of that which is experienced as object. Thoughts are digital and as such are discontinuous and divisive, whereas the “territory” of our sensory continuum and the physical universe that the latter is supposed to convey to us, are analog, and as such are continuous and in themselves undivided. Therefore, even though current science considers *sensa* to result from organistic processes, *with regard to our conceptual perception of them* they may be referred to as the *given*. As substantiated in the endnote the reference mark for which is at the end of this paragraph, neurology has “shown” our *sensa* (the luminosity that allows us to see, the sonority that allows us to hear, etc.) to be produced by our brains and to be incapable of resembling in any way the external reality that both realists and Kant^c assumed that they convey to us—and hence *not* to be *given* in the sense of *not depending on anything other than themselves to appear as they appear*. However, from this it does not follow that we are forbidden to emphasize the fact that both our *sensa* and the universe that common sense assumes they convey to us are analog and as such continuous, whereas our *perceptions* of segments of the continuum of sensation in terms of contents of thought are digital and therefore discontinuous—and that from this it follows that the latter can never correspond precisely to the former, and that whenever we perceive the former in terms of the latter or believe that a description of the former in terms of latter is exact, we are under a gross delusion.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, since Wilfrid Sellars^d denounced the idea of the *given* as a myth, and stated that one of the things that has at times been held to be *given* is sense contents,⁷⁵ various researchers and theorists in the fields of spirituality, mysticism, religious studies and transpersonal psychology have delegitimized the key distinction between naked *sensa* and perception.^e Jorge Ferrer (a Spanish theorist in the fields of religious studies and transpersonal psychology), in particular, in spite of condemning foundationalist theories of perception (which are the main target of Sellars’ critique), paradoxically has elaborated one foundationalist theory by clearly implying *sensa* to be digital, discontinuous and discrete, thus positing entities that therefore could be used as foundations in a foundational theory of

^a Skt. *saṃtāna*; Tib. *semgyü* (Wylie, *sems rgyud*) or *gyün* (Wylie, *rgyun*) ; Ch. 相續 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*); in general used as 心相續 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnxiāngxù*; Wade-Giles *hsin¹-hsiang¹-hsü⁴*).

^b The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “*thukje*” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness or mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*. The concept of the energy aspect of the Base pertains to the Dzogchen teachings and will be explained when these teachings are discussed.

^c Kant (this English version, 1996) posited an external reality, yet acknowledged that it did not resemble in any way our experience of it: it was the nondimensional Ding-an-sich or thing-in-itself, which also lacked sensory characteristics.

^d Sellars (1997).

^e E.g. Ferrer & Sherman (2008, eds. 2008).

truth^a—and implicitly using them for this purpose, for on the basis of his claim that sensory differences are *given*, he negates the viewless view of the higher forms of Buddhism that he ascribes to the so-called perennial philosophy, thus implicitly validating the perceptions of common sense and thus falling into the myth of the given right as Sellars defined it. The big paradox is that he does so while claiming that the superiority of his perspective is that it is inclusive of all spiritual systems—among which he explicitly, repeatedly lists Buddhism. These contradictions by Sellars’ followers are discussed in greater detail in the endnote the reference mark for which lies at the end of this paragraph, and in even greater detail in an Appendix to Capriles (2013d).⁷⁶

At any rate, since (as shown in endnotes 75 and 77) maps in terms of thought are by nature digital and as such discontinuous and divisive, whereas the territory of our sensory continuum and the physical universe that the latter is supposed to convey to us are analog and as such continuous and in themselves undivided, absolutely no perception in terms of thoughts can fit precisely the territory it interprets, and nothing that can be asserted with regard to any region of reality or any entity can precisely correspond to it or exhaust it. However, the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of and clinging to our deluded thoughts—both the *subtle* ones^b involved in perception and the *coarse* ones^c involved in reflection—makes us experience the sensory continuum / the universe, which as just noted is analog, continuous and in itself undivided, as being digital, discontinuous and inherently divided. Likewise, whereas the segments we single out in the sensory continuum / universe are systemically interconnected, we perceive them as disconnected or mechanically connected, etc. Since all of this involves experiencing something as it (is) not, it is a delusion.

The above makes us experience the plethora of segments that we single out in the sensory field as being in themselves separate and as being the thoughts in terms of which we perceive them, so that the continuum of *sensa* / of the universe is experienced as a plethora of self-existent phenomena of one or another kind inherently possessing such and such qualities, etc.—just as the reification of the supersubtle thought I render as *threefold directional thought structure* produces the experience of that which we call *ourselves* as a self-existent self possessing a self-existent, separate consciousness, and the combination of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of subtle thoughts with that of the supersubtle thought in question causes us to experience other human beings as self-existent selves possessing self-existent, separate consciousnesses.

All of the above are functions, aspects or effects of the basic human delusion called *avidyā*, which according to a Mahāyāna interpretation of the Four Noble Truths that will be discussed in the following chapter is the source both of *samsāra* and of the suffering inherent in the latter. In order to block the functioning of the conceptual mind responsible both for the deluded perception of the analog territory in terms of digital conceptual maps made up of intuitive, subtle thoughts, and for discursive, abstract thinking, Nāgārjuna and

^a E.g. Ferrer (2002, 2008). For my refutation of Ferrer’s views—including his assertion of the purportedly digital and discontinuous character of *sensa*—cf. Capriles (2013d, Appendix III). For a brief yet conclusive excerpt of that refutation, cf. also endnote 75 to this book.

^b These are the ones that the Dzogchen teachings and Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavāda call (Skt.) *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*)

^c These are the ones that both the Dzogchen teachings and Dignāga refer to by the Skt. *śabdāsāmānya* (Tib. *drachi* [Wylie, *sgra spyi*]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*]).

Āryadeva (who, as noted above, together are called “Mādhyamikas of the Model Texts”) and centuries later Buddhapālita, set out to consistently refute the beliefs of common sense and the statements that common sense, religion and philosophy (including other Buddhist Schools) make regarding reality. When the functioning of the conceptual mind is blocked, the possibility arises that all aspects or types of *avidyā*—including unawareness of the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena, and the cognitive functions and conceptual filters at the root of the illusory, delusive reality we normally experience—dissolve spontaneously and the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena becomes fully patent.

The Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika Subschoools and the Varieties of Svātantrika: Svātantrika-Sautrāntika and Svātantrika-Yogācāra

Shortly after the time of Buddhapālita, Bhāvaviveka, Bhāviveka or Bhavya asserted this approach to have been excellent for the founding fathers or, which is the same, for the Mādhyamikas of the Model Texts, yet not to be appropriate at later times: on the grounds that it had become necessary to draw positive conclusions from the former’s refutations, he charged against Buddhapālita for having failed to do so, all while doing it himself in his own writings. Subsequently Candrakīrti charged against Bhāvaviveka and, defending the view of Buddhapālita, chastised Bhāvaviveka for having done away with the true method of Mādhyamaka and thus deprived this school from its liberating, Awakening power. And he was right, for the original method of Mādhyamaka lay in frustrating the mind’s attempts to grasp at concepts or conceptual worldviews and take them as the truth concerning reality, so that conceptual knowledge would collapse and this would give a chance to the absolute condition to reveal itself beyond concepts—whereas offering it views to grasp at would simply prevent this collapse from occurring.⁷⁷

In Tibet, some scholars and Masters began retrospectively referring to those who, from the time of Candrakīrti (or in some cases from that of Buddhapālita) onwards, applied the original Mādhyamaka method, by the label Prāsaṅgikas or “adherents of *prāsaṅga* (i.e., of *reductio ad absurdum*),” and included in this category the great Indian philosopher and practitioner Śāntideva. They referred to all of those who called themselves Mādhyamikas yet drew autonomous theses and syllogisms from Mādhyamaka refutations as Svātantrika or “adherents of *svātantra* (i.e., of autonomous theses and syllogisms).”⁷⁸ With the passing of time, these labels became customary in the Land of the Snows, and scholars forgot that they were a Tibetan creation (though not completely so, for the term Svātantrika was used a couple of times in Indian Master Jayānanda’s *Madhyamakāvatāraṅkā* to refer to advocates of a position that he saw Candrakīrti as opposing.^a).⁷⁹ Among Svātantrikas some assimilated views proper to the Sautrāntika School of the Hīnayāna, and hence were called Svātantrika-Sautrāntika-Mādhyamikas, whereas others assimilated teachings of the Third Promulgation and were called Svātantrika-Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas (for details see Capriles, 2014, and should I have time to prepare it, the definitive edition of Capriles, electronic publication 2004).

Schools Based on the Third Promulgation

^a Cabezon (2003, p. 292).

Lower Interpretations of the Third Promulgation: Yogācāra^a / Cittamātra^b

Maitreya, Asaṅga, and the latter's brother, Vasubandhu, all of whom are classified as Mādhyamikas by the Nyingmapas and quite a few adherents of other Tibetan Buddhist Schools except for the Gelugpa, wrote different classes of treatises interpreting the *sūtras* of the Third Promulgation. Among these interpreters, Maitreya is traditionally identified as the Buddha of the future, whom Asaṅga would have visited in the Tuṣita^c Heaven, yet most Western scholars identify him as Asaṅga's main *human* teacher, who received the epithet of Ajita and who purportedly was also called Maitreya^d.⁸⁰ Asaṅga is often identified by Tibetan Buddhist tradition as one of the Two Charoteers or Promulgators (the other one being Nāgārjuna), and regarded as one of the most important philosophers of Mahāyāna Buddhism. And Vasubandhu was Asaṅga's younger brother, who according to prevalent tradition had been a Hīnayāna teacher until his conversion to the Mahāyāna views of his elder brother, Asaṅga.⁸¹ These three teachers produced what seem to be quite different categories of interpretation, among which the lowest one was codified in the Cittamātra (Mind-Only), Vijñānavāda (Adhering to Consciousness) or Vijñaptimātra (Representation-Only) School—which most scholars identify with the Yogācāra School, though some are of the opinion that the label Cittamātra refers to the views expounded in the outermost, lowest treatises by these authors, whereas Yogācāra refers to the views expounded in the middling treatises by the same authors.⁸² All Tibetan Masters agree that the Yogācāra / Cittamātra School(s) is/are philosophically inferior to Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamaka school.

Independently of the above, the names Cittamātra, Vijñānavāda and Vijñaptimātra are due to the fact that, according to the interpretation of Third Promulgation Canonical Sources referred to by those names, there is no physical world external to and independent from mind and experiencing, for all there is, is mind or experiencing—and all phenomena of human experience are illusory in the sense of being *merely representation or information* (*vijñaptimātra*), and in the sense of being dependent—their dependence lying on their being conditioned by other factors.^f Note that, although there is no way to prove that all there is, is experience, it is evident that if there were an independent, physical basis of experience, it would be rather like Kant's thing-in-itself,^g for it would have no dimensionality or sensory characteristics (cf. the arguments put forward by Bishop Berkeley and those developed by Bertrand Russell in endnote 193).

^a Tib. naljor chöpaṅpa (Wylie, *nal 'byor spyod pa ba*); Ch. 瑜伽行派 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yúqíxíng pài*; Wade-Giles, *yü²-ch'ieh²-hsing² p'ai⁴*).

^b Tib. semtsampa (Wylie, *sems tsam pa*); Ch. 唯心 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wéixīn*; Wade-Giles, *wei²-hsin¹*).

^c Pāli Tuṣita; Tib. Galden (Wylie, *dga' ldan*); Ch. 兜率天 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dōushuài tiān*; Wade-Giles, *tou¹-shuai⁴ t'ien¹*).

^d Ajita (Tib. Mipham [Wylie, *mi pham*]) means “unconquered” and is a common epithet of the bodhisattva Maitreya, who is prophesized to become the Buddha of the future.

^e Cf. Chöphel & Capriles (in press); Capriles (in press 1).

^f Should I prepare and publish the definitive version of Capriles (electronic publication 2004), it would feature a discussion of the view of the Yogācāra School in relation to those of the other schools of the Sūtrayāna Path of Renunciation, and of the relation of those views to those of the Dzogchen Atiyoga (and to some extent to those of the Tantras of transformation).

^g *Ding-as-sich*.

Rather than reducing the whole of human experience and Buddhist metaexperience to only two truths—the relative and the absolute—Third Promulgation canonical sources posit three natures, which in those sources and in the treatises of the Cittamātra / Yogācāra School are called:

(1) The absolutely true nature,^a which is emptiness, and which is said to be a condition in which the object perceived and the perceiving subject / consciousness, both of which belong to (2) the dependent nature, are undifferentiated; this nature is classified into the incontrovertible, absolutely true nature and the unchanging, absolutely true nature.

(2) The dependent nature,^b which is held to be correct relative truth, for it is asserted not to be conditioned by the activity of the imagination and not to involve distortions of the senses or other delusory activities, and therefore it is compared to seeing a rope as a rope; it is subdivided into pure dependence, which includes all of the (meta)phenomena of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*,⁸³ and impure dependence, which includes all of the phenomena of *saṃsāra*.

(3) The imaginary imputational nature^c is held to be deluded relative truth, which involves being mistaken with regard to the nature of entities, and as such is compared to seeing a rope as a snake; though experiences in dreams, hallucinations, optical illusions and so on fall under this category, the valid phenomena of dependent nature also serve as the basis for it when recognized in terms of delusive concepts put forward by the imagination and hence perceived as this or that type of object, as permanent and as existing outside the mind, etc., for the ensuing delusive perception of the phenomena of dependent nature is held to be itself an experience of imaginary nature.

These canonical sources and schools posit the same six consciousnesses or avenues of consciousness that are posited by the whole of Buddhism—those of the five senses and the one that perceives mental phenomena—yet adds two other ones to these six, which are the consciousness of defilements^d that is the source of delusion and of the ensuing passions, and the store-consciousness^e that carries all memories and propensities but that, rather than a static receptacle, is a dynamic stream of consciousness.^f There is much more to say with regard to the Yogācāra / Cittamātra School(s), but this is not the place to discuss in detail the various philosophical schools of the Mahāyāna.

School(s) Based on Both Promulgations: Uma Zhentongpa and Mahāmādhyaṃaka

^a Skt. *pariṇiṣpanna*; Tib. yongdrub (Wylie, *yongs grub*); Ch. 圓成實性 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánchéng shíxìng*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-ch¹eng² shih²-hsing⁴*).

^b Skt. *paratantra*; Tib. zhenwang (Wylie, *gzhan dbang*); Ch. 依他起性 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yītā qǐxìng*; Wade-Giles, *i¹-ta¹ ch¹i³-hsing⁴*).

^c Skt. *parikalpita*[h]; Tib. kuntak or kuntu takpa (Wylie, *kun [tu] brtags [pa]*); Ch. 遍計所執性 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *biànjì suǒzhí xìng*; Wade-Giles, *pien⁴-ch¹i⁴ so³-chih² hsing⁴*).

^d Skt. *kliṣṭamanovijñāna*; Tib. **nyönyikyī namshe** (Wylie, *nyon yid kyi rnam shes*) or **nyönmongpa chengyi yikyī nampar shepa** (Wylie, *nyon mongs pa can gyi yid kyi rnam par shes pa*); Ch. 末那識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *mòna shì*; Wade-Giles, *mo⁴-na⁴ shih⁴*).

^e Skt. *ālayavijñāna*; Tib. kunzhi namshe or kunzhi nampar shepa (Wylie, *kun gzhi rnam [par] shes [pa]*); Ch. 阿賴耶識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *ālāiyē shí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴*) or 藏識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zàngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsang⁴-shih⁴*).

^f Skt. *saṃtāna*; Pāli *santāna*; Tib. semgyü (Wylie, *sems rgyud*) or gyün (Wylie, *rgyun*); Ch. 相續 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*); in general used as 心相續 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnxiāngxù*; Wade-Giles *hsin¹-hsiang¹-hsü⁴*).

The Third Promulgation *Tathāgatarbhasūtras* and, among Second Promulgation *sūtras*, the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, together with Tantras such as *Kālacakra* and *Hevajra*, and with the higher interpretations of the *Tathāgatarbhasūtras* and of *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* by Maitreya, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, as well as with the views that Second Promulgation interpreter Nāgārjuna expressed in his *Stavakāya*,^a and in particular in the *Dharmadhātustava*,^b expressed a conception of emptiness^c as emptiness as absence of substances other than the Buddha-nature,^d or than the true condition of phenomena,^e or than thatness / thusness,^f or than the *dharmakāya*.^g This conception of emptiness may be called emptiness of alien substances,^h and it is complementary to the emptiness of self-existenceⁱ posited in many *sūtras*, which serves as the basis of the Uma Rangtongpa^j subschools of Mādhyamaka, for the emptiness of alien substances implies that there are no substances or self-existent entities, for all there (is), (is) the Buddha-nature, the true condition of phenomena, thatness / thusness, or the *dharmakāya*.

This emptiness of alien substances is the core of the interpretation of Mādhyamaka that ethnic Tibetan Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen,^k the principal philosopher in the Jonangpa^l School and most famous champion of emptiness of alien substances (though not the first scholar-yogin in defending this view of emptiness in Tibet),⁸⁴ christened subtle, inner Mādhyamaka. Although Dölpopa used the terms Uma Zhentongpa^m and Mahāmādhyamaka or Great Mādhyamakaⁿ as synonyms, here I am keeping the term Uma Zhentongpa for the views of Dölpopa just as he expressed them in his writings, and have appropriated the term Mahāmādhyamaka to refer to my own reformulation of the view Dölpopa designated by that name, so as to fit what I view as the supreme interpretation of Buddhist philosophy (the great Tibetan scholar-yogin Jamgön Ju Mipham or Jamgön Mipham Jamyang Namgyal Gyamtso^o—one of the most influential Tibetan Masters—used the term Mahāmādhyamaka

^a Tib. Tötsog (Wylie, *bstod tshogs*).

^b Tib. Chöying töpa (Wylie, *chos dbyings bstod pa*).

^c Skt. *śūnyatā*; Tib. tongpanyi (Wylie, *stong pa nyid*); Ch. 空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *kòng*; Wade–Giles, *k'ung*⁴); Jap. *kū*.

^d Skt. *tathāgatarbha* or *sugatagarbha*; Tib. desheg nyingpo or dezhin shegpai nyingpo (Wylie, *de [bzhin] gshegs [pa'i] snying po*); Chin. 如來藏 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *rúlái zàng*; Wade–Giles, *ju²-lai²-tsang*⁴) / Skt. *buddhatā*, *buddhadhātu* or *buddhatva*; Tib. sangyeki kham (Wylie, *sangs rgyas kyi khams*); Ch. 佛性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fó xìng*; Wade–Giles *fo²-hsing*⁴).

^e Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chönyi (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ xìng*; Wade–Giles, *fa³-hsing*⁴).

^f Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. dezhinnyi (Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*); Chin. 眞如 [性] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú [xìng]*; Wade–Giles, *chen¹-ju² [hsing*⁴]).

^g Tib. chöku (Wylie, *chos sku*); Ch. 法身 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ shēn*; Wade–Giles, *fa³-shen*¹).

^h Emptiness thus understood is called in Tib. zhengyi ngöpo tongpanyi (Wylie, *gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid*), which may be rendered into Skt. as *paraśūnyatā* or *pararūpaśūnyatā*, and into English as emptiness of extraneous or alien substances.

ⁱ Skt. *svabhāvaśūnyatā* or *prakṛtiśūnyatā*; Tib. rangzhin[gyi] tongpanyi (Wylie, *rang bzhing [gyi] stong pa nyid*); Chin. 自性空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zì xìng kōng*; Wade–Giles, *tzü⁴-hsing⁴-k'ung*⁴; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^j Wylie, *dbu ma rang stong pa*, which may be rendered into Skt. as *Svabhāvaśūnyatā Mādhyamaka* and / or as *Prakṛtiśūnyatā Mādhyamaka*.

^k Wylie, *dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan* (1292–1361).

^l Wylie, *jo nang pa*.

^m Wylie, *dbu ma gzhan stong pa*.

ⁿ Wylie, *dbu ma chen po*.

^o 'ju mi pham rgya mtsho or 'jam mgon mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho: 1846–1912.

to refer to a Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka view that incorporated the Pramāṇavāda concept of self-awareness / awareness [of] consciousness and some elements from the *sūtras* of the Third Promulgation; however, my reformulation of Mahāmādhyamaka is nearer Dōlpopa's view than was Mipham's—the main difference with Dōlpopa's lying in my insistence that the condition that is free from substances other than the absolute is not self-existent, for it is beyond the four extremes of being, nonbeing, both and neither, and if it is not existent, far less could it be self-existent).⁸⁵

According to Dōlpopa and to Mahāmādhyamaka as I have redefined it, phenomenal existence in its totality is unconditioned, unproduced, nonfabricated, uncompounded and / or uncontrived,^a yet our experience of it is produced, conditioned, fabricated, compounded and / or contrived^b by our perceptual mechanisms and in particular by our deluded thoughts, which we confuse with what they interpret—and as a result of this we come to live in the wholly produced, conditioned, fabricated, compounded and / or contrived sphere known as the wheel (*saṃsāra*), which involves recurrent ascension into less unpleasant conditioned states and descent into more painful ones—all of which, however, are characterized by lack of plenitude and suffering, even though in the highest ones the latter are eluded for very long periods.^c

The Two Mahāyāna Promulgations and the Nonverbal Transmission of nondual Awake awareness: Gradual, Sudden and Eclectic Mahāyāna

In the opinion of the present author, the simplest classification of the Mahāyāna in its totality would be the following:

(1) Gradual, which in Indian Buddhism comprised the two main schools mentioned above: Yogācāra and Mādhyamaka. The gradual Mahāyāna in general is based on the progressive development of the Mind of Awakening^d by means of the practices of the *bodhicitta* of intention—which consists mainly in the training in the “Four Immeasurable Catalysts of Awakening”^e—and the *bodhicitta* of action—which lies in the training in the Six or Ten Pāramitās. In this approach, which places a quite strong emphasis on training in the practice of *śamatha* or *mental pacification*^f and successively in that of *vipaśyanā* or insight^g (the latter being always associated in one way or another with mental movements), realization as such consists in the manifestation of absolute wisdom^h— which the Uma Rangtongpa^a

^a Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. dūmache (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²).

^c If I get the time to produce the definitive version on paper of Capriles [electronic publication 2004], in it the schools of tenets discussed here, as well as their sub-schools, will be reviewed in far greater detail.

^d Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. changchu[kyi]bsem (Wylie, byang chub [kyi] sem); Ch. 菩提心, (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, pútíxīn; Wade-Giles, p'u²-t'i²-hsin¹; Jap. bodaishin).

^e Skt. *caturaprāmeya*; Tib. tseme shyi (Wylie, tshad med bzhi).

^f *śamatha* is the Sanskrit; Pāli *samatha*; Tib. zhine (Wylie, zhi gnas); Chin. 止 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, zhǐ; Wade-Giles, chih³); Jap: shi.

^g *vipaśyanā* is the Sanskrit; Pāli *vipassanā*; Tib. lhantong (Wylie, lhag mthong); Chin. 觀 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, guān; Wade-Giles, kuan¹); Jap: kan.

^h i.e. absolute *prajñā* (Tib. sherab [Wylie, shes rab]; Ch. 般若 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn bōrě; Wade-Giles, po¹-je³]).

Subschools explain as the direct, nonconceptual, nondual realization of emptiness of self-nature or substance^b—inseparable from compassion. In this approach, the bodhisattva goes through five paths^c and ten or eleven levels,^d as shown in the diagram below:

PATHS	LEVELS	
<i>sambhāramārga</i> <i>tshogs-lam</i>		
<i>prayogamārga</i> <i>sbyor-lam</i>		
<i>darśanamārga</i> <i>mthong-lam</i>	(1) <i>pramuditā</i>	<i>rab-tu dga'-ba</i>
	(2) <i>vimalā</i>	<i>dri-ma ned-pa</i>
	(3) <i>prabhākarī</i>	<i>'od-byed</i>
	(4) <i>arciśmatī</i>	<i>'od-'phro-ba</i>
	(5) <i>sudurjayā</i>	<i>sbyang dka'-ba</i>
<i>bhāvanāmārga</i> <i>bsgom-lam</i>	(6) <i>abhimukhī</i>	<i>mngon-du byed-pa</i>
	(7) <i>duraṅgamā</i>	<i>ring-du song-ba</i>
	(8) <i>acalā</i>	<i>mi-gyo-ba</i>
	(9) <i>sādhumatī</i>	<i>legs-pa'i blo-gros</i>
	(10) <i>dharmamegā</i>	<i>chos-kyi sprin-pa</i>
<i>āśaikṣamārga</i> <i>mi-slob-pa'i lam</i>	(11) <i>samantaprabhā</i>	<i>kun-tu-'od</i>

(2) Sudden (Chán or Zen^e), which regards itself as a transmission apart from the scriptures that, according to the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*,^f was initiated by the so-called

^a Uma Rangtongpa (Wylie, *dbu ma rang stong pa*), which may be rendered into Sanskrit as Svabhāvaśūnyatā Mādhyamaka.

^b Skt. *svabhāvaśūnyatā* or *prakṛtiśūnyatā*; Tib. rangzhin[gyi] tongpanyi (Wylie, *rang bzhing [gyi] stong pa nyid*); Ch. 自性空 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade-Giles, *tz'u⁴-hsing⁴-k'ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^c Skt. *mārga(h)*; Pāli *magga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); 道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles *tao⁴*).

^d Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

^e Chán is the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn transliteration of Ch. 禪; Wade-Giles, Ch'an²; Jap. ぜん (hiragana) / Zen (romaji); Korean, 선 (Seon or Sŏn); Viet. Thi`ân.

^f Ch. 壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Tánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *T'an²-ching¹*), 六祖壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Liùzǔtánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *Liù⁴-tsu³ T'an²-ching¹*), which abbreviate 六祖大師法寶壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Liùzǔdàshī fábǎotánjīng*;

“silent sermon,” in which Śākyamuni, instead of speaking, remained silent in the condition of *dharmakāya*, thereby puzzling everyone—except for Mahākāśyapa,^a who, while looking into Śākyamuni’s eyes, automatically realized the same condition, thus receiving the direct transmission of nondual Awake awareness. This system, rather than trying to *produce* the qualities of realization by means of imitative methods and gradual trainings, resorts to quite distinctive skillful means aimed at enabling the spontaneous, sudden unveiling of absolute wisdom,^{b86} which according to this system involves the simultaneous manifestation of calm^c and insight^d (these two being inseparable^e in the meditation proper to this school) and in which all the qualities of the Mahāyāna are inherent—so that realization of the wisdom in question naturally and effortlessly gives rise to those qualities.

(3) Eclectic, including Chinese Mahāyāna schools such as, for example, Huáyán,^f Tiāntái^g and Nirvāṇa,^h which combine the teachings and methods of gradual Mahāyāna with those of sudden Mahāyāna. Some deem these schools to be extinct, on the grounds that, to a very great extent, they have lost their essence; however, I have no evidence that would allow me to ascertain whether or not this is so.

Although, as noted above, the *sūtras* of the Second and Third Promulgation are the canonical basis of the Indian-originated Gradual Mahāyāna, which stresses the gradual development of the relative mind-of-Awakening,ⁱ as will be shown later on, some of the *sūtras* of both the Second and Third Promulgations contain elements that lend themselves to a “Sudden Awakening” interpretation.⁸⁷ Moreover, the gradual tradition based on the scriptures and the sudden one based on the nonverbal, nonconceptual transmission of Awake awareness are not adhered to by two totally separate Buddhist communities, for the two creators of the Mādhyamaka School (Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva), as well as one of the founders of the Yogācāra School (Vasubandhu), are listed among the links in the transmission of the school conveying the sudden method, which will be considered in a later chapter.^j

The Chinese and Far-Eastern Mahāyāna⁸⁸

Wade-Giles, *Liu⁴-tsu³-ta⁴-shih¹ Fa²-pao³-t’an²-ching¹*); full title: 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺說法壇經。

^a Pāli Mahākassapa; Tib. Örung Chenpo (Wylie, *od srung chen po*); Ch. 摩訶迦葉 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Móhējiāshè; Wade-Giles, Mo²-he¹-chia¹-she⁴).

^b i.e. absolute *prajñā* (Tib. sherab [Wylie, *shes rab*]; Ch. 般若 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*). Absolute *prajñā* is the same as primordial gnosis (Skt. *jñāna*; Pāli *ñāṇa*; Tib. *yeshe* [Wylie, *ye shes*]; Ch. 智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*).

^c Skt. *śamatha*; Pāli: *samatha*; Tib. *zhine* (Wylie, *zhi gnas*); Ch. 止 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhǐ*; Wade-Giles, *chih³*; Jap: *shi*).

^d Skt. *vipaśyanā*; Pāli *vipassanā*; Tib. *lhantong* (Wylie, *lhag mthong*); Ch. 觀 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *guān*; Wade-Giles, *kuan¹*; Jap. *kan*).

^e This is why the practice is called 止觀 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhǐguān*; Wade-Giles, *chih³-kuan¹*; Jap: *shi kan*), and also 童蒙止觀 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tóngméng zhǐguān*; Wade-Giles, *t’ung²-meng² chih³-kuan¹*).

^f Huáyánzōng (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn); 華嚴宗; Wade-Giles, Hua²-yan² Tsung¹; Jap. Kegon-shū

^g Tiāntái Zōng (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn); 天台宗; Wade-Giles, T’ien¹-t’ai² Tsung¹; Jap. Tendai-shū.

^h Nièpánzōng (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn); 涅槃宗; Wade-Giles, Nieh²-p’an² Tsung¹; Jap. Nehan-shū.

ⁱ Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. *changchub sem* (Wylie, *byang chub sems*) or *changchubkyi sem* (Wylie, *byang chub kyi sems*); Ch. 菩提心 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p’u²-t’i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodaishin*).

^j Cf. the section on the Sudden Mahāyāna in a subsequent chapter of this book and the notes to that section.

Although Chinese Buddhists like to refer to China as “the land of Mahāyāna,” and although this section is titled “The Chinese and Far-Eastern Mahāyāna,” actually not only the Mahāyāna schools, but also some Hīnayāna schools were established in that country. Therefore, we are obliged to make reference to the latter—which to my knowledge are the following:

(1 and 2) The Pítán School, Pítánzōng^a or Abhidharma School, and the Jùshè School, Jùshèzōng^b or Kośa School, which were based on the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma. The first—the Pítán—was based on the translations of Dharmottara’s *Abhidharmahrdaya* and Dharmatrāta’s *Samyuktābhidharmahrdaya*, whereas the latter had as its main source the noted *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu, which he authored while he was adhering to the Sarvāstivāda School of the Hīnayāna—i.e., before being converted to the Mahāyāna by his elder brother, Asaṅga. Therefore, both schools gave continuity to the Sarvāstivāda School of the Indian Hīnayāna, which holds the doctrine of “all exists” and which I have discussed elsewhere.^c In Japan, these two schools had their continuity in the Japanese Kośa School.

(3) The Chéngshí School, Chéngshízōng^d or Perfection of Truth School, which was based on the homonymous treatise by Harivarman—the text known in Chinese as *Chéngshílùn*^e—and which had its continuity in the Japanese Jojitsu School. This school gave continuity to the Indian Sautrāntika School of the Hīnayāna, briefly discussed in the preceding section and discussed in greater detail elsewhere.^f

(4) The Lù School, Lùzōng^g or Vinaya School, which was based specifically on the Vinayapīṭaka’s teachings on discipline, morality and behavior, and which held the strict observation of the rules of monastic life to be most important. Like Jizang, the systematizer of the Sānlùn School, Dào Xuān,^h founder of the Lù School, condemned the treatise by Harivarman on which the Chéngshí School was based as a Hīnayāna treatise;ⁱ nevertheless, scholars correctly categorize the Lù School as a Hīnayāna school, for the Vinayapīṭaka sets up inflexible rules of behavior that cannot be violated, thus being based and by the same token being the basis of the principle of vows proper to the Hīnayāna, as different from the principle of training on the basis of noble intentions that, as will be shown in a subsequent section, is the principle of the Mahāyāna—and which obliges those having Hīnayāna vows to infringe them if this is necessary for benefitting sentient beings and leading them along the Path. Indeed, the Vinaya is an inherently Hīnayāna section of the Tripiṭaka, and, moreover, the specific Vinaya that the Lùzōng adhered to was that of the Dharmaguptaka school of the Hīnayāna.

^a 毘曇宗; Wade-Giles, P’i²-t’an² Tsung¹.

^b 俱舍宗; Wade-Giles, Chū⁴-she⁴ Tsung¹.

^c Capriles (2004). I deleted that book from my Webpage because of its flaws. Therefore I ask whoever may be interested in consulting it, to wait for the definitive version that will be published on paper if I ever finish the definitive version of the text.

^d 成實宗; Wade-Giles, Ch’eng²-shih² Tsung¹.

^e 成實論; Wade-Giles, Ch’eng²-shih² Lun⁴. This book is not extant in Sanskrit; in the Harivarman entry of Keown & Prebish (2010), Charles Hallisey reconstructed its name as *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* or *Satyasiddhiśāstra*.

^f Capriles (2004). I deleted that book from my Webpage because of its flaws. Therefore I ask whoever may be interested in consulting it, to wait for the definitive version that will be published on paper if I ever finish the definitive version of the text.

^g 律宗; Wade-Giles, Lü⁴ Tsung¹.

^h 道宣; Wade-Giles, Tao²-hsüan¹.

ⁱ Cf. Charles Hallisey, “Harivarman” entry in Keown & Prebish (2010).

In China and the Far East, Mahāyāna schools proliferated, reaching a much higher number than in India—with each of them offering its own, divergent list of Śākyamuni’s successive Promulgations of teachings, and/or of classes into which Buddhist canonical texts should be divided. It must be noted, however, that among the schools that regarded themselves as Mahāyāna, in China various scholars regarded some as quasi-Mahāyāna, even though they gave continuity to the only two Indian Mahāyāna philosophical schools—and some independent monks were seen in the same way. These are:⁸⁹

(1) The Sānlùn School, Sānlùnzōng^a or Three Treatises School, which was the Chinese Mādhyamaka School and which was so called because it was based on Chinese translations of three Indian treatises—namely Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamakāśāstra* (Chin. *Zhōnglùn*^b) or *Prajñānāmamūlamadhyamakakārikā* and *Dvādaśadvāraśāstra* (Chin. *Shí’èrménlùn*^c) as rendered into Chinese by Kumārajīva, and Āryadeva’s *Śata[ka]śāstra* or *Treatise in One-hundred [stanzas]*⁹⁰ (Chin. *Bǎilùn*^d). The Sānlùn School posited Three Promulgations: (1) The one in which the *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra* was taught; (2) since Śākyamuni’s disciples failed to understand the teaching in question, he was forced to bestow the many teachings that constituted this new phase, including all doctrines of the Hīnayāna and most of the Mahāyāna; (3) then Śākyamuni’s disciples became ready for higher teachings, and so the Awake One was able to proceed into this final, definitive phase by teaching the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* or *Lotus Sūtra*. In Japan this school was called Sanron and in Korea Samnon. (Note that a Four Treatises School or Sìlùnzōng,^e which incorporated into this school’s threefold canon the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*^f that the Chinese attribute to Nāgārjuna and that was also translated by Kumārajīva, had a brief existence in China.)⁹¹

(2) The Fǎxiàng School or Fǎxiàngzōng,^g established by Xuánzàng^h and his main disciple, Kuījī,ⁱ which gave continuity to the Yogācāra School in China. This school was also called Wéishízōng^j or Consciousness-Only School, and Wéishí Yújiāxíng Pài^k or Consciousness-Only Yogācāra School. However, the prestige of this school diminished considerably after the Táng dynasty.^{1 92} In Japan it was called Hosso. It must be noted that this school derived from and replaced the Shèlùn School or Shèlùnzōng,^m which was based on Asaṅga’s *Mahāyānasamgraha* or, more exactly, on Vasubandhu’s commentary on the said book by his elder brother, but which disappeared some time after Xuánzàng made a new translation of the texts in question and founded his Fǎxiàng School.

(3) Note that a whole class of Chinese Buddhists simply regarded themselves as Masters of the Tripiṭaka or Triple Basket—namely the collection of Buddhist canonical teachings originating directly from Śākyamuni, which will be explained in a subsequent chapter, and

^a 三論宗; Wade-Giles, San¹-lun⁴ Tsung¹.

^b 中論; Wade-Giles, Chung¹-lun⁴.

^c 十二門論; Wade-Giles, Shih²-erh⁴-men²-lun⁴.

^d 百論; Wade-Giles, Pai³-lun⁴.

^e 四論宗; Wade-Giles, Ssu⁴-lun⁴ Tsung¹.

^f Chin. 大智度論; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Dàzhìdùlùn; Wade-Giles, Ta⁴-shih⁴-tu⁴ Lun⁴.

^g 法相宗; Wade-Giles, Fa³-hsiang² Tsung¹; Jap. Hossō-shū.

^h 玄奘; Wade-Giles, Hsüan²-tsang⁴.

ⁱ 窺基; Wade-Giles, K’uei¹-chi¹.

^j 唯識宗; Wade-Giles, Wei²-shih² Tsung¹.

^k 唯識瑜伽行派; Wade-Giles, Wei²-shih² Yü²-chi¹-hsing² P’ai⁴.

^l Ch. 唐朝; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Tángcháo; Wade-Giles T’ang²-ch’ao².

^m 攝論宗; Wade-Giles, She⁴-lun⁴ Tsung¹.

which is so called because the teachings in question were classified into three sets: the Sūtrapīṭaka,^a containing the teachings on view and meditation; the Abhidharmapīṭaka, containing the teachings on cosmology, epistemology, psychology and so on, and the Vinayapīṭaka, containing the sets of rules for the different types of Buddhist ordination. However, the Chinese Tripīṭaka contains, not only the canonical texts of the Sūtrayāna Path of Renunciation that conform the Sanskrit (as such Mahāyāna) Tripīṭaka, but also the commentaries by Chinese Masters.⁹³ Although I am listing the Tripīṭaka as though it were a school, no Chinese ever established such a school, and hence no such school is listed in the treatises by Chinese Buddhologists and historians, or those by modern Western scholars.

Then, there are the schools that the Chinese regard as fully Mahāyāna, which have been considered by Western scholars to be indigenous of China, since no solid proof of their existence in India has been found so far (the only school of which there is some, though scant, evidence that it existed in India, is the Chán School; cf. Dumoulin, 2005):

(1) The Chán School or Chánzōng^b which transmits the Mahāyāna's Sudden Path, which, in the case of individuals who have the appropriate capacity, is far more rapid and efficient than the gradual Path of the same vehicle. This school will be reviewed in some detail in dealing with the various vehicles (Skt. *yāna*) of the Path of Renunciation that is the Sūtrayāna, for it makes up the sudden subvehicle of the Mahāyāna, and hence it will not be discussed at this point.

(2) The Huáyán School or Huáyánzōng,^c based on the *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra* and the other *Vaipulyasūtras* (which include the *Gaṇḍavyūha*), at some point absorbed the Dìlùnzōng^d or Dàśabhūmikā School, based on Vasubandhu's *Daśabhūmikabhāṣya* (since the latter was a commentary to the *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra*'s *Daśabhūmikasūtra* chapter, the absorption of this school by the Huáyán School was to be expected). Since the Huáyán School possessed and applied the Mahāyāna's gradual teachings as well as the sudden ones transmitted by the Chán school, combining them skillfully, it designated its own amalgamation of views and practices as the *round* or *total* method. This school classifies the teachings of Śākyamuni's on the basis, not so much of the periods in which they were offered, but mainly of their content, in the following way: (i) the doctrines of the Hīnayāna, contained in the *āgamas*; (ii) the elemental doctrine of the Mahāyāna, contained in the Chinese schools which gave continuity to the Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra schools of Buddhism; (iii) the definitive doctrine of the Mahāyāna, transmitted by the Tiāntái school; (iv) the “sudden” doctrine, consisting in Chán, and (v) the “round” or “total” doctrine of the Mahāyāna, which is that of the Huáyán school.

(3) The Tiāntái School, Tiāntáizōng,^e or School of the Heavenly Dais, which also accepted the validity both of the sudden method (which it attributed to the *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra*) and of the gradual one (which it attributed to the *āgamas*, the *Vaipulyasūtras* and the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*), and placed a great emphasis on the inseparability or the circular

^a Pāli: Suttapīṭaka; Tib. Doi denö (Wylie, *mdo'i sde snod*); Ch. 經藏 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Jīngzàng; Wade-Giles, Ching¹-tsang⁴).

^b 禪宗; Wade-Giles, Ch'an²-tsung¹; Jap. ぜんしゅう (hiragana) / Zen-shū (romaji); Korean, 성종 (Seonjong); Viet. Thi ền Tông.

^c 華嚴宗; Wade-Giles, Hua²-yan² Tsung¹; Jap. Kegon-shū.

^d 地論宗; Wade-Giles, Ti⁴-lun⁴ Tsung¹.

^e 天台宗; Wade-Giles, T'ien¹-t'ai² tsung¹; Jap. Tendai-shū.

combination of the meditation practices of *śamatha*^a and *vipaśyanā*^b,⁹⁴ was based on the *Lotus Sūtra* or *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, but also on the *Mahāśamathavipaśyanāsūtra* and a couple of Chinese commentaries (like other Chinese schools, it also incorporated the teachings of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*). This school divides the Buddha’s teaching into five periods and eight doctrines, the periods being: (i) that of the *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra*, in which it was established that the universe was the manifestation of the absolute, and which contains the *round* or *total* method that comprises the gradual method of the Mahāyāna as well as the sudden one of this same vehicle; (ii) that of the *āgamas*,^c consisting of the four (or five if the *Kṣudraka Āgama* or Lesser *Āgama* is included) main collections of Hīnayāna discourses of Śākyamuni’s that were translated from the Pāli and inserted in the Sanskrit Tripiṭaka, which he taught upon verifying that his students had not understood the meaning of what he proclaimed in the first period; (3) that of the *Vaipulyasūtras*, or the most extensive *sūtras* of the Mahāyāna (excluding those that are specifically included in another category), which contains all the doctrines, as the first step of this vehicle; (4) that of the *sūtras* of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, which teach the absolute emptiness / insubstantiality of all *dharma*s (phenomena), rejecting the ideas of substantial distinction and acquisition (as though for selecting students), and by the same token negate final truth to emptiness itself; and (5) that of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and the *Lotus (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka) Sūtra*—the latter of which contains the final Buddhist truth, beyond the division into gradual and swift methods, and asserts the vehicles of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas* to be merely expedient, provisional teachings, while asserting the only true vehicle to be the Buddha-vehicle. With the passing of time this school assimilated teachings from the Tantric or “Secret School”—the Mìzōng^d—to such an extent that it may be said to have become a quasi-Tantric or even a fully Tantric School; however, since it was originally non-Tantric, here I list it among the Mahāyāna Schools of China and the Far-East. This tradition is also known by the name Tángmì^e or “Esoteric of the Táng (dynasty)” and also as the Hànmi Mìzōng^f or “Secret Buddhism of the Hàn Transmission.”

(4) The Jìngtǔ School, Jìngtǔzōng^g or Pure Land School, had its canonical basis in the *sūtras Sukhāvativyūha*, *Amitābha* and *Amitāyurdhyāna*. Although it is generally thought to merely provide methods for achieving rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha (which would lead us to view it *in the best of cases* as a gradual School), D. T. Suzuki affirmed that in Japan a greater number of individuals attained a sudden, first *satori* (provisional, sudden Awakening) by means of the practices of this school than through those of Chán or of Japanese Zen.⁹⁵ Tibetan Master Chögyam Trungpa asserted this school to have transmitted the teaching Tibetans know as phowa^h or *transference of consciousness*.

^a Pāli: *samatha*; Tib. zhine (Wylie, *zhi gnas*); Chin. 止 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhǐ*; Wade-Giles, *chih*³; Jap: *shī*).

^b Pāli: *vipassanā* Tib. lhantong (Wylie, *lhag mthong*); Chin. 觀 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *guān*; Wade-Giles, *kuan*¹; Jap: *kan*).

^c Pāli, *nikāya*; Tib. lung (Wylie, *lung*); Ch. 阿含 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *āhán*; Wade-Giles, *a*¹-*han*²; Jap. *agon*).

^d 密宗; Wade-Giles, Mì⁴-tsung¹.

^e 唐密; Wade-Giles, T’ang²-mì⁴.

^f 漢傳密宗; Wade-Giles, Han⁴-mì⁴ mì⁴-tsung¹.

^g 淨土宗; Wade-Giles, Ching⁴-t’u³ Tsung¹; Jap. Jōdo-shū or Jōdo bukkyō; Korean, Jeongtojong (정토종); Vietnamese, Tịnh Độ Tông.

^h Wylie, *pho ba*.

(5) The Nirvāṇa School, Nièpán School or Nièpánzōng,^a based on interpretations of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, which was often accused of conceiving the absolute in personal or substantialistic terms,⁹⁶ also accepted the concept of sudden Awakening. In particular, Master Zhú Dàoshēng^b placed a strong emphasis on the fact that, according to this *sūtra*, sudden Awakening was possible even for the *icchāntika*,⁹⁷ who are those who have cut all wholesome roots in themselves. Shortly thereafter, a Sanskrit copy of the *sūtra* in question was introduced and translated, and people were surprised to learn that it confirmed that Master's theory, which also put forward the doctrine of sudden Awakening. The Nirvāṇa School also classified the canonical teachings in terms of periods, but posited as the last one that in which the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*^c was taught, since this *sūtra*'s title is due to the fact that it was purportedly the last and final teaching of Śākyamuni, taught during the day and evening immediately preceding his “great decease,”^d and on these grounds it held it to constitute his final and definitive teaching. Although this school and the *sūtra* at its root were not so popular in China, the doctrine of Buddha-nature^e and of the *dharmakāya* it teaches pervaded the whole of the Chinese Mahāyāna. It must be noted that the southern branch of this school was absorbed by the Tiāntái School or Tiāntáizōng.

To conclude this brief review of the non-Tantric schools of the Far East, it must be noted that, in the thirteenth century CE, in Japan, a sect arose which, like the Tiāntái School, has the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* as its source, and which bears the name of the monk who established its doctrine, Nichiren Shōnin^f (1222-1282), who belonged to the Tendai-shū^g but who, following what he took to be a spontaneous Awakening resulting from the understanding of the *sūtra* in question, decided that the whole of the teachings that, *on the basis of his own true, authentic Awakening*, the Buddha offered on meditation and on practice in general were superfluous, and insisted in doing away with them, for in his view all that was needed to attain the Fruit of the Buddha-vehicle was to maintain the behavior of the bodhisattva, recite the *sūtra* in question as much as possible, and venerate the “Three Great Mysteries:” (1) The *gohonzon*^h or “object of worship,” which in this sect is the *moji-maṇḍala*ⁱ or *maṇḍala gohonzon*,^j namely the scroll Nichiren inscribed with the

^a 涅槃宗; Wade-Giles, Nieh⁴-p'an²-tsung¹.

^b 竺道生; Wade-Giles, Chu² Tao⁴-sheng¹.

^c Skt. *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*; Tib. *Yongsu myanganle depai chenpo do* (Wylie, *yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa chen po mdo*); Ch. 大(般)涅槃經 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, Dà[bān] Nièpánjīng; Wade-Giles, Ta⁴[-pan¹]) Nieh⁴-p'an²-ching¹; Jap. Daihatsunehangyō.

^d Skt. *mahāparinirvāṇa[m]*; Tib. *Yongsu myanganle depai chenpo* (Wylie, *yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa chen po*); Ch. 大(般)涅槃 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, dà[bān] nièpán; Wade-Giles, ta⁴[-pan¹]) nieh⁴-p'an²; Jap. daihatsunehan.

^e Skt. *tathāgatagarbha* or *sugatagarbha*; Tib. *desheg nyingpo* or *dezhin shegpai nyingpo* (Wylie, *de [bzhin] gshegs [pa'i] snying po*); Chin. 如來藏 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, rúláizàng; Wade-Giles, ju²-lai²-tsang⁴) / Skt. *buddhata*, *buddhadhātu* or *buddhatva*; Tib. *sangyekyi kham* (Wylie, *sangs rgyas kyi khams*); Ch. 佛性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, fóxìng; Wade-Giles fo²-hsing⁴).

^f 日蓮聖人; his disciples called him 日蓮大聖人 or Nichiren Daishōnin (大 or dai meaning “great”).

^g 天台宗 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, Tiāntáizōng; Wade-Giles, T'ien¹-t'ai² tsung¹).

^h 御本尊.

ⁱ 文字曼荼羅. These inscribed papers or tablets are regarded as *maṇḍalas*.

^j 曼荼羅御本尊.

five Chinese characters of the *daimoku*,^a which stands for Buddha's truth, lying at the center and representing the stūpa of the Seven Precious Materials featured in the *Lotus Sūtra*, with the names of various bodhisattvas and other beings surrounding it in concentric circles: it is facing a copy of the *gohonzon* that chanting and worship are practiced. (2) The *daimoku*, which, in order to purify body, speech and mind and *in lieu of the Refuge formula*, is to be recited as though it were a *mantra* or *dhāraṇī*, in particular while facing the *gohonzon*.^b And (3) the *kaidan*,^c which in all monastic Buddhist schools was the ordination platform, but which here is the place where the *gohonzon* is placed (whether the original one that is kept on Mount Minobu, or the copy possessed by the devotee). Although Nichiren did not formally quit the Tendai School nor did he formally found a school, paradoxically he decreed the schools that applied the practices that Śākyamuni taught to be heretical, and dreamed of establishing in his country what he fancied to be the true doctrine of the Buddha, which was no other than his own concoction. Convinced patriot, Nichiren made the *kaidan* stand for Japan, for he fancied Japan as the center of this purportedly “genuine doctrine of the Buddha,” from where he expected it to irradiate to the whole world, so as to produce a universal Buddhist empire. The different sects established by five of Nichiren's six senior disciples over time became amalgamated into one school, called the Nichiren School or Nichiren-shū.^d The remaining senior disciple, Nikkō,^e deemed the practices of the other disciples to have degenerated, as they did not have the *gohonzon* as their sole object of worship, for in their temples they also placed Buddha statues and other objects of worship, and hence he founded the Nichiren-Shōshū^f or “True Nichiren School,” venerating Nichiren as the “Buddha of final times.” Much later, in the twentieth century, Fujī Nichidatsu,^g known as Fujī Gurojī (who was so inimical to Tantrism that he claimed that the Tantric doctrines caused the ruin of Tibet), founded the monastic sect Nipponzan-Myōhōji-Daisangha,^h whereas two laymen founded two lay sects: the Risshō Kōsei Kaiⁱ and the Sōka Gakkai International^j or Society for the creation of value. The last of these arose within the Nichiren-Shōshū as its peripheral lay branch, and has been accused of tightly controlling its members' activities and acquaintances and engaging in dubious activities to preclude affiliates from leaving the sect^k—a policy that was not this sect's own invention, for it is founded on Nichiren teachings on *shakubuku*,^l rendered character by character as “break and subdue,” or in a less literal way as “forced

^a 題目: nam-myoho-renge-kyo (namu myōhō rengo kyō, where namu is the Japanization of the Sanskrit namo, which means praise or hail but has the connotation of devoting one's life to, and myoho-renge-kyo is the Japanese name of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*). The practice of recitation of this phrase is called shōdai (唱題).

^b Powers (2000, p. 202) notes that the Nichiren-Shōshū declared the *gohonzon* of the Sōka Gakkai to be invalid and only the one it keeps to be an authentic basis for chanting and worship, and “excommunicated” the Sōka Gakkai; however, later on the two organizations seem to have made peace.

^c 戒壇.

^d 日蓮宗.

^e 日興 (1246–1333).

^f 日蓮正宗.

^g 藤井日達.

^h 日本山妙法寺大僧伽.

ⁱ 立正佼成会; until June 1960, 大日本立正交成会: Dai-Nippon Risshō Kōsei Kai

^j 創価学会.

^k Gardini, Walter (1995, pp. 148-158); cf. the endnote at the end of the paragraph for a wider bibliography.

^l 折伏. This term comes from the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanādasūtra*, but Nichiren gave it a meaning radically different from the one it has in the *sūtra*.

conversion.” In Japan, this lay school established its own, anticommunist political party, which in spite of its pacifism is widely categorized as an extreme right party. Thus it is not at all surprising that in 1969 University Professor Fujiwara Hirotsu published the book *I Denounce the Soka Gakkai*, in which he acrimoniously criticized the Gakkai, calling it “fascist” and comparing it to the early Nazi party.^a Paradoxically, a sect that has done away with nearly the whole of the Buddhist teachings and practices, that has led its members to adopt as their principal practice the recitation of *nam-myoho-renge-kyo*—most commonly as a means to achieve worldly aims (often financial, thus contradicting the Buddhist principle that riches, rather than yielding happiness, beget worries⁹⁸)—and that applies to its affiliates methods that have been likened to those of the Nazis, refers to itself as the only true Buddhism, while categorizing Zen (Chán) as “ridiculous” and asserting the Theravāda to be unable to solve the current problems of society. (For further details see the endnote.⁹⁹)

With the passing of time, the majority of Chinese Buddhist schools degenerated and serious practice was replaced by mere speculation. Exceptions to this tendency could be found in the Tibetan traditions in China, which were renewed every now and then by great Masters (as did in the twentieth century the great Kagyüpa^b Master of Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen, Bo Gangkar Rinpoche^c), and in Chán or Zen, which, beginning at the end of the nineteenth century and until more than halfway through the twentieth century, experienced a splendid revival thanks to the work of the incomparable patriarch Xūyún Dàshī^d (who, by the way, made two visits to Tibet: one before his sudden Awakening and another one after the event in question).

The Tantric Schools of Central and East Asia

All currently existent schools of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as the Bön tradition, contain, transmit and apply the teachings of both the Sūtrayāna—including the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna—and the totality of those of the Tantrayāna, Mantrayāna or Vajrayāna, either in their New Schools^e version (which feature four Tantric vehicles) or their Ancient School^f form (which counts six Tantric vehicles). The same is *not* the case with the first and main Tantric School of China and Japan—the Mizōng^g—because, although it is a fully-fledged Tantric School, it transmits only those Tantras that in Tibet the New Translations call lower and the Ancient Translations refer to as outer. Let us begin with the latter.¹⁰⁰

The Mizōng or Mi School resulted from the fusion of two lineages, namely: (1) that of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, introduced directly from Oḍḍiyāna, via Kashmir and Tibet, by Śubhakarasiṃha,^{h101} and having the *Mahāvairocanatantra*ⁱ as its main scripture (and in fact, the lineage may also be referred to by the name of this Tantra), and (2) that of the

^a *Ibidem*.

^b Wylie, bka’ brgyud pa.

^c Wylie, ’bo gangs dkar rin po che: the precious teacher from White Glacier Mountain of ’Bo.

^d 虛雲大師; Wade-Giles: Hsu¹-yun² Ta⁴-shih¹: Great Master Empty Cloud (1840–1959).

^e Tib. Sarmapa (Wylie, *gsar ma pa*).

^f Tib. Nyingmapa (Wylie, *rnying ma pa*).

^g 密宗; Wade-Giles, Mi⁴ Tsung¹.

^h Ch. 善無畏三藏; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Shàn wúwèi Sāncáng; Wade-Giles, Shan⁴-wu²-wei⁴ San¹-ts’ang; Jap. Zenmui-Sanzō.

ⁱ 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Dà Pílúzhēnà Chéngfó Shénbiàn Jiāchí Jīng; Wade-Giles, Ta⁴-p’i²-lu²-che¹-na⁴ ch’eng²-fo² shen²-pien⁴ chia¹-ch’ih² ching¹.

Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, which stressed the practice of the *Sarvatathāgatattvaśaṃgraha*,^a a Tantra of the Yogatantra class called introduced by the Indian Master Vajrabodhi^b after reaching China by sea.¹⁰² Then Amoghavajra, who had studied with Vajrabodhi in Java and followed him to China, was commissioned by his teacher to go to Śrī Laṅka to find and fetch important scriptures there, and on his return to the “Empire of the Center, “ after his teacher’s demise, he studied the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, thus unifying the two lineages just mentioned, and translated one hundred and ten texts, which filled one hundred and forty three volumes. These two lineages passed from Amoghavajra to Huìguō,^c root teacher of Kūkai^d (whom the Japanese regard as an emanation of Amoghavajra), who for his part brought this unified tradition to Japan, where he founded the Shingon-shū^e or Mantra School.

With regard to the Tibetan schools, firstly it must be noted that Buddhism was established in Tibet by means of two main “disseminations of the doctrine,” each of which was based on a different series of translations: (1) The first dissemination,^f carried out in the second half of the eighth century CE, initially by Guru Padmasambhava, Dzogchen Master Vimalamitra and abbot-scholar Śāntarakṣita, created the need for translators who would be able to render into Tibetan the whole of the Sanskrit and *prākṛta* Buddhist Canon. Hence a group of their students were sent to India to learn Sanskrit and to Oḍḍiyāna to fetch texts and receive teachings, among whom foremost was translator-yogin Bairotsana^g—who, together with the *yoginī* Yeshe Tsogyāl and an important group of their fellow students were also instrumental in the diffusion of the Buddhist teachings—and upon their return to Tibet set out to work in government-sponsored translation centers that produced the corpus of works that is currently known as the Old Translations.^h (2) The second dissemination,ⁱ which was initiated in the tenth and eleventh centuries CE by the influential translator Rinchen Zangpo,^j and then carried on by a series of teachers that included the Indian Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna^k and his Tibetan disciples (among whom foremost was Dromtönpa^l), Drogmi Śākya Yeshe^m and his disciples, Marpa Chökyi Lodröⁿ and so on, inspired many Tibetans to form groupings of translators, which produced new renderings of an ample series of original Buddhist canonical sources and authoritative commentaries presently known as the New Translations.^o These became the basis of the

^a 金剛頂經; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Jīngāngdǐngjīng; Wade-Giles, Chin¹-kang¹-ting³ Ching; Jap.. Kongōchōkyō.

^b Ch. 金剛智; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Jīngāngzhì; Wade-Giles, Chin¹-kang¹-chih⁴; Jap. Kongouchi.

^c Ch. 惠果; Wade-Giles, Hui⁴-kuo³.

^d 空海.

^e 真言宗; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Zhēnyánzōng; Wade-Giles, Chen¹-yan² Tsung¹.

^f Tib. ngadar (Wylie, *snga dar*).

^g Skt. Vairocana; Bairotsana is the Tibetan pronunciation of his name.

^h Tib. ngangyur (Wylie, *snga ’gyur*).

ⁱ Tib. chidar (Wylie, *phyi dar*).

^j Wylie, rin chen bzang po (958-1055), who travelled to Kashmir, where he studied with his main teacher, Śrāddhakaravarman, and then proceeded to (other parts of) India and studied with several important teachers.

^k 982-1054.

^l Wylie, brom ston pa rgyal ba’i ’byung-gnas (1004 or 1005–1064).

^m Wylie, brog mi śākya ye shes (994-1078? / 993-1074? / 993-1077?).

ⁿ Wylie, mar pa chos kyi blo gros, known as Marpa Lotsawa (Wylie, mar pa lo tsa ba) or Marpa the Translator (1012-1097).

^o Tib. sarngyur (Wylie, *gsar ’gyur*).

New or Sarmapa^a schools, among which the main ones were initially the Kadampa^b, the Kagyüpa and the Sakyapa.^c Later on Je Tsongkhapa^d founded the Gelugpa School, which absorbed the Kadampa School and which, since the time of the “Great Fifth” Dalai Lama, has been the school of the rulers of Tibet. After the second dissemination and the foundation of the Sarmapa Schools, in order to distinguish the sum of doctrines and practices established in Tibet during the first dissemination from the new forms of Buddhism, and the practitioners of the former from those of the latter, the doctrines, practices and practitioners of first dissemination translations received the name of Ancient or Nyingmapa Tradition (which, unlike the New or Sarmapa schools, until the forced exile of many Tibetan Masters in the second half of the twentieth century, was not structured hierarchically or subject to the authority of a hierarchy).

The currently existing Tibetan Schools possess the teachings of the two Hīnayāna vehicles (the Śrāvakayāna and the Pratyekabuddhayāna), those of the gradual Mahāyāna (or Bodhisattvayāna), those of all the Outer or Lower Tantras (Kriyāntātra, Ubhayatantra or Cāryatantra, and Yogatantra), a greater or lesser part of the Inner or Higher Tantras (the Anuttarayogatantras in the case of the Sarmapa [adhering to the New Translations] and the Mahāyogatantras and Anuyogatantras in that of the Nyingmapa [adhering to the Ancient Translations])—and, in the case of the Nyingmapas, the Atiyogatantras, which are the ones that convey the Dzogchen teachings (note that, when the term Dzogchen is understood as referring to a vehicle or path, it is a synonym of Atiyogatantra). Although Atiyogatantra is a Nyingma teachings, nowadays most Masters of all traditions practice the teachings of this vehicle.

In our time the Tibetan Schools are: (1) the Nyingmapa;^e (2) the Sakyapa;^f (3) the Kagyüpa;^g (4) the Gelugpa;^h (5) the Jonangpa;ⁱ and (6) the Bön^j—for the Fourteenth Dalai Lama classed the last two as the fifth and sixth Tibetan Buddhist School, respectively; in the case of Bön, its being regarded as a Buddhist School is due to the fact that it assimilated the totality of the Buddhist teachings. Sometimes Chöd^k is classed as a school, but I do not know of any current institution that declare itself to pertain to a tradition of this name, and currently those who practice Chöd are nearly all Nyingmapas and Kagyüpas; likewise, the Kadampas were an important school, but they were extinguished after being assimilated by the Gelug School. A splinter group of the Gelug sect turned demon-worshippers constituted itself toward the end of the twentieth century that adopted the name of the Kadampas and hence it will be listed below as pseudo-Kadampa.

(1) The Nyingmapa originally were not a school; Buddhism might have made its first inroads into Tibet at the time of King Lhatotori Nyentsen;^l then, at the time of King

^a Wylie, *gsar ma pa*.

^b Wylie, *bka' gdams pa*.

^c Wylie, *sa skya pa*.

^d Wylie, *rje tsong kha pa* (1357-1419).

^e Wylie, *rnying ma pa*.

^f Wylie, *sa skya pa*.

^g Wylie, *bka' brgyud pa*.

^h Wylie, *dge lugs pa*.

ⁱ Wylie, *jo nang pa*.

^j Wylie, *bon*.

^k Wylie, *gcod*.

^l Wylie, *lha tho tho ri gnyan btsan*, where *lha* (deity) is a title.

Songtsen Gampo,^a Nepalese (and probably also Indian) and Chinese monks and Masters were brought to Tibet by his Nepalese wife and his Chinese wife;¹⁰³ finally, Buddhism was definitively established at the time of King Trisong Detsen^b by Indian Master Śāntarakṣita, Oḍḍiyāna-born Mahāguru Padmasambhava, the latter’s disciples—including those in the school of great translators—and the Chinese Hwashans (i.e., Chán Masters). The teachings that arrived at the time included all existing Buddhist vehicles: the two Hīnayāna vehicles (Śrāvākayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna), the gradual Mahāyāna (or Bodhisattvayāna), the sudden Mahāyāna (in the form of the Northern Chán School), all the Outer Tantras (namely Kriyātantra, Ubhayatantra and Yogatantra), the ancient Inner Tantras (Mahāyogatantra and Anuyogatantra), and the universal ancestor^c and source of all vehicles, the Atiyogatantra (Dzogchen as a vehicle or path)—the highest vehicle, which is usually classed among the Inner Tantras, even though its principle different from that of the other Inner Tantras, for rather than transformation the principle of this vehicle is spontaneous liberation. In fact, it was during the Nyingma or “Ancient” diffusion that the Buddhist Dzogchen teachings were introduced into Tibet—where there were already seminal, rudimentary Dzogchen teachings pertaining to the Bön, pre-Buddhist School of Zhang Zhung¹⁰⁴ and Tibet. Because of this, two most ancient works that will be discussed below contrast it with Tantra, classifying the Buddhist teachings into Sūtra or Path of Renunciation,^d Tantra or Path of Transformation^e and Dzogchen or Path of Spontaneous Liberation.^f The Nyingmapa were not a school because there were no other schools in contrast with which it could be seen as a school and hence they did not regard themselves as conforming a school, thus being simply Buddhists, and because they did not have a hierarch. It was after the Sarmapa or New Schools were established, beginning nearly three centuries after the time of King Trisong Detsen, that in contrast with those new schools the Nyingmapa were viewed as a school; however, in contrast with the rest of Tibetan schools, the Nyingmapa continued without a hierarch. It was after the escape of most great lamas from Tibet into India as a result of the Chinese invasion that the Fourteenth Kundün^g—the current Dalai Lama—asked the Nyingmapas to elect a hierarch, as it was convenient for the diaspora, and Khyabje Dūdjom Yeshe Dorje^h was designated hierarch of the School. The last hierarch known to me at the time of writing this was Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche,ⁱ who died in December 2015.¹⁰⁵

(2) The Sakya School is founded on the teachings Drogmi Śākya Yeshe^j brought to Tibet from India in the eleventh century CE. Sakyapa Drakpa Gyaltsen wrote in *Chronicle of the Indic Masters* (in Davidson, 2004, p. 166):

(He) first went to Nepal and entered into the door of mantra through (the teacher) Bhāro Hamthung. Then he went to India itself and, realizing that the Ācārya Ratnākaraśānti was both

^a Wylie, srong btsan sgam po.

^b Wylie, khri srong lde btsan.

^c This is how Nubchen Sangye Yeshe (Wylie, gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes) refers to Dzogchen-*qua*-vehicle (i.e. to Atiyogatantra) in his *Samten Migdrön* (Wylie, *bsam gtan mig sgron*).

^d Tib. pong lam (Wylie, *spong lam*).

^e Tib. gyur lam (Wylie, *sgyur lam*).

^f Tib. dröl lam (Wylie, *grol lam*).

^g Wylie, sku mdun.

^h Wylie, bdud ’joms rin po che, ’jigs ’bral ye shes rdo rje (1904-1987).

ⁱ Wylie, stag lung rtse sprul rin po che (1926-2015).

^j Wylie, brog mi Śākya ye shes (994-1078? / 993-1074? / 993-1077?).

greatly renowned and learned, he heard extensively the Vinaya, *Prajñāpāramitā*, and mantra. Then having gone to the eastern part of India, he encountered Bhikṣu Vīravajra, who was the greatest direct disciple of Durjayacāndra, who himself had held the lineage of Ācārya Virūpa's own disciple, Dombiheruka. From Bhikṣu Vīravajra he heard extensively the mantra material of the three tantras of Hevajra, complete in all their branches. He also requested the many instruction manuals of *Acintyakrama* and so forth, so that he heard the “Lamdré without the fundamental text” (*rtsa med lam 'bras*) as well. In this way, Dromki lived in India for twelve years and became a great translator.

On his return to Tibet, he was sought by Konchok Gyalpo^a, who received his lineage and in 1073 founded Sakya Monastery (also known as Pal Sakya^b or “Pale Earth” because of the color of the hills). The tradition was officially, properly established by the “Five Venerable Supreme Sakya Masters,” the first of whom was Konchok Gyalpo's grandson, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo.^c Sakya Paṇḍita,^d Rongtönpa,^e Gorampa^f and Śākya Chokden^g were possibly the most important Sakya scholars prior to the arising of the Rime movement. This school gives great importance to learning and erudition, even though it is also centered on Tantric practice; its most distinctive teachings are the above-mentioned Lamdre teachings. It is ruled by a hereditary dynasty and its head is called the Sakya Tridzin^h—lit. Sakya Throne Holder—who currently is Ngawang Kunga Tegchen Palbar.ⁱ

(3) The Kagyu School is founded on the teachings Marpa Chökyi Lodrö^j imported from India into Tibet. After studying Sanskrit with Drogmi Śākya Yeshe (Tibetan source of the Sakya tradition), Marpa went to Nepal, where he studied with two prominent students of Nāropā, and then travelled to India, where he studied with the *mahāsiddhas* Nāropā and Maitrīpa^k and other important Indian Masters. After overcoming some initial problems his practice lineage was transmitted to Milarepa,^l who transmitted it to Gampopa (source of the monastic lineage, as he was a Kādampa monk) and Rechungpa^m (source of the repa or lay tummo lineage). Gampopa was the teacher of Dūsum Khyenpa,ⁿ the first Karmapa, who initiated the practice of recognizing “reincarnations” by leaving instructions for the finding and identification of the second Karmapa. Initially this school emphasized Tantric and Mahāmudrā practice and did not care much for scholarship, but with the passing of time study acquired greater importance. Originally its main practice was the noted Six Yogas of

^a Wylie, 'khon dkon mchog rgyal po (1034-1102).

^b Wylie, dpal sa skya.

^c Wylie, sa chen kun dga' snying po.

^d Sapaṇ (Wylie, sa skya paṇ ḍi ta kun dga' rgyal mtshan: 1182–1251).

^e Wylie, rong ston shes bya kun rig (1367-1449).

^f Gorampa Sönam Senge (Wylie, go rams pa bsod nams seng ge: 1429-89).

^g Wylie, gser mdog paṇ chen śākya mchog ldan (1427/1428-1507/1508).

^h Wylie, sa skya khri 'dzin.

ⁱ Wylie, ngag dbang kun dga' theg chen dpal 'bar.

^j Wylie, mar pa chos kyi blo gros, known as Marpa Lotsawa (Wylie, mar pa lo tsa ba) or Marpa the Translator (1012-1097).

^k Maitrīpāda, also known as Advayavajra and as Maitrīgupta.

^l Wylie, rje btsun mi la ras pa (c. 1052–c. 1135).

^m Wylie, ras chung rdo rje grags pa (1083/4-1161).

ⁿ Wylie, dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193)

Nāropā and Six Yogas of Niguma (the latter, mainly among the Shangpa Kagyus^a), though the school soon began to absorb Nyingma teachings, to the extent that presently both its philosophy and practice are hardly distinguishable from those of the Nyingma School. The hierarchs of all Kagyu schools are the Karmapas—the current one being the seventeenth, Orgyen Thinle Dorje,^b though a group of high lamas recognized another candidate, namely Thinle Thaye Dorje^c (currently there is a conciliating trend that asserts the two of them to be tulkus of the Karmapa).

(4) The Gelug School was founded by Je Tsongkhapa,^d who was ordained as a layman^e by the Fourth Karmapa, Rölpai Dorje, and then was ordained as a novice^f by Chöje Dhöndup Rinchen.^g Still at an early age he received the empowerments of Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra and Yamāntaka; then he studied the Vinaya and the Six Yogas of Nāropā, and received the *Kālacakratantra* and the Kagyu practice of Mahāmudrā. His full ordination^h took place in the Sakya tradition. He studied Mādhyamaka with the noted Sakya lama Remdawa,ⁱ and from him and Zhönnu Lodrö (*gzhon nu blo gros*) he received Sakya Paṇḍita's tradition of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*—which, however, he assimilated in terms of Chapa's^{j106} peculiar reading. He followed all the courses at Drikung Monastery (of the Drikung Kagyu) and received all Kadam lineages, as well as the main Sarma Tantras (as well as certain Nyingma Tantras). He structured his Lamrim teachings on the basis of those transmitted by Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna, and placed so much emphasis on the observation of monastic discipline that eventually the Kadampa tradition founded by Atīśa's disciple, Dromtönpa,^k became absorbed in the school he founded. However, in his interpretation of the philosophy of Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka he departed from the understanding of both Atīśa and his own teacher, Remdawa, giving rise to a wholly unconventional interpretation of these teachings that made him an object of veneration to his followers and an object of criticism to those who adhered to the traditional interpretations. At any rate, he is one of the few Tibetan Lamas who have been recognized as emanations of Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom. As to the way this school came to power in Tibet, the Gushri Khan was so impressed by the spiritual attainments of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama that he made him the ruler of the Land of the Snows, to be succeeded by the successive Dalai Lamas, who ever since upheld power in Tibet (however, as it is well-known, in the mid-twentieth century Tibet was invaded and annexed by the Chinese, and until the present the current Dalai Lama has been in exile and the country has been under Chinese rule).

^a Wylie, shangs pa bka' brgyud, founded by Khedrub Khyungpo Naljor (Wylie, mkhas grub khyung po rnal 'byor, 990-1139).

^b Wylie, o rgyan phrin las rdo rje, b. June 26, 1985.

^c Wylie, phrin las 'mtha yas rdo rje, b. May 6, 1983,

^d Wylie, rje tsong kha pa, also referred to as rje rin po che (1357–1419).

^e Skt. and Pāli, *upāsaka*; Tib. genyen[pa] (Wylie, *dge bsnyen [pa]*); Ch. 優婆塞 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yōupósāi*; Wade-Giles, *yu¹-p' o²-sai¹*).

^f Skt. *śramaṇera*; Pāli *sāmaṇera*; Tib. getsül (Wylie, *dge tshul*); Ch. 沙彌 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shāmí*; Wade-Giles, *sha¹-mí²*).

^g Wylie, chos rje don 'grub rin chen.

^h Skt. *bhikṣu*; Pāli *bhikkhu*; Tib. gelong (Wylie, *dge slong*); Ch. 和尚 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *héshàng*; Wade-Giles, *he¹-shang⁴*).

ⁱ Wylie, red mda' ba gzhon nu blo gros (1349–1412).

^j Wylie, phyapa chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169).

^k Dromtön Gyalwe Jungney (Wylie, 'brom ston pa rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas: 1004/1005–1064).

(5) Due to political reasons, the Jonangpa School was declared heretical by the Fifth Dalai Lama, as a result of which most of its monasteries were taken over by the Gelug School (the Fourteenth Dalai Lama himself has explained the political reasons at the root of these acts¹⁰⁷). However, I class them as the fifth school because recently, in an extremely remote region of the Himalayas, a group of monasteries was discovered where the teachings of this school had been uninterruptedly practicing since very old times—which means that the School in question is still alive—and because the present, Fourteenth Dalai Lama, validated its claims to orthodoxy by acknowledging it to be the fifth Buddhist School of Tibet.

(6) The Bön School was in pre-Buddhist times the religion of Zhang Zhung (its center of irradiation lay in today's Western Tibet) and then of most of what later on was known as Tibet. Its teachings are structured in terms of the so-called Nine Ways of Bön,^a of which the summit is the ninth Path—the Dzogchen of Yungdrung Bön,^b consisting of the teachings and transmission of Zhang Zhung Nyengyü.^c Lopön Tenzin Namdak^d tells us that according to the Southern Treasures the nine ways are: (i) The Way of the Shen of Prediction, which includes divination, astrology, various rituals, and medical diagnosis. (ii) The Way of the Shen of the Phenomenal World, which includes rituals dealing with communication with external forces such as rituals of protection, invocation, ransom of the soul and life-force, and repelling negative, harmful energies. (iii) The Way of the Shen of Manifestation, which includes venerating a deity or master and then applying mantras and mudras in order to accomplish a goal such as requesting assistance from natural energies. (iv) The Way of the Shen of Existence, which is mainly focused on rituals for the dead and methods to promote longevity for the living. (v) The Way of the Virtuous Lay Practitioners, which establishes the proper conduct of lay people taking vows. (vi) The Way of the Fully Ordained, which establishes the proper conduct for those who are fully ordained practitioners. (vii) The Way of the White AH, which is primarily focused on Tantric practice using visualization. (viii) The Way of the Primordial Shen, primarily focused upon higher tantric practice. And (ix) The Unsurpassed Way, which is primarily focused upon the practice of Dzogchen, and as such does not rely upon antidotes, ritual or practice with a meditational deity, for it is concerned with the realization of the true nature of one's own mind. The same source tells us that according to the Central Treasures the nine ways roughly correspond to those of the Nyingmapa, with the following exception: the Bodhisattvayāna, which in the system of the Nyingmapa is the third vehicle from bottom to top, is divided into what could be called Cittamātrin Bodhisattvayāna, which in this system constitutes the third vehicle, and what could be called Mādhyamaka Bodhisattvayāna, which in this system is the four vehicle; and the Yogatantrayāna, the Mahāyogatantrayāna and the Anuyogatantrayāna, which in the Nyingma system constitute the sixth, seventh and eighth systems, respectively, in this system are compressed into the seventh and eighth vehicles. (It must be noted that apart from the manners in which the Nine Ways are described in the Southern and the Central Treasures there are other alternative classifications; for example, the one Snellgrove offers is a wholly different one.¹⁰⁸) As already stated in an endnote, the Bön of our time absorbed the whole of the books of Buddhism, including the canonical sources and the treatises, and

^a The actual word is thegpa (Wylie, *theg pa*), which is usually rendered as “vehicle” rather than “Way.”

^b yung drung bon, where the first two words mean both svāstika and “unchanging,” and are also the name of Mount Yung-drung Gu-tzeg (“Edifice of Nine Svāstikas”)—namely Mount Kailāśā.

^c Wylie, zhang zhung snyen rgyud.

^d Wylie, Lopön Tenzin Namdak (2006, pp. 15-20), a very important, high Bönpo lama.

as the nature of the nine ways clearly show, it has the same final aim as Buddhism—and hence it is fully justified to class it as a Buddhist School.

(pseudo-7) Toward the end of the twentieth century, a splinter group of the Gelug School established itself as a new pseudo-Buddhist Tibetan sect that is actually a cult of demon-worshippers that has among its principal aims the exclusion from Tibet (and, were it possible, from the World) of Schools different from their own, and that in order to draw potential followers into its fold assures the achievement through its practices of worldly, temporary benefits (among which economic ones seem to be foremost). At the time of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Drakpa Gyaltsen,^a a rival who vied for recognition as the tulku (“reincarnation”) of the Fourth Dalai Lama, developed a virulent grudge toward the Great Fifth as a result of the latter’s recognition as the Dalai Lama, and finally died in doubtful circumstances¹⁰⁹ harboring so much hatred in his heart that he was purportedly reborn as an evil spirit of the gyalpo^b class called Shugden.^c Although this gyalpo was not regarded as one of the guardians of the Gelug School (for centuries he did not appear in tangkhas [painting scrolls mounted on dyed brocade] among the guardians of the School), in the first half of the twentieth century a powerful Gelug lama called Phawongkha^d elevated him to the status of main guardian of his tradition and made him the object of a cult that used him for maintaining Gelug supremacy in Tibet and destroying those that he saw as enemies of his school, those who he saw as upholding heresies—and especially the Gelug lamas who practiced non-Gelug doctrines and, especially, those who practiced Dzogchen and/or other Nyingma teachings. Stephan Beyer (1988, p. 239) writes:

...many eastern Tibetans remember him (Phawongkha) with loathing as the great persecutor of the “ancient” sect, devoting himself to the destruction throughout K’am^e of images of the Precious Guru and the burning of “ancient” books and paintings.

In the early twentieth century, Zangmar Togden,^f who formerly had followed and practiced Nyingma teachings under the Master Drugu^g Sakyasrī, fell under the spell of Phawongkha’s personality, and therefore when he became regent of a Nyingma monastery called Kajegon,^h which had been built by a Gelug lama (*ibidem*):

He tried to force the monks of Kajegon (who were technically under his authority) to perform the Gelug rituals, and when they obstinately continued to refuse he called in the government police on a trumped-up charge of treason. They raided Kajegon, broke its images, made a fire of its books and paintings, and beat its monks with sticks. The head monk... ..tried to stop them; while one policeman threatened him with a stick, another shot him in the back...

Phawongkha’s main disciple was Trijang Rinpoche, the Junior Tutor to H.H. the present (Fourteenth) Dalai Lama, who strongly promoted the cult of Shugden, making it

^a Wylie, grags pa rgyal mtshan. This is not the same individual as the great Sakyapa Master of the same name.

^b Wylie, rgyal po.

^c Wylie, shugs ldan.

^d Wylie, pha bong kha.

^e In the system of phonetic transliteration used here, Kham (Wylie, *kham*s).

^f Wylie, zangs dmar rtogs ldan.

^g Wylie, gru gu.

^h Wylie, bka’ brgyad dgon.

prevail among exiled Gelug lamas, and getting the present Dalai Lama to perform rituals to the evil spirit in the belief that he was truly an Awake guardian, even though the spirit was a sworn enemy of the Dalai Lamas that had been regularly used to undermine their power. When the current Dalai Lama learned what the Shugden cult really was, he initially ceased performing the practices linked to the evil spirit and at some point forbid performance of those practices inside Gelug monasteries. Devotees of the gyalpo reacted by abandoning the Gelug School and creating a pseudo-Buddhist sect they called New Kadampa Tradition (choosing this name because after the birth of the Gelug School the Kadampa Tradition was somehow assimilated by the former, which became the upholder of the Kadampa values of monastic purity). Of course the new sect did not reveal its true colors to the public, advertising itself as a Buddhist School emphasizing compassion and all the other Buddhist virtues, while beguiling its followers with worldly achievements through the practice of the spirit that the founder of the new sect declared divine in both essence and appearance and adored in many ways. And, indeed, though the practice of the spirit in the long run drives followers insane, since initially they obtain riches, power and many of the things they prey for, the sect has been the fastest growing “Buddhist” school in some Western countries, where followers are unaware of the heinous crimes allegedly committed in the name of what they mistakenly see as their deity—and in particular of the recent murder by multiple stabbing, in an orgy of blood, of one of the Dalai Lama’s closest collaborators and two of his monks. The Newsweek article reporting the crime read (Clifton & Miller, 1997):

... in an interview with NEWSWEEK earlier this month, the Dalai Lama expressed his worries about the Dorje Shugden. “That cult is actually destroying the freedom of religious thought,” he said.

“Say I want to practice Nyingma. They say this Protector will harm me. Now, that’s an obstacle to religious freedom. I am trying to promote the tradition of coexistence, but the Shugdends say you should not even touch a Red Hat document. That teaching totally contradicts my efforts.”

The split grew angry early last year. The Dalai Lama issued a call to all Tibetan Buddhists to avoid the Shugdends. He warned against the cult’s extremism and against public worship of their idol.

The article then describes the murders themselves (*ibidem*):

Three members of the Dalai Lama’s inner circle were brutally slain on the night of Feb 4 in a bedroom just a few hundred yards from His Holiness’s exile residence in the northern Indian city of Dharamsala. The next morning monks found the Dalai Lama’s close friend and confidant 70-year-old Lobsang Gyatso, dead on his bed. Two young monks, Ngawang Lodoe and the Dalai Lama’s Chinese-language interpreter, Lobsang Ngawang, died within hours of the attack. Each victim had been stabbed 15 to 20 times, leaving the walls of the small monk’s chamber splattered with blood. Police believe it was the work of five to eight attackers. But who, exactly? Cash and gilded Buddhist statues were left at the scene, ruling out robbers. And what kind of criminal would commit such carnage in this famed sanctuary of the gentlest religion?

The savagery of the attack immediately steered police to search for fanatics of some kind. So did the death threats that followed against 14 more members of the Dalai Lama’s entourage. Now Indian police believe the murders were committed by an obscure Buddhist sect that takes its name and inspiration from a minor but ferocious Tibetan deity: Dorje Shugden...

...Indian police have formally questioned at least five Shugden followers, and were canvassing Tibetan-refugee neighborhoods in New Delhi last week, seeking clues to what they describe as a well organized murder plot. “I think there’s no doubt that Shugden was behind the killings,” says Robert Thurman, America’s foremost Buddhist scholar and an old friend of the Dalai Lama’s. “The three were stabbed repeatedly and cut up in a way that was like an exorcism.”

Particularly worrying is the fact that, since the present Dalai Lama became the new sect’s arch-enemy, and the Chinese government also regards the great Master and leader as its most dangerous foe, at some point a principal ally of the new sect and his followers established a impious alliance with the Chinese government that has allowed it to become the fastest growing religious group in the Land of the Snows and to have built the greatest number of monasteries in the last decades. Furthermore, the sect is also growing in the West, for as Clifton & Miller report (*ibidem*):

It’s the fastest growing Buddhist sect in Britain, where it now has about 3,000 members, a thriving publishing business in London and mansions that double as “Dharma Centers” all over the country. It has also been denounced by the London press and the Dalai Lama as a cult that fleeces its own followers. “Nobody would pray to Buddha for better business, but they go to Shugden for such favors – and this is where it has become like spirit worship,” the Dalai Lama told NEWSWEEK. “This is a great pity – a tragedy...”

NKT founder Kelsang... ..has denied allegations that he is a fraud of a monk who never went on a religious retreat and who has made a personal fortune in the “millions of pounds.” He insists that any profits go to his Dharma Centers and that he lives modestly on a 3250 stipend each month. Yet there is no denying the crude mix of spiritual and commercial themes pitched on the sect’s Internet Web site. A current bulletin explains that “accumulating merit” is vital to “become an enlightened being” and that helping the Dharma Centers “flourish” is a great way to accumulate merit.

“So,” the bulletin offers, “if you are in the market for some merit (and who isn’t) here is a perfect opportunity.” There follows a price list: 23,000 (\$4,800) for an NKT shrine cabinet, 22,000 for an NKT Buddha statue, 230 for “a teacup and saucer for Geshe-La” (Kelsang’s honorific title). “Shugden appeals to crazies by offering instant gratification,” says Thurman. [who wanted to be initiated but didn’t get it “on grounds of his fickle character”] “Once you get involved, you’re told you have to devote your lives to the cult, because the god gets very angry if you don’t attend to him every day. It’s really bad stuff, the way they’re draining money out of people.”

The results of the police investigation on the triple murder and of the enquiry by a reporter of leading Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, as well as valuable information about the impious alliance in question, are all available in Bultrini (2013); cf. also the Newsweek article on the triple murder cited above in Clifton & Miller, 1997.

To conclude this chapter, it must be noted that this book is written from a Nyingma standpointless standpoint; more specifically, and as stated in the Introduction, its viewless views, classifications of vehicles and so on are as described in Nub Namkhai Nyingpo’s^a *Kathang Dennga*^b (a treasure^a teaching revealed by Orgyen Lingpa^b of Yarje^c) and Nubchen

^a Wylie, gnubs nam mkha’i snying po.

^b Wylie, *bka’ thang sde lnga*.

Sangye Yeshe's^d *Samten Migdrön*^e (retrieved from the ruins of Dūnhuáng^f), and as taught in our time by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

^a Tib. terma (Wylie, *gter ma*).

^b Wylie, o rgyan gling pa.

^c Wylie, yar rje.

^d Wylie, gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes.

^e Wylie, *bsam gtan mig sgron*.

^f 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun⁴-huang² [also 燉煌]; simplified, 炖煌).

MAHĀYĀNA VERSION OF THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

In Mahāyāna terms, the Four Truths may be explained as follows:

(1) Life is *duḥkha*: lack of plenitude, dissatisfaction, discomfort, frustration and recurrent pain and suffering. In the way of explaining *duḥkha* there are no significant differences between the Narrow Vehicle—i.e. the Hīnayāna—and the Ampler Vehicle—i.e. the Mahāyāna. However, according to the Mahāyāna, in the Hīnayāna the principal motivation to practice is to free oneself from *duḥkha*, whereas in the Mahāyāna we must aspire to an active wisdom allowing us to help all beings liberate themselves from *duḥkha*.

(2) We have seen that, according to the original version of the Four Noble Truths in the Pāli Canon, the cause of *duḥkha* is *trṣṇā*: a basic craving that recurrently manifests as a thirst for pleasure, which always involves both the impulse to confirm ourselves as substantial individuals and the longing to fill a powerful existential lack, and which in the case of some individuals on the Path may manifest as thirst for extinction.¹¹⁰ However, the Pāli Canon also teaches the *twelve links^a of interdependent origination* that constitute the *pratītyasamutpāda*,^b in which *trṣṇā* is the eighth link, whereas the first is *avidyā*: although the chain is circular—i.e., the twelfth link is for its part the cause of the first—the fact that *avidyā* is the first shows that Śākyamuni wanted to emphasize the fact that *avidyā* sets in motion all the other ones, including *trṣṇā*—thus implying *avidyā* to be the deepest root of *duḥkha*. This explains why, upon considering the Four Noble Truths, the Mahāyāna often stresses the fact that the *trṣṇā* or craving that, according to the Hīnayāna, is the Second Truth, for its part had a cause, which is the unawareness *cum* delusion¹¹¹ called *avidyā*,^{c112} which consists in being unaware of the true, single nature of all subjects and objects, and taking each of them to be a self-existing, substantial entity, so that what is dependent is taken to be independent, what is empty of self-existence is taken to be self-existent, what is insubstantial is taken to be substantial, the relative is taken to be absolute, the unsatisfactory is believed to have the potential of providing satisfaction, and so on. For example, regarding the Mādhyamika Prāsaṅgika view on this point, Je Tsongkhapa stressed the explanation according to which the root of *samsāra* (i.e. of cyclic existence) is the basic delusion called *avidyā*; that this delusion is of two types,

^a Pāli and Skt. *nidāna*; Tib. drel (Wylie, 'brel); Ch. 尼陀那 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *nítuónà*; Wade-Giles, *ni²-t'ò-na⁴*).

^b Pāli, *patīcasamuppāda*; Tib. tendrel (Wylie, *rten 'brel*), tenching drelwar (*rten cing 'brel bar*) or **tenching drelwar jungwa** (Wylie, *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba*); Ch. 因緣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīnyuán*; Wade-Giles, *yin¹-yüan²*).

^c Pāli: *avijjā*; Tib. marigpa (Wylie, *ma rig pa*); Ch. 無明 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúmíng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-míng²*).

namely the misconception and delusory experience of the nature and status of the person and the misconception and delusory experience of the nature and status of phenomena other than the person (including the five aggregates or *skandhas* that interact in the production of the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of the person); that the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of the person depends on the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of the aggregates (which as just noted are themselves phenomena-that-are-not-persons); and that this does not imply that there are two roots of cyclic existence, for both misconceptions / delusory experiences are exactly the same in nature—which he explained as a conception and experience of hypostatic / inherent existence, where actually there is no such mode of existence.¹¹³ In the chapter on the Second Noble Truth the reasons why Mādhyamaka asserts that truth to be *avidyā* rather than *trṣṇā* will be discussed in some detail.

(3) The *nirvāṇa* that, according to the original teaching, is the Third Truth, can no longer be conceived as a mere cessation of suffering, for in the Mahāyāna one first seeks and then obtains the active wisdom called Buddha-omniscience,^a which *besides* putting an end to *avidyā* and therefore to *duḥkha* in the individual, allows him or her to help all beings achieve Awakening or freedom from suffering. This aim of the Mahāyāna is called *anuttarā samyaksambodhi* or Total Unsurpassable Awakening, and it lies in the achievement of irreversible *nonstatic nirvāṇa*.^b

(4) There is a Path leading to the achievement of the Third Truth, and therefore to the eradication of the first two Truths. Both the Buddhism of the First Promulgation (the one the Mahāyāna calls Hīnayāna) and the Mahāyāna explain this truth in terms of the Eightfold Noble Path, which consists of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. However, since there is a big difference between the different Buddhist vehicles in what regards the manner of treading the Path, in this book I will explain the Fourth Noble Truth in terms of the classification into three Paths and nine Vehicles established in Tibet during the Ancient or Nyingma dissemination of Buddhism.

It must be emphasized that, no matter to what extent the teaching on the Four Noble Truths may be successfully adapted to the views and realizations of the vehicles that are classed higher¹¹⁴ in the taxonomy of the three Paths and nine vehicles, it is a characteristically Hīnayāna teaching, designed to appeal to those who can understand suffering and all that pertains to the level of body, and who will naturally wish to rid themselves of suffering, but who might not understand or respond enthusiastically to “higher” forms of Buddhism: they may be afraid of emptiness as taught in the Mahāyāna and be reluctant to face dangers and hardships to help others free themselves from suffering—and, even more so, they may be unable to understand the level of energy that is the essence of the Vajrayāna and the level of mind that is the essence of Dzogchen *qua* vehicle or Path (i.e., the Atiyogatantrayāna^c).

^a Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^b Skt. *apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. minepai myangde (Wylie, *mi gnas pa'i myang 'das*); Ch. 無住涅槃 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúzhù nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²*).

^c Skt. *Ādiyogatantrayāna*; here no diacritical signs are placed on terms in the language of Oḍḍiyāna (e.g. Atiyogatantrayāna) because the pronunciation of that language is unknown.

MAHĀYĀNA VERSION OF THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH

The Three Types of *Duḥkha*

We have seen that the first noble truth is *duḥkha*. In order to fully understand what this *duḥkha* is, it is best to begin by explaining it in terms of the three types of *duḥkha* that the Buddha Śākyamuni described in *Samyutta Nikāya* 38.14, and which are described in Sanskrit literature as well (Vasubandhu discussed them in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, VI, of the Vaibhāṣika School of the Hīnayāna), including the one pertaining to the Mahāyāna (Candrakīrti did so in the *Bodhisattvayogācāracaṭuḥsatakaṭkā*),¹¹⁵ and also in Tibetan works (Gampopa described them in the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*;^a Longchenpa in the commentary on *The Great Perfection: The Nature of Mind, the Easer of Weariness* called the *Great Chariot*;^b etc.). The contemporary Tibetan Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 42-43) briefly summarized these three as follows (terminology adapted to the one used here):

...even though it may seem that at times in the karmic dimension of *samsāra* there is fleeting happiness, in reality beings of the three lower states (the hell realm, the *preta* realm and the animal realm) are afflicted with the ‘*duḥkha* of suffering’ or ‘double suffering’, like a leper who is also struck by bubonic plague; the beings of the three higher states (the realm of gods, the realm of anti-gods and the human realm) are tormented by the ‘*duḥkha* of change’, like a bee [that previously was happily flying around but then is] trapped in a jar [thereby becoming very agitated]; and all beings dominated by a distorted perception of reality are subject to the ‘all-pervading conditioning *duḥkha*,’ transmigrating infinitely like the turning of the paddles of a water mill... (Note by E.C.: the various spheres and realms or psychological states are listed and briefly explained below, and in the note the reference mark for which stands at the end of this paragraph as well.)

All-Pervading *Duḥkha* or *Duḥkha* Inherent in the Fabricated, the Produced, the Contrived, the Conditioned, the Configured, and /or the Compounded^c

^a Tib. *Damchö yizhin norbu tharpa rinpochei gyen* (Wylie, *dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan* [*dang zhal gdams rin po che phreng ba*]).

^b Tib. *Dzogpa chenpo semnyi ngäldoi drelpa shingta chenpo* (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i grel pa shing ta chen po*).

^c Pāli *saṃkhāra-dukkha*; Skt. *samskāraduḥkhatā*; Tib. *duchekeyi dugngäl* (Wylie, ‘*du byed kyi sdug bsngal*); Ch. 行苦 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíngkǔ*; Wade-Giles, *hsing²-k³*). Lit. “distress inherent in being subject to habitual mental formations or impulses that move the mind” (Skt. *samskāra*; Pāli *saṅkhāra*; Tib. *duche* [Wylie, ‘*du byed*]; Ch. 行 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng* Wade-Giles, *hsing²*).

All-pervading duḥkha or “*duḥkha* inherent in the fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and /or compounded”^a is the relentless lack of plenitude issuing from the illusory sundering of our primordial completeness upon the arising of the illusory subject-object cleavage, and in particular the neutral feeling that is experienced in the so-called peak of *saṃsāra*^b—the highest of the four formless realms—that result from accumulated *karma* of immobility. In fact, as will be shown below, formless states arise in the process whereby active *saṃsāra* arises from the neutral condition of the base-of-all, when the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle thought I call the *threefold directional thought-structure*^c begets the subject-object duality and the continuum that at that point appears as object is objectified and grasped at in terms of subtle concepts, and it is the illusion of being a mental subject that stands at a distance from the continuum, which begets a sense of lack—a lack of the plenitude of that continuum. Or, to express it in a different way, as soon as the consciousness having the mental subject as its core arises and experiences itself as being at a distance from the single nature of all entities and that I often *illustrate* with the sensory continuum and / or with the energy continuum that according to Einstein’s Field Theory constitutes the whole universe,¹¹⁶ we experience a lack of wholeness and plenitude. Meditators who have created a sufficient *karma* of immobility^d by resting in formless absorptions can then take birth in the sphere of formlessness. Now, since at the time the coarse passions and the associated feeling tones are not experienced, this sphere is said to be “tainted by a neutral mental feeling-tone.”^{e117} However, these states result from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of concepts, ideas and judgments, they involve a very subtle feeling tone, which is said to be one of very subtle, lasting pleasure. At any rate, it is certain that in post-meditation extreme pride arises from the meditator’s wrong belief that he or she has attained Awakening, or at least a temporary state of absolute truth while on the Path. And that such states are impermanent.

In order to clearly grasp the above, the reader must know which are the various spheres and realms / psychological states that Buddhism posits. To begin with, it must be noted that there are three spheres:^f (1) The sphere of sensuality (or sphere of the passions), which is the one in which ourselves and most other beings usually live, and in which we are mainly driven by the passions.^g (2) The sphere of form,^h in which we are concentrated

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. **düche** (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^b Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. **sidtse** (Wylie, *srid rtse*) or *sidpai tsemo* (Wylie, *srid pa'i rtse mo*); Ch. 有頂天 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*).

^c Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. *khorsum* (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^d Skt. *ānījyākarma*; Pāli *aniñjītakamma*; Tib. **migyowai le** (Wylie, *mi gyo ba'i las*); Ch. 不動業 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *bùdòng yè*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-tung⁴ yeh⁴*).

^e Tib. **zabchekyi tangnyom** (Wylie, *zab cas kyi btang snyoms*).

^f Skt. *tridhātu*, *traidhātuka*, *traidhātukāvacara*, *triloka* or *trilokadhātu*; Pāli, *tiloka*; Tib. **khamsum or jigtengyi khamsum** (Wylie, { *'jig rten gyi* } *khamsum*); Ch. 三界 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *sānjiè*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-chieh⁴*).

^g Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. **döpai kham** (Wylie, *dod pa'i kham*); Ch. 欲界 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yùjiè*; Wade-Giles, *yu⁴-chieh⁴*).

^h Skt. *rūpadhātu*; Pāli, *rūpaloka*; Tib. **zugkham** (Wylie, *gzugs kham*); Ch. 色界 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *sèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *se⁴-chieh⁴*).

on a particular form and the coarse passions have no hold on us, and which may be attained as the fruit of intensive practice of the four contemplative absorptions^a or four absorptions of form,^b or of remaining for considerable time in the state that the Dzogchen teachings call consciousness of the base-of-all.^c And (3) the sphere of formlessness,^d in which the figure-ground division dissolves and awareness embraces a seemingly limitless expanse, yet there continues to be a mental subject, which identifies with this seemingly limitless expanse that it takes for the *dharmadhātu* and thus believes to have realized the true condition; as noted above, though at the time the coarse passions and the associated feeling tones are not experienced (which is the reason why the feeling tone associated with the supreme state of this sphere is a “tainted neutral one”^e), they involve very subtle, lasting pleasure—and *a posteriori* an extreme, intoxicating pride is experienced because of having attained them and taken them to be genuine transcendence. This sphere has four subdivisions,^f each of which is attained through the practice of one of the four formless absorptions^g, or by remaining for very long time in the neutral condition of the base-of-all. (Note that higher bodhisattvas, even if they develop the absorptions, are not reborn in realms of the formless sphere, for they know how to allow delusion to liberate itself).

Access to the spheres of form and formlessness is dependent on the accumulation of *karma* of immobility,^h which is *neither* the good *karma* based on good intended actions (and on acceptance of the good) within the sphere of sensuality, *nor* the bad *karma* based on evil intended actions within the same sphere, nor neutral *karma* based on neither of the former in the same sphere, and which results from remaining for long periods in the absorptions of form of in the consciousness of the base-of-all, or in the absorptions of formlessness of in the neutral condition of the base-of-all (which of the absorptions the meditator remains in, being that which determines whether she or he will create *karma* for one or the other sphere, and one or another of its subdivisions). For its part, access to the six realms of the sphere of sensuality or passions depends on the accumulation of six corresponding kinds of good, bad or neutral *karma* within that same sphere.

^a Skt. *catvāridhyāna*; Pāli *cattārijhāna*; Tib. **samten zhi** (Wylie, *bsam gtan bzhi*); Ch. 四禪 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sìchán*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-ch’an²*) or 四種禪 (simplified 四种禅) (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sìzhǒng chán*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-chung³ ch’an²*).

^b Skt. *rūpāvacaradhyāna*; Pāli *rūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. **zugna chöpai samten** (Wylie, *gzugs na spyod pa’i bsam gtan*); Ch. 色界定 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*).

^c Tib. kunzhi namshé (Wylie, *kun gzhi rnam shes*) or **kunzhi nampar shepa** (Wylie, *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*); Skt. *ālayavijñāna*; Ch. 阿賴耶識 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *ālāiyē shí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴*) or 藏識 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *zàngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsang⁴-shih⁴*).

^d Skt. *ārūpyadhātu* [also *arūpaloka* and *ārūpyāvacara*]; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. **zugmepai kham** (Wylie, *gzugs med pa’i kham*); Ch. 無色界 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*).

^e Tib. **zakchekyi tangnyom** (Wylie, *zag bcas kyi btang snyoms*). This is proper to the peak of existence.

^f This is the reason why these realms are referred to by the Skt. *caturārūpyadhātu* (also [*catur*] *arūpaloka* and [*catur*] *ārūpyāvacara*); the Tib. **zugme khampai gne zhi** (Wylie, *gzugs med kham pa’i gnas bzhi*); and the Ch. 四無色界 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sì wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*).

^g These four are referred to by the Skt. [*catur*] *ārūpyāvacaradhyāna*, the Pāli [*catu*] *arūpāvacarajhāna*, the Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten [zhi]** [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa’i bsam gtan {bzhi}*], the Ch. [四] 無色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, {*sì*} *wú-sè-jiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, {*ssu⁴*} *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*], and often also by the Skt. [*catur*] *ārūpyasamāpatti*, the Pāli [*catu*] *arūpāsamāpatti*; the Tib. **zugmepai nyomjug [zhi]** (Wylie, *gzugs med pa’i snyoms ’jug {bzhi}*), or the Ch. 四空定 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sìkōng dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-k’ung¹ ting⁴*).

^h (Skt. *ānīṅjakarma*[*n*] [or *aniṅjanakarma*{*n*}]; Pāli *aniṅjītakamma*; Tib. **migyowai le** [Wylie, *mi gyo ba’i las*]; Ch. 不動業 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *bùdòng yè*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-tung⁴ yeh⁴*]).

Then, within the sphere of sensuality, there are six psychological states or “realms of samsaric experience,”^a which are: (1) the realm of the gods;^b (2) the realm of the antigods or titans;^c (3) the realm of humans;^d (4) the realm of animals;^e (5) the realm of craving spirits (some times called Tantaluses);^f and (6) the realm of the non-eternal hells or purgatories.^g Of these, the realm of the gods is the only one that is not circumscribed to the sphere of sensuality, for only its lower regions pertain to that sphere—the sphere of form being its middle regions, and the formless sphere being its highest regions. It must be noted that, even though all of us regard ourselves as human, we constantly migrate from one samsaric psychological state or realm to another—normally within the realm of sensuality—for our ways of experiencing, our attitudes and the ensuing qualities of our experience, as well as our interests, are always changing. For example, when we find ourselves in a psychological state characterized by anger, hatred and malevolence, we have taken birth in the realm of the non-eternal hells or purgatories. When we avoid the full, clear awareness of our situation in order not to be disturbed and thus act in terms of habits (as in what J.-P. Sartre called “attitude of indifference toward others”^h) and seek our aims in unawareness of context, and in general whenever we take refuge in ignorance, we have taken birth in the realm of animals. When we find ourselves in a psychological state in which we are possessed by intense craving or by a compulsion to possess, we have taken birth in the realm of the craving spirits or Tantaluses. When we are in a psychological state in which we are passionate yet we have the capacity of employing our intelligence to question our experience in order to proceed on the Path of Awakening, we have taken birth in the human realm. When we find ourselves in a psychological state in which we are always struggling for status, power or position, in which we principally experience envy and/or jealousy, or in which intrigue is our main interest, we have taken birth in the realm of antigods or titans. When we find ourselves in a psychological state in which we are possessed by pride, or in which we are attached to one or another kind of pleasure, in which we feel we have achieved and have realized ourselves, or in which we are clinging to our present position, etc. we have taken birth in the realm of gods of sensuality (and, obviously, when we are in a state of concentration on a figure we have taken birth in the realm of the gods of form, whereas remaining in an absorption that goes

^a Skt. *sadgati* or *sadloka*; Pāli *chagati* or *chaloka*; Tib. **jigtengyi kham drug** (Wylie, *'jig rten gyi kham drug*); 六趣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *liùqù*; Wade-Giles, *liu⁴-ch'ü⁴*).

^b Skt. and Pāli *devagati* / *suragati* / *devaloka* / *devagati*; Tib. **lha drowa** (Wylie, *lha 'gro ba*); Ch. 天趣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien¹ ch'ü⁴*).

^c Skt. and Pāli *asuragati* / *asuraloka*; Tib. **lhamayin drowa** (Wylie, *lha ma yin 'gro ba*); Ch. 阿修羅 趣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *āxiūluó qù*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-hsiu¹-luo² ch'ü⁴*).

^d Skt. *manuṣyagati* / *manuṣyaloka*; Pāli *manussagati* / *manussaloka*; Tib. **mi drowa** (Wylie, *mi 'gro ba*); Ch. 人 趣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rén qù*; Wade-Giles, *jen²-ch'ü⁴*).

^e Skt. *tiryagyonigati* / *tiryagyoniloka*; Pāli *tiracchānagati* / *tiracchānaloka*; Tib. **düdro drowa** (Wylie, *dud 'gro 'gro ba*); Ch. 畜生 趣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chùshēng qù*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ü⁴-sheng¹ ch'ü⁴*). Note that the animals as such are referred to by the Skt *tiryak* (also *tiryāścīna* and *tiryāñc*).

^f Skt. *pretagati* / *pretaloka*; Pāli *petagati* / *petaloka*; Tib. **yidwag drowa** (Wylie, *yi dvags 'gro ba*); Ch. 餓鬼 趣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *èguǐ qù*; Wade-Giles, *o⁴-kuei³ ch'ü⁴*).

^g Skt. *narakagati* / *narakaloka*; Pāli *nerayikagati* / *nerayikagati*; Tib. **myälwa drowa** (Wylie, *dmyal ba'i 'gro ba*); Ch. 地獄趣有情趣 或 地獄趣衆生趣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dìyù yǒuqíng qù* or *dìyù zhòngshēng qù*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴-yü⁴ yu³-ch'ing² ch'ü⁴* or *tí⁴-yü⁴ chung⁴-sheng¹ ch'ü⁴*).

^h Sartre (1980/1969).

beyond the figure-ground division signifies that we have taken birth in the realm of the gods of formlessness).

It is essential to keep in mind that, in order to tread a genuine Path leading to Awakening and liberation, we must keep to the human realm. Obviously we will lose this condition whenever we are possessed by different passions and thereby take birth in other realms, but we must have the capacity to each and every time we do so recover our human quality in order to effectively practice the Path.

Back to all-pervading *duḥkha*, as *samsāra* continues to develop from the neutral condition of the base-of-all, the formless condition is interrupted by a state the Dzogchen teachings call consciousness of the base-of-all, which is then followed by a condition with form, which is then followed by what the Dzogchen teachings call consciousness of the passions, which it then followed by a condition of sensuality. At this point the feeling of lack of plenitude, which was a neutral sensation so long as it was ignored (this being the reason why it is said that all-pervading *duḥkha* involves a neutral feeling—which seems to contradict the assertion that it is a type of suffering), because it radically contrasts with the seeming wholeness that preceded it, may cause us to judge it as uncomfortable and automatically reject it—which begets the displeasure that ensues from rejection, which for its part is a case of the *duḥkha* of suffering that will be discussed last. In fact, each of the three types of *duḥkha* yields other types of *duḥkha*.

However, common sense tells us that some qualities and/or intensities of sensation are inherently pleasurable, others are inherently painful and yet others inherently neutral. Then why do I say that displeasure ensues from rejection, or that a neutral feeling issues from indifference? As the Stoics noted (probably on the basis of teachings received from the Cynics), pain results from rejection of experience (“physical” pain, from rejection of “physical” sensations; “mental” pain, from the rejection of the perception of an “external” object as ugly, evil, etc., or from the rejection of a more abstract thought) by the dualistic consciousness having the illusory mental subject as its core, rather than from the quality or intensity of a sensation, or from the inherent qualities of an external object, etc. For its part, pleasure issues from the acceptance of experience in general (“physical” pleasure, from acceptance of “physical” sensations; “mental” pleasure, from acceptance of the perception of an “external” object as beautiful, good, etc., or from the acceptance of a more abstract thought), rather than from the quality or intensity of a sensation. Finally, neutral sensations arise from indifference toward experience in general and to sensations in particular, rather than from the quality or intensity of a sensation. To make my pregraduate philosophy students at the University understand and accept this assertion, I often asked them, “what would the heterosexual males present here reply to the proposal of letting you choose the forty-nine most attractive maidens you can find and making them caress your naked body all over with goose feathers with the aim of making you feel the greatest pleasure possible?” As a rule, those who replied would say something like, “I’d love it.” Then I used to warn them, “but they would go on uninterruptedly for forty-nine days and nights.” For as long as the man accepts the sensations produced by the feathers, they will be pleasurable; however, as soon as he becomes exasperated and begins to reject them, his rejection will make them unbearably unpleasant. Thus initially he will likely feel most pleasurable sensations, but as the caresses go on uninterruptedly for long hours or, in the case of an trained person, for entire days and nights, even though the feathers are so soft that at no point whatsoever will they irritate the skin and alter the

quality or intensity of the elicited sensation, at some point he will be sent over the edge by the uninterrupted monotony of the sensations and physically or mentally yell, “stop it”—thereby turning the caresses into an unbearable torture. Since his rejection will increase exponentially as time passes without the caresses stopping, the sensation will get ever worse. Thus it is clear that, although we have inborn propensities to accept the qualities and intensities of sensation that may further health, perpetuate the species and/or yield mystic states, and to reject those that harm the body, it is *not* the quality or the intensity of the sensation that makes it pleasant or unpleasant:¹¹⁸ the decisive factor that causes it to be one way or the other is *whether the mental subject accepts it or rejects it*.¹¹⁹ Otherwise, how would it be possible for a masochist to enjoy the whipping he gets a prostitute to inflict on him, which all other human beings would feel to be a terrible pain they would do anything to avoid?¹²⁰ (Other examples are offered in the endnote at the end of this sentence.¹²¹)

At any rate, once the subject-object duality arises from the neutral base-of-all, and with it active *samsāra* begins to develop, we are ineluctably subject to unremitting *all-pervading duḥkha* or *duḥkha* inherent in the fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and / or compounded. According to Buddhist teachings of all promulgations and all vehicles and paths, whatever is fabricated, contrived, conditioned, configured, compounded and / or produced is transient / impermanent and subject to *duḥkha*. However, the *particular type* of *duḥkha* called all-pervading *duḥkha* or *duḥkha* inherent in *all that is fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and/or compounded*,^a which is said to be a neutral feeling that is followed by a painful sensation, I relate to the feeling of lack that, no matter the sphere or realm we find ourselves in, pervades the whole of the experience of all of us who are dominated by the distorted perception of reality (i.e., the *avidyā*) that is the source of fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and/or compounded experience—which is a neutral feeling so long as it is ignored, yet after the arising of the sphere of sensuality at some point may yield discomfort and uneasiness, just as happens to beings in the formless sphere since the moment at which they foresee their fall—in which case it will have turned into *duḥkha* of suffering (the one that will be discussed last in this section).

However, even in the realms of the sphere of sensuality,^b which is the one in which all three types of *duḥkha* are experienced, we manage to go on with our lives, for in those lapses in which we accept our objects, pleasure momentarily replaces discomfort (even though the underlying lack of plenitude persists, as dualistic consciousness persists), and when we cannot thus turn discomfort into pleasure we at least manage to elude awareness of the lack of plenitude by attributing it to contingent causes (we tell ourselves that the sense of lack is a lack of this or that object, or of pleasure, or of not having obtained the love of the person that elicits an endorphin shot in us, or of wealth and status, or of not having gained the admiration of many people, etc.), and ignore it by setting our attention on distracting aims, expectations, activities and so on. This is why this type of *duḥkha* is said to be a neutral feeling.

In fact, this *duḥkha* is what all beings in *samsāra* constantly strive to elude by the

^a Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. **düche** (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²): fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and / or compounded.

^b Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. dōpai kham (Wylie, *dod pa'i kham*s); Ch. 欲界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yùjiè; Wade-Giles, yü⁴-chieh⁴).

means considered in the following section of this chapter and other works of mine. And it is because to some extent we succeed in eluding it, that in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, VI, Vasubandhu¹²² likened this type of *duḥkha* to a hair or a filament of wool, the normal individual to the palm of a hand and the higher *bodhisattva* to the eyeball, and noted that in the palm of the hand the hair can remain undetected indefinitely, but in the eyeball, where its presence stings, thus being evident and unbearable (i.e. becoming *duḥkha* of suffering), it has to be removed immediately. Normal individuals succeed to a considerable extent in eluding this all-pervading feeling of lack, discomfort and uneasiness, and so long as they manage to do so, they do not have any chance of ridding themselves of it. In fact, their condition is comparable to that of an individual who clings to and tries to climb a rope in order to avoid being burned by a thin layer of burning hay lying half way between his or her body and a pond's water, thus repeatedly having the feet burnt and experiencing an unremitting sting and ache in the hands, rather than letting go of the rope and going through the fire so swiftly that she or he would not be burned at all, and then safely diving into the water. Higher *bodhisattvas*, on the other hand, find it impossible to effectively elude the feelings of lack, discomfort and uneasiness produced by the distorted perception of reality that is the source of conditioned^a experience, partly because they have become keenly aware of the dynamics of elusion described below, possibly also partly because an increase of the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness (Tib. thigle,^b which renders the Sanskrit bindu but in this sense has a sense to some extent akin to that of the Sanskrit *kuṇḍalinī*)¹²³ made the boundaries of their focus of conscious attention more permeable and thus undermined their capacity to elude it, and possibly because of other reasons as well—all of which give rise to what Buddhist texts refer to as “a deficiency in those conditions that tend to produce and sustain birth and death” (for an evaluation in depth, cf. Capriles, 2007a vols. I and II). Therefore, they are like the individual who lets go of the rope and dives into the water unharmed. In fact, this is one of the reasons why only they have the opportunity to uproot the cause of that feeling and thereby attain Awakening.

***Duḥkha* of change or *duḥkha* of impermanence^c**

The “*duḥkha* of change” (often rendered as *duḥkha* of impermanence) in spite of being experienced by all beings, is also distinctive of higher realms / psychological states. As shown above, the gods of formless realms—and in particular those of the peak of *samsāra*^d—even though they are subject to all-pervading *duḥkha*, manage to completely elude the *duḥkha* of suffering. However, they come to experience coarser suffering again when they foresee their fall from their godly condition and the destiny that awaits them, for as a rule the highest realms are followed by the lowest realms / psychological states,

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. **düche** (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*): fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and / or compounded.

^b Wylie, *thig le*.

^c Skt. *vipariṇāmaduḥkhatā*; Pāli *vipariṇāmadukkha*; Tib. **gyurwai dugngäl** (Wylie, 'gyur ba'i sduḡ bsngal); Ch. 壞苦 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *huàikǔ*; Wade-Giles, *huai⁴ k'u³*).

^d Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. **sidtse** (Wylie, *srid rtse*) or **sidpai tsemo** (Wylie, *srid pa'i rtse mo*); Ch. 有頂天 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*).

and in particular into the realm / psychological state of purgatories^a (impermanent hells).

The reason they fall from the gods' realm directly to the purgatories is that they have grown disaccustomed to suffering during what they experienced as aeons^b in the highest realms, and therefore, upon meeting suffering again—as ineluctably they will do at some point—they will be compelled to reject it with greater impetus than ever, making experience especially painful. In particular, on falling from the formless sphere,^c the contrast between the preceding, seemingly limitless condition to the narrow, tunnel-like consciousness of the sphere of sensuality, yields claustrophobia—this being why the suffering of change is compared to *a bee that, after being in boundless space, is confined to the claustrophobic dimension of a small jar*. Since in the formless sphere the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^{d124} is quite high—for the raise of the volume in question is what allows consciousness to encompass the whole sensory field rather than taking a segment as figure and leaving the rest as ground—when they fall they still have a quite high energetic volume that does not allow them to shield the ensuing discomfort, and thus are compelled to reject it with all their might—thereby making it unbearable and giving rise to a positive—i.e. autocatalytic—feedback loop that makes pain become ever more excruciating.¹²⁵ However, at this point we are already referring, not to the *duḥkha* of change, but to the *duḥkha* of suffering (which will be discussed next)—which shows that the limits among the three types of *duḥkha* are hazy, if they may be said to exist at all. It must be noted that the autocatalytic dynamics of suffering mentioned in this paragraph, which cause suffering to increase from its own feedback, will be discussed in greater detail in Part III, Vol. II of this book in terms of the dynamics of the *maṇḍala* (it was also discussed in detail, and in the same terms, in Capriles, 2013b and elsewhere).

Keep in mind that, as stated at the beginning of this subsection, the fact that the *duḥkha* of change is illustrated with the fall of the gods does not mean that only the gods experience this kind of suffering: we all experience it constantly to the extent we develop attachment to people, possessions, status, rang, pleasure, and, in general, to all we may become attached to, for ineluctably at some point we lose the object of our attachment and this attachment makes us suffer.

***Duḥkha* of Suffering of Double *Duḥkha*^e**

Finally, the “*duḥkha* of suffering” or “double suffering” is the suffering that most people refer to by the term, which is characteristic of lower realms. It is a misfortune that falls on top of a misfortune, resulting in a *double misfortune*, which as such is illustrated with a leper who is struck by bubonic plague: it may be inferred that leprosy stands for the

^a Skt. *naraka*; Pāli *nerayika*; Tib. **myalwa** (Wylie, *dmyal ba*); Ch. 地獄有情 or 地獄衆生 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dìyù yǒuqíng* or *dìyù zhòngshēng*; Wade-Giles, *tì⁴-yü⁴ yu³-ch'ing²* or *tì⁴-yü⁴ chung⁴-sheng¹*).

^b Eons; i.e. cosmic time cycles: Skt. *kalpa*; Pāli *kappa*; Tib. **kalpa** (Wylie, *bskal pa*); Ch. 劫 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh²*; jap. *gō*).

^c Skt. *arūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. **zugmepai kham** (Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i khams*); Ch. 無色界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*).

^d Tib. *thig le*, which in this sense is similar in meaning to the Skt. *kuṇḍalinī*.

^e Skt. *duḥkhaduḥkhatā*; Pāli *dukkhadukkhata*; Tib. **dugngälgyi dugngäl** (Wylie, *sdug bsngal gyi sdug bsngal*); Ch. 苦苦 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *kǔkǔ*; Wade-Giles *k'u³-k'u³*).

all-pervading *duḥkha* inherent in conditioned^a existence, and the bubonic plague for the *duḥkha* of suffering that is no other than the suffering of facing the pain, illness, dejection, sadness, depression and so on that recurrently strikes us beings confined to *samsāra*—though the leprosy could also stand for having to face what we usually regard as painful or unpleasant, and the bubonic plague for our rejection of it, which makes it, not merely unpleasant or painful, but unbearable.

Dealing with the Above Threefold *Duḥkha*

Normality is not at all the same as sanity, for normal individuals are possessed by the unawareness and delusion that the Buddha called *avidyā*, which as will be shown below might as well be the most dangerous of mental illnesses, for it is the only mental illness that could put an end to human life—and perhaps to *all* life—on this planet. And normality also involves being deluded both about the fact that one is deluded and about the fact that one’s existence is pervaded by suffering.

In fact, in order not to despair in face of the ineluctable presence of the sensation of lack inherent in our apparently separate existence and the discomfort and uneasiness it elicits, and thus to be able to keep going with our lives even though our experience is marked by *duḥkha*, whenever we become aware of all-pervading *duḥkha*, we attribute it to a contingent cause to it and try to remove it by removing that purported cause, or by engaging in one or another distraction in order to divert our awareness from it by—thus succeeding most of the time in eluding *duḥkha* thanks to the psychological mechanisms inherent in normality that allow us to divert our sight, deceive ourselves, invent hopes, expectations, projects, illusions and so on, etc.

When the aspect of all-pervading *duḥkha* that we become aware of is the lack of completeness or plenitude arising from the illusory sundering of the continuum of plenitude that is our true nature, we instantly tell ourselves that the lack is a lack of this or that object and set out to procure the object or to procure the means for obtaining the object, and convince ourselves that obtaining what we think we need will fill it. For example, we have seen a new model of smart phone—or a new model of computer, car, motorcycle or whatever—and as we feel the lack we fancy that obtaining and possessing that object will fill the lack. Consequently, we dismiss the sensation, thinking that it is transitory and that it will come to an end when we achieve our aim—and so long as we strive to obtain the money to acquire the object, or to obtain it by other means, we succeed in eluding the sensation of lack a great deal of the time. When we do obtain the object we had been striving to obtain, its possession may intoxicate us for a few hours or perhaps even for brief periods during a few days (for example, if I buy the latest model dream car, I can become momentarily inebriated by its new car smell, its beauty, its smoothness and its power, or by pretending that everybody is looking at me in such a marvelous piece of machinery), etc. However, it will not take long for the sensation of lack to slip again into our conscious awareness—at which point we will no longer be able to elude it by concentrating on the means to obtain the object, as we already own it, nor will we be able to deceive ourselves thinking that its possession will fill the lack. Thus we will have no choice but to fancy that the lack is the lack of another object, and to deceive ourselves by

^a Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

denying what experience has taught us:¹²⁶ that the possession of no object whatsoever will possibly fill the lack. (Actually, some people have this intuition on obtaining the object of their longing. For example, I knew a Venezuelan man who was an artisan and he, who had never had a car, decided to save the product of his work in order to buy the car of his dreams. By making and selling very fine handicrafts, finally he managed to buy the brand new car of his dreams. However, the unhappiest moment of his life—as he told me later on—was when he got the car and sat on the driving seat, for he realized that possession of the car could not fill the lack he had expected to fill with it.)

A very clear example of the dynamics under discussion is that of children who have been excited for weeks by the expectation receiving gifts on Christmas day; when the day comes and they receive their new toys they will play with them, but immediately thereafter they will feel void, as enjoyment of the gifts fails to provide them with the real fulfillment and satisfaction they expected, and now they have no expectations to get excited about. Furthermore, if the children get many expensive gifts, it may be worse than if they receive few inexpensive ones, for in the latter case they may believe that their disappointment is due to the fact that the gifts were few and cheap, but in the former one, they may begin to intuit that gifts, toys and possessions cannot produce true satisfaction.

It is to the extent that we believe that possession or enjoyment of certain objects will allow us to recover the plenitude we have lost, that we project greater or lesser value on those objects¹²⁷—though this also depends on the object’s cost, for we tend to prize our potential possessions according to the grade of difficulty we face to procure them.¹²⁸ And, as we have just seen, in many cases the value of these objects is also intimately linked to the value that, according to our belief, its possession will bestow on us in the eyes of others. However, as shown above, believing that the possession of something will result in an experience of plenitude could hardly be less in line with reality. Since the sensation of lack derives from the illusion that we are separate from the plenitude of the continuum (of sensation / of the universe), and since the possession of physical objects confirms and maintains the illusion that we are distinct and separate from what we possess (as well as from the rest of the “physical world”), possessing objects can only confirm and reinforce the sensation of lack.

Furthermore, so long as we are in *samsāra*, whatever we possess will become a source of worry and strife. This is the reason why Petrül Rinpoche^a said, “if you have a packet of tea, you have a problem the size of a packet of tea; if you have a goat, you have a problem the size of a goat; if you have a horse, you have a problem the size of a horse.” If you have no car, you do not have to worry about a car; if you have an old car, you have that much to worry about; if you have a new, very expensive car, you have a far greater source of worry. If you have a lot of expensive stock exchange shares, you have a *really great* source of worry.

Another strategy we resort to in order to try to fill our sensation of lack, consists in attempting to get others to project a high degree of value on us in in the hope of to filling with this value the sense of lack that results from the illusory sundering of completeness and plenitude produced by our illusion of separateness. One of the means that we use to try to get others to value us consists in adapting ourselves to our society or social group and embodying the values shared by their members, so that the value that they have

^a Wylie, *dpal sprul rin po che* (in full, *dza dpal sprul 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po rin po che*).

placed on those values will be projected on us. Nevertheless, we will never be able to get all of those whose opinions we mind, to continually hold us in high esteem—or, even less so, to admire us so much as to see us as value itself. Furthermore, the more we come to depend on the recognition of others, the more anxiety we will experience on facing the possibility of being ignored, rejected, slighted, judged negatively or hated.¹²⁹

Among the above strategies for filling our sense of lack, a most common one is romantic involvement. Imagine I am a heterosexual man and I am walking the streets and cross a girl and our eyes meet and I get an endorphin shot that makes me feel like I am floating. It is likely that I will fancy that if I get involved romantically with that girl I will always feel the way I felt while crossing her. And imagine something similar happened to the girl when she crossed me. Then a few days later we meet at a party, and hence both of us, each in his or her own way, will try to catch the other's interest and get her or him romantically involved. However, when we get in a relationship, unless we are sadists or masochists,¹³⁰ we want to be the most valuable and important person for the other in the romantic relation, in the hope that the value and the importance that that other projects on us will fill our lack. Of course, in order to believe this, we will have to become infatuated with that person, projecting on her or him a high value—which will happen automatically if the person in question elicits an endorphin shot in us, since we will take the special feeling this induces as proof of the uniqueness and specialty of the other person—for otherwise we would not be able to take seriously the value that she or he may project onto us (this is why normally we need the person in question not to be stupid, mad or ignorant: because then she or he could be mistaken and the value that she or he project onto us will not be worth anything; on the other hand, the value that someone who is not mistaken and who is worth a lot, surely “will really be worth a lot”).¹³¹ Thus, “normal” lovers strongly need their partner to value them over everything else, but they also need to value their partner, for otherwise they would not be able to value the value the other projects on them. To the extent that this is so, what both lovers value is first of all their own self, and each of them incurs in self-deceit when he or she thinks that his or her partner values him or her more than anything. However, all this is not something that we calculate and plan, for otherwise the strategy would not work, as we would be aware that our potential partner is not so special after all and that a crucial aim of us is to fill our lack with the value projected by her or him; as just noted, all of this happens naturally as a result of the initial attraction that elicited the endorphin shot.

The reason why the other elicits the endorphin shot is so hard to identify because as a rule it is karmic.¹³² At any rate, the effect of endorphins is so powerful as to allow lovers embraced under the rain not to feel cold or experience discomfort. However, this does not last long; it has been determined that the extraordinary production of endorphins associated with falling in love does not last, in the best of cases, over three years. Besides, just as happened to the evil witch in Snow White's story, infatuation will have made us dependent on the magic mirror that tells us we are the most special person. Consequently, instead of obtaining security, we give rise to a continual anxiety as to whether or not we are still the most valuable and precious person for our partner, and as to whether she or he has come to value someone else more than us. And since there is no way for us to explore the depths of another human being's consciousness, we will never be able to be sure we are truly the most important, most special and most valuable for her or him. It is due to all this, and to many other things that we do not have space to consider here, that the project

of filling the basic existential lack issuing from delusion by falling in love and getting the other to fall in love with us is doomed to failure.¹³³

An example of the above was offered by Marcel Proust in his noted seven-volume novel *À la recherche du temps perdu*, where (in the second tome, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*) the narrator falls in love with Albertine Simonet. Then, when he wins her love he begins to doubt of her “virtue,” and then begins to suspect her of being a lesbian (he began to see homosexuality all around him in tome four, *Sodome et Gomorrhe*), and fearing she might find a girl she will desire and value more than she desires and values him, he invites her to live with him in his absent parents’ apartment while getting their common friend, Andrée, to follow her wherever she goes in order to check that she is not engaging in lesbian adventures, and trying to keep her inside so as to reduce the chances that she may meet a girl she may desire and value more than she desires and values him (this is the subject of the fifth tome of the work, *La prisonnière*). However, by trying to keep her inside and spying on her to keep her from desiring and valuing someone else more than she desires and values him, he is giving her to understand that he is not worth much and is not really desirable. So he becomes extremely apprehensive that she may see through the windows some girl she desires and values more than she desires and values him—thus starting a positive feedback loop of jealousy, insecurity and apprehension. She begins to seem tired and sad of being in this situation, until finally she gets fed up with it and leaves him. Then in the sixth tome, *La fugitive*, later renamed *Albertine disparue*, she finally decides to go back to him, but dies before so doing.

The search for fame can be a way of trying to achieve what falling in love failed to deliver, by reducing dependence on a single individual through multiplying the sources of valorization of one’s self, in the belief that if we depend on *many* magic mirrors, it will not matter so much what *one* of them reflects. Moreover, those pursuing fame fancy that if *many* people adore them, they will be more valuable than if they are appreciated by a single person, believing that they will thus be able to assimilate the sum of the value that each of their admirers project. Likewise, even the most common and least special people can get someone to esteem them in a special way and become their partner, but fame can only be obtained if one is *very* special in some sense or in some activity or walk of life—and, moreover, one may think that it is less likely for many people to be mistaken than it is for a single person, and hence that one will be more convinced of one’s worth if many people adore one. However, just as in the preceding instances, this self-deception, instead of putting an end to the lack, will cause it to increase: in this case, it will make it grow proportionally to the number of people with whose adoration we try to fill it. Moreover, as individuals become accustomed to fame, the latter gradually loses its power to cause them to deflect their attention from their sense of lack (which, as we have seen, has not been overcome, but, contrariwise, has been made to increase); therefore, they need their fame to continue to increase without ever reaching a ceiling. Furthermore, they become more and more addicted to the recognition received from others: I guess most of us have seen some celebrity arrive at a public place showing signs of being worried about whether or not he or she is being recognized by those present.¹³⁴ And when negative sides of famous people are made public, they often suffer a nervous breakdown (as happened to Elizabeth Taylor as a result of the publication of the book written by journalist Kitty Kelly after passing herself off as a household assistant at Taylor’s home). Fame, let us repeat, is a whirlpool that increases our inner void to the extent that, in order to fill it, we need the

value projected by an ever greater number of people: the greater quantity of something we need to fill a hole, the bigger the hole that we were trying to fill will have become.

The same happens with our association with individuals valued by many, with belonging to groups that many value, and so on. To the extent that we think these things will endow us with value in the eyes of others (whom we value insofar as they value the same individuals, groups, etc. as we do), we value and pursue them. Nevertheless, they will not provide us with stable value and happiness, for, among other things: (1) Not all human beings value the same objects, individuals and groups, so that, in order to be valued by some, we will have to be despised by others.¹³⁵ (2) As shown above, pleasure is the result of acceptance, which is interdependent with rejection and cannot be sustained indefinitely; once we become accustomed to the positive estimation of the human entity designated by our name, habituation will cause us to stop accepting this object, and so we will become indifferent towards it—which will produce a neutral feeling that later we will interpret as boredom and consequently we will reject, experiencing the displeasure that results from rejection. Thus, we will migrate through the six psychological realms of the cycle of indifference, rejection and acceptance that Buddhists call *samsāra*. (3) At each instant we will feel threatened by the possibility of losing what we have become attached to, and our attachments will thus become a source of anxiety and anguish. And so on.

Pleasure is another of the privileged means through which we try to fill our lack, and by the same token replace the associated sensation of uneasiness or discomfort with the pleasure. Since all of us value whatever we believe will fill this lack, and all of us find pleasure specially rewarding, all of us value it very highly. Pleasure can be classified into sensual-Dionysian,¹³⁶ aesthetic-Apollonian,¹³⁷ and transpersonal-Brahmic¹³⁸ (the latter of which is asserted to be “of a purely mental kind”), which the common Buddhist teachings and the Tantric Buddhist teachings grade in opposite ways, and which individuals grade according to their respective conditionings and propensities.¹³⁹ However, no matter to which of the preceding three categories our favorite pleasures belong, all of us value the objects, persons or activities on which we depend for obtaining pleasure proportionally to our appraisalment of the latter.

The first of the above three kinds of pleasure is easiest to explain because, while we experience it, the object of consciousness is the sensation of pleasure itself—which in this case is of the kind that the teachings call “physical sensation” rather than of the kind they refer to as “mental sensation”.^a As given to understand above, sensations that go beyond certain levels of intensity (quantity) and/or that exhibit certain characteristics (quality) are indicative of either damage or danger to the organism, and hence we have an inborn tendency to reject them, *as a result of which* we experience them as unpleasant or altogether painful. Sensations within certain ranges of intensity and/or exhibiting certain qualities are indicative of benefit to the organism and/or of activities that perpetuate the species and may unleash mystical experiences, and therefore we have an innate tendency to accept them, *as a result of which* we experience them as pleasurable. And sensations below a given threshold of intensity and/or exhibiting certain qualities are neither harmful nor necessary or beneficial, and therefore we have a natural tendency to be indifferent to them—*as a result of which* we experience them as neutral. It cannot be emphasized too much that, even though we have a natural tendency to accept some kinds of sensations,

^a Mental sensation: Skt. *vedanā*; Pāli *vedanā*; Tib. *tsorwa* (Wylie, *tshor ba*); Ch. 受 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou*⁴).

reject other types and remain indifferent to still other types, *in themselves* none of these sensations is unpleasant, pleasant or neutral: what makes them be unpleasant, pleasant or neutral is our rejection, acceptance or indifference, respectively.

Since there is no way that our acceptance may be sustained uninterruptedly, it is clear that sensual pleasures are ephemeral. Furthermore, most of them are not so intense as to absorb us completely, altogether making us forget our sensation of lack. Some of us intuit that erotic pleasure could be sufficiently intense as to make our lack dissolve—and indeed in one of the Buddhist Paths that will be discussed below a sustained experience of the most intense erotic pleasure possible is used as the means to temporarily dissolve the illusion of separateness and the feeling of lack inherent in it. However, this is not what happens when erotic relations are undertaken outside the context of yogic practice. The first contact with the other person (for example, holding hands) is pleasurable, but not intense enough as to dissolve our basic sensation of lack, or even as to absorb our attention uninterruptedly over a long period. Therefore, after the first contact we will try to intensify the pleasure derived from it through cumulative interaction:¹⁴⁰ since every new act by either of the parties produces a little more pleasure, but not enough to fill our lack, both parts undertake new actions that produce greater pleasure, engaging in ever-increasing activity. As this happens, we develop an expectant attitude, diverting attention from the present and keeping it on expectations of a future, while the *now* eludes us at each instant. Therefore, when we finally reach the instant of maximum pleasure in the ephemeral moment of climax,¹⁴¹ we are so oriented toward the future and so distanced from the *now* that an insurmountable abyss separates us from the bare, full experience of this pleasure. In fact, the paradox is that so long as we experience ourselves as separate selves we are compelled to affirm our existence as such, and hence in all our attempts to reach plenitude and satisfaction, at the same time we try with all our strength to maintain the illusion of separateness and selfhood that bars us from attaining them. Thus when the climax is reached, we want to experience it as a separate consciousness, thus maintaining the subject-object gap that keeps us at a distance from pleasure and thus forestalls fusion in total pleasure. In conclusion, as we grasp the ensuing pleasure, which can hardly reach the intensity we dreamed of, it escapes us like sand from the grip that tries to seize it, and immediately we have to face our lack. If, in spite of the disappointment, both partners manage to believe that the lack can be filled by the pleasure of ordinary intercourse, and the male has the energy to undertake another coitus, it will likely be less satisfactory to the partners than the preceding one, for having accustomed themselves to the degrees of pleasure they experienced a while ago, they will be satisfied by those same degrees of pleasure to an even lesser extent. If the couple has enough money, they might possibly try to evade their disappointment and attempt to fill their lack by eating out; otherwise, they could go to the movies or tune on the TV—or simply seek forgetfulness in sleep.¹⁴² It was due to repeated experience of these dynamics that Augustine of Hippo said that after coitus all animals are sorrowful.

The point is that plenitude can only be experienced in the undivided completeness of our true condition, in which the continuum of Space-Time-Awareness is uninterrupted, for there is no illusory subject to feel at a distance from its objects, and the *now* is not divided into past, present and future. However, the moment there arises the subject-object duality, the undivided completeness of our true condition is illusorily sundered, and the subject is doomed to experience the lack of the plenitude of completeness. As we will see

in the next chapter, thus arises the *present* (the etymological meaning of which is “being before”), for the illusory mental subject experiences itself as *being at a distance* from the undivided *now*. If then we pursue a future climax of pleasure, we assert and confirm the illusion of being at a distance from the *now*, thus sustaining our illusion of distance from the physical universe and thus from the plenitude inherent in undivided totality—and thus maintaining our lack of plenitude.

Aesthetic and transpersonal pleasure are different from sensual pleasure, because while we experience them the *direct object* of experience is not the sensation itself: in the case of aesthetic pleasure, the *direct object* of experience is a form, and in the case of the transpersonal pleasure experienced in samsaric formless contemplations,^a the *direct object* of experience is what appears to be an infinitude or the like.¹⁴³ Now, in perception^b we always experience the object in terms of a subtle thought of the kind that Dignāga and then Dharmakīrti referred to by a Sanskrit term that in the context of his system is often rendered as *mental image*,^c and which in the context of the Dzogchen teachings may be rendered as *universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] which conveys a meaning*,^{d144} which is hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized by virtue of a vibratory activity that seems to have its core in the center of the body at the level of the heart. This vibration is the basis of the mental factor / mental event^e that the Buddhist *Abhidharma* calls *feeling-tone*:^f the *so-called* “mental sensation” that accompanies and colors all experiences and that manifests more pronouncedly in the center of the body at the level of the heart. Since consciousness can neither have two different objects nor adopt two different attitudes toward an object simultaneously, when we accept the *direct object* of perception, this attitude embraces all potential objects, and thus automatically we accept the whole of the continuum in which the object was singled out; since this continuum includes all of our sensations, we indirectly accept the *feeling-tone / mental sensation* that sustains and colors experience—which, for the reasons shown above, our acceptance makes us experience as pleasant.¹⁴⁵

Let us consider the aesthetic appreciation of a work of art. If we like the work, the above dynamics will give rise to a pleasant *feeling-tone / mental sensation* in connection with its perception, and the experience of a pleasant *feeling-tone / mental sensation* in connection with the contemplation of the work of art will automatically be interpreted as irrefutable proof of the inherent (rather than culturally conditioned) beauty of the object. On the other hand, when we dislike the object of aesthetic appreciation, we automatically reject the continuum wherein we single out objects, which includes all sensations, and

^a Skt. *caturārūpyasamāpatti*; Tib. **zugmepai nyomjug zhi** (Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug bzhi*); Ch. 四空定 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sīkōng dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-k'ung¹ ting⁴*); more precisely, the four *ārūpyāvacaradhyaṇa*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten** (Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*); Ch. 無色界定 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wú sè jiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*). (Four *ārūpyāvacaradhyaṇa*: Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten zhi** [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan bzhi*]; Ch. 四無色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sì wú sè jiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]).

^b Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushe* (Wylie, *'du shes*); Ch. 想 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang³*).

^c Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

^d This is a modification of the translation used in Berzin (2001).

^e Skt. *caitta* or *caitasika*; Pāli *cetasika*; Tib. *semjung* (Wylie, *sems byung*); Ch. 心所 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnsuǒ*; Wade-Giles, *hsin¹-so³*).

^f This is one type of that which is called by the Pāli and Skt. *vedanā*, the Tib. *tsorwa* (Wylie, *tshor ba*) and the Ch. 受 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou⁴*).

hence we automatically reject our sensations—and rejection of the *feeling-tone / mental sensation* that with each thought and each concept-tainted experience is felt in the center of the body at the level of the heart makes us experience it as unpleasant. Finally, when we neither like nor dislike the object of aesthetic appreciation, we remain indifferent to it, and hence we automatically remain indifferent to the continuum of potential objects, including the so-called *feeling-tone / mental sensation*—thus experiencing the latter as neutral).

Back to the example of the aesthetic appreciation of a work of art that we like and the appreciation of which therefore elicits a pleasant *feeling-tone / mental sensation* that is then experienced as the proof of the work's objective beauty and value, it is important to note that, if we are forced to contemplate it indefinitely, at some point we will get so used to the object that we will cease accepting it, becoming indifferent to it—upon which, since we have also become indifferent to the *feeling-tone / mental sensation*, the latter will become neutral. Then at some point we will tire of the monotony of the situation, with its neutral *feeling-tone / mental sensation*, developing irritation, and thus will reject it, thus indirectly rejecting the *feeling-tone / mental sensation* and thus making it become unpleasant: at this point we will be unable to appreciate the object's beauty, and we will feel that the work of art has become a nuisance. (For a more detailed discussion of this, see my book *Estética primordial y arte visionario*.^a)

The same that applies to aesthetic appreciation will apply to the four absorptions with form^b and to the sphere of form in general. However, if in experiences of the sphere in question the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^c is sufficiently high and other circumstances are present, the ensuing discomfort will be far more pronounced, and thus it will absorb our attention, becoming its *direct object* and eliciting rejection—which will make the feeling all the more painful, eliciting further rejection and thus giving rise to a positive feedback loop of ever-increasing suffering. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why—as will be shown below in this volume and in greater detail in Volume II of this book (and in Vol. III if it were published)—the dynamics of this sphere are a key catalyst of the most advanced Dzogchen practices.¹⁴⁶

In the case of the contemplation of space in formless^d meditation, and in general in all four contemplations of formlessness,^e as a result of having accumulated enough *karma* of immobility we do not react to the subtle object consisting in the infinitude appearing as object with the coarse acceptance-attachment-desire or the coarse rejection-aversion that in the sphere of sensuality manifest as what we call the passions—yet there seems to be a very subtle acceptance-attachment that produces very subtle, lasting pleasure. However, as will be shown later on, the *karma* that allows us to maintain the contemplation sooner or later will be exhausted, and before that some of the contributory conditions necessary for us to maintain the contemplation and the acceptance could also change—for example,

^a Capriles (2000b).

^b Skt. *rūpāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *rūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *gzugs na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*; Ch. 色界定 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*).

^c Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*), which in this sense is similar in meaning to the Skt. *kundalinī*.

^d Skt. *ārūpa*; Tib. *zukme* (Wylie, *gzugs med*); Ch. 無色 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴*).

^e *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten** (Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*); Ch. 無色界定 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*). (Four *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*: Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten zhi** [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan bzhi*]; Ch. 四無色界定 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sì wú-sè-jiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]).

we may encounter disturbing stimuli, receive negative projections, or tire of the relative monotony of the object and at some point come to reject it, etc. At any rate, as soon as the formless state comes to an end, we *might* tend to accept our object, which may oscillate between the memory of the formless condition that because of its limitlessness seems to us magnificent and sublime and the thought that we have attained a very high degree of realization, and thus turn the *feeling-tone / mental sensation* that appears most clearly in the center of the body at the level of the heart into the pleasurable sensation characteristic of pride. However, if we are beings of lower capacities, and before the formless condition we have a glimpse of the emptiness of the total, empty expanse^a where all “physical” and “mental” phenomena manifest—the *dharmadhātu*—this may give rise to an experience of *panic* (irrational fear before the totality that in Greek mythology was represented with the god Pan, which is glimpsed when our attention becomes more *panoramic*). Therefore, according to propensities, what seems to be a formless infinitude may produce pleasure or pain—and if the result is pain, as one rejects it in a panoramic condition pain will increase from its own feedback, in an autocatalytic loop.

At any rate, it is certain that at some point our attitude toward the object will change, as a result of which the character of the experience will change, and we will fall from our “high.” Since the subtle pleasurable sensation of the trance of formlessness is to a great extent due to the progressive relaxation of tension and increasing serenity proper to the absorption (which as noted repeatedly depends on our karma of immobility), one might expect that this relaxation and serenity should prevent the manifestation of the drive to reject the object, or that it should mollify it if it happened to manifest. However, once rejection is elicited, the opposite will ineluctably happen: since at that point we will have become utterly unaccustomed to discomfort, the rejection the latter elicits will be much stronger, and since formless absorptions involve a high energetic volume determining the scope of awareness and the wide scope of awareness undermines our capacity to shun ego-dystonic contents and in general whatever we need to shun, including discomfort, upon meeting the discomfort issuing from rejection we will reject it with our whole being, giving rise to a positive feedback loop of rejection and suffering.

Despite the fact that neutral transpersonal-Brahmic states, being conditioned^b and transient, pertain to *samsāra*, and despite the fact that the Buddhist teachings warn that a number of deluded beings try to fill their basic sensation of lack with sense of oneness and totality that they hope such states will provide, and subsequently try to fill it with the pride of believing they had a high spiritual attainment, in a subsequent chapter we will see that transpersonal and “integral” psychologies view most transpersonal and holistic or holotropic states in the same light, as furthering our progress on the path to true sanity or, in some cases, even taking them as ends in themselves, failing to make the distinction

^a In this book the term “expanse” renders the Skt. *dharmadhātu*, the Pāli *dhammadhātu*, the Tib. *chöying* (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); the Ch. 法界 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*), etc.—except when it designates the subtle object of formless absorptions (Skt. *ārūpyāvacaradhyāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *zugme na chöpai samten* [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]). However, the term *expanse* will not always be used alone: I will often use “expanse of the true condition of phenomena;” “expanse of phenomena;” “total, empty expanse where all ‘physical’ and ‘mental’ phenomena manifest;” “total, intrinsically empty expanse of the *dharmadhātu*; total empty expanse of the *dharmadhātu*;” “empty expanse;” etc.

^b Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

between: (1) transpersonal-Brahmic conditioned states located in the highest tier of the wheel of *saṃsāra* (and as such pertaining to functional *saṃsāra*); (2) the transpersonal condition called dimension of the base-of-all, in which neither *saṃsāra* nor *nirvāṇa* are active (but which technically also pertains to *saṃsāra*); and (3) the liberation and the Awakening which are the aims of higher Buddhism and other genuine, nondual mystical traditions, or the Contemplation state^a of bodhisattvas, yogins and siddhas (which pertain to nonstatic *nirvāṇa*). Therefore, those who wrongly believe these and other related trends of Western psychology to be genuine spiritual Paths become unable to follow the only Path leading to Awakening or liberation, which lies in Seeing through produced, conditioned states into the uncompounded, unproduced, unborn, unconditioned^b true condition.

We have seen that pleasure is interdependent with pain and maintains itself only so long as consciousness can continue to accept its object, and we have seen that since we cannot uninterruptedly maintain acceptance, it is a rule that sooner or later pleasure will be replaced by pain. In fact, so long as we experience ourselves as subjects separate from our objects, we will have no alternatives apart of accepting them, experiencing pleasure; rejecting them, experiencing pain; or remaining indifferent toward them, experiencing a neutral sensation. Since these are the only three possible attitudes of apparently separate consciousnesses, and since it is impossible to uninterruptedly maintain an attitude of acceptance, each act of acceptance and therefore each pleasure will become the cause of a later rejection and therefore of a subsequent pain. Thus we are doomed to a self-sustaining alternation of pleasure, pain and neutral sensations, all of which manifest in a dimension characterized by the underlying lack of plenitude that results from the illusion of being at a distance from the *now* and from the continuum of plenitude that the single, true condition of all entities is.

It has been noted that another most important aspect of all-pervading *duḥkha* is discomfort and uneasiness—which may be produced by negatively judging and thereby rejecting that lack of completeness or plenitude, or by negatively judging and thereby rejecting or the monotony of a situation, etc. In the second case, as soon as we experience this discomfort and uneasiness, we tell ourselves that its cause is that we are bored with the monotony in question, in which case we may seek for distractions or pleasures and so on, or that we are facing some other unpleasant situation or object, in which case we do whatever we can in order to change our circumstances. As to the strategy of going after distractions, we may also resort to it whenever we become aware of the lack, for deep down we know well that we will never succeed in filling our lack with possessions, with the value projected by others, with “physical,” “aesthetic” or “mental” pleasure, and so on, and hence we try at least to elude it together with the disturbances that accompany it (which together make up the “all-pervasive suffering”) by undertaking activities that divert our attention from it (and from all three types of suffering, for that matter). Now, if the distractive activity we engage in is a game, a sport, etc., for it to absorb our attention we will have to believe that we are pursuing the object of the activity rather than the

^a Skt. and Pāli *samāhita*; Tib. nyakzhak (Wylie, *mnyam bzhaḡ*); Ch. 等引 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^b Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. dūmache (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

activity itself. As Pascal^a points out, rather than obtaining the hare's meat, what hunters want is to run after the animal in order to find distraction from their distress; however, in order to pursue it, they have to make themselves believe that what they want is to get the hare itself. Likewise, what gamblers really want is to forget the miseries of *samsāra* by concentrating on the roulette (or the cards, etc.); however, in order to do so they have to make themselves believe that what they want is to win the main prize. And so on. (In fact, if you want to ruin the fun of a hunter, give him or her the hare and tell him or her to stay home; if you want to ruin the fun of a gambler, give him or her the main prize and tell him or her to keep away from the casino. And so on.)

Pascal also tells us that people may be eager even to go to war, as the adventure will allow them to escape the monotony of their existence. For example, the feudal lord asks his serfs to prepare for a war expedition. The serfs may be afraid and worried of the dangers of going to war, yet they are so fed up with their everyday life and activities that they happily assume the adventure. Then they experience the suffering of sleeping in the bare earth with all its pebbles, walking all day, being cold and exhausted, facing the fear of battle, having friends killed or wounded, and perhaps being wounded themselves. All the while, they comfort themselves with the memories of their usual peaceful life, of the warmth of their huts, their hot meals, their more or less comfortable beds, the sex they have with their wives, their spending time with the rest of the family by the fire, and so on. If they don't die and manage to survive the war and return home, they may be really pleased of having all that they missed during the expedition. However, the next day or the day after that they will no longer enjoy all the things and activities that pleased them on returning home, and will become so bored and miserable that, if the feudal lord asks them to prepare for war and follow him in his new adventure, they will happily leave their everyday existence and undertake the new challenge.

Furthermore, if we feel we are inherently Christian, Jew, atheist or Buddhist, we will always be worried about what people may think of Jesus and the Christians, of Jews, of atheists, or of Buddha and the Buddhists—and when what we feel we are is insulted, we will get offended and suffer, and we might even be willing to fight and thus run the risk of suffering blows, pain, bruises, wounds and even death, or to cause any of these damages to our opponent and thereby create negative karmic consequences and probably face jail and/or guilt. Moreover, if we defeat our adversary and yet are not brought to jail and fail to experience guilt, we will remain dissatisfied as well, since we will never be able to convince him that we are right, and he will continue to have a negative opinion of Christians, Jews, atheists or Buddhists. These dynamics are at the root of conflicts between groups, and in particular of wars—which, given the quality and quantity of our present weapons, in the best of cases drastically accelerates the process of self destruction of our species or, in the worst of cases, might cause the immediate destruction of nearly all life on our planet. Thus Krishnamurti was right when he asserted that, so long as we are this or that (which, as will be shown in the next chapter, in the context of this book means “so long as *we feel we are inherently this or that,*” which results from hypostasizing / reifying / valorizing [positively, negatively or neutrally] the concept or idea of being this or that), we are responsible for wars and confrontations between groups, with all their negative—possibly holocaustic—consequences.¹⁴⁷

^a Pascal (1962).

As shown above, it is quite common to try to fill our lack by trying to get others to appreciate us, engaging in the dialectics of the lover and the beloved described by J.-P. Sartre.^a However, others who have been victims of customary violence (by parents or by peers, etc.), in whom anger predominates over desire, who are rougher and cruder, who feel that wanting to be loved and appreciated is a sign of weakness, or who, having failed to get others to admire and love them, are convinced they cannot get others to appreciate them, may engage in the Hegelian dialectics of the master and the slave^b—attempting to dominate and subject others to their power, get others to fear them or fawn on them—or in sadomasochism in the Sartrean sense of the term^c—engaging in relationships in which one of the sides gets the better of the other or treats the other as worthless or despicable, etc. As a rule, a strategy for trying to fill the essential lack that is the motor of *samsāra* is to try to obtain a position of power allowing us to feel privileged in relation to others and to use our privileged status as proof of our pretended happiness and comfort—and, more basically, of our supposedly inherent value. However, all of those who set out to prevail over others through coarse or subtle aggression spend their lives struggling against others to keep their position or conquer a higher one, and since rejection begets pain, whoever takes this path is doomed to again and again experience the hell inherent in the bare experience of aversion (of which pride is a transformation).¹⁴⁸

As a rule, by concentrating on the objects of our desire, hatred, envy, pride and so on, and by clinging to the habits allowing us to elude awareness of whatever disturbs us, we elude the fully conscious realization of the dissatisfaction, the frustration, the tension, the anxiety, the continuous missing the point and, in short, the suffering inherent in these disturbing emotions. Furthermore, since in order to go on with our normal lives we have to elude the fact that those lives are inherently dissatisfactory, we manage to forget many of the unhappy memories of our past, and to privilege remembrance of our most pleasant moments—so that, as experiments in the 1950s showed, pleasant experiences are more easily remembered than unpleasant ones.”¹⁴⁹ It is solely because of the psychological mechanisms whereby we manage to elude a great deal of the undesirable consequences of delusion, and to remember pleasant experiences and forget a large part of the unpleasant ones experienced in the past, and so on, that in spite of the lack of plenitude and the dissatisfaction that characterizes all our experiences, and despite the recurrent pain and the repeated frustration that we have to face again and again, we succeed in going on with our projects, our activities and our lives.¹⁵⁰

As shown in the discussion of the *duḥkha* of suffering, when we have experiences we feel compelled to reject, this rejection makes our sensations painful, and whenever we experience pain, we increase it by rejecting it and wanting to get rid of it, activating a positive feedback loop that causes suffering to autocatalytically increase from its own feedback: to the degree that pain increases, our rejection of it increases, which makes our pain increase proportionally, which causes our rejection to increase.¹⁵¹ On the other hand, when we have experiences that we are driven to accept, acceptance makes our sensations pleasurable; however, when we experience pleasure, we are unable to fully enjoy it, for our attempts to fully grasp it and enjoy it to its fullness maintains the subject-object gap that forestalls us from fusing into the pleasure and sustains the lack of plenitude inherent

^a Sartre (1980/1969).

^b Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (this English ed. J. Baille trans. 1955).

^c Sartre (1980/1969).

in this gap; moreover, if the drive to intensify it, or the fear that it will come to an end too soon, come into play, they will give rise to anxiety and avidity, which distract us from the pleasure and may disrupt the acceptance that is the root of pleasure. For their part, neutral sensations are soon interpreted as boredom and, consequently, rejected, causing them to cease to be neutral and become a nuisance. Thus our drives forestall the attainment of the total pleasure we intuit may be attained and to which we aspire, our rejection of neutral sensations makes them unpleasant, and our rejection of suffering multiplies it. In fact, our lives are like turning wheels, for acceptance makes us ascend—though even when we are high up we face an underlying lack of plenitude and uneasiness—and then rejection makes us descend: no wonder that Buddhism refers to the existence that is marked by the first two Noble Truths as *samsāra*^a or “the wheel.” And as noted above, even when we ascend to paradisiac experiences of sensuality, form or formlessness, since there is no way to uninterruptedly continue to accept our experience, they will not last forever, and when rejection replaces acceptance we will fall to the bottom of the wheel. Moreover, as shown repeatedly, underlying both pleasant and unpleasant experiences lies the lack of plenitude and uneasiness proper to all-pervading *duḥkha*.

Among other things, the term *karma* refers to: (1) intentional, self-conscious action; (2) the propensities such action establishes; and (3) the causes this action creates for ripening future results. Buddhism classifies the *karma* accumulated in the sphere of sensuality into good, bad and neutral—the *karma* of immobility^b that is the type of *karma* that is the cause for birth in the form and formless realms^c being the result of absorption in conditions without form (such as the neutral condition of the base-of-all or the absorptions of formlessness) and conditions of form (such as the consciousness of the base-of-all and the absorptions of form), respectively. So long as an individual cannot go beyond *karma*, he or she must strive to avoid creating negative karmas, which may be harmful to others and that in the future will be a source of unpleasant experiences to the agent who accumulated them. **However, by its inherent nature, *karma*—no matter whether positive, negative or of immobility—produces effects that, as the word indicates, are produced / contrived / configured / compounded or conditioned,^d and that conceal our unconditioned / uncompounded / unmade / unproduced^e true condition and sustain *samsāra*.** Therefore, both positive *karma* and *karma* of immobility, just as much as negative or neutral *karma*, confirms and maintains the basic human delusion at the root of *samsāra*^{f152} that Buddhism intends to uproot. In fact, by the very nature of spinning wheels, whichever point of the wheel that at some time goes up will have to come down later on; therefore, avoiding bad

^a Tib. khorwa (Wylie, 'khor ba); Ch. 輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, lúnhuí; Wade-Giles, lun²-hui²) or 生死輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, shēngsǐ lúnhuí; Wade-Giles, sheng¹-ssu³ lun²-hui²).

^b Skt. *āninjyakarma*; Pāli *aniñjītakamma*; Tib. migyowai le (Wylie, mi gyo ba'i las); Ch. 不動業 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, bùdòng yè; Wade-Giles, pu⁴-tung⁴ yeh⁴).

^c Pāli and Skt. *rūpadhātu* and *ārūpyadhātu*, or *rūpaloka* and (Pāli) *arūpaloka*; Tib. zugkham (Wylie, gzugs kham) and zugmepai kham (Wylie, gzugs med pa'i kham); Ch. 色界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, sèjiè; Wade-Giles, se⁴-chieh⁴) and 無色界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúsèjiè; Wade-Giles, wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴).

^d Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli *sāṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²).

^e Skt. *asamskrta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. dümache (Wylie, du ma byas); Ch. 無為 *asamskrta* (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²).

^f Tibetan: khorwa (*khor ba*); Ch. 輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, lúnhuí; Wade-Giles, lun²-hui²) or 生死輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, shēngsǐ lúnhuí; Wade-Giles, sheng¹-ssu³ lun²-hui²).

karmas and producing only good karmas or karma of immobility would not be a definitive solution to our problems, for it will cause us to go up, only to come down again at some point. These problems will be definitively overcome only when our illusion of separate agency and in general our compounded, conditioned and fabricated experience of phenomena as compounded, conditioned and arisen,¹⁵³ is finally uprooted through the repeated recognition—i.e. the direct realization, beyond the recognition of a collection of characteristics in terms of a concept¹⁵⁴—(of) the true, uncompounded, unconditioned and unmade nature: only thus will we overcome *karma* itself, putting an end to the spinning of the wheel of *saṃsāra*. (One may harbor doubts that positive and negative *karma* are actually the cause of future pleasant and unpleasant experiences. However, in a subsequent section of this volume it will be shown that it is possible to prove at least part of the workings of *karma*.)

A person enjoying high status in the realm of sensuality^a is not truly “better off” than another suffering a low one; if a poverty-stricken person has a greater quantity of so-called “physical” sufferings, wealthier people certainly have a great deal of so-called “mental” ones, as they have to constantly worry about their financial operations, oscillations of the stock exchange, and so on—and, moreover, at any moment they can have an accident or illness and thus have to experience extraordinary levels of so-called “physical” pain. And the same applies to beings in the realms of the gods of sensuality, of form or of formlessness: if we ascend to a higher place due to a combination of *karma* and apparently desirable turns of fortune, when the time comes for the wheel of *saṃsāra* to turn we will experience a far more vertiginous and pronounced fall—for we will plunge from a higher point in the wheel, possibly to the lowest point. And when we face states of the lower part of the wheel, being unaccustomed to them, we will reject them with greater impetus—which will give rise to the positive feedback loop that makes them ever more unpleasant. This is the reason why Blaise Pascal insisted that the existence of the peasant, for example, is less prone to conflict than that of the sovereign:^b

“The great and the small have the same accidents, the same sorrows and the same passions; however, the former is on the periphery of the wheel, whereas the latter is more near the center and thus is less agitated by the same movements.”

Whether we are kings or beggars, good looking or ugly, healthy or sick, loved or repudiated by other people, what we do whenever we try to reach plenitude by the usual means is to maintain our lack of plenitude, put ourselves in the hands of others (as we cause our well-being to depend on their capricious judgments about us), and constantly suffer due to the impossibility of obtaining the satisfaction we pursue. I could keep on considering how the normal existence of the individual possessed by the delusion called *avidyā* or *marigpa* is marked by lack of plenitude, dissatisfaction, discomfort, frustration and suffering—in short, by *duḥkha*—but I think that in contexts such as this, brevity could make arguments have a greater impact. What is essential is that we understand that, so long as the delusion called *avidyā* persists—which in this explanation is the Second Noble Truth: the cause of *duḥkha*—we will never reach complete plenitude, absolute value, total

^a Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. *döpai kham* (Wylie, *dod pa'i kham*); Ch. 欲界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yùjìè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*).

^b Pascal (1962, thought 223).

pleasure or true happiness, and there will be no way to put an end to *duḥkha*. In fact, so long as we remain under the illusion of being substantial entities, separate from the rest of the universe—thus illusorily disrupting the wholeness of our true condition and thereby having the illusory experience of lack of wholeness—and hence of being distanced from the plenitude of the continuum that the single nature of all entities and thus experiencing illusory lack of plenitude—and of having to repeatedly face objects and situations that elicit rejection, *duḥkha* will be ineluctable.

There are many original Buddhist texts that one can consult in order to deepen one's understanding of the first Noble Truth. In addition, there are Western texts based on Buddhism that consider it in great detail (including Chapter 1 of my book *Qué somos y adónde vamos*). And even in Western works that make no reference to Buddhism, we can find explanations that allow us get a better grasping of the first Noble Truth (examples of this being Blaise Pascal's *Thoughts* and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*).¹⁵⁵

MAHĀYĀNA VERSION OF THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH

As we have seen, here I am following one of the ways in which the Mahāyāna and other “higher vehicles” explain the cause of *duḥkha*—namely the one that identifies that cause in *avidyā*, which, as shown above, the Hīnayāna teaching of interdependent origination^a acknowledges to be the ultimate cause of the *trṣṇā* or craving which for the Hīnayāna is the cause of *duḥkha*. In this chapter, I will explain the term on the basis of the various types or aspects of *avidyā* distinguished by two threefold Dzogchen classifications. For these classifications—and indeed for the whole book—to be properly understood, it is mandatory to begin by defining the elements of another Dzogchen classification: the three *main* types of thought distinguished by the Dzogchen teachings.^b These are the following:

(A) Coarse thoughts. As I understand the term throughout this book, the paradigmatic coarse thoughts are the ones that both the Dzogchen teachings and the philosopher ācārya Dignāga¹⁵⁶ referred to by the Sanskrit term *śabdāsāmānya*,^c which in a Dzogchen context I will render here as *word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings*.¹⁵⁷ These thoughts, which are the ones used in discursive thinking and which therefore could be called “discursive thoughts,” are models obtained by abstracting the patterns of the sound of words (i.e. divesting the latter of some of the characteristics of an individual’s voice, such as pitch, accent and so on) and by the same token associating them to a referent, whether general (e.g. a class) or particular (e.g. an individual), which then the imagination uses to form inner dialogues that serve as the basis for *conveying chains of meaning*—which, for their part, beside allowing us to deal with worldly matters, serve for conceiving *dharma* teachings, reasoning about reality and establishing, proving and refuting theses, determining the truth or falsity of the subtle thoughts that will be defined next, making those subtle thoughts more specific, relating the latter among themselves, etc. And yet when hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized and thus taken to be inherently true or false, these coarse thoughts become sources of delusion.

^a Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; Pāli, *patīccasamuppāda*; Tib. *tendrel* (Wylie, *rten 'brel*), *tenching drelwar* (*rten cing 'brel bar*) or *tenching drelwar jungwa* (Wylie, *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba*); Ch. 因緣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīnyuán*; Wade-Giles, *yin¹-yüan²*).

^b For more types of thought distinguished by these teachings, cf. Berzin (2001)—who, however, overlooks the one I render as threefold directional thought-structure (Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. *khorsum* [Wylie, *'khor gsum*]; Ch. 三輪 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *sānlún*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun²*]).

^c Tib. *drachi* (Wylie, *sgra spyi*); Ch. 論聲總 (simplified 论声总) (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*).

(B) Subtle thoughts. These are what the Dzogchen teachings and philosophers Dignāga and Dharmakīrti referred to by the Sanskrit term *arthasāmānya*,^a which in a Dzogchen context I will render here as *universal, abstract concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings*:¹⁵⁸ these thoughts have the function of providing us with the instantaneous, mute comprehension of the essence of singled-out sensory patterns / configurations / collections of characteristics^b or of their reproduction by the imagination in the form of mental images, and they also occur in mental dialogues taking place in terms of coarse thoughts, as crucial elements of understanding. Therefore, they are at the root of all knowledge and perception, including, (a) what the rationalist Descartes, the empiricist Locke and other Western philosophers referred to as “intuitive knowledge” (comprising the one that, as noted both in the Dzogchen teachings and in various Western, twentieth century epistemological works, occurs repeatedly during discursive thinking¹⁵⁹) but which, contrarily to Descartes’ view, rather than being a source of indubitable truth, when hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized, begets delusion, and (b) that which Locke called “sensitive knowledge,” which H. H. Price and others call “recognition,” etc., and which constitutes the core of sensory perception, but which, contrarily to general belief, rather than being an indubitable source of truth, when taken to correspond precisely to what it interprets, or confused with the latter, begets delusion.¹⁶⁰ In fact, (1) When these thoughts are hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized [positively, negatively or neutrally] in perception and action we understand their referents to be *in themselves* what the content of thought established them to be (a beautiful lady, a vase, a jar), there is delusion, for they are *not so in themselves*, but *only in terms of the knowledge that establishes them to be so*, and from a different perspective or on a different logical type they may be validly established to be something else. (Moreover, Dharmakīrti, source of nearly all of the views of Svātantrika Mādhyamikas in what regards logic and epistemology—and who according to certain scholars both in Tibet and India was himself a Svātantrika^{161c}—despite the emphasis he placed on correct logic and on “instrumental / valid cognitions,”^d made it clear that these thoughts, since they are synthetic mental phenomena / nominalist universals of the kind *ācārya* Dignāga had called *abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics*,^e which are no more than mental constructs and which do not change during cognition, were *erroneous*,^f and asserted all human cognitions of relative entities to be deluded, for they involve the *error*^g of taking these mental constructs that do not change during cognition for physical, extended, effective, ever-changing sensory patterns / configurations / collections of characteristics^h—i.e. physical entities—and accounted for this delusion by developing what Tillemansⁱ

^a Tib. dōnchi (*don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zǒngyì; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

^b Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Pāli *lakkhaṇa*; Tib. tsennyi (Wylie, *mtshan nyid*); Ch. 相 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, xiāng; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹*).

^c Sharma (1987).

^d Skt. *pramāṇa*; Tib. tsema (Wylie, *tshad ma*); Ch. 量 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, liàng [or *liáng*]; Wade-Giles, *liang⁴* [or *liang²*]).

^e Skt. *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*; Tib. shitsen (Wylie, *spyi mtshan*); Ch. 共相 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, gòngxiāng; Wade-Giles, *kung⁴-hsiang⁴*).

^f Skt. *viplava*; Tib. lepa (Wylie, *bslad pa*); Ch. 迷亂 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, míluàn; Wade-Giles, *mi²-luan⁴*).

^g Skt. *bhrānti*; Tib. trul (Wylie, *'phrul*); Ch. 亂 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, luàn; Wade-Giles, *luan⁴*).

^h Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Tib. tsennyi (Wylie, *mtshan nyid*); Ch. 相 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, xiāng; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹*).

ⁱ Tillemans (1995).

called *a theory of unconscious error*.) (2) When they are hypostasized as they repeatedly arise in chains of discursive thoughts for establishing and connecting meanings, we experience the thoughts that are their referents as *in themselves* true, and the reasonings and conclusions reached thanks to them as being inherently true or false—which is also a delusion, for thoughts may be true from one standpoint or on a certain logical type, and false from another standpoint or on different logical types: this is why the Buddhas do not have views of their own,^a and yet put forward views for others to uphold^b—or, in other words, their statements are all of the kind referred to as *reasons acknowledged by the opponent only*:^c they are made without taking them to be true, or, which is the same, are made as *other-directed assertions*.^d

(C) Last, the paradigmatic supersubtle thought that conceives and establishes a dualistic, linear, directional threefold structure of experience, and that the Dzogchen and Tantric teachings, and Third Promulgation Sūtras, designate by the Sanskrit term *trimaṇḍala*,^e which I render as *threefold directional thought-structure*, and which consists in the notion that there is a perceiver, a perception and something perceived; a doer, a doing and an action; a thinker, a thinking and thoughts which are thought; etc. The hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of this thought-structure gives rise to the subject-object duality, and is the pivot of dimensionality.¹⁶²

Having clarified the above, it will be easy to understand the explanation of the two threefold Dzogchen classifications of *avidyā* and their combination in the paragraphs that follow, where (1) indicates the first aspect of *avidyā* in both classifications; (2) and (3) indicate, respectively, the second and third aspects or types of *avidyā* in the most widely diffused classification, whereas (2-3)—which combines (2) and (3)—indicates the second type of *avidyā* in the least-known of the two classifications, which from now on I will call “alternative classification,” and (4) identifies the third aspect or type of *avidyā* in the alternative classification.

(1) The first type of *avidyā* in both classifications corresponds to the etymology of both the Sanskrit term and its Tibetan translation, marigpa,^f at least in the context of the Dzogchen teachings to which these classifications of *avidyā* pertains, for etymologically marigpa is the negation of rigpa,^g just as *avidyā* is the negation of *vidyā*—although, it must be noted, the negative prefix in marigpa is not the one used in normal categorical negation.¹⁶³ In fact, the Dzogchen teachings acknowledge that all phenomena manifest by virtue of a nondual Awake self-awareness that is referred to as the *nature of mind*^h and

^a Skt. *svamata*; Tib. ranglug (Wylie, *rang lugs*).

^b Skt. *paramata*; Tib. zhenlug (Wylie, *gzhan lugs*).

^c Skt. *praprasiddhānumāna*; Tib. **zhendragkyi jesu pagna** (Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*) / zhenla dragpai jepak (Wylie, *gzhan la grags pa'i rjes dpag*).

^d Tib. **zhen ngo khelen** (Wylie, *gzhan ngo khas len*): these are assertions propounding reasonings based on what others and only others take as established (Skt. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. **zhendragkyi jesu pagpa** [Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*], etc.)

^e Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^f Wylie, *ma rig pa*.

^g Wylie, *rig pa*.

^h I am using “nondual Base-awareness” and “nature of mind” to render the same term: Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*). In the Dzogchen teachings, also Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. changchub sem (Wylie, *byang chub sems*).

that is symbolized by *Samantabhadra* and *Samantabhadri*^a in mystical / erotic union—which is at the root of and *is the true condition of* all cognitions, samsaric or nirvanic, and of all of the phenomena that manifest through that awareness. In those teachings the term *rigpa* refers specifically to the disclosure (of) the true condition of the nondual awareness through which all phenomena manifest—the nature of mind—and of all the phenomena that manifest through it: *rigpa* (is) Awake, nondual self-awareness when nonconceptually^b and hence nondually self-reGnized^c in a way that makes this nondual awareness’ own face patent, by the same token removing all that hinders its functionality.^{d164} (It is important to once more emphasize the contrast between the reGnition proper to Dzogchen and what is termed recognition, which was explained in endnote 35 to this book:^e whereas the latter involves the understanding of singled-out *sensa* in terms of the contents of thought—normally a reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized subtle thought^f which for its part manifests as object due to the reification / hypostatization / valorization of the supersubtle thought that I call threefold directional thought structure^g—the reGnition in question involves the instantaneous dissolution of all forms of recognition.) Now it can be understood that this aspect / type of *avidyā*, which here I will call *innate beclouding of primordial*, nondual, Awake awareness or, figuratively, *unawareness*,^h consists in the concealment of the awareness in question, and with it of the true condition of both the individual and all phenomena—i.e., of what the Dzogchen teachings call the Base and that above was referred to as Dzogchen-*qua*-Base—by the element of stupefaction in Tibetan called *mongcha*,ⁱ which has always been flowing with the mental continuum of those sentient beings who have never realized the true condition in question, and which is what beclouds the self-reGnition^j of this condition’s naked “face”^k—which, when it (is) not

^a Tib. *kunzang gongpa* (Wylie, *kun bzang dgongs pa*): primordial state of *Samantabhadra* / *Samantabhadri*. Note that the term *gongpa* is the honorific for “*sampa*” (Wylie, *bsam pa*), meaning “thought” or “intention,” yet in the Dzogchen teachings it refers to the wisdom mind of Buddhas, or of higher (Skt. *ārya*; Tib. *phagpa* [Wylie, *’phags pa*]; Ch. 聖 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shèng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng*⁴] bodhisattvas in their Contemplation state (Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* [Wylie, *mnyam bzhak*]; Ch. 等引 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*]), both of whom are beyond thought and intention in the ordinary sense of the terms.

^b Skt. *niṣprapañca*; Tib. *thödräl* (Wylie, *spros bral*); Ch. 不戲論 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *pu²-hsi⁴-lun⁴*) or Skt. *aprapañca*; Tib. *töme* or *töpa mepa* (Wylie, *spros [pa] med [pa]*); Ch. 無戲論 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *wu-hsi-lun*). In properly Dzogchen terminology, Tib. *la dawa* (Wylie, *la bzla ba*).

^c For a definition and justification of this term, cf. the section “Terminology and Titles of Eastern Texts.”

^d Tib. *rangngo shepa* (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^e Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushe* (Wylie, *’du shes*); Ch. 想 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang³*).

^f Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*). Modifying a translation devised by Alex Berzin (2001), I render this term as universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] that conveys a meaning.

^g Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. *khorsum* (Wylie, *’khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^h Tib. *gyu dagnyi chikpai marigpa* (Wylie, *rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa’i ma rig pa*); cf. Longchenpa, 1976, p. 24, and Cornu, 2001, p. 62.

ⁱ Wylie, *rmongs cha*.

^j Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*. For the reason for inventing the neologisms reGnition, reGnize and so on, see the discussion of the terminology chosen above in the section “Terminology and Titles of Eastern Texts,” and the endnote the reference mark for which is next to the reference mark to this footnote.

^k *cherthong* (Wylie, *gcer mthong*);

beclouded, is called *rigpa*.^a This means that so long as this type of *avidyā* is manifest, *rigpa*, or which is the same,¹⁶⁵ nonstatic *nirvāṇa*, in which the self-recognition in question reveals the true condition of the Base,^b cannot occur.

Although all that involves this first aspect or type of *avidyā* technically pertains to *samsāra*, the mere arising of this aspect or type of *avidyā* does not *necessarily* mean that *samsāra* has become operative, for this would require the additional coming up of *avidyā* in others of the senses the term has in this classification: when this first type of *avidyā* occurs alone, there arises the neutral condition of the base-of-all^c briefly discussed in a previous section of this book (which, according to conditions and circumstances may be called “dimension of the base-of-all”^d or “base-of-all carrying propensities”^e),¹⁶⁶ which is nonconceptual and nondual, for *avidyā* has not yet manifested the illusion of a subject-object chasm or the illusion of a multiplicity of substances—or, far less, as the delusion that consists in taking the chasm and the multiplicity in question as given, self-existent realities. Yet this aspect or type of *avidyā* is certainly *not* circumscribed to the neutral condition of the base-of-all, for after *samsāra* has become *operative* as a result of the arising of *avidyā* in sense (2) and then of *avidyā* in the other senses discussed here, it continues to be manifest. As already suggested, this type of *avidyā* is inborn and in beings that have not realized their true condition it has never, ever dissolved; on the other hand, when a superior bodhisattva moves from the absolute truth of the Contemplation state^f to the state of mitigated, lucid relative truth proper to post-Contemplation,^g it is the first type of *avidyā* to occur.¹⁶⁷ Early translators rendered the Tibetan term that, in the classification adopted here, designates this aspect or type of *avidyā*, as spontaneous illusion.^h

(2-3) In the alternative threefold Dzogchen classification, the second aspect or type of *avidyā*, which can only come up on the basis of the *unawareness* which is the first sense of *avidyā* in both classifications, and which is the combination of the second and third aspects or types of *avidyā* in the most widespread classification, may be called *mix-up*, as it consists in a basic, *experiential mix-up* that causes us to perceive everything distortedly: awareness, on the one hand, and the host of phenomena that arise through it, on the other, are experienced as being inherently different and separate from each other; the analog, holistic territory of the *given*ⁱ is experienced as though it were the digital, fragmentary maps of thought that, because of the essential discrepancy between the former and the

^a *rig pa*; the term renders the Sanskrit term *vidyā*, although it is also short for *rangrig* (Wylie, *rang rig*; Skt. *svasamvedana* or *svasamvittih*; Ch. 自證 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-cheng⁴*] / 自覺 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-chüeh²*]) as understood in the Dzogchen teachings, in which it refers to the patency of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness that is the essence or nature of mind as it manifests in Buddhas and in the Contemplation state (Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* [Wylie, *mnyam bzahag*]; Ch. 等引 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*]) of superior *bodhisattvas*, *siddhas*, etc.

^b Tib. *zhii nelug* (Wylie, *gchi'i gnas lugs*).

^c *kunzhi lungmaten* (Wylie, *kun gchi lung ma bstan*).

^d Tib. *kunzhi kham* (Wylie, *kun gchi kham*).

^e Tib. *bagchagkyi kunzhi* (Wylie, *bag chags kyi kun gchi*).

^f Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* (Wylie, *mnyam bzahag*); Ch. 等引 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^g Skt. *prṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. *jethob* (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*).

^h In the classification adopted here, the Tibetan for this aspect or type of *avidyā* is **lhenchik kyepai marigpa** (Wylie, *lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*). (Cf. Longchenpa, 1975a, p. 51; 1976, pp. 24 and 122 note 10 [the latter from Khandro Yangthik, part III, p. 117 of edition used by the translator], and Cornu, 2001, p. 62)

ⁱ Cf. endnote 67.

latter, are simply unable to match it; the dependent / insubstantial is experienced as independent / substantial / self-existent; the relative is experienced as absolute; the impermanent is experienced as permanent; that which lacks importance and value is experienced as having inherent, positive or negative value and importance;¹⁶⁸ what cannot provide satisfaction is experienced as having the power to provide satisfaction; etc. This combination of the second and third aspects or types of *avidyā* in the most widespread classification is beyond doubt the basic human contradiction, for it makes us perceive everything inversely, thereby generating the dynamics of inverted effect or backward law briefly discussed below in this section on the Second Noble Truth (which I dealt with in greater detail in previous works [Capriles, 1990a, 2001]): by the same token it begets lack of plenitude and attempts to attain plenitude that keep plenitude away, suffering and attempts to stop suffering that perpetuate and exacerbate suffering, yearning for pleasure and attempts to obtain pleasure that keep pleasure away, self-hindering and attempts to attain skillfulness that beget and accentuate self-impediment, evil and those strategies for achieving goodness that perpetuate and boost evil, and so on—and, in particular, toward the end of the dark (or black) age^a in which we find ourselves, it gives rise to the project of scientific-technological dominion over the ecosystem that, in purportedly trying to create an Eden, has taken our human species to the brink of extinction.

(2) This type of *avidyā*, which as emphasized in the most widespread threefold Dzogchen classification is the first to manifest when *operative saṃsāra* (as different from the non-operative or passive *saṃsāra* of the neutral condition of the base-of-all) arises from the neutral condition of the base-of-all, and which in that classification is the second aspect of *avidyā*, was rendered by early translators as *spontaneous illusion*.^b The basic phenomenon of this type of *avidyā* is the illusory duality of a grasper and a grasped or an apprehender and something apprehended^c—i.e. the subject-object duality, condition of possibility^d of grasping at objects^e—which results from hypostasizing / reifying / valorizing the supersubtle thought referred to as *threefold directional thought structure*.^{f169}

(3) The third aspect or type of *avidyā* in the most diffused classification is the second type or aspect of *avidyā* to occur when active *saṃsāra* arises from the base-of-all. Referred to as *imaginative delusion*,^g it involves a fully-fledged illusion of selfhood in the individual and of self-existent plurality in the world, for the subtle concept of an *I* is superimposed on the illusory subject that is one of the poles of dualistic knowledge and that of a self-existing entity is superimposed on the object that is the other pole of knowledge—giving

^a Skt. *kaliyuga*; Tib. tsöden or tsöden gyi dü (Wylie, *rtsod ldan [gyi dus]*); Ch. 爭鬥時 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēngdòu shí*; Wade-Giles, *cheng¹-tou⁴ shih²*).

^b cf. Longchenpa, 1975a, p. 51; 1976, pp. 24 and 122 note 10 (the latter from *Khandro Yangthik*, part III, p. 117 of edition used by the translator), and Cornu, 2001, p. 62. The Tibetan for this type or type of *avidyā* is *lenchik kyepai marigpa* (Wylie, *lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*).

^c Skt. *grāhyagrāhakavikalpa*; Tib. sungwa dang dzinpa nampar togpa (Wylie, *gzung ba dang 'dzin pa'i rnam par rtog pa*); Ch. 所取能取分別 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *suǒqǔ néngqǔ fēnbié*; Wade-Giles, *so³-ch'ü³ neng²-ch'ü³ fen¹-pieh²*), which gives rise to the duality of *grāhaka-grāhya* (Tib. zungdzin [Wylie, *gzung 'dzin*]).

^d Ger. *Bedingungen der Möglichkeit*; the term is being used in a nonKantian way.

^e Tib. chinchi logpar dzinpa (Wylie, *phyin ci log par 'dzin pa*).

^f Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*): lit. *threefold maṇḍala* (Skt.) or *three spheres* (Tib.); for an explanation, see below.

^g cf. Longchenpa, 1976, pp. 24 and 123 note 11, and Cornu, 2001, p. 62. The Tibetan for this aspect or type of *avidyā* is *kuntu tagpai marigpa* (Wylie, *kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa*).

rise to an overpowering urge to confirm the existence of the *I* in question and gratify its acquisitiveness by singling out segments of the continuum of what appears as object (which at this stage are wrongly perceived as being self-existing, external entities), having contact with them, and reacting to their presence with different emotional attitudes.¹⁷⁰ In general, this type of *avidyā* may be reduced to the apparitional-imputational delusion^a that consists in experiencing a plurality of entities and experiencing these entities in terms of the hypostatized / reified / absolutized / valorized subtle concepts that establish what they are—a delusion which is absent both in (1) and in (2). A more in depth discussion of senses (2) and (3) in the most widespread classification is provided in the note the reference mark for which stands at the end of this sentence.¹⁷¹

(4) The fourth aspect of *avidyā* in this combined classification is the third aspect of *avidyā* in the alternative threefold classification—which can only come up in people under the power of the *unawareness* that is the first aspect of *avidyā* and the *mix-up* that is sense (2-3) of *avidyā*, and which is proper to the condition our civilization refers to as *normality*—and it may be called *meta-mix-up*, as it consists in taking the *mix-up* produced by aspects or types (2) and (3) of *avidyā* in the most widespread classification, for a perfectly sound perception of an objective, self-existing reality: it results from ignoring^b the fact that the appearance of dualism and of a self and a multiplicity of entities as ultimately true and important,¹⁷² which arises by virtue of *avidyā* (2) and (3), is false and baseless. This type of *avidyā* is the condition for the second and third aspects or types of *avidyā* to continue to deceive us unchallenged, for if it were not operative, the contradiction inherent in the latter would turn into conflict—which for its part would offer a possibility of altogether eradicating *avidyā*. In fact, this is why it is said that in order to escape from jail first we have to realize that we are in jail, and why in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, VI, Vasubandhu, having represented all-pervading *duḥkha*^c with a hair, said that superior bodhisattvas have ceased to be like the palm of the hand and have become like the globe of the eye, where the hair stings and from which they are therefore compelled to remove it by removing the *avidyā* at its root.¹⁷³ Since this aspect or type of *avidyā* has the function of sustaining the contradiction inherent in the combination of *avidyā* (2) and (3), it may be said to produce a meta-contradiction.

The reason why I have consistently left the term *avidyā* in Sanskrit rather than translating it, is that each of the senses of *avidyā* is so distinct from the others that it is not possible to refer to all of them by the same English word—and in fact, different words had to be used in the above explanation of its three aspects or types. However, the combination of the three aspects, which is what in general terms the Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna and Atiyogatantrayāna^d understand by *avidyā*, may be properly rendered as *unawareness cum delusion*, or even simply as *delusion*.¹⁷⁴ Though the Greek term *lethe*^e literally means forgetfulness¹⁷⁵ and may also convey the sense of “concealment,” so that its etymological

^a Skt. *vyabhīcāra* / *vyakāla*; Tib. *tulpa* (Wylie, 'phrul pa).

^b Tib. *mishepa* (Wylie, *mi shes pa*).

^c Skt. *saṃskāraduḥkhatā*; Tib. *duchékyi dugngäl* ('du byed kyi sdug bsngal); Ch. 行苦 (Hānyü Pnyin, *xíngkǔ*; Wade-Giles, *hsing²-k'u³*).

^d The Sanskrit equivalent of this term would be *Ādiyogatantrayāna*; since the term *Atiyogatantrayāna* is in Oḍḍiyāna language, and the pronunciation and hence the diacritics to be used in the transliteration of its terms are unknown (at least to this writer), I simply skip the diacritical marks.

^e λήθη.

meaning seems to express the first of the senses of the term *avidyā*, I reckon that Ionian philosopher Heraclitus used the term to refer to the *unawareness cum delusion* that the Mahāyāna calls *avidyā*—and hence elsewhere I have used it as a synonym of *avidyā* as a whole and rendered it as *delusion*.¹⁷⁶ At any rate, it may be useful to emphasize the fact that so long as the first aspect of *avidyā* (1) is the only one affecting human experience and the other ones have not become active, the individual remains in the neutral condition of the base-of-all; when, on the top of (1), (2-3) is affecting human experience, *saṃsāra* is actively functioning; and when (4) is functioning and hence *all* aspects or types of *avidyā* are affecting human experience, *saṃsāra* is fully operative and capable of functioning and persisting unchallenged.

Above it was said that the mental subject and the perception of *sensa* as object—i.e. the subject-object duality—that are proper to *saṃsāra* result from charging the content of a thought with the illusion of substance / self-existence, truth, importance and objective existence. This is what I call hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought, which is at the root of the mix-up that is the cause of *operative saṃsāra*, and which is produced by a vibratory activity that seems to have its seat, or be concentrated, in the center of the chest at the level of the heart. This activity charges thoughts with an illusion of importance, value, objectiveness and truth, causing us to either, (a) experience their purely imaginary contents as self-existing entities, as happens when the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle thought referred to as *threefold directional thought-structure* gives rise to the experience of there being a mental subject separate and independent from its objects, (b) confuse them with the territory they interpret and take them to be entities-in-themselves, as occurs with subtle thoughts in sensory perception, or (c) be the absolute truth—or something absolutely false—about whatever the thoughts interpret, as happens with coarse thoughts in discursive thinking.¹⁷⁷

When, in experiences proper to the realm of sensuality,^a this hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought becomes stronger, and hence the sensation in the center of the chest associated with the vibratory function at the root of delusion^b becomes more conspicuous to an ordinary individual and the impulses to act in specific ways become more powerful and compelling, it is said that one is being affected by a passion.^c It is also worth noting that, when the activity in question valorizes / reifies / hypostasizes / valorizes being and existence,^d it gives rise to the belief in the substantiality and self-existence of all entities; when it valorizes / reifies / hypostasizes / valorizes the negation of being and existence,^e it gives rise to the denial of *karma* and its effects, of the need to respect relative reality, etc.—and when these two are developed into systems of beliefs, they give rise to the extreme beliefs of substantialism / eternalism and nihilism / annihilationism, respectively (among which the latter are more detrimental, for people can

^a Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. *dōpai kham* (Wylie, *dod pa'i kham*); Ch. 欲界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yùjiè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*).

^b Skt. *vedanā*; Pāli *vedanā*; Tib. *tsorwa* (Wylie, *tshor ba*); 受 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou⁴*). In this context, this term is rendered as “mental sensation.”

^c Skt. *kleśa*; Pāli *kilesa*; Tib. *nyönmong* (Wylie, *nyon mongs*); Ch. 煩惱 (simplified, 煩惱) (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎo*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³*).

^d Skt. *samāropa*; Tib. *drotakpa* (Wylie, *sgro btags pa*) or *drodok* (Wylie, *sgro 'dogs*); Ch. 增益 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zēngyì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng¹-i⁴*).

^e Skt. *apavāda*; Tib. *kurdeb* or *kurpa debpa* (Wylie, *skur [pa] 'debs [pa]*); Ch. 損減 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sǔnjiǎn*; Wade-Giles, *sun³-chien³*).

use it to justify harming others in order to obtain what one sees as one's own good).¹⁷⁸

In terms of the Mahāmādhyaṃaka sub-school of Mādhyamaka philosophy, it could be said that this delusion implies that the unmade, uncompounded, unconditioned and unborn^a true nature of the whole of reality is veiled by our fabricated and conditioned^b experiences, and that the fabricated and conditioned becomes the ruling principle of human life. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize the fact that the various schools of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna have very different views of what is unmade, uncompounded and unconditioned, and what is fabricated, compounded and conditioned—some of which will turn up in the chapters that follow.^c

Moreover, on the Path of Renunciation (the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna) to which the Four Noble Truths pertain, the Abhidharmaṭīkā gives the terms *vidyā* and *rigpa* the meaning of “science;” consequently, in the context of that particular set of teachings the term *avidyā*, composed by a privative prefix and the term *vidyā*,^d should have the meaning the noun “ignorance” has in everyday language. However, neither in the Sūtrapiṭaka (the *sūtra* section) of the Path of Renunciation nor in the teachings of any other Buddhist Path is the term *avidyā*, as used in the context of the Four Noble Truths, taken in the sense of lack of information or culture. Though as shown above the first aspect or type of *avidyā* in the main Dzogchen classifications is the above-discussed impediment to directly discover the true, single condition of all subjects and objects, and hence it lies in a concealment, and though this concealment of the true nature of all subjects and objects serves as the basis for the development of the *delusion* that consists in experiencing these subjects and objects as intrinsically separate, substantial, inherently existing, absolutely true entities (this *delusion* being produced by the second and third of the senses the terms *avidyā* and *marigpa* have in the threefold classification adopted here), the term *avidyā* is most often rendered as “ignorance”—a misnomer that will be systematically avoided throughout this book. Moreover, as shown above, in “normal” people the unawareness (of the true condition) *cum* delusion called *avidyā* also involves the inability to realize that one is unaware (of the true condition) and deluded—this being the last of the senses the term *avidyā* has in the fourfold combined classification expounded above.

In order to get a better grasp of the reason why the Mahāyāna often identifies the primary cause of *duḥkha* and hence the Second Truth as *avidyā* rather than *trṣṇā*, it must be emphasized that the single true condition of all entities, including both awareness and all its contents (and among the latter also those that, once delusion becomes active, appear to us as object, or as external to us), is an undivided continuum having no empty spaces or gaps that as such may be characterized in terms of completeness and plenitude (as shown below, this is so regardless of whether we conceive this continuum as a physical universe and interpret it in terms of present day theories in physics,¹⁷⁹ whether we imagine the whole of reality as a continuum of “mental stuff,” or whether we refuse to interpret it one

^a Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dūmache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *dūche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^c A more in-depth discussion of some of those conceptions is to be found in Chöphel & Capriles, in press; Capriles, in press 1; Capriles, 2013b—and should I complete it, in the upcoming corrected and improved version of Capriles, electronic publication 2004.

^d The same applies to its Tibetan translation, *marigpa* (Wylie, *ma rig pa*).

way or the other). As noted above, the instant there arises the illusion that a mental subject is at a distance from the undivided continuum in which objects are singled out, and we feel that we are a mental subject in an *internal dimension*^a inherently separate from a physical *external dimension*,^b it appears as though the undivided whole consisting of awareness and its contents had been sundered, and hence the absolute completeness and plenitude of the undivided continuum is disrupted *in* and *by* our experience¹⁸⁰—as a result of which the consciousness having the illusory mental subject as its core feels *the lack of the completeness and plenitude of that undivided whole*. Since this *sensation of lack* is not *only* at the root of the lack of plenitude and completeness that makes up the core of all-pervading *duḥkha*, but is *also* at the root of the basic craving or thirst that *trṣṇā* is,¹⁸¹ it is clear that *trṣṇā* and the lack of plenitude and completeness that makes up the core of all-pervading *duḥkha* arise as a consequence of *avidyā* in sense (2) of the ones described above (a fact that, as noted in a previous section, was acknowledged in the teaching of the *prattīyasamutpāda*, in which *trṣṇā* is the eighth link or *nidāna* and *avidyā* the first). And, as will be shown below, the discomfort and uneasiness that are the most constant manifestations of the *duḥkha* of suffering, and the *duḥkha* of suffering and the *duḥkha* of change in general, issue from *avidyā* in sense (2-3)—i.e., from a combination of senses (2) and (3).

But on what grounds is it being claimed that all subjects and objects result from the illusory sundering of an undivided substratum that constitutes a continuum and that comprises both our own awareness and the whole of its contents? Quite a few years ago I wrote a book discussing many of the existing and the possible philosophical positions regarding the constitution and nature of all that we experience, on the one hand, and of the one who experiences, on the other.^c Though it is impossible to consider such a complex matter in a few short paragraphs, I quote below from an extremely condensed paper I left unfinished in order to concentrate on writing the series of books in English of which the present one is part:^d

(1) Realists and materialists posit the existence of a physical universe, which common sense regards as external to and independent from human perception. Among such people, those who believe that the sciences discover the precise structure and function of reality generally take consensually accepted theories in the field of physics to be a faithful description of the reality they interpret.¹⁸² Albert Einstein's Field Theory pictured the universe as a single energy field: a continuum without interruptions or empty spaces that therefore may be aptly characterized as absolute plenitude. Later theories, including Super-Unification hypotheses and Recognition Physics—the latter including David Bohm's Holonomic Theory, etc.—lend even more weight to this vision of the universe as a continuum without inherent or substantial divisions, which

^a Wylie, *nang dbyings*.

^b Wylie, *phyi dbyings*.

^c Capriles, Elías, 1986. I plan to further elaborate and refine the said discussion in an upcoming work, which I intend to be more sophisticated and precise than the former.

^d I had begun preparing a paper for the South-American Conference on Philosophy that took place in October 2002 in Caracas, Venezuela, but then I decided that, rather than attending the Conference, I would finish preparing an enlarged, enriched, revised and corrected English translation of *Budismo y dzogchén* (the enlarged and corrected First Part of which the reader has in his or her hands in the English language), would complete the correction of Capriles, Elías, electronic publication 2007, 3 vols. and would write Capriles, Elías, electronic publication 2004. So I stopped writing the paper, which I was just beginning, but kept this quotation, which seemed to fit here.

being devoid of interruptions or empty spaces is free of multiplicity—a vision that, if correct, would imply that our perception of the cosmos as a multiplicity of substances is an error or delusion.

In those who take the discoveries of the sciences to be true, the above conception may serve as an antidote to the belief that material entities are self-existent and substantial; now we must offer them an antidote to the belief that mental phenomena are manifestations of a substance different from the universal energy field.

Nineteenth century tanner and philosopher Joseph Dietzgen (who according to Engels^a discovered materialistic dialectics independently of Marx), in full agreement with the theories Einstein would develop later on, as well as with those of post-Einsteinian physics, asserted all mental phenomena (including consciousness, the mental subject, dreams, perceptions and so on) to be material—and, indeed, mental phenomena necessarily have to be made of something, and it would be absurd to think that they consist of something other than the energy field that makes up the physical universe, for there is no way a non-physical, non-extended substance could exchange information with the material brain (the dualistic assertion of the supposed existence of two wholly different substances, one mental and the other one physical, which as such would pertain to two substantially different orders of reality, would reintroduce the insurmountable philosophical problem René Descartes faced when he tried to explain how the *res cogitans* communicated with the *res extensa*).¹⁸³ Therefore, the realist and the materialist would be far more consistent if they asserted dreams, perceptions and psychic experiences in general, as well as consciousness and the mental subject, to be part of the universal energy field, and thus acknowledge that it is a delusion for the mental subject to feel different and separate from the physical world.¹⁸⁴

However, if there were nothing non-material, the very concept of *matter* would lose its specific difference^b or its counter-concept^c—i.e. that in contrast with which it is defined—and thus would become an empty concept: this is why, on the basis of Einsteinian physics, Swiss Empirio-Criticist philosopher Avenarius^d asserted both the physical and the mental to be made up of a stuff that is neither one nor the other¹⁸⁵—which is clearly the most sensible option—and why in the US Alfred North Whitehead^e put forward a to some extent similar philosophical conception (also Ernst Haeckel, Avenarius' elder, had posited a non-idealistic monism, and so did several other thinkers).

(2) Extreme idealists claim that there is no physical world external to and independent from human experience, and therefore that all entities are made of the stuff mental experiences are made of. Those who uphold this theory must acknowledge that *sensa* are a continuum, whereas awareness of *sensa* cannot be at a distance from *sensa*, as *sensa* manifest in awareness: there being no reasons for believing the stuff in question to have interruptions or empty spaces, they are implicitly positing a continuum just like Einstein's, but that would be psychic rather than physical. In fact, if they accepted science, extreme idealists necessarily would have to conclude that Einstein produced his theory on the basis of the study of his own experience, and therefore that it would be the latter that, if Einstein's methods and conclusions were sound, would be a continuum. The conclusion would be the same as in (1): if a view like this one were correct,

^a Engels (1994).

^b Latin, *differentia specifica*; roughly equivalent to the Skt. *apoha* (Tib. *selwa* [Wylie, *sel ba*]; 除 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chú*; Wade-Giles, *ch'u²*] or 遮除 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēchú*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-ch'u²*] or, more precisely, *anyāpoha* (Tib. *zhensel* [Wylie, *gchan sel*]; Ch. seems to be 他感排除 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tā gǎn páichú*; Wade-Giles, *t'a¹-kan³ p'ai²-ch'u²*]).

^c German, *Gegenbegriff*; Skt. *pratipakṣa*; Tib. *nyenpo* (Wylie, *gnyen po*); Ch. 對治 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *duìzhì*; Wade-Giles, *tui⁴-chih⁴*).

^d Carstanjen (2014).

^e Whitehead (1979).

then the entities that we categorize as “material” would be part of a continuum and would not at all be substantial or self-existent, and the mental subject and other mental phenomena also would be part of that continuum. Therefore, it would be a delusion to perceive physical entities as being self-existent, and it would be equally delusory for the mental subject to feel different and separate from the so-called physical world.¹⁸⁶

As implied above, it would be difficult to distinguish the view indicated as (2) from the one indicated as (1), for according to both of them what we regard as physical and what we regard as psychical are made of the same stuff, and since everything would be made of it and thus everything would be it, it would lack a specific difference^a and a proximate genus,^{b187} or a counter-concept^c—and hence it would be absurd to call it either “physical” or “psychical.”¹⁸⁸

(3) Skepticism, critical phenomenism and phenomenology agree on the imperative to maintain a suspension of judgment^d (which each of them conceives in its own particular way) regarding the purported existence of an objective world external to and independent from experience (and hence also with regard to the alleged substantial separation between mind and matter, etc.). This is due to the fact that they have become fully aware that, regardless of whether or not there is a universe external to and independent from human perception, all we can know is our own experience—and, as noted above and as substantiated in the endnote the reference mark for which is at the end of this paragraph, certainly if there is something external to experience, it cannot have any of the characteristics proper to experience—such as form, color, sound and other sensory qualities, or even spatiality.¹⁸⁹ And since it is evident that experience must be made of a single stuff (so to speak), and since it is equally evident that such stuff would have to be a continuum, those who hold views of these kinds should agree that it is a delusion to perceive physical entities as inherently separate and self-existent, and that it would be equally delusory for the mental subject to feel inherently different and separate from the entities that appear to it as object.

(4) The Dzogchen teachings assert all phenomena to be manifestations of a continuum of basic energy,¹⁹⁰ which in *samsāra* manifests as two *apparently* separate dimensions, but in *nirvāṇa* manifests as a single, continuous, indivisible dimension. In fact, in *active samsāra*, as a result of the manifestation of a form of energy called tsel^e, one’s “internal” condition (which is actually beyond the internal-external divide) manifests externally^f as the creative energy of nonconceptual and as such nondual Awake, undistorted awareness or rigpa,^g and hence the phenomena of the tsel form of manifestation of energy, which include all of what we wrongly experience as constituting a self-existing “physical” world, appear to lie in an external dimension,^h and to be self-existent (i.e. hypostatically, inherently existent), when in truth it

^a Latin, *differentia specifica*; roughly equivalent to the Skt. *apoha* (Tib. selwa [Wylie, *sel ba*]; 除 [Hànǎyǔ Pīnyīn, *chú*; Wade-Giles, *ch’u²*] or 遮除 [Hànǎyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēchú*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-ch’u²*] or, more precisely, *anyāpoha* (Tib. zhensel [Wylie, *gzhān sel*]; Ch. seems to be 他感排除 [Hànǎyǔ Pīnyīn, *tā gǎn páichú*; Wade-Giles, *t’a¹-kan³ p’ai²-ch’u²*]).

^b Latin, *genus proximum*: the immediately ampler genus that includes the class determined by the specific difference (that which the class excludes within the same genus)—namely by its *apoha* (Tib. selwa [Wylie, *sel ba*]; 除 [Hànǎyǔ Pīnyīn, *chú*; Wade-Giles, *ch’u²*] or 遮除 [Hànǎyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēchú*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-ch’u²*] or, more precisely, *anyāpoha* (Tib. zhensel [Wylie, *gzhān sel*]; Ch. seems to be 他感排除 [Hànǎyǔ Pīnyīn, *tā gǎn páichú*; Wade-Giles, *t’a¹-kan³ p’ai²-ch’u²*]).

^c German, *Gegenbegriff*; Skt. *pratipakṣa*; Tib. nyenpo (Wylie, *gnyen po*); Ch. 對治 (Hànǎyǔ Pīnyīn, *duìzhì*; Wade-Giles, *tui⁴-chih⁴*).

^d *epoche* (εποχή).

^e Wylie, *rtsal*.

^f Tib. **chir nang rangyin** (Wylie, *cir snang rang yin*).

^g Tib. rigpai tsel (Wylie, *rig pa’i rtsal*).

^h Tib. chiying (Wylie, *phyi dbyings*), where *chi* (*phyi*) means external and *ying* (*dbyings*) means dimension.

does not exist in this way,^a for they are baseless appearances. For their part, the phenomena of the form of energy called dang^b, which include all thoughts and all that we regard as “mental phenomena,” and which in themselves are neither internal nor external, in *active saṃsāra* seem to lie in an internal dimension.^{c191} In turn, in *nirvāṇa* the appearance of the existence of two different dimensions, one internal and the other external, simply does not arise. Therefore, in terms of this conception it would be utterly absurd to ask whether one of the three options discussed above is correct and the others are wrong: since both what we experience as internal and what we experience as external are forms of manifestation of a basic energy that in truth is a single continuum, it would be absurd to claim that there is a physical universe of which thought is part, and it would not be very precise to posit a mental universe of which the apparently physical universe is a projection—whereas it would be utterly absurd to posit an inherently existing external world that we may be either capable or incapable of knowing.

Even though this Dzogchen way of explaining cannot be demonstrated by logical proof, it is demonstrated by realization. In fact, in *nonstatic nirvāṇa* we realize that there was always a single continuum of energy, which in *saṃsāra* manifested as though there were two different dimensions, one internal and the other one external.

Within the single, indivisible cognitive apparatus of deluded beings the teachings of the Abhidharmapiṭaka discern two aspects: mind,^d which they define as consciousness or awareness of a form, and a series of mental factors or mental events^e involved in the cognition of that form.¹⁹² With regard to the former, the *Abhidharmakośa* (a Hīnayāna text by Vasubandhu) declares, “consciousness is a selecting awareness,”^f and “perception (involves) a process of singling out.”^g This refers to the occurrences that take place after consciousness, by virtue of the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the *threefold directional thought structure*,^h comes to experience itself as separate from the rest of the continuum that the single nature of all entities is: upon facing the continuum of what appears as object, another apparent split takes place in our experience, whereby the continuum of what appears as object is divided into figure and ground. In fact, our attention circumscribes itself to one segment of the sensory field that we find interesting among those that seem to maintain their configuration and that we are used to associate with one of our concepts,ⁱ singling it out as figure and taking it as object, while leaving the rest of the field sunk in a sort of penumbra of awareness, whereby it becomes

^a Tib. **mayinpai chölug** (Wylie, *ma yin pa'i chos lugs*).

^b Wylie, *gdangs*.

^c Tib. nangying (Wylie, *nang dbyings*), where nang (Wylie, *nang*) means external and ying (Wylie, *dbyings*) means dimension.

^d Skt. *citta*; Tib. sem (Wylie, *sems*); Ch. 心 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xīn*; Wade-Giles, *hsin*¹). Note, however, that this Chinese term also renders the Skt. *cittata* and *citta eva* and the Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*), which are defined in contrast with the Skt. *citta* and the Tib. sem (Wylie, *sems*).

^e Skt. *caitta* or *caitasika*; Pāli *cetasika*; Tib. semjung (Wylie, *sems byung*); Ch. 心所 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnsuǒ*; Wade-Giles, *hsin*¹-*so*³).

^f Guenther & Kawamura (trans. 1975).

^g *Ibidem*.

^h Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san*¹-*lun*⁴).

ⁱ I.e. subtle thoughts: universal, abstract concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings (Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. dönchi [Wylie, *don spyi*]; Ch. 總義 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung*³-*i*⁴]).

background. Then the mental factor / event called *recognition* or *perception*^{a193} comes into play, causing us to grasp the segment that was singled out in terms of the corresponding concept. (The tendency to single out, within the ever-changing totality of sense-data, segments of this totality that maintain a certain continuity of pattern, is the function of a pre-conceptual interest that in adults is as a rule determined by a concept and that is the precondition for the subsequent application of the concept in question and thus give rise to the recognition / perception of the object.¹⁹⁴ Hence, it is clear that perception is an active process driven by impulses and (pre-)concepts in our own psyche rather than consisting in the passive reception of data [as both Aristotle^b and Lenin,^c among other Western thinkers, wrongly believed].)

Though the continuum of what appears as object was split by our own mental functions, we fall under the illusion that this split is inherent in a *given* reality that we take to be self-existent and objective, and thus we think that the figure is a substantial, self-existent entity, in itself separate from all that was turned into background.¹⁹⁵ And we wrongly take the figure to be inherently and absolutely the mental concept in terms of which we have perceived it (i.e. we believe that the segment we have singled out is inherently, absolutely a dog, a house, this or that human individual, etc.). These mistaken appearances are produced by hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the intuitive thoughts in terms of which we recognize the segments of the sensory field that our mental functions successively single out.¹⁹⁶

We also may recognize qualities in the object, and conclude that the “entity” we face has such or such inherent qualities.¹⁹⁷ According to the qualities that we recognize, it may happen that we come to a positive, negative or neutral judgment—that the object is good, bad or neutral, or beautiful, ugly or middling, etc.—that gives rise to a pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feeling-tone, respectively, and endows our object with positive, negative or neutral value—which we then believe to be inherent in the object. In fact, as we have seen, so long as we experience ourselves as mental subjects at a distance from our objects, we are doomed to accept them / endow them with positive value, experiencing a fleeting pleasure (for the attitude of acceptance involved embraces the whole of our experience, including the “mental sensation” that in each and every perception arises in the center of the body at the level of the heart, which thereby becomes pleasurable); reject them / endow them with negative value, having an unpleasant feeling (for the same thing happens with rejection); or remain indifferent to them and not endow them with value of either sign, deriving a neutral sensation (also because of the same reason). At any rate, the underlying feeling of lack that derives from experiencing ourselves as being at a distance from the plenitude of the undivided continuum of our true nature will mar whichever pleasant states arise. Furthermore, our judgment of the qualities of our objects yields the passions or afflictions,^d which range between three (in which case they are called the three poisons^e) and eighty-four thousand—according to how we divide the continuum—which,

^a Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushe* (Wylie, 'du shes); Ch. 想 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang*³).

^b Aristotle, this English ed. 1991.

^c Ulianov (Lenin) (this English ed. 1977).

^d Skt. *kleśa*; Pāli *kilesa*; Tib. *nyönmong* (Wylie, *nyon mongs*); Ch. 煩惱 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fánnǎo*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³*).

^e Skt. *triviṣa*; Tibetan: *duksum* (Wylie, *dug gsum*); Ch. 三毒 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sāndú*, Wade-Giles, *san¹-tu²*); also called the three unwholesome roots (Skt. *akuśalamūla*; Pāli *akusalamūla*; Tib. *migewai tsasum* [Wylie, *mi dge ba'i rtsa gsum*]; Ch. 三不善 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sān bùshàn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹ pu⁴-shan⁴*]); the three root

may lead us to try to appropriate those we deem desirable, or, conversely, to try to keep at bay or destroy those we find annoying or menacing: no wonder the current exacerbation of *avidyā* is at the root of all individual, social and intersocial conflicts, and is the deepest cause of ecological crisis.

It has been noted that the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the “directional threefold thought structure” illusorily splits the continuum of our awareness and its contents by giving rise to the appearance of there being an experiencer-doer, an experience or action, and an object that is experienced or acted upon. The experiencer-doer is what I have been calling the mental subject, which we regard as the core of our being and conceive as a soul or mind: as an intrinsically separate, autonomous and independent source of perception, thought and action, inherently different from the “material” world and from “other souls or minds.” However, rather than an intrinsically separate, autonomous and independent source of perception, thought and action, and a self-existent receiver of experiences inherently different from the “material” world and from “other souls or minds,” the subject is no more than a thought that has being reified, producing an illusion. This is why the crazy wisdom aspect of Padmasambhava, Orgyen Dorje Trolö,^a asked the great tertön Dūdjom Lingpa in a vision he had in a dream:^b

Hum Hum! Supreme being, Vajra of [and Awake Awareness] Rigpa
Hum Hum! do you understand the common thread of the three realms of *samsāra*
Hum Hum! as dualistic grasping at the apprehender and the apprehended?
Hum Hum! Do you understand both the object and the [mental] subject
Hum Hum! as two thoughts [that are part of a single thought-structure]?

Furthermore, as emphasized below, the delusion called *avidyā* involves believing consciousness and intelligence to be functions of this illusory, apparently separate mental subject, rather than being functions of the gnitive^c / intelligent aspect of the single nature of all entities, as is in truth the case.

We have seen that all Buddhist schools (including those of the Hīnayāna that fail to assert the *utter* absence of a self-nature in phenomena that are not human beings¹⁹⁸) denounced as a delusion the belief and feeling that we are hypostatically existing, self-sufficient, substantial selves and experiencing ourselves as such.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, as higher Buddhist paths, vehicles and schools point out, the nonexistence of the self implies that thinking is not something the mental subject does. In fact, the mental subject, rather than a soul or hypostatically / inherently existing self, is an empty appearance that arises together

kleśas, which are (1) bewilderment and mental obfuscation (Skt. and Pāli *moha*; Tib. timug [Wylie, *gti mug*]; Ch. 癡 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chī*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih*¹]); (2) avidity or strong desire (Skt. and Pāli *lobha*; Tib. chakpa [Wylie, *chags pa*]; Ch. 貪 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tān*; Wade-Giles, *t'an*¹] as different from the other two main defilements (rather than being the force behind all defilements); and (3) aversion (Skt. *dveṣa*; Pāli *dosa*; Tib. zhedang [Wylie, *zhe sdang*]; Ch. 瞋 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chēn*; Wade-Giles *ch'en*¹]).

^a Wylie, o rgyan rdo rje gro lod.

^b *The foolish dharma of an idiot clothed in mud and feathers* (Tib. *Mongpai lunchö daggö chapuchen* [Wylie, *rmongs pa'i blun chos 'dag gos bya spu can*), in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, p. 151). The phrase within brackets in the last line is my own explicative addition.

^c “Gnitive” is a neologism obtained by deleting the prefix “co-,” which implies duality in general and the subject-object duality in particular, from the adjective “cognitive.”

with its objects by virtue of the stream of creativity that gives rise to all appearances, including thoughts. The root Tantra of Mahāyoga, the *Guhyagarbha*, reads:^a

Amazing! From the sugatagarbha^b
are emanated one's own thoughts and actions.
Various bodies and enjoyments,
places, miseries, and so on,
each grasped as "I" and "mine."
Bound by no one, there are no fetters,
nor is there anyone who is bound.
By grasping at thoughts as oneself,
one's bonds are deliberately tied in space.

And Nyosul Khenpo,^c commenting on Jigme Lingpa's *The Lions' Roar*, tells us:

Jigme Lingpa also mentions here the "thinker,"^d the one who [is supposed to] give rise to thoughts. The "thinker" cannot be grasped by (...) attention as an object of attention. This is because there is no [mental] subject. There isn't any thinker.

In fact, thought is the unobstructed play or display^e of the energy^f aspect of the Base—and in particular of the dang^g mode of manifestation of energy. Many non-Buddhist, Western philosophers also denounced the delusion under discussion; to begin with, the purportedly younger Greek contemporary of Śākyamuni, Heraclitus of Ephesus, wrote:^{h200}

...Although the *logos* [or universal intelligence] is [the single and] common [nature of all intellects], the majority [of human beings] live as if they had a separate and personal intelligence [of their own].

Over two thousand two hundred years after Heraclitus, Scottish philosopher David Hume asserted our belief in the substantiality of the "I" to be nothing but an illusion, and explained this illusion in terms of the concept of a "bundle."²⁰¹ A short time after Hume, Georg Cristoph Lichtenberg stated:²⁰²

^a Lama Chönam & Sangye Khandro (trans. 2011, p. 41). Also in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. I, p. 89).

^b The Skt. terms *tathāgatagarbha* and *sugatagarbha* (Tib. desheg nyingpo / dezhin shegpai nyingpo [Wylie, *de (bzhin) gshegs (pa'i) snying po*]; Chin. 如來藏 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúláizàng*; Wade-Giles, *ju-lai-tsang*]) refer to the kernel or matrix of Buddhahood, or Buddha-nature.

^c Nyosul Khenpo (Wylie, *smyo sul mkhan po*) (2015, p. 165). The citation was adapted to the terminology of this book and explanatory phrases were inserted between brackets.

^d Tib. *kyekhen* (Wylie, *skye mkhan*).

^e Tib. *rölpa gagme* (Wylie, *rol pa 'gags med*), or simply *rölpa* (Wylie, *rol pa*): play or display.

^f The term "energy" renders the Tibetan "thukje" (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei*¹—lit. *sadness* or *mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*. The reason why this term is used is explained in a footnote to the Introduction.

^g Wylie, *gdangs*.

^h Fragment DK 2, Marcovich 23 (cf. Marcovich, 1967, and Marcovich, 1968.) Translation based on Kirk & Raven (1966, Spanish 1970). Instead of "particular intelligence," Cappelletti has "particular understanding" (Cappelletti, A. J. 1972; cf. also: Cappelletti, A. J. 1969), whereas Diels gives us "private understanding."

[It would be better to use an impersonal formula and, rather than saying *I think*,] to say “*there is thinking*,” just as one says “there is lightening.”

For his part, twentieth century Mexican poet Octavio Paz wrote,^{a203}

“...las voces que me piensan al pensarlas. Soy la sombra que arrojan mis palabras...”
 (“...the voices that think me as I think them; I am the shadow projected by my words...”).

The illusion that we are intrinsically separate, autonomous, independent sources of perception, thought and action, substantially, hypostatically different from the “material world” and from “other souls or minds,” implies a considerable degree of anguish, insofar as our destiny and the destiny of the individuals and valuables (including dear ones) that may be affected by our actions, depend directly on the decisions we as seemingly separate sources of decision and action, have to make again and again throughout our lives—which may yield well-being or distress, success or failure, and even life or death. Since anguish is painful and distressing, as shown by Existential and Existentialist philosophers, once it arises we have to elude it and do so by a plethora of means.²⁰⁴ Moreover, in the long run the evolution of delusion exacerbates the illusion of being at a distance from the “physical world,” making it turn into antisomatism, which is one of the key attitudes at the root of that which Gregory Bateson called “conscious purpose versus Nature” and therefore of ecological crisis.^b And it exacerbates the fragmentation of our perception, giving rise to and then exacerbating the systemic ignorance and erroneous perception that in the *Udāna* of the Pāli Canon and the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* of the Mahāyāna the Buddha Śākyamuni illustrated with the parable of the blind men with the elephant and that will be discussed below.

At any rate, Mādhyamika philosophers did a good job in refuting the purported inherently separate existence of entities, and the Mahāyāna in general has striven to show that there is no multiplicity of substances. Throughout this book I have used expressions that suggest that phenomena in their totality are a single universal continuum on the basis of which delusory mental activity produces the illusion of substantial multiplicity.^c This, however, may lead to the mistaken conception that all that exists is a universal substance, or that the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena is a substantial oneness—which would contradict a most basic principle of Buddhism and in particular of Mādhyamaka, which is that no concept whatsoever can fit the true condition of reality. As noted in a previous section, this is why both the *Mahāyānasūtras* and Mādhyamaka philosophy, and even many *sūtras* of the Pāli Canon,²⁰⁵ negate oneness by the same token as multiplicity, and nonbeing by the same token as being. The point is that the true condition of ourselves and the rest of phenomena cannot fit any concept, positive or negative, for it does not exclude anything whatsoever, whereas concepts are defined by inclusion (i.e. proximate genus:^d inclusion in the immediately ampler genus to which they pertain) and exclusion (i.e. specific difference:^e exclusion of all other classes within the same genus). And since

^a Paz, O. (1978, p. 44).

^b Bateson, Gregory, 1968; reprinted in Bateson, Gregory, 1972.

^c See Capriles, Elías, electronic publication 2004.

^d Latin, *genus proximum*.

^e Latin, *differentia specifica*; roughly equivalent to the Skt. *apoha* (Tib. *selwa* [Wylie, *sel ba*]; 除 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *chú*; Wade-Giles, *ch'u²*] or 遮除 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhēchú*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-ch'u²*] or, more precisely,

that which has no limits and excludes nothing cannot be contained in that which has limits and excludes something, the true condition is inconceivable.^a Moreover, since, as stated repeatedly throughout this book, *concepts are digital and as such discontinuous, whereas that which they interpret (is) analog and as such continuous, the latter is utterly distorted when perceived in terms of the former.* To realize the true condition of ourselves and the rest of phenomena, the filter of subtle thoughts through which perception occurs has to collapse, so as to leave room for the nonconceptual and hence nondual primordial gnosis^b that makes it nakedly patent. This is why a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa reads:^c

Because all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is not other than the nature of the ground sugatagarbha, it is free of the extreme of diversity. Because all the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise distinctly and not merged together, it is free from the extreme of unity.

As noted in a previous section and substantiated in endnote 77, neurology has “shown” our *sensa* (the luminosity that allows us to see, the sonority that allows us to hear, etc.) to be produced by our brains and to be incapable of resembling in any way the external reality that both realists and Kantians^d assume they convey to us—and hence *not* to be *given* in the sense of not depending on anything other than themselves to appear as they appear. However, from this it does not follow that we are forbidden to emphasize the above noted fact that both our *sensa* and the universe that common sense assumes they convey to us are analog and as such continuous (cf. endnote 75), whereas our *perception* of segments of the continuum of sensation in terms of contents of thought are digital and therefore discontinuous—and that from this it follows that the latter can never correspond precisely to the former, and that whenever we perceive the former in terms of the latter or believe that a description of the former in terms of latter is exact, we are under a gross delusion.²⁰⁶

The above is the reason why throughout the Buddhist teachings it has always been emphasized that all possible assertions must necessarily be false and hence one must have no views of one’s own: in the Pāli Canon the *Aṭṭhakavagga*^e explicitly states the latter, whereas in the Mahāyāna Nāgārjuna and his Mādhyamaka School of philosophy—and with even greater emphasis the Prāsaṅgika and Mahāmādhyamaka subschools—most

anyāpoha (Tib. zhensel [Wylie, *gzhan sel*]; Ch. seems to be 他感排除 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *tā gǎn páichú*; Wade-Giles, *t’ a¹-kan³ p’ ai²-ch’ u²*]).

^a Skt. *acintya*; Pāli *acinteya*, *acintiya*; Tib. samye (Wylie, *bsam yas*) or samgyi mikhyabpa (Wylie, *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*); Ch. 佛學辭彙 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *fóxué cíhuì*; Wade-Giles, *fo²-hsüeh² tz’ u²-hui⁴*).

^b Skt. *jñāna*; Pāli, *ñāṇa*; Tib. yeshe (Wylie, *ye shes*); Ch. 智 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*). As will be shown below in the regular text, in one of the main senses of the term primordial gnosis is an event of *rigpa*.

^c *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjung/ sanggyél kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyengyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po’i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po’i dgongs pa lag pa’i mthil du brkam nas lhag ger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan brgyud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka’ rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 174.

^d Kant posited an external reality, yet acknowledged that it did not resemble in any way our experience of it: it was the nondimensional Ding-an-sich or thing-in-itself, which also lacked sensory characteristics.

^e Fifth book of the *Sutta Nipāta* subsection of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, in the Pāli Canon (cf. Beckwith, 2015, p. 37).

clearly emphasize it. In particular, the Prāsaṅgikas make the point that Awake individuals have no views *of their own*^a and hence all they teach is solely *for others*^b who still cling to views: their statements, rather than being based on something *they themselves take as established*^c—i.e., rather than being *self-directed*^d—are *reasonings based on what the interlocutors take as established*^e and as such are *other-directed statements*^f that may either help the interlocutors' conceptual mind collapse, or make them provisionally adopt a viewpoint that may help them tread the Path that leads to that collapse. Because of this, Buddhism uses the form of reasoning that the Greeks call tetralemma^g and that Sanskrit Buddhism calls *catuṣkoṭi*,^h which consists in negating all four possibilities regarding a topic (for example, that something *is*, that *it is not*, that *both is and is not*, and that *neither is nor is not*; that something *arises from another*, that *it arises from itself*, that *it arises from both itself and another*, and that *it arises from neither itself nor another*; etc.) and which is used repeatedly in texts of the Pāli Canon²⁰⁷ and in the Mahāyāna Canon²⁰⁸—but which has its most elaborate form and most frequent use in the Mādhyamaka School. (The negation of four extreme positions is not intended as a philosophical position or thesis that reason should adhere to and which should be subject to logical analysis, but as a skillful method serving for pulling the conceptual carpet from under the mind's feet, so that the mind in question may collapse and the true condition of ourselves and all other phenomena may be unconcealed utterly beyond concepts—and therefore without a subject-object duality and beyond the logic ruling the concatenation of thoughts).²⁰⁹

Even though the next few paragraphs will be a little more difficult to read, at this point it is useful to go a little further beyond the Mahāyāna and consider the arising of the delusion called *avidyā* by combining the concepts of a tradition associated with the *Kālacakra Tantra* that Tibetan Lama Tarthang Tulku expounded in *Time, Space and Knowledge*,ⁱ with the characteristically Dzogchen concept of the Base as our own original condition of Dzogchen—a term that is most often rendered as “Great Perfection” or “Great Completion,” but which, as noted in the note on Methodology and Tips for Reading this Book at the beginning of this volume, and as it will be explained in greater detail in Part II of the book, I think might be more precisely rendered as “total plenitude / completeness and perfection.”

In fact, our *original condition of total plenitude and completeness* (Dzogchen) may also be referred to as *total space-time-awareness*. This does not imply that space, time and awareness are three different aspects, separate from each other, of this condition.

^a Skt. *svamata*; Tib. ranglug (Wylie, *rang lugs*).

^b Skt. *paramata*; Tib. zhenlug (Wylie, *gzhan lugs*).

^c Skt. *svaprasiddha*; Tib. rangla drakpa (Wylie, *rang la grags pa*): opposite of Skr. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. zhenla drakpa (Wylie, *gzhang la grags pa*) or zhendragki yesu pagpa (Wylie: *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*).

^d Tib. rangguiüüdu kelen (Wylie: *rang rgyud du khas len*).

^e Skt. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. zhendragki yesu pagpa (Wylie: *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*) or zhenla drakpa (Wylie, *gzhang la grags pa*).

^f Tib. zhenngo khelen (Wylie: *gzhan ngo khas len*).

^g τετραλήμμα.

^h Tib. muzhi (Wylie, *mu bzhi*) or tazhi (Wylie, *mtha' bzhi*); Ch. 四句分別 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sì jù fēn bié*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-chü⁴ fen¹-pieh²*).

ⁱ Tarthang Tulku, 1977a.

Reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought-structure brings about the illusory rupture of this condition in our experience, giving rise to the subject-object chasm and, by the same token, to the illusion that space and time are “dimensions” inherently separate from one another, as well as from human knowledge, which is henceforth experienced as a property of the separate mental subject. At this point the second aspect or type of *avidyā* in the most widespread classification has become operative, and hence we have a combination of senses one and two of *avidyā* in that classification. When the *absolutization / hypostatization / reification / valorization of those subtle thoughts that here I am calling universal, abstract concepts of entities [resulting from a mental synthesis] which convey meanings^a* gives rise to the third aspect or type of *avidyā*, we have a fully-fledged case of the *illusion* denounced by Heraclitus, as one wrongly experiences oneself as a soul or mind (the mental subject) that is the agent of thought and action and the recipient of perceptions, that is inherently separated, both from other subjects and from the spatial continuum and all the potential objects in it—and then we feel compelled to fill the sense of lack inherent in the second aspect or type of *avidyā* by the means discussed in the analysis of the First Noble Truth, and in general to confirm our existence and gratify our acquisitiveness by singling out segments of the continuum of what appears as object (which at this stage are wrongly perceived as being self-existing, external entities), having contact with them, and reacting to their presence with different emotional attitudes. As noted above, thus arise the passions or afflictions^b that may lead us to try to appropriate those we deem desirable, or, conversely, to try to keep at bay or destroy those we find annoying or menacing—which is the root of all individual, social and intersocial conflicts, and the deepest cause of ecological crisis.

The point is that *avidyā* produces an illusory sundering of the *indivisibility of Total Space-Time-Awareness* that is inherent in our original condition of total plenitude and completeness (Dzogchen, when the emphasis is placed on its primordial purity^c aspect),²¹⁰ by means of the illusory cleavage of the nondual awareness or gnosis^d that is the essence of mind^e into the two poles of dualistic knowledge, which are the subject and the object.²¹¹ Thus there arises the illusion that there is a mental subject that is in itself separate from the spatial continuum of potential objects and from the temporal continuum that can be properly called *nowness*: the mental subject that, as Heraclitus rightly gave to understand, we erroneously experience as a separate source of cognition, thought and action. And the illusory sundering of our *original condition of total completeness and plenitude* for its part introduces the illusion of a hiatus, breach or gap: we experience ourselves as though we were at a distance from the absolute plenitude of the continuum in which all entities manifest and that all entities are, giving rise to: (1) the spatial dimension as different from the time dimension; (2) the illusion that we are nonspatial, immaterial, mental, spiritual entity facing an alien spatial, material universe; and (3) the experience of ourselves as being a distance from the absolute completeness and plenitude of the indivisible “now,”

^a Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

^b Skt. *kleśa*; Pāli *kilesa*; Tib. *nyönmong* (Wylie, *nyon mongs*); Ch. 煩惱 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎo*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³*).

^c Tib. *katak* (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^d Skt. *advayajñāna*; Tib. *nyisu mepai yeshe* (Wylie, *gnyis su med pa'i ye shes*); Ch. 不二智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bù'èrzhì*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-erh⁴-shih⁴*) (note that the Chinese is uncertain).

^e Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

thus giving rise to the illusion of finding ourselves in an inapprehensible moment that seems to separate the future from the past, which is inherent in the temporal dimension. As noted in the section on Terminology and Titles of Eastern Texts, Plato remarked that the etymology of the term “present” is “being before,” and in fact the illusory hiatus, break or gap that arises when the *illusory fracture* of *total space-time-awareness* occurs, manifests in the temporal plane as the *present* that artificially separates the future from the past, whereas in the spatial plane it manifests as the illusion of *being before* (i.e., of facing, of being at a distance from) the “physical” world. This is the reason why I have decided to use the term “present” only when the illusion that one is at a distance both from the Now and from the “physical universe” is manifest.

Thus, *from a temporal perspective*, it may be said that the present is the *illusory nothingness* or *illusory gap* constituted by the *mathematical* instant (that is, an instant that has no duration whatsoever) that separates the past from the future, and therefore that it is *nothing*: it is no more than the *illusion of a nothingness, vacuum or lack*. On the contrary, the Now is the absolute plenitude and completeness that involves no separation between the past and the future. In fact, if we were to fully realize the Now, ceasing to experience ourselves as though we were at a distance from it, there would be absolute plenitude and completeness—just as is the case, spatially, with the totality of our own true condition (which, in terms of the above “option [1]” may be represented with the single energy field that, according to Einstein and physics after him, the universe is). In Dzogchen terms, it (is) what is called the “fourth time” (in contrast with the *three times*, which are the future, the present and the past) but which is actually the only timeless time, for its realization (is) free from the division into three times. Contrariwise, the present, being an illusory distance with respect to the Now, is the experience of *lack* that results from experiencing ourselves as separate from our own condition of total plenitude and completeness.

Likewise, from a spatial perspective the illusion of a hiatus or gap corresponds to the “crossing point” of the lines of the three spatial dimensions (“place”)—that is, to the point where there seems to lie the illusory, apparently separate, mental subject. Although this “crossing point” does not occupy any space or time whatsoever, *qua* reference point it is the *conditio sine qua non* of spatial perception (Descartes conceived the *res cogitans* as a soul that did not occupy any space, precisely because he took the illusory mental subject, which does not occupy any space, to be a substantial and immortal soul²¹²).

Finally, when considered from a spatiotemporal perspective (i.e., from that of the combination of space and time), the illusion of a hiatus or gap corresponds to the crossing point of the lines of the three spatial dimensions (“place”) and the line of the dimension of time (“moment”) in the experience of any given individual. Although this crossing point does not occupy any space or time whatsoever, *qua* reference point it is the *conditio sine qua non* of spatiotemporal perception: it is the center from which the three dimensions of space seem to fan out, and the center that separates the past from the future.

The feeling of lack that issues from experiencing ourselves as though we were at a distance from the uninterrupted plenitude of the continuum of total space, as well as from the uninterrupted plenitude of total time manifesting as the Now, is the root of both the lack that is at the core of all-pervading *duḥkha* / *duḥkha* of the conditioned, and of *trṣṇā* (craving, avidity and thirst), which consists in the urge to fill up the lack in question and as such involves also the works of the third aspect or type of *avidyā*, as explained above. And, as also noted above, then we attempt to accomplish the task that *trṣṇā* imposes on us

through a plethora of means that prevent us from achieving our goal, for all of them affirm and sustain the illusion that we are intrinsically separate entities that is the very root of the sensation of lack. Paradoxically, it is the basic delusion at the root of *tr̥ṣṇā* that gives rise to the need for the mental subject to assert itself as an existent, for it is upon experiencing the “crossing point” of the lines of the three spatial dimensions (“place”) and the line of the dimension of time (“moment”), which is *nothing at all*, as though it were an apparently separate mental subject, and then having the *absolutization / hypostatization / reification / valorization of those subtle thoughts that here I am calling universal, abstract concepts of entities [resulting from a mental synthesis] which convey meanings^a* give rise to the third aspect or type of *avidyā*, that the compulsion for the latter to assert itself²¹³ as an absolutely true and important entity arises. This compulsion, which is known as “self-preoccupation,”^b is deemed to be of the greatest importance by the Dzogchen teaching.

Now, *avidyā* is the cause, not only of *tr̥ṣṇā* and of *duḥkha*, but of human evil as well. As I have explained in other works and hinted above,^c basic delusion, which implies believing ourselves to be substantial, intrinsically separate *selves* or *egos*, progressively develops as the aeon or cosmic time cycle^d evolves, and with the passing of time it comes to beget unmitigated *selfishness / egotism*: an interest in ourselves and lack of concern for others (especially if they are not close to us) that causes us to be ready to harm them in all possible ways in order to obtain what we erroneously believe will lead to our own benefit. It was owing to the generalization of evil as a result of this exacerbation of *selfishness / egotism* that it became necessary to decree religious, moral and legal norms banning those courses of behavior that are harmful to others. However, this “solution” cannot beget true virtue, for the latter can only arise from the dissolution of *selfishness* or *egotism*, which can only come about as a result of the dissolution of our illusion of being substantial *selves* or *egos*. In fact, straitjacketing the ego-delusion would be like tying a camel in the desert: when it is free, the animal stays quiet, but when tethered, it ceaselessly pulls and jumps trying to set itself free. Moreover, the attempt to achieve virtue implies that it is not inherent in us, but something external that we must obtain; consequently, it will only keep us at a distance from it.²¹⁴

Something worse happens in the case of the drive to destroy evil: since this drive is a manifestation of hatred, which is evil, it reinforces the evil in us, making it doubly evil and perverse. Worse still, when directed against the “sinner” and the “perverse:”^e

“...the worst [acts of] violence are misconstrued as acts of piety.”

Consequently, everyone is willing to commit atrocities toward the convict much worse than the ones supposedly committed by the alleged criminal²¹⁵—and may even stone the adulteress to death. In general, we distance ourselves from virtue by trying to

^a Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

^b Skt. *ahaṃkāra*; Tib. *ngardzin* (Wylie, *ngar ’dzin*) / Skt. *ātma-graha*; Tib. *dagdzin* (Wylie, *bdag ’dzin*); Ch. 我執 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wǒzhí*; Wade-Giles, *wo³-chih²*) or 我慢 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wǒmàn*; Wade-Giles, *wo³-man⁴*).

^c Capriles (1994; 2000b; etc.).

^d Skt. *kalpa*; Pāli *kappa*; Tib. *kalpa* (Wylie, *bskal pa*); Ch. 劫波 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiébō*; Wade-Giles, *chieh²-po¹*) or simply 劫 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh²*; jap. *gō*).

^e Ravnant (1972, Spanish 1978).

possess it and we exacerbate evil by trying to destroy it.²¹⁶ In fact, it is the archetype that Jung called *the shadow* and the dynamics of this *shadow* described by Gestalt psychology, that lead us to see all that we intuit in ourselves and that we have been made to hate and despise, as the identity of others, and to feel compelled to punish and possibly even destroy the shadow by punishing and possibly even destroying those individuals on whom we project it. (Note, however, that I radically reject Jung's explanation of the phylogeny of the shadow.²¹⁷)

Furthermore, the unawareness and delusion called *avidyā* or *marigpa* is the root of the self-consciousness that is at the root of the self-interference that hinders all our acts, making them imprecise and imperfect. As expressed in the English rhyme:^a

The centipede was happy, quite,
until the toad for fun
or maybe it was out of spite,
asked, "Pray, which leg goes after which?"
which wrought his mind to such a pitch
he lay demented in a ditch
forgetting how to run.

The self-encumbering that this rhyme expresses is the consequence of the cleavage that characterizes the deluded human psyche, wherein one aspect must control, govern and direct another aspect that is therefore controlled, governed or directed. Someone who has developed a skill to a considerable extent, so long as the supersubtle thought called threefold directional thought structure is not hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized and hence a subject paying attention to an object does not arise, and thus undivided, unhindered total awareness does not split into the two poles of knowledge, thought and action, will suffer no impediment.²¹⁸ However, the very instant consciousness self-consciously reflects on the individual's actions and hence dualistic attention seemingly splits total awareness, the unhindered, masterful flow of unselfconscious spontaneity of total awareness is blocked. And this will be specially obstructive if, as one carries out an action, one is constantly judging one's performance and introducing continual wavering through one's attempts to correct it. The point is that, in self-conscious action, consciousness at the very moment of acting takes as its object the entity it perceives as the agent (i.e. the individual who is acting), and establishes with it what Sartre called "a link of being"^{b 219}—whereby the subject momentarily becomes an object lacking subjectivity and capacity to act, which gives rise to an interference that spoils the action. Or, more simply, that self-control on the basis of an inner split interferes with the perfect yet spontaneous and nondual control inherent in the spontaneous, nondual flow of awareness proper to the state of *rigpa*.

The above is the reason why no gymnasts, no matter how she may have perfected her skills, has ever been able to obtain a punctuation of 10^c in all the competitions: Nadia Comăneci accomplished the feat in the Olympic Games of 1976, and other two gymnasts repeated it after that, but no gymnast whatsoever has been able to do so consistently. The beginner has to carry out her performance with total self-consciousness, for as Gregory

^a In Watts (1956).

^b Sartre (1980/1969).

^c Until 2006, 10 was the score indicating a perfect performance with no perceivable error whatsoever.

Bateson noted,^a this is the only way to establish a habit. However, she begins to do things well when the habit is so ingrained that, if she manages to suspend her self-consciousness, the performance will happen automatically and hence approach perfection. However, it is always possible that doubt will creep in, causing a wavering that taints the performance: the thought of disappointing the trainer and the whole population of her country, a doubt as to her own capacity, etc., may cause self-consciousness to arise and taint the action. Gymnasts, dancers, artisans, plastic artists and in general members of all professions that depend on the body's performance, may temporarily "let go" and carry out their activity masterfully, yet so long as they are under the power of *avidyā* and, consequently, find themselves inwardly split, are subject to interference by the controlling subject, which may try to direct their artistic activity at will, correcting it as they carry it out, and thus impeding the spontaneous creative flow of the true, single nature of all entities. Therefore, not only happiness, but also consummate performance in arts, crafts, sports, practical matters and everyday life, is hindered by the delusion called *avidyā*.

A delusion is a distorted perception of reality. Someone who, being deluded with regard to the direction of cardinal points, tries to go north, at a given moment could as well discover she or he is going south. As we have seen, this happens all the time in our daily lives, as so often our attempts to get pleasure result in pain, the actions whereby we intend to achieve happiness give rise to unhappiness, what we do obtain security produces insecurity, and so on. In fact, the essential human delusion called *avidyā* produces an inverted dynamics that often cause us to achieve with our actions the very opposite of what we intend to accomplish—which is what Émile Coué de la Châtaigneraie^b called the "reverse law" and which Alan Watts^c referred to as "law of inverted effect" or "reverse law".²²⁰ The great Dzogchen Master Vimalamitra provided us with an excellent example of this law in the *Three Sections of the Letters of the Five Spaces*, where he noted that all the happiness of *samsāra*, even if it momentarily appears as such, is in reality only suffering, maturing in the same way as the effects of eating an appetizing but poisonous fruit:^d again and again the appetizing aspect of the fruits of *samsāra* beguile us into gobbling them, and yet we fail to learn from the ensuing stomachaches. In *The Precious Vase: Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Samgha*, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explains the examples with which the *mahāsiddha* illustrated this law:^e

Not knowing what to accept and what to reject, even though we crave happiness we obtain only sorrow, like a moth^f that, attracted by a flame, dives into it and is burnt alive; or like a bee^g that, due to its attachment to nectar, sucks a flower and cannot disengage from it, dying trapped inside; or like a deer^h killed by hunters while it listens to the sound of the flute; like fishⁱ that, attached to the taste of the food on the fisherman's hook, die on the hot sand; like an

^a The Logical Categories of Learning and Communication, in Bateson (1971).

^b Brooks (1922).

^c Watts (1951).

^d Vimalamitra / Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Tibetan Text 2, p. 6, 6. Quoted in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 41).

^e Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 44).

^f The moth represents the sense of sight.

^g The bee represents the sense of smell.

^h The deer represents the sense of hearing.

ⁱ The fish represents the sense of taste.

elephant^a that, craving contact with something cool, goes into a muddy pool and dies because it cannot get out. In fact the *Treasury of the Dohās (Do ha mdzod)* says:

“Observe the deeds of the fish, the moth, the elephant, the bee and the deer, [each of which brings about its own suffering through attachment to objects of one of the five senses]! [...]”

From the *Three Sections of the Letters of the Five Spaces* (op. 3: p. 7, 1):

“There is no end to all the various secondary causes, just like following the mirage of a spring of water.”

In fact all the beings that transmigrate through the power of *karma*, whether they are born in the higher or lower states, are in fact beguiled and dominated by the diverse secondary causes so whichever actions they perform become a cause of suffering. They are never content with what they do and there is nothing on which they can really rely...

It is these dynamics that are at the root of the current ecological crisis: by trying, like the architects of Babel, to reach Heaven by building a material structure (which in this case consists in the whole of modern science and technology), we have given rise to a hell on earth and have come to the edge of the abyss of our own extinction. In fact, the most upright and regardful scientists on the planet have warned that, if current trends of human action on the biosphere are maintained, ecological crisis will very likely put an end to life on our planet, or at least disrupt human society—most likely during the current century.²²¹ Our way of life sacrifices future generations in their entirety and countless members of present generations in exchange for an apparent comfort that only a bunch of “privileged ones” can attain, but that does not provide even this bunch with any degree of genuine happiness. Like all other members of our technological civilization, those who live in opulence and/or wield power are always beset by dissatisfaction, anxiety and neurosis, and have no access to the nonconceptual unveiling of the nondual Flow of our true nature that makes life truly Meaningful.²²² In terms of Pascal’s simile, those who live in opulence and wield power lie at the top of the realm of sensuality in the wheel of *saṃsāra*, spinning in the outermost point of the section of the wheel occupied by the realm in question—this being the reason why, when the wheel’s turnings bring them up, they lie at the very top of that realm. However, since they lie at the outermost extreme of the realm in question, they will be made to fall far more precipitously by the wheel’s turnings—and, when they reach the bottom, they will be at the wheel’s lowest place.

The project of Modernity is a product of the exacerbation of the unawareness *cum* delusion called *avidyā*, for the exacerbation of what Gestalt philosophy and psychology call the figure-ground mind causes us to perceive the figure singled out by our perception as though it were in itself separate, disconnected and isolated from what we perceive as background or environment, giving rise to an extreme perceptual fragmentation resulting in a lack of overall understanding of a universe that, in itself, is an indivisible continuum in which all parts we may single out are intricately interconnected and hence mutually interdependent. In fact, according to the *Udāna* (third book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* in the Pāli Canon that contains the First Promulgation sermons, basis of the Hīnayāna), the

^a The elephant represents the sense of touch.

Prajñāpāramitāsūtras (Second Promulgation), many Third Promulgation canonic texts, the philosophy of Nāgārjuna and many other of the great Mahāyāna Masters, and most of the Vajrayāna and Dzogchen Ati, this grave lack of holistic, overall understanding of the indivisible, analog universal continuum and network of interdependences is a central aspect of the basic human delusion called *avidyā*. K. Venkata Ramanan paraphrases the explanation that the *Prajñāpāramitāsāstra*, which the Chinese attribute to Nāgārjuna,²²³ gives of this key aspect of delusion (Venkata Ramanan, 1966, pp. 107-108):

We select from out of the presented only the aspects of our interest and neglect the rest; to the rest that is neglected we become first indifferent and then blind; in our blindness, we claim completeness for the aspects we have selected. We seize them as absolute, we cling to them as complete truth... While the intellectual analysis of the presented content into its different aspects is conducive to and necessary for a comprehensive understanding, analysis is miscarried if the fragmentary

This fragmentation and the ensuing lack of overall understanding may be illustrated with the story of the six blind men and the elephant told in the *Udāna*, third book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* in the Pāli Canon, basis of Hīnayāna Buddhism:^a the one who held the elephant's head asserted the object to be like a pot; the one who held the ear claimed that it was like a winnowing fan; etc.: each of them held so firmly to his partial view, taking it to be an accurate, absolute view of totality, that they could not come to an agreement as to the nature of the object before them. Roughly the same fable is told in the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, pertaining to the Sanskrit Canon of Mahāyāna Buddhism, as follows:^b

The king assembled many blind men and, [making them face] an elephant, commanded, "Describe [this object's] particular characteristics." Those among them who felt the elephant's nose said that [the object] resembled an iron hook. Those who felt the eyes said that [it] resembled bowls. Those who felt the ears said [it] resembled winnowing baskets. Those who felt the back said it resembled a sedan chair, and those who felt the tail said it resembled a string. Indeed, though [their description responded to the parts of the] elephant [they touched], they were lacking in overall understanding...

In a modified version of this story popularized by Ṣūfī^c poets in Islamic countries, the conclusions as to what the animal was were adapted to the local civilization: the one who took hold of its trunk said it was a hose; the one who seized its ear thought it was a fan; the one who put his hand on its back decided it was a throne; the one who clasped its leg concluded it was a pillar... To this we add one element *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* version of the fable and say that the man who placed his hand on the eye took it to be a bowl, and then incorporate two new elements into the story and say that the one who grabbed a tusk took it for a giant iron hook, and the one who grasped its tail threw it away in terror, believing it to be a snake.²²⁴

^a P.T.S. (pp. 66-68); Ramanan (1966, pp. 49-50; reference in note 138 to Ch. I, p. 344).

^b Tibetan Text 3, quoted in Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, p. 295). The parts in parentheses are those I modified in order to make the text more comprehensible in the context in which it is being used.

^c صُوفِي.

The gradual exacerbation of *avidyā*—the essential human delusion—as time goes on, by carrying to its logical extreme our sensation of being entities inherently separate and independent from the rest of nature, together with our fragmentary perception of the universe as though it were the sum of intrinsically separate, self-existent and unconnected entities, has made us more deluded than the men with the elephant, as well as extremely noxious. In the last several centuries, in particular, it produced the project of modernity, based on the myth of progress, which led us to develop and implement the technological project aimed at destroying the parts of the world that annoyed us and to appropriate those that pleased us, which has seriously impaired the functionality of the global ecosystem of which we are parts and on which our survival as a species depends. A noted Western author illustrated this by saying that our incapacity to grasp the unity of the coin of life has led us to develop and apply powerful corrosives in order to destroy the side that we deemed undesirable—death, illness, pain, troubles, etc.—and protect the side we deemed desirable—life, health, pleasure, comfort, etc... And pointed that these corrosives, by boring a hole through the coin, now are on the verge of destroying the side we were intent on preserving.²²⁵

In order to illustrate the narrow and fragmentary state of consciousness inherent in *avidyā* that a tradition associated with the *Kālacakra* tantra, calls “small space-time-knowledge,”²²⁶ which is concomitant with the condition of fully fledged *avidyā* / delusion proper to “normality” and with a low *energetic volume determining the scope of awareness*,^b following the late Khyabje Dungse Thinle Norbu^c we could modify a Daoist (Taoist) and Buddhist story and use as an example a frog that, having been confined all its life to the water at the bottom of a well, believed the sky to be a small blue circle, and that—like the ones in the story told by Dza Petrul Rinpoche,^d the Chinese proverb and Chapter 17 of the *Zhuāngzǐ*^{e227}—could not accept the existence of the ocean. Gregory Bateson^f rightly noted that when this type of consciousness perceives an arch, it does not realize it to be part of a circuit; as the well-known proverb puts it, we simply cannot see the forest for the trees. Consequently, when we feel an arch bothers us, we aim our technological weapons against it, destroying the circuit of which the arch is a part: trying to burn the tree in front of us, we set fire to the forest, thus causing our own destruction.

In fact, according to the cyclical theory of human evolution and history Buddhist Tantrism and Dzogchen share with other systems of thought, Eastern as well as Greco-Roman, the delusion called *avidyā*, and therefore the fragmentary perception that prevents the coming into function of systemic wisdom, has been developing progressively since time immemorial.²²⁸ In the primordial Golden Age, Era of Truth^g or Age of Perfection^a the

^a Cf. Tarthang Tulku (1977a).

^b Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*); Skt. *bindu*. Note that the meaning of thigle when used in this sense is roughly akin to that of the Skt. *kuṇḍalinī*.

^c skyabs rje gdung sras phrin las nor bu rin po che. Personal communication.

^d Sogyal Rinpoche (1995).

^e 莊子; Wade-Giles, Chuang Tzu. In Chuang Tzu (1968, pp. 107-8). The Chinese, Korean and Japanese proverb goes: “The frog in the well knows nothing of the great ocean” (井底之蛙, 不知大海). The Watson translation of the chapter is in the Web at the URL <http://www.terebess.hu/english/chuangtzu1.html#17>.

^f Gregory Bateson (1972).

^g Skt. *satyayuga*; Tib. *denden* (Wylie, *bden ldan*); 黃金時代 (Hàngyù Pīnyīn, *huángjīn shídài*; Wade-Giles, *huang²-chin¹ shih²-tai⁴*).

true nature of ourselves and the whole universe was fully evident a great deal of the time, and while it was, the behavior of human beings was the spontaneous, selfless flow of that nature, which as such impartially accomplished the benefit of all—and when the nature in question was concealed, like a drawer from which a fine perfume has just been removed, the fragrance of that nature still made those beings naturally accomplish the benefit of all. However, with the passing of time the progressive development of basic human delusion made the true condition of all entities more and more veiled, even though initially the veil would easily draw itself at the time of sacred rituals and festivals. And then at some point humankind as a whole lost the capacity to shed the veil even at the time of sacred rituals and festivals—as a result of which deluded, selfish action came to prevail, and our species progressively turned ever more ignorant and wicked. It was no other than this what Lǎozǐ^b expressed in a noted chapter of the *Dàodéjīng*:^c

When the *dào* is lost, we still have its virtue;^{d229}
 when its virtue is lost, we have humane attitudes;
 having lost humanity, we develop righteousness;
 having lost righteousness, [only] propriety and ritual remain.

This progressive development of delusion impelled the process of degeneration that followed its course one era after another, producing the process described by Lǎozǐ until, at the end of the Iron Age, Era of Darkness or Dark Age,^e in which we presently find ourselves, it gave rise to the myth of progress and the modern project of creating a technoscientific Eden, which gave rise to the ecological crisis that has taken us to the brink of our own extinction—making it evident that the state of mind at the root of the project was marred by delusion. In this way, the delusion called *avidyā*, which as noted above has been developing during the entire aeon or cosmic time cycle,^f completed its experiential *reductio ad absurdum*, showing itself for what it is and proving unviable; therefore, now we have the opportunity to eradicate it as a species and thus to recover the systemic wisdom and basic virtue it impeded.²³⁰ Only if we succeed in so doing will we have real possibilities of avoiding extinction as a species and, by the same token, entering a new era of plenitude and fulfillment—which shows that E. F. Schumacher was right when he stated:^g

We can say today that man is far too clever to be able to survive without wisdom. No one is really working for peace unless he is working primarily for the restoration of wisdom.

^a Skt. *kṛtayuga*; Tib. dzogden (Wylie, *rdzogs ldan*); 圓滿時 (abridged 圓滿时) (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn shí*; Wade-Giles, *yuán²-mǎn³ shih³*).

^b 老子; Wade-Giles, *Lao-tzu*.

^c 道德經; Wade-Giles, *Tao-te-ching*.

^d 德 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dé*; Wade-Giles, *te²*).

^e Skt. *kaliyuga*; Tib. tsöden[gyi dü] (Wylie, *rtsod ldan [gyi dus]*); Ch. 爭鬥時 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēngdòu shí*; Wade-Giles, *cheng¹-tou⁴ shih²*).

^f Skt. *kalpa*; Pāli *kappa*; Tib. kalpa (Wylie, *bskal pa*); Ch. 劫波 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiébo*; Wade-Giles, *chieh²-po¹*) or simply 劫 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh²*; Jap. *gō*). However, in terms of Hinduism, we may be talking of sub-cycle, of the kind referred to as *mahāyuga*, of which there are 1000 in a *kalpa* and 71 in a *manvantara* (*Manu-antara*).

^g Schumacher, E. F. (1973).

No doubt, the recovery of easy, widespread access to the nonconceptual, nondual primordial gnosis that makes the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena patent, and, when this gnosis is concealed in post-Contemplation,^{a231} maintain with responsible awareness^b the working of systemic wisdom, is the condition for the possible survival of humankind. Moreover, if it were accomplished on a sufficiently large scale, it would result in the transition to a condition roughly like the one that prevailed in the so-called Golden Age, Era of Truth^c or Age of Perfection^d—which is what the *Kālacakratantra* predicts will occur in the upcoming, final millennium of our species.

So that the relevance of Buddhism to the present predicament of humankind and its function in making the survival of our species beyond the current century possible and the possible ushering in of a new age of harmony may be fully appreciated, I find it fitting to explain the ecological crisis in terms of the Four Noble Truths:

(1) The ecological crisis is so grave that, if everything goes on as it is currently going on, initially human society will be disrupted, at a later stage our species will be annihilated, and finally most if not all species will become extinct on this planet—likely within the current century. Meanwhile, the economy and, what is worse, our very means of subsistence will be disrupted, natural disasters will occur far more often and be much graver, our existence will become ever more miserable, and an increasing number of human beings will be incapable of adapting to the social and biological environment—which will give rise to generalized despair and suffering, extremely high levels of stress, neurosis and psychosis, and serious illnesses and suicides.

(2) There is a primary cause of the ecological crisis, which is the exacerbation of *avidyā* and in particular two by-products of this exacerbation: (i) the intensification of our sense of inherent separation from the rest of the ecosystem, which has increased to become a sense of being in opposition with regard to it, and from other human beings, which has increased to the degree at which we perceive most human beings as rivals to dominate or tools to use and exploit (or, in other words, the aggravation of selfishness), and (ii) the exacerbation of the fragmentation of our perception that the Buddha illustrated with the tale of the men with the elephant. If we feel inherently separate from the rest of the human species, sooner or later we will give rise to the religious, social, economic, racial and ideological divisions, within as well as among societies, which are at the root of injustices and conflicts. If we feel inherently separate from the rest of the ecosystem, being unaware of our ecological interdependence, we are likely to wish to destroy the aspects of nature that disturb us and appropriate those we believe will endow us with comfort, pleasure and security—giving rise to the technological project that has destroyed the systems on which life depends.

(3) There is a solution to the ecological crisis, which lies in the eradication of its primary cause—the basic human delusion called *avidyā*—and of its secondary causes—

^a Skt. *prṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. jethob (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*).

^b Skt. *saṃprajanya*; Tib. shezhin (Wylie, *shes bzhin*); Ch. 正知 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngzhī*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-chih¹*). The presence of this responsible awareness, so that the latter is not lost because of distraction, is *smṛtisamprajanya* (Pāli *satisampajañña*; Tib. tenpa dang shezhin [Wylie, *dran pa dang shes bzhin*]; Ch. 正念慧 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngniànhuì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-nien⁴-hui⁴*]).

^c Skt. *satyayuga*; Tib. denden (Wylie, *bden ldan*); Ch. 黃金時代 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *huángjīn shídài*; Wade-Giles, *huang²-chin¹ shih²-tai⁴*).

^d Skt. *kṛtayuga*; Tib. dzogden (Wylie, *rdzogs ldan*); 圓滿時 (abridged 圓滿時) (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn shí*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ shih³*).

the technological project of domination and exploitation of nature and of other human beings, the consumerism that this project brought about, and the deep underlying political, economic and social inequality.

(4) The Buddhist Path (among other genuine Awakening traditions) can eradicate the causes of ecological crisis and restore an era of communitarian, harmonious social organization based on the systemic wisdom that frees us from the urge to obtain ever more manipulative knowledge, and allows us to use the knowledge we already possess in ways that are beneficial to the biosphere as a whole, and to all beings without distinctions.

All of this shows that fully developed *avidyā*, as a delusion, is not milder than the ones mainstream psychiatrists have described as a result of the observation of their psychotic patients. Mādhyamika-Prāsaṅgika Master Candrakīrti^a recounted the fable of a king that consulted a famous astrologer, who predicted that a rainfall of “maddening water” would contaminate all water sources, reservoirs and tanks in his kingdom, driving insane all of those who drank the water. The king warned his ministers and subjects, so that everyone would prepare a protected supply of water and thus could avoid drinking the deranging water. However, the subjects, being less wealthy, built smaller reservoirs and thus exhausted their reserves more rapidly, and hence at some point had to drink contaminated water. Since the king and the ministers did not behave like the subjects who had drunk the maddening water, the latter concluded that they had become insane. When the ministers finished up their reserves, which were bigger than the subjects’ yet quite smaller than the king’s, they also had to drink the deranging water—upon which the rest of the subjects “realized” that the ministers were back to normal, and the only one still insane was the king. Since now both the people and his ministers coincided that the king was insane, in order to keep his kingdom and to avoid being impeached and put into an asylum, the king had no option but to drink the contaminated water.²³²

In the same way, seventeenth century French thinker Blaise Pascal likened what we call “normality” unto a psychological disorder.²³³ And ex-Frankfurt philosopher, social psychologist and transpersonal forerunner Erich Fromm suggested that our societies as a whole are way far from sanity.²³⁴

Just as there is a *folie à deux* there is a *folie à millions*. The fact that millions of people share the same vices does not make these vices virtues, the fact that they share so many errors does not make the errors to be truths, and the fact that millions of people share the same form of mental pathology does not make these people sane.

Back to Candrakīrti, although he expressed his idea in terms of a parable, the underlying criterion for distinguishing between sanity and insanity was whether or not there was delusion, and if there was, to what degree was it manifest: absolute sanity would consist in the absence of delusion; relative sanity in a significant watering down of delusion; and insanity in complete delusion. The criterion is not so different from that of

^a Chandrakīrti, *Bodhisattvayogācāracatuḥśatakaṭīkā* III.22. (Tib. *Uma zhi gyapai drelpa* [Wylie, *dbu ma bzhi brgya pa'i 'grel pa*], or *Changchub sempai naljor chöpa zhigyapai gyacher drelpa* [Wylie, *byang chub sems dpa'i rnal 'byor spyod pa gzhi brgya pa'i rgya cher 'grel pa*): a Commentary to the *Catuḥśataka* by Āryadeva (Tib. Zhigyapa [Wylie, *bzhi brgya pa*]). Cf. Gendün Chöphel (dge 'dun chos 'phel), *Umai zabde nyingpor drilwai lekshe ludrub gonggyen* (Wylie, *dbu ma'i zab gdad snying por dril ba'i legs bshad klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*). In Chöphel & Capriles (in press). This story of crazy water is also told in Trungpa (1976). Besides, it is widely used in Sufism; cf. Shah (this ed. 1991).

Alfred Korzybski,^a for it lends itself to a conception of insanity as delusion and sanity as right, undeluded awareness, rather than circumscribing insanity to that which psychiatry diagnoses as psychosis.²³⁵ In fact, according to Korzybski there is sanity when there is a structural fit between our reactions to the world and what is actually going on in the world, and insanity when there is no such fit—which may seem to roughly correspond to the criterion of *pramāṇa*^b in Dharmakīrti,^c whose criterion was expressed by Dunne^d as follows (words in brackets are my own additions):

Dharmakīrti’s notion of a cognition’s instrumentality (*pramāṇa*, also rendered as validity^e) rests on the cognition’s trustworthiness or reliability, and that trustworthiness is largely constituted by one’s accomplishment of a goal through the knowledge supplied by that cognition.

Dharmakīrti’s criterion, however, is based on immediate effects rather than long-term effects, which are most often those that contradict the agent’s intentions—this being the reason why he could take cognitions to be instrumental or valid. In fact, our actions are often instrumental to our most immediate aims: the first times we apply a pesticide we may manage to exterminate most of the mosquitoes in a swamp, and only in the long run, after its repeated application, do we realize that our drinking water has become polluted, that anura and other species have been exterminated, that the poison has ran through the food chain and accumulated on the animals we feed on, that mosquitoes have developed resistance to the poison, etc.

In the face of Hume’s law (cf. the endnote the reference mark for which is appended at the end of this paragraph) and accumulated objections of scores of subsequent epistemologists,^f in order to validate the sciences, A. J. Ayer^g devised the criterion according to which “We are entitled to have faith in our procedure just so long as it does the work it is designed to do—that is, enables us to predict future experience, and so to control our environment” (a criterion with which, in his criticism of metaphysics in the pejorative sense of the term, M. Johnston^h coincided). However, Ayer overlooked the law of reverse effect proper to our ordinary condition, for in trying to control our environment with the declared aim of creating an artificial Eden and kill death and pain, the sciences and the technology based on them, rather than achieving their declared aim, have produced a hellish chaos and taken us to the brink of our extinction—and, moreover, at no moment did they foresee this outcome. Hence Ayer’s criterion, and by implication Korzybski’s and Dharmakīrti’s, rather than validating, invalidates the sciences as well as

^a Korzybski (1973).

^b Tib. tsema (Wylie, *tshad ma*); Ch. 量 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *liàng* [or *liáng*]; Wade-Giles, *liang*⁴ [or *liang*²]). John Dunne (2004) renders this term as *instrumentality*; however, Ernst Steinkellner (throughout his works; for example, 1994) and most other translators translate it as *validity*.

^c Philosopher, epistemologist and logician in the Mahāyāna Buddhist Pramāṇavāda tradition founded by ācārya Dignāga, of whom he was an indirect disciple. Most doxographers view these two philosophers as Cittamātrins, yet some have found good reasons to class them as Svātantrika-Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas.

^d Dunne (2004, p. 246).

^e The words within parentheses are my own clarification.

^f Cf. Capriles (1994, 2007, 2012, 2013c).

^g Ayer (1952, p. 50).

^h Johnston (1993).

the technology they allowed us to develop (which as Marcuse noted,^a are inseparable aspects of the same intent)—and, more amply, the reliability of all purportedly valid / instrumental means of knowledge.²³⁶

Korzybski differs from Prāsaṅgika, however, in that the latter does not assume the existence of the inherently existent particular phenomena that would be indispensable for something to be actually going on in the world. Moreover, in Korzybski's view, the sciences could achieve the structural fit defining sanity, for in terms of his renowned map-territory analogy, the map is not the territory but, when correct, it has a structure similar to that of the territory that allows it to be useful in dealing with the latter. However, as repeatedly noted throughout this book, the maps of thought are digital and therefore discontinuous (they pertain to that which Freud^b called secondary process) as well as fragmentary, whereas the sensory territory is analogue and as such continuous, as well as holistic in nature—and hence it is impossible for the former to correspond precisely to the latter. In various works I illustrated the impossibility of our digital maps to correspond precisely to the analogue territory they interpret with a series of examples; here suffice to mention the mismatch between a digital photograph and the analogue reality it is intended to replicate: though the mismatch may be imperceptible when the number of dpi is very high, even in this case if we zoom in repeatedly, we will see a combination of colored squares bearing no resemblance with the continuous reality photographed. Since the digital, discontinuous, lineal and fragmentary cannot match what is analogue, continuous, holistic and intricately interconnected, when we believe that our perception in terms of the contents of thought corresponds precisely to the sensory territory, we are under delusion. And, besides, only truly sane scientists could produce really useful sciences and derived technologies.

So long as space-time-awareness is not total, there is delusion, which is the only valid criterion for diagnosing insanity, and which implies the consequences that derive from a distorted or inverted perception of reality: a greater or lesser degree of men-with-the-elephant effect, of frog-in-the-well effect, of self-impeded centipede effect,²³⁷ and so on.

THE ARISING OF *SAMŚĀRA* FROM THE NEUTRAL CONDITION OF THE BASE-OF-ALL

Throughout this Volume, reference has been made to the process whereby *saṃsāra* arises from the Neutral Condition of the Base-of-All, but a brief yet comprehensive account of this process has not been offered. Since the root of *saṃsāra* is the Second Noble Truth and the arising and development of *saṃsāra* is that of the development of the Second Noble Truth, this discussion of the Truth in question seemed to be the right place to offer an extremely brief discussion of that arising and development.

To begin with, it must be noted that the Base is the Awake, nonconceptual and hence nondual awareness that is called essence or nature of mind^c and that is represented

^a Marcuse (1965).

^b Freud (trans. J. Strachey, 1954).

^c Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

as the primordial Buddha,^a Samantabhadra, whose name means All-Good: its primordial purity^b aspect, which is its (being) primordially empty, its freedom from blemishes, defects and contaminations, since the source of all defilements is the illusion of substantiality that is removed by the realization of emptiness; its spontaneous perfection / self-rectification / spontaneous accomplishment^c aspect implies that, as emphasized by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, All is Viable, for whatever manifests, including all that common sense and lower vehicles view as delusions, defilements and blemishes, may be turned into the Path. It is because this awareness is Awake and is the primordial Buddha that the full, irreversible disclosure of its primordial purity aspect and the removal of self-impediment of its aspect of spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification / self-accomplishment are referred to as the attainment of Buddhahood.

The primordial purity aspect of the Base is its essence^d aspect, the *dharmakāya* qua Base or Base *dharmakāya*. However, as soon as we distinguish the essence aspect that (is) the *dharmakāya* we have implicitly distinguished the aspect of unawareness that is the first aspect or sense of *avidyā*, which is the unawareness of the true condition of the Base—and, indeed, the whole of *avidyā*, including the second and third aspects or senses of the term, which I have categorized as delusion. In fact, the essence / *dharmakāya* is compared to gold, and the unawareness *cum* delusion called *avidyā* is compared to the rust or tarnish that may conceal the qualities proper to gold and referred to as the base-of-all.^e Longchen Rabjam writes in the *Tsigdön Dzö*:^f

As the base-of-all is the root of *samsāra*, it is the foundation of all traces, like a pond. As the *dharmakāya* is the root of *nirvāṇa*, it is freedom from all traces and the exhaustion of all impurities...

In the state of clear ocean-like *dharmakāya*, which dwells as the Base, the boat-like base-of-all filled with a mass of passengers—mind and consciousness, and much cargo, *karmas* and traces—sets out on the Path [of Awakening] through the state of [nonconceptual and hence nondual] Awake self-awareness, the *dharmakāya*.

In some *sūtras* and *Tantras* the aspect of the Base is termed the base-of-all. Here some people who do not understand the actual meaning asserted that the Base and the base-of-all are the same. This is a grave error. If they were the same, then there would be many faults: since the base-of-all has traces, the *dharmakāya* would also have traces; since the base-of-all changes, the *dharmakāya* would also change, and since the base-of-all is transient, the *dharmakāya* would also be impermanent.

In order to properly understand the above, it must be noted that the terms neutral base-of-all, dimension of the base-of-all and so on refer to a *phenomenal condition* that is

^a Skt. *ādibuddha*; Tib. *dōmai sangye* (Wylie, *gdod ma'i sangs rgyas*) / *dangpoi sangye* (Wylie, *dang po'i sangs rgyas*) / *yene sangye* (Wylie, *ye nas sangs rgyas*); Ch. 本初佛 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *běncū fó*; Wade-Giles, *pen³-ch'u¹ fo²*).

^b Tib. *katak* (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^c Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^d Tib. *ngowo* (Wylie, *ngo bo*); Skt. *svābhāva*; Ch. 自性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tsu⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*).

^e Tib. *kunzhi* (Wylie, *kun gzhi*); Skt. *ālaya*; Ch. 来源 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *láiyuán*; Wade-Giles, *lai²-yüan²*).

^f Wylie, *gsang ba bla na med pa 'od gsal rdo rje snying po'i gnas gsum gsal bar byed pa'i tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*, 52a/4. Alternative translations in Tulku Thondup (1996, pp. 211-12) and van Schaik (2004, pp. 58-59 & 338 n. 204).

represented as a pervasive medium wherein the mind's intentionality^a is not yet operating, even though seminal texts^b equate it with mind;^c therefore, they are likened to an egg (an example used for the condition preceding the separation of the earth and the sky described in Bön and other ancient cosmogonies): in this sense, the phenomenal condition referred to as base-of-all is comparable to a situation in which the senses have not awakened to their objects, though *not necessarily* because the continuum of sensation from which objects are singled out in developed samsaric experience is absent (as would be the case in an individual who is asleep or unconscious individual, to whom therefore the sensory continuum of awake experience is not present): what is essential is that as yet there be no cognitive, conceptualizing and objectifying activity.²³⁸

Just like an egg can give rise to a chick or to an omelet, among other things, the base-of-all may be said to be twofold: when the essence or nature^d of the Base is viewed *in causal vehicles* as the *cause* of Buddhahood, with all of its dimensions and primordial gnoses, it is called unpolluted, absolute base-of-all;^e viewed as the basis of *samsāra*, it is called the base-of-all-the-stained-traces-or-propensities.^f These two ways of viewing it are explained as follows by Longchen Rabjam in the *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngalsoi Drelwa Shingta Chenpo*:^g

As this essence or nature^h (is) the cause of perfections such as the dimensions (*kāya*) and primordial gnoses [of Buddhahood], it is called the stainless, absolute base-of-all.ⁱ As it (is) the basis of *samsāra*, it is called the base-of-all-the-stained-traces-or-propensities.^j The Base's essence^k [aspect *qua*] the base-of-all, is one, but it is divided [by the teachings] on account of the different qualities based on it.

At any rate, the above twofold classification of the base-of-all is not the only one of those offered by the Dzogchen teachings, for although, as noted in the above passage, the Base's essence aspect *qua* base-of-all is one, the teachings distinguish in it as many

^a Tib. mig (Wylie, *dmigs*).

^b E.g. Longchen Rabjam's *Tsigdön Rinpochei Dzö* (Wylie, *tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*), 60b/3, which will be cited below in the regular text.

^c Tib. sem (Wylie, *sems*); Skt. *citta*; Ch. 心 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīn*; Wade-Giles, *hsin*¹). Note, however, that this Chinese term also renders the Skt. *cittata* and *citta eva* and the Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^d Tib. shi (Wylie, *gshis*—a term widely used in Kagyü teachings that is roughly equivalent to ngowo [Wylie, *ngo bo*] as the term is used when it refers to the first aspect of the Base in the threefold classification of the Base's primordial gnoses in the Dzogchen teachings).

^e Tib. dōngyi kunzhi (Wylie, *don gyi kun gzhi*).

^f Tib. bagchag na tsogpai kunzhi (Wylie, *bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*).

^g Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*, vol. I, 92a/2 (cited in Tulku Thondup, 1996, p. 226; I replaced some terms for the ones used in this book).

^h Tib. shi [Wylie, *gshis*]: a term which is a rough equivalent of ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*) as used in the Dzogchen teachings, and which is widely used in Kagyü teachings.

ⁱ Tib. dōngyi kunzhi (Wylie, *don gyi kun gzhi*).

^j Tib. bagchag na tsogpai kunzhi (Wylie, *bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*).

^k Tib. ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*); Skt. *svābhāva*; Ch. 自性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tsu⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*).

aspects as required by different needs of elucidation. For example, in the *Tsigdön Dzö*^a Longchen Rabjam offers the following fourfold classification of the base-of-all:

“The four [aspects of types of base-of-all] are:

[i] Absolute, primordial base-of-all:^b attendance of unawareness or nescience upon gnosis—that aspect of nescience or unawareness of [the true condition of universal] nondual Awake self-awareness^c arisen simultaneously with this nondual Awake self-awareness from primordial time, like gold and its tarnish, which serves as the initial ground for all samsaric phenomena (being an unAwakening that is defined as such in relation to^d Awakening).

[ii] Absolute linking-up base-of-all:^e the base of karmic activity, the neutral^f primary support or foundation that links up and impels one through one’s individual *karma* to *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* through different deeds [or absence of deeds].

[iii] Base-of-all carrying multifarious traces or propensities:^g the neutral base of diverse latent *karma* that generates the samsaric cycle of mind and mental factors or events and repeated births in *samsāra*.

[iv] Base-of-all of bodily propensities or traces:^h nescience / unAwakening as a basis / ground for the manifestation of three different bodies: [a] a gross body that manifests in parts, whose limbs and organs are made of infinitesimal particles such as the one that appears in the realm of sensuality, [b] a radiant body of lights such as the one that appears in the realm of form, and [c] a body that manifests out of Contemplation such as the one that appears in the realm of formlessness.”

The above classifications will be useful in the discussion of the Truth of the Path. With regard to the arising of *samsāra* from the base-of-all, which is that which we are concerned with at this point, it must be noted that from the base-of-all the essence aspect of the Base, which if the Base *dharmakāya* and as such involves the potentiality for nonstatic *nirvāṇa* to manifest, shines forth as ngowoi shi.ⁱ However, as noted above, the gold that is the example of the essence / *dharmakāya* has since beginningless time coexisted with the first aspect or type of the unawareness *cum* delusion called *avidyā*, which was compared to the rust or tarnish that may conceal the qualities proper to gold: the contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction^j that forestalls the reGnition of the shining forth of the so-called fivefold gnosis that otherwise would have made patent the Base *dharmakāya* that is the Base’s essence aspect. This first aspect or type of *avidyā* in the classification adopted here, which in Tibetan is called **gyu dagnyi chikpai marigpa**,^k

^a Wylie, *gsang ba bla na med pa 'od gsal rdo rje snying po'i gnas gsum gsal bar byed pa'i tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*, 52a/5. Alternative translations in Tulku Thondup (1996, pp. 211-12) and van Schaik (2004, pp. 58-59 & 338 n. 204).

^b Tib. ye dōngyi kunzhi (Wylie, *ye don gyi kun gzhi*).

^c Skt. *svasamvedana*; Tib. rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*).

^d Tib. tōpai (Wylie, *ltos pa'i*).

^e Tib. jorwa dōngyi kunzhi (Wylie, *sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*).

^f Tib. lungmaten (Wylie, *lung ma bstan*).

^g Tib. bagchag na tsogpai kunzhi (Wylie, *bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*).

^h Tib. bagchag lūkyi kunzhi (Wylie, *bag chags lus kyi kun gzhi*).

ⁱ Wylie, *ngo bo'i gshis*.

^j Tib. Mongcha (Wylie, *rmongs cha*).

^k Wylie, *rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa* (cf. Longchenpa, 1976, p. 24, and the great encompassing work by Cornu, 2001, p. 62).

was manifest in the neutral base-of-all—and, indeed, it was that which caused the base-of-all to be a neutral condition that pertains to *samsāra* but in which neither *samsāra* nor *nirvāṇa* is actively functioning.

If, immediately after being prevented from recognizing of the shining forth of the so-called fivefold gnosis by the contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction^a that is the core of the first aspect or type of *avidyā* in the classification adopted here, the subject-object duality—i.e. the grasper and the grasped, conditions of possibility of grasping at appearances—arises and hence we incur in the error of taking that shining forth to be an external reality, this is the second aspect or type of *avidyā* in the threefold classification adopted in this book, which calls it spontaneous illusion or **lhenchik kyepai marigpa**^b—which marks the beginning of the development of *active samsāra*. This gives rise to the illusory distance between the perceiver and the perceived necessary for the perceiver to cling to the perceived, and hence for thoughts to leave traces rather than spontaneously dissolving as they arise like feathers entering fire, as occurs in the spontaneous liberation that is the hallmark of Dzogchen. However, by itself it is not sufficient for producing the imprints or traces in question.

Finally, there arises the third aspect or type of *avidyā* in the classification adopted here, termed *kuntu tagpai marigpa*^c or imaginative delusion.^d This begins with the arising of a delusiveness,^e the propensity for which is inherent in the base-of-all-carrying-propensities,^f which upon manifesting conceives of the base-of-all-carrying-propensities as an independently existing “I” that rules over the aggregates,^g thus giving rise to the basic disturbing attitude referred to by the Sanskrit term *ahaṃkāra* and the Tibetan *ngadzin*,^h which I am rendering as self-grasping but which involves self-affirmation and self-preoccupation as well, and which conceives an *I* or *me* as the experiencer, would-be controller and somehow owner of what is cognized. This will become the impelling force at the root of the singling out of objects (which for its part depends on the existence of a divisive, hermetic focus of awareness) within the continuum that appeared as object the moment spontaneous illusionⁱ arose in the immediately preceding stage, and also of the perception of these objects in terms of hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized thoughts that is at the root of the confusion of the digital, fragmentary maps of thought with the analog, holistic territory of the given that such maps are incapable of matching, and the mistaken belief in the perfect correspondence of the one and the other—which is the source of the illusion of there being a plethora of entities existing hypostatically or intrinsically, independently and disconnectedly. This occurs because the superimposition

^a Tib. *Mongcha* (Wylie, *rmongs cha*).

^b Wylie, *lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa* (cf. Longchenpa, 1975a, p. 51; 1976, pp. 24 and 122 note 10; and Cornu, 2001, p. 62).

^c Wylie, *kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa* (cf. Longchenpa, 1976, pp. 24 and 123 note 11, and Cornu, 2001, p. 62).

^d As the term suggests, this aspect or type of *avidyā* is related to the third nature of Mahāmādhyaṃaka, which is the “nature of imaginary configurations” (Skt. *parikalpītalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *kuntagkyi tsennyi* [Wylie, *kun brtags kyi mtshan-nyid*]).

^e Tib. *nyönyi* (Wylie, *nyon-yid*).

^f Tib. *bagchagkyi kunzhi* (Wylie, *bag chags kyi kun gzhi*).

^g Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandha*; Tib. *phungpo* (Wylie, *phung po*); Ch. 蘊 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yùn*; Wade-Giles, *yün*⁴).

^h Wylie, *nga 'dzin*.

ⁱ Tib. *lhenchik kyepai marigpa* (Wylie, *lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*).

of the idea of an “I” on the illusory subject that arose in the preceding state and that is the core of dualistic consciousness, gives rise to the compelling drive to confirm the existence of that “I” and gratify its acquisitiveness by means of contacts with the seemingly self-existing, seemingly external entities that are perceived at this stage. This is the source of the grasper’s lingering interest in and clinging to the grasped that causes thoughts to leave traces or imprints that impel the mind toward subsequent thoughts, rather than liberating themselves without leaving traces as feathers entering fire. If we compare the source of experience to a spring, the perceiver, with the self-grasping, self-affirmation and self-preoccupation with which it was endowed at this stage, is the illusion of someone separate and other than the spring that observes the water that flows from it, conceptualizing the forms that arise in it and clinging to them, thus fixating them in time and forestalling their spontaneous liberation. With this, and with our inability to realize the unawareness *cum* delusion called *avidyā* as such that is the third type or aspect of *avidyā* in the *alternative* classification, *saṃsāra* consolidates.

However, also if nonstatic *nirvāṇa* manifested upon the shining forth of ngowoi shi by reGnizing the latter in a nonconceptual and hence nondual way as the essence aspect of nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake self-awareness, this would not last forever: at some point (and initially most likely after very few seconds) *avidyā* or marigpa in the first of the senses it has in the Dzogchen classification adopted here would manifest again, reinstating the dimension of the base-of-all—from which *saṃsāra* would rapidly develop in the way described above.

If we wish to explain the arising of *saṃsāra* in more precise terms, we may do so in terms of three stages that successively produce birth in the three spheres of *saṃsāra* (as implied by a terma revealed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,^a **to which I added an element of interpretation based on my own experience (namely the consideration of the base-of-all^b and the formless absorptions^c as two different conditions, the consciousness of the base-of-all^d and the absorptions of form^e as two different conditions, and the consciousness of defilements^f and the realm of sensuality^g as two different conditions, the second of which would arise when the subject-object duality is introduced)**). In any case, if at any stage or this process the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of contents of thought subsided, liberating itself, the development of *saṃsāra* would be interrupted, but otherwise the corresponding samsaric realm will become established. These three stages are:

^a The *Longchen Ösel Khandro Nyingthik Thigle Tawa Lode Chenpoi Ne Changshig* (Wylie, *klong chen 'od gsal mkha' 'gro'i snying thig las lta ba blo 'das chen po'i gnad byang bshigs*).

^b Skt. *ālaya*; Tib. *kunzhi* (Wylie, *kun gzhi*); Ch. 来源 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *láiyuán*; Wade-Giles, *lai²-yüan²*).

^c Skt. *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *zugmé na chöpai samten* (Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*); Ch. 無色界定 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*).

^d Skt. *ālayavijñāna*; Tib. *kunzhi namshé* or *kunzhi nampar shepa* (Wylie, *kun gzhi rnam [par] shes [pa]*); Ch. 阿賴耶識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *àlāiyē shí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴*) or 藏識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zàngshí*; Wade-Giles, *tsang⁴-shih⁴*).

^e Skt. *rūpāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *rūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *gzugs na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*; Ch. 色界定 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*).

^f Skt. *kliṣṭamanovijñāna*; Tib. *nyönyikyī namshé* or *nyönmongpa chengyi yikyī nampar shepa* (Wylie, *nyon [mong] pa can gyi yid kyi rnam [par] shes [pa]*); Ch. 末那識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *mòna shí*; Wade-Giles, *mo⁴-na⁴ shih⁴*).

^g Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. *döpai kham* (Wylie, *dod pa'i khams*); Ch. 欲界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yùjiè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*).

(1) The co-emergent arising of the activity I am referring to as hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization and of the supersubtle thought I call threefold thought-structure, gives rise to a directional, dualistic structuring and functioning of the cognitive complex, which polarizes into subject and object, and by the same token gives rise to the phenomenon of being that, as shown elsewhere,^a endows all phenomena with the illusion of being—thus generating the illusion that there is an *experience-that-is*, an *experiencer-that-is* and *something-experienced-that-is*. Thus the continuum of the neutral base-of-all that manifested when the beclouding element of stupefaction prevented the reGnition of ngowoi shi^b that otherwise would have made evident the essence or ngowo aspect of the Base (i.e. the Base’s emptiness that constitutes the Base *dharmakāya*), appears as object. Although the traditional Dzogchen teachings do not seem to make a distinction between the neutral base-of-all and formless contemplations, “neutral base-of-all” and “formless contemplations” are two different, distinct terms, and since all (or nearly all) Dzogchen termas revealed in the last seven centuries, including those revealed by Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa, make the point that the only aspect or type of *avidyā* that is manifest in the base-of-all is the one I am rendering as *innate beclouding of primordial*, nondual, Awake awareness or, figuratively, *unawareness*^c—which implies that the second aspect or sense of *avidyā*, which is the one that gives rise to the subject-object duality, is absent in all of the states referred to by terms involving the phrase base-of-all, I apply the terms neutral base-of-all, dimension of the base-of-all^d and so on to those phenomenal conditions in which a continuum that seems to be a totality is manifest and in which there is no subject-object duality, and the term formless contemplations to the conditions that arise as a result of the manifestation of the subject-object duality, in which there appears as object a limited albeit seemingly limitless continuum that, being utterly free from a figure / ground division, may be mistaken for a totality or an infinitude (although it is neither a totality nor an infinitude, for the illusory subject-object duality has concealed Totality, and the experience of there being a subject different and separate from whatever appears as object has introduced a limit that makes the object finite). As the mental subject establishes a *link of being* (cf. endnote 219) with that seemingly limitless object, thus *becoming* the seeming infinitude, it obtains the illusion of having accomplished a totality or an infinitude—which may be mistaken for a Buddhist realization: this is the reason why even the earliest Buddhist teachings have warned against mistaking formless absorptions for Awakening. At any rate, if we managed to make the base-of-all or a formless absorption stable, we would take birth in the formless realm; otherwise, *samsāra* will continue to develop through the following stages.

(2) Then there manifests what the Dzogchen teachings call consciousness of the base-of-all.^e Though at this point the concrete objects of the five senses are not yet present as such, a subtle cognitive capacity that tends to grasp its objects has risen and made itself ready in every respect to receive the impressions of the potential objects of deluded mind, like a mirror, and so the eyes see what deluded beings perceive as color-forms, the ears

^a Capriles (2007, Vol. I).

^b Wylie, *ngo bo'i gshis*.

^c Tib. *gyu dagnyi chikpai marigpa* (Wylie, *rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa*); cf. Longchenpa, 1976, p. 24, and Cornu, 2001, p. 62.

^d Tib. *kunzhii kham* (Wylie, *kun gzhi'i kham*s).

^e (Skt. *ālayavijñāna*; Tib. *kunzhi namshe* or *kunzhi nampar shepa* [*kun gzhi rnam [par] shes [pa]*]).

hear what deluded beings perceive as sounds, the nose smells what deluded beings call fragrances, the tongue tastes what deluded beings perceive as flavors, and the body has what deluded beings perceive as kinesthetic sensations. This singling-out consciousness is compared to ice on water^a because grasping at its would-be objects amounts to singling them out, which is akin to freezing segments of the ocean, for it causes what is as yet unpatterned to become configured; when this happens we enter the realm that, according to the Mahāyāna, is primarily determined by cognitive delusive obstructions:^b the realm of form. If we manage to make the ensuing condition stable, we take birth in this realm; otherwise, *samsāra* will continue to develop through the manifestation of the next stage.

(3) At this stage the singled out configurations or patterns^c of that which, *when recognized / perceived*, will become sense data of the consciousness of the five sensory gates (i.e. of that which the West calls the five senses), are *recognized / perceived* as being this or that by the so-called “consciousness of mental contents.”^d The “consciousness” in question apprehends only the phenomena of the dang^e mode of manifestation of energy that we call “mental”^f and that normally we perceive as lying in an internal dimension,^g but at this stage its function consists in interpreting and perceiving in terms of subtle thoughts^h the configurations or patterns that were singled out in the preceding stage and that manifest through the consciousness of the five sense doorsⁱ that presents phenomena of the tsel^j mode of manifestation of energy that appear to lie in an external dimension^k (i.e. through the five *modes of* consciousness that apprehend sensa that manifest in the fields of the five senses universally accepted by Western psychology and epistemology). As Drime Öser notes,^l it is usually said that mind^m is the consciousness of the base-of-all, whereas apprehending selfhood [in human beings or in phenomena which are not human beings] is thought or mental forms.ⁿ For its part, the arousing of aversion, desire or attachment, or of neutral attitudes, towards the sensory configurations that at this point are being perceived

^a Jigme Lingpa, *Dzogpa Chenpoi Nagsum Shenche* (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po'i gnag gsum shan 'byed*), in the *Longchen Nyinggi Thigle* (Wylie, *klong chen snying gi thig le*). Quoted in Guenther (1977, p. 144).

^b Skt. *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli *ñeyyavāvaraṇa*; Tib. shedrib or shechai dribpa (Wylie, *shes [bya'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 所知障 Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *suǒzhīzhàng*; Wade-Giles *so³-chih¹-chang⁴*).

^c Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Pāli *lakkhana*; Tib. tsennyi (Wylie, *mtshan nyid*); Ch. 相 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn. *xiāng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹*)

^d Skt. *manovijñāna*; Pāli *manoviññāna*; Tib. yikyī namshe or yikyī nampar shepa (Wylie, *yid kyi rnam [par] shes [pa]*); Ch. 意識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yìshí*; Wade-Giles, *i⁴-shih²*).

^e Wylie, *gdangs*.

^f Skt. *manovijñāna*; Pāli *manoviññāna*; Tib. yikyī namshe or yikyī nampar shepa (Wylie, *yid kyi rnam [par] shes [pa]*); Ch. 意識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yìshí*; Wade-Giles, *i⁴-shih²*).

^g Tib. nang yin (Wylie, *nang dbyings*).

^h Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. dōnchi (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總事 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-shih⁴*) or 總義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *pañcadvārajñāna*; Tib. gongai namshe or gongai nampar shepa (Wylie, *sgo lnga'i rnam [par] shes [pa]*).

^j Wylie, *rtsal*. I have occasionally rendered this mode of manifestation of energy as “projective energy.”

^k Tib. chi ying (Wylie, *spyi dbyings*).

^l Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngāksoi Drelwa Shingta Chenpo (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*, I, 49a/3 Alternative translation in Tulku Thondup (1996, pp. 220).

^m Skt. *citta*; Tib. sem (Wylie, *sems*); Ch. 心 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīn*; Wade-Giles, *hsin¹*).

ⁿ Skt. *manas*; Tib. yi (Wylie, *yid*); Ch. 意 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yì*; Wade-Giles, *i⁴*).

in terms of subtle thoughts,^a is the ego-centered consciousness called consciousness of defilements or consciousness of the passions^b—which consists in the drive to react to the configurations in question, grasping them, appropriating them, or confronting them in whichever ways may serve the illusory I that is the core of self-preoccupation to establish, confirm, demonstrate and sustain the illusion of its own existence as a separate, absolutely important and true individual self. It is this that leads one into the realm of sensuality, which functions through the consciousness that apprehends mental phenomena,^c and the so-called consciousnesses of the other five senses^d (all of these “consciousnesses” and their objects, are stirred by the “Base-of-all carrying propensities,” for consciousness and its contents arise interdependently or coemergently for one moment and then disappear, in an order or sequence that depends on the karmic propensities “carried” by the “base-of-all carrying propensities”). This is the realm of “I” and “mine” in which, through the last six modes of consciousness, the imaginary “I” that is the core of the self-preoccupation tries to affirm itself as a true self and gratify its acquisitiveness by obtaining concrete sensory experiences and emotionally reacting to the objects of these experiences. In Mahāyāna terms, it is also the realm that is primarily determined by passionate delusive obstructions.^e

Nonetheless, in the case of Dzogchen practitioners who are familiar enough with the unwavering manifestation of the *dharmakāya* and the spontaneous liberation of delusory thoughts, even at this point it will be enough for them to look into whichever thought is present, as though to apprehend its true condition (with which they are quite familiar due to their previous, repeated reGnition of the *dharmakāya* and concomitant experience of spontaneous liberation), for the thought to liberate itself spontaneously in the reGnition of the *dharmakāya*—or not to do so, since spontaneous liberation is beyond causality and thus, unless the individual is very advanced on the Dzogchen Path, there are no guarantees that it will take place in any particular occasion.

Note that a process roughly analogous to the one described above develops again and again as short cognitive gaps occur repeatedly in our experience throughout the activities of daily life, but at the time our space-time-awareness is quite narrow and we are distracted by the turmoil of daily activities, duties and worries; moreover, the process takes place just too rapidly and confusedly, and the limits of its successive stages become extremely murky. And the same occurs in those practices of *semdzin*^f and *rushen*^g that induce specific varieties of the neutral base-of-all—such as, for example, the experience of disoriented clarity and emptiness called *heddewa*.^{h 239}

^a Cf. the *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngälsoi Drelwa Shingta Chenpo* (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*), vol. I, 83a/5 (cited in Tulku Thondup, 1996, p. 220-221). I am not quoting from it at this point.

^b Skt. *kliṣṭamanovijñāna*; Tib. *nyönmongpachen yikyī namshe* or *nyönmongpachen yikyī nampar shepa* (Wylie, *nyon mongs pa can yid kyī rnam [par] shes [pa]*).

^c Skt. *manovijñāna*; Tib. *yikyī namshe* or *yikyī nampar shepa* (*yid kyī rnam [par] shes [pa]*).

^d Skt. *pañcadvārajñāna*; Tib. *gongai namshe* or *gongai nampar shepa* (Wylie, *sgo lnga'i rnam [par] shes [pa]*).

^e Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Pāli *kilesāvaraṇa*; Tib. *nyöndrib* or *nyönmongpai dribpa* (Wylie, *nyon [mongs pa'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 煩惱障 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎozhàng*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³-chang⁴*).

^f Wylie, *sems 'dzin*—lit. mental fixation or mental concentration.

^g Wylie, *ru shan*. The full name of these practices is *khorde rushen chywewa* (Wylie, *'khor 'das ru shan phye ba*): distinguishing between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

^h Wylie, *had de ba*.

At any rate, the recurrence of this process throughout our daily life shows that *samsāra*, rather than being continuous, is constantly arising and developing.)

MAHĀYĀNA VERSION OF THE THIRD NOBLE TRUTH

As we have seen, in the Canon Pāli and in the whole of the Hīnayāna the Third Noble Truth is *nirvāṇa*, whereas in the Mahāyāna Canon and in all higher vehicles it consists in Buddhahood—i.e. in the irreversible establishment of *nonstatic nirvāṇa*.^a

According to canonical texts of the First Promulgation and to the Theravāda and Vatsiputriya schools of the Hīnayāna, *nirvāṇa* alone is unproduced, uncontrived, uncompounded and unconditioned,^b for all samsaric phenomena are compounded, or conditioned, or produced, or contrived.^c The Sarvāstivādins, which also pertain to the Hīnayāna, for their part hold all that is produced, or compounded, or conditioned, or contrived,^d to exhibit the four characteristics that they attribute to all that pertains to the latter category listed in most of their Abhidharma texts, including Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*: arising / birth;^e subsistence / maturation;^f decay / senescence;^g and impermanence, which in this context means disintegration / death.^{h240} However, this list was produced because the Sarvāstivādins needed to explain how those factors that the school asserted to subsist through past, present, and future, nonetheless seemed to undergo change. The general Buddhist explanation is that *all that originates from the conjunction of causes and conditions, or from interdependent arisings*, is produced, and/or compounded, and/or conditioned, and/or contrived and thus impermanent.ⁱ And since all that arises does so as the result of the conjunction of causes and conditions, or of interdependent arisings, it is evident that all that *arises* at some point is necessarily *arisen*, or compounded, or conditioned, or produced, or contrived. And, in fact, it is logically evident that whatever has a beginning necessarily must have an end.²⁴¹ The

^a Skt. *apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. minepai myangde (Wylie, *mi gnas pa'i myang 'das*); Ch. 無住涅槃 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *wúzhù nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²*).

^b Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Tib. dümache (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^d Skt. *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa* / *caturlakṣaṇa*; Tib. duchekyi tsennyi zhi (Wylie, *'du byas kyi mtshan nyid bzhi*); Ch. 四相 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *sìxiāng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-hsiang¹*).

^e Skt. and Pāli *jāti[h]*; Tib. kyewa (Wylie, *skye ba*); Ch. 生 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *shēng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹*).

^f Skt. *sthiti*; Pāli *ṭhiti*; Tib. nepa (Wylie, *gnas pa*); Ch. 住 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhù*; Wade-Giles, *chu⁴*).

^g Skt. and Pāli *jarā*; Tib. gawa (Wylie, *rga ba*); Ch. 老 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *lǎo*; Wade-Giles, *lao³*). “Senescence” is the process of aging with the decay it entails.

^h Skt. *anityatā*; Pāli *anicca*; Tib. mitakpa (Wylie, *mi rtag pa*); Ch. 無常 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *wúcháng*; Wade-Giles *wu²-ch'ang²*): the condition of being impermanent (Skt. *anitya*).

ⁱ Same as preceding footnote.

paradox is that according to the Hīnayāna in general *nirvāṇa* arises at some point—which implies that, like the whole of the phenomena of *saṃsāra*, the metaphenomena of *nirvāṇa*²⁴² must be *arisen*, and/or compounded, and/or conditioned, and/or produced, and/or contrived—and hence impermanent.

As noted in a previous section, none of the Buddhist teachings was taught as the Buddha’s own view:^a all of them were taught as *views for others to uphold*^b—or, in other words, as *reasons acknowledged by the opponent only*^c (for the one who makes them does not take them to be true) or *other-directed assertions*.^d This, however, does not mean that all Buddhist teachings are equally valid, for some texts express meanings that are provisional^e with regard to other texts that are asserted to be of definitive meaning^f with regard to the former. And according to the Mahāyānasūtras the texts of the First Promulgation were of provisional meaning, for they were intended to help beings of lower capacity assimilate those among the principles of the Buddha *dharma* that, rather than scaring them away from it, would allow them to establish a positive relationship with it. (The categories of provisional and definitive meaning are applied to canonical sources only; the teachings of schools are classified simply into lower and higher. Hence the schools of the Sanskrit Hīnayāna that posit several types of unmade, unconditioned, uncompounded or uncontrived phenomena,²⁴³ as well as the Cittamātra School of the Mahāyāna, which does the same,²⁴⁴ since their teachings are addressed to beings of lower capacity, are “lower” schools—even though all Mahāyāna schools, including the Cittamātra, are much “higher” than all Hīnayāna schools.)

However, the Buddhist teachings as a rule claim that *saṃsāra* has no beginning yet has an end, whereas *nirvāṇa* has a beginning but no end. This seems contradictory, and in order to understand why it is *not* so it is mandatory to resort to the teachings of higher vehicles and paths, beginning, from lower to higher, with the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine of the homonymous *sūtras* and related commentaries; then going a step higher with the doctrines of the vajra vehicles; and reaching the peak with those of Dzogchen Atiyoga.

In fact, contradicting the views of the First Promulgation canonical texts and the Hīnayāna with regard to the produced, and/or compounded, and/or conditioned, and/or contrived, and the unconditioned, uncompounded, uncontrived and unmade, the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* and related commentaries assert all entities of both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* to share a single nature—namely the unmade, uncompounded, unborn, unconditioned, unproduced and uncontrived Awake Buddha-nature. However, in the *sūtras* and commentaries in question a doctrine of Buddha-nature as potency is mixed with the doctrine of the Buddha-nature as act. For example, in the most acclaimed of

^a Skt. *svamata*; Tib. ranglug (Wylie, *rang lugs*).

^b Skt. *paramata*; Tib. zhenlug (Wylie, *gzhan lugs*).

^c Skt. *praprasiddhānumāna*; Tib. zhendragkyi jesu pagpa (Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*) or zhenla drakpai jepag (Wylie, *gzhan la grags pa'i rjes dpag*).

^d Tib. zhenngo khelen (Wylie, *gzhan ngo khas len*): these are assertions propounding reasonings based on what others and only others take as established (Skt. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. zhendragkyi jesu pagpa [Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*], etc.)

^e Skt. *neyārtha*; Tib. drangdön (Wylie, *drang don*); Ch. 不了義 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *bùliǎoyì*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-liao³-i⁴*).

^f Skt. *nītārtha*; Tib. ngedön (Wylie, *nges don*); Ch. 了義 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *liǎoyì*; Wade-Giles, *liao³-i⁴*).

all such commentaries—namely the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* or *Uttaratantraśāstra*^a—one of the examples illustrating the Awake Buddha-nature is that of the sun that has never ceased shining (meaning that the Buddha-nature is always *actual* Buddhahood) yet is temporally covered by clouds that stand for delusive obstructions^b and karmic propensities^c—and in particular for the hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized contents of thought—that in *saṃsāra* conceal and obstruct the Buddha-nature, which is not created by causes and conditions and hence is *not impermanent*. Moreover, the *rūpakāya* (i.e. the *nirmāṇakāya* plus the *saṃbhogakāya*) is said to be immanent in the *dharmakāya* rather than having to be *produced* by completing the collection of merits,^d as stated by many Mahāyāna sources. However, others of the examples imply Buddhahood to arise from causes and conditions, which for its part implies the Buddha-nature not to be actual Buddhahood—one of these representing with a seed the Buddha-nature and with a tree the attainment of Buddhahood as the Fruit of the Path. And if Buddhahood were to arise from causes and conditions then it would be produced, and/or contrived, and/or compounded, and/or conditioned—and therefore impermanent. (Note that among the philosophical interpretations of these scriptures, the soundest is Mahāmādhyaṃaka’s—at least if this term is understood the way I do in a recent work and a probable future one,^e in which the absence of substances other than the true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality posited by this school is not taken to imply that the condition in question is *existent* or, far less, *hypostatically / inherently existent*.²⁴⁵ The reason why this is so is probably that rather than being based solely on Mahāyāna sources it is also based on Vajrayāna texts)

Also the *Vajra* vehicles acknowledge the produced, compounded, conditioned or contrived experience of phenomena proper to *saṃsāra* to be an effect of the *avidyā* that both conceals and distorts the true, common nature of all phenomena of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, of all subjects and all objects, and in general of all experiences. Yet it refers to the true, uncontrived, unmade, uncompounded and unconditioned condition of both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, as the *Vajra*-nature, in which according to these vehicles all of the aspects of Buddhahood and qualities of *nirvāṇa* are inherent²⁴⁶—thus fitting the example of the sun that is covered by the clouds rather than that of the seed and its fruit. In fact, it is because nonstatic *nirvāṇa* is the reGnition and unhindered, masterful functioning (of) the unconditioned, unmade, uncompounded and unborn^f true condition of everything, which has been perfectly manifest and actual since beginningless time independently of its being concealed and hindered in *saṃsāra* or its being evident and

^a Tib. *Gyü lama* (Wylie, *rgyud bla ma*); Skt. title in full: (*Ratnagoṭravibhāgamahāyānauttaratantra*.) According to Tibetan sources, the root verses are by Maitreya[nātha] (Tib. Jampa [Gönpo]; Wylie, byams pa [mgon po]) and the commentary by Asaṅga; according to Chinese sources, both texts are by Sthiramati.

^b Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^c Skt. *vāsanā* Tib. *bagchag* (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch¹i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch¹i⁴*).

^d Skt. *puṇya*; Pāli *puñña*; Tib. *sönam* (Wylie, *bsod nams*); Ch. 福 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fú*; Wade-Giles, *fu²*).

^e Capriles (in press 1), in Chöphel & Capriles (in press), and the upcoming revised and corrected, definitive edition in print of Capriles (2004), should it be prepared and published.

^f Pāli and Skt. *ajāta*; Tib. *makye* (Wylie, *ma skyes*) or *kyeme* (Wylie, *skyes med*). Nāgārjuna used mainly the term unorigination (Skt. *anutpāda* [synonym of *anutpatti*]; Tib. *makyepa* [Wylie, *ma skyes pa*]; Ch. 無生 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúshēng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-sheng¹*).

unhindered in *nirvāṇa*, that when nonstatic *nirvāṇa*^a consolidates in a definitive and irreversible manner—i.e., when it is what the Mahāyāna calls unsurpassable, complete Awakening^b—it offers a true, definitive, irreversible solution to the distressful cycle that is *samsāra*. Thus the Tantric conception of the Vajra-nature is clearly superior to that of the Buddha-nature as explained in the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* and the related commentaries.

As to the outer Tantric vehicles (Kriyātantra, Ubhayatantra / Cāryatantra^c and Yogatantra), the deity is deemed to be the manifestation, on the relative plane, of the absolute nature of the *dharmakāya* beyond birth and cessation, and so the relative is the manifestation of the unconditioned nature and the very basis of the Path, rather than being merely an impure, conditioned vision to be overcome. However, their method is based on the principle of purification, which undeniably implies the nature in question to be tainted and in need of purification when in *samsāra*. This is evidenced by their practices, which involve consuming only so-called “white” foodstuffs (thus avoiding many substances deemed impure), bathing and changing clothes several times a day, and so on—which, by the way, also reinforces the illusory dualisms of self and other, of pure and impure, etc.

For their part, middling Tantric vehicles (in the ancient or Nyingma tradition, Mahāyogatantra; in the new or Sarma traditions, Anuttarayogatantra) deem our vision to be impure and teach us to artificially transform it into pure vision, and require that the passions are transformed into the facets of primordial gnosis that they originally are—thus implying that in order to attain Awakening it is imperative to change the natural way of manifesting of the Vajra-nature. Moreover, they require that great efforts be made on the Path in order to reach the Fruit, thus implying our actionless and effortless, self-perfect and spontaneous condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection (i.e. of Dzogchen) to be attained through effort and thus involving a discontinuity as well as a incongruity between the nature of the Path and that of the Fruit. And if there is no continuity—or, worse still, is there is an incongruity—between Base, Path and Fruit, then there is no Tantra—i.e. there is no continuity^d—and the Fruit is something that newly arises and therefore it must necessarily be *produced* (and/or contrived, and/or conditioned, and/or compounded),^e and therefore impermanent.

Finally, the highest Tantric vehicle in the ancient or Nyingma tradition, which

^a Skt. *apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. minepai myangde (Wylie, *mi gnas pa'i myang 'das*); Ch. 無住涅槃 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúzhù nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²*).

^b Skt. *anuttarāsamyaksambodhi*; Tib. **yangdak par yongsu dzogpai changchub** (Wylie, *yang dag par yongs su rdzogs pa'i byang chub*); Ch. 阿耨多罗三藐三菩提 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *ānòuduōluó sānmǐào sānpútí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-nou⁴-to¹-luo² san¹-miao³ san¹-p'u²-t'i²*).

^c Ubhayatantra is this vehicle's Skt. name in the ancient or Nyingma system, whereas Cāryatantra is its Skt. name in the new or Sarma schools.

^d The Skt. term Tantra means “woof.” However, its Tibetan translation is gyü (Wylie, *rgyud*), which is the term for the woolen threads used for stringing Buddhist rosaries, making carpets and so on, and which has the sense of “continuity.” Moreover, both the Skt. and Tib. terms imply the sense of the Skt. word *prabandha*, which refers to luminosity, and hence Tantra is a “continuity of luminosity.” For its part, the best-known Chinese is 目次 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *mùcì*; Wade-Giles, *mu⁴-tz'u⁴*); according to the Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (López & Buswell, 2014), the Ch. is 檀特羅 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *tántèluó*; Wade-Giles, *t'an²-t'e⁴-luo²*).

^e Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli *sankhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

is called Anuyogatantra, conceives the Buddha-nature exactly in the same way as the teachings of Dzogchen Atiyoga, which as will be shown in due time distinguish two or three aspects in it—which, when two of them are distinguished, are primordial purity,^a which is emptiness, and spontaneous perfection,^b which implies that all is naturally perfect as it (is) and also that involves perfect spontaneous processes, including those of self-rectification that will be considered below. It is asserted that the methods of this vehicle, like Dzogchen Atiyoga, make use of the spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification^c aspect of the Base, and that this is the reason why visualization is applied in an instantaneous way. However, also here there is a need to artificially transform one's vision into pure vision, and the passions into the facets of primordial gnosis that they originally are—thus implying that in order to attain Awakening it is imperative to change the natural way of manifesting of the Vajra-nature. Moreover, its methods are based on action rather than on actionless systemic activities, which is how the principle of spontaneous perfection works in Dzogchen Atiyoga, and the Fruit is viewed as the result of a cause. And this involves a problem similar to that of the middling Tantric vehicles: they imply our actionless, effortless, self-perfect, spontaneous condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection (i.e. of Dzogchen) to be attained by action and thus involve a discontinuity as well as an incongruity between the nature of the Path and that of the Fruit. And, once more, if there is no continuity—or, worse still, is there is an incongruity—between Base, Path and Fruit, then there is no Tantra—i.e. there is no continuity—and the Fruit newly arises and thus it must be *produced*, and/or contrived, and/or conditioned, and/or compounded and therefore impermanent.

The above is no more than a brief summary of the views of the main Buddhist vehicles, which will be discussed in some detail in the discussion of the Fourth Noble Truth, in which it will be shown that only Dzogchen Atiyoga is perfectly aware that the Buddha-nature—which in terms of the triad of Base, Path and Fruit is the Base—is actual Buddhahood, for only this vehicle warns that the latter cannot be made to occur as the Fruit by means of purification, transformation, effort or action, for then it would be compounded, or conditioned, or produced, or contrived. Moreover, it will also be shown that only Dzogchen Atiyoga achieves the Fruit of Buddhahood by means that at no point involve either purification, transformation or action, for all of its methods are based on the principle of spontaneous perfection / self-rectification^d that is free from action: spontaneous systemic activities are activated that lead hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized contents of the main three types of thought to self-liberate each and every time they arise, just as they arise, until all propensities for them to arise are neutralized or burned out and hence *samsāra* arises no more.

Likewise, in this vehicle and path the general Buddhist principle according to which *samsāra* has no beginning but has an end, whereas *nirvāṇa* has a beginning but no end, is shown not to be a contradiction: the Base (is) the Buddha-nature that (is) our true condition and that since beginningless time has been in the condition of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*, yet since beginningless time it has been concealed by temporary, delusive

^a Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^b Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^c Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^d Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

obstructions^a and karmic propensities.^b It is then that there is a need for a Path, which in Dzogchen lies simply in the spontaneous liberation into rigpa of the hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized contents of the main three types of thought, which progressively neutralizes all delusive obstructions^c and karmic propensities,^d so that in the long run they disappear—upon which *saṃsāra* ceases and the Fruit is attained. However, *saṃsāra* never existed, as all phenomena of *saṃsāra* are illusory and the Base has always been in a condition of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*; therefore, the cessation of *saṃsāra* happens only illusorily and by no means in truth, and hence it is not true that *saṃsāra* has an end. Likewise, when nonstatic *nirvāṇa* arises, it does not really arise, as it (had been) always inherent in the Base, which since beginningless time had been in the condition of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*—yet it is stated *in a for-others way* (i.e. as *others' view*,^e or as *reasons acknowledged by the opponent only*,^f or as *other-directed assertions*^g), and hence without taking the statement to be true, that at that point in time the would-be Buddhas Awaken, attaining Buddhahood.

In spite of the above, Buddhist vehicles lower than Dzogchen Atiyoga *do work as means for attaining their Fruits*, for they all involve tricks (so to speak) that make *avidyā* trip and collapse, upon which it is possible that the Buddha-nature be revealed spontaneously. This means that, even though each vehicle has its own principle, which will be discussed in the consideration of the Fourth Noble Truth, when they work they all do so on the basis of the principle of spontaneous liberation—which, as noted in the discussion of Śākyamuni's story, was how the historical Buddha's Awakening took place, for he saw the morning star, without any idea that this would be a door to his Awakening, and the Fruit manifested spontaneously, as is proper to Dzogchen Atiyoga. However, whereas Śākyamuni had to wait for luminosity to arise whenever it would, Dzogchen Ati practitioners, rather than waiting for luminosity to arise, apply methods that work as contributory conditions that facilitate the spontaneous arising of inherent luminosity.^h

However, all of the above will be considered where it pertains, which is the discussion of the Fourth Noble Truth. With regard to the Third Truth, which as noted above in all higher vehicles is held to be Buddhahood—i.e. unsurpassable, complete Awakening—it must be noted that it involves that which is often rendered as Buddha-

^a Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^b Skt. *vāsanā*; Tib. *bagchag* (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch'i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch'i⁴*).

^c Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^d Skt. *vāsanā*; Tib. *bagchag* (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch'i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch'i⁴*).

^e Skt. *paramata*; Tib. *zhenlug* (Wylie, *gzhan lugs*).

^f Skt. *prapasiddhānumāna*; Tib. *zhendragkyi jesu pagpa* (Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*) / *zhenla drakpai jepak* (Wylie, *gzhan la grags pa'i rjes dpag*).

^g Tib. *zhenngo khelen* (Wylie, *gzhan ngo khas len*: these are assertions propounding reasonings based on what others and only others take as established (Skt. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. *zhendragkyi jesu pagpa* [Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*], etc.)

^h Tib. *rangjung rangsel* (Wylie, *rang byung rang gsal*).

omniscience,^a which for its part involves two primordial gnoses that, in a Mahāyāna context, may be suitably rendered as *gnosis that reveals the true condition*^b—for it is the awareness that reveals, without concepts and hence in the absence of the subject-object divide, the true condition of phenomena^c—and *gnosis of variety*^d—which refers to awareness of the countless distinctions at the root of the multiplicity of phenomena and which, when it is fully developed, allows the individual to know all that there is to be known in the deluded realm of relative truth, including the relations between the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena, which (is) *absolute*, and each *relative* phenomenon, and between the different *relative* phenomena.

The point is that, since the various vehicles have different aims, and since the Path has to be congruent with the Fruit,²⁴⁷ naturally they differ as to the methods to be applied in order to achieve their aims. However, in all “higher vehicles” the *purpose of self* is accomplished by means of the *gnosis that reveals the true condition*, which nonconceptually and hence nondually unveils the unproduced, uncontrived, unmade, unconditioned, uncompounded, original single nature of all that in *samsāra* appears as produced, and/or conditioned, and/or compounded, and/or made, for each and every time this happens, the mix of unawareness and delusion called *avidyā* and the *duḥkha* inherent in it dissolves and the propensities for the two of them to arise are neutralized to a small extent—so that in the long run both of them are totally neutralized or burned out. For its part, the *purpose of others* is accomplished by the gradual development, as a result of the repeated occurrence of the *gnosis that reveals the true condition*, of the *gnosis of variety* that allows Buddhas to help all sentient beings overcome both *avidyā* and *duḥkha*. Beginning with the Third Path and First Level of the bodhisattva Path and prior to the attainment of the Fruit of Buddhahood, these two gnosis alternate, for the *gnosis that reveals the true condition* occurs in—or constitutes—the Contemplation state^e of a higher bodhisattva,^f a yogin, a siddha or a mahāsiddha, whereas the gnosis of variety occurs and gradually develops in the post-Contemplation state:^g although the true condition cannot be remembered, for it is realized when perception in terms of concepts (which depend on memory) dissolves—and, moreover, as noted repeatedly, no concept can embrace the true condition—the fluid alternation of the Contemplation

^a *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒngzhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^b Skt. *yathāvadbhāvikajñāna*; Tib. ji tawa khyenpai yeshe (Wylie, *ji lta ba mkhyen pa'i ye shes*); Ch. 如理智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúlǐzhì*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-li³-chih⁴*).

^c Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chönyi (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*).

^d Skt. *yāvadbhāvikajñāna*; Tib. ji nyepa khyenpai yeshe (Wylie, *ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes*); Ch. 如量智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúliángzhì*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-liang²-chih⁴*).

^e Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. nyamzhak (Wylie, *mnyam bzhak*); Ch. 等引 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^f Skt. *āryabodhisattva*; Tib. changphak (Wylie, *byang 'phags*) or changchub sempa phagpa (Wylie, *byang chub sems dpa' 'phags pa*): one who has attained or surpassed the Third Path—that of Seeing (Skt. *darśanamārga*; Tib. thonglam [Wylie, *mtshong lam*]) or the first level—the one called Joyous (Skt. *pramuditābhūmi* Tib. rabtu ganwai sa [Wylie, *rab tu dga' ba'i sa*]). *Āryabodhisattvas* constitute the *āryasamgha* (Tib. phagpai gendün [Wylie, *'phags pa'i dge 'dun*]; Ch. 聖眾 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèngzhòng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng⁴-chung⁴*) or 聖僧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèngsēng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng⁴-seng¹*).

^g Skt. *pr̥ṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. jethob (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*).

and post-Contemplation states results in a profound post-Contemplation understanding of the relationship between the true condition and all the delusive, relative phenomena of *samsāra*, and among each of the multifarious phenomena of *samsāra* and the rest, while by the same token yielding an operational wisdom that is not subject to the law of reverse effect considered above: this fluid alternation results in that which Gregory Bateson called Learning III^a and which yields the relative systemic wisdom, with its *knowledge of relationships* and high operational capabilities, proper to the *gnosis of variety*. Moreover, the *gnosis that reveals the true condition* unveils the emptiness of those phenomena that are not human beings, which is the *conditio sine qua non* of Mahāyāna realizations—for otherwise the *scope* of wisdom would be limited by the belief in the self-existence of those phenomena.²⁴⁸

It is when Buddhahood is attained as a result of all the learning and unlearning achieved by the above means that the two gnoses manifest simultaneously. However, contrarily to the views of one revered Tibetan Master and his disciples, the fact that the *gnosis of variety* functions in Buddhas does *not* imply that absolute truth and relative truth manifest simultaneously and that therefore Buddhas perceive relative phenomena or that their awareness involves a subject-object duality: a Buddha does *not* perceive sentient beings to be helped, a Buddha that helps beings, or an action of helping, for his or her acts are of the kind called “action and fruit of action devoid of the threefold directional thought-structure,”^b which does not involve the subject-object duality, and hence the teachings that arise in response to the needs of others are offered without taking their contents as either true or false: they are offered as *others’ view*^c (i.e. without *own view*^d) and as such are that which is known as *other-directed assertions*.^e

Thus the *gnosis that reveals the true condition* is indispensable for achieving not only the benefit of self, but the benefit of others as well, because as noted above it is the constant repetition of this gnosis that gradually dissolves the *avidyā* that distorts our experience, just too often causing us to achieve the opposite of what we intend to achieve, while by the same token yielding Learning III and therefore and all-embracing knowledge and relative systemic wisdom, with its extraordinary capacity to masterfully manage relative reality. In brief, the deluded cannot lead the deluded beyond delusion, for when the blind leads the blind, both can fall into any abyss.

As we have seen, so far as we are affected by the basic delusion called *avidyā*, we experience ourselves as separate, autonomous, substantial nuclei of consciousness at a distance from the continuum of absolute plenitude and completeness that is the single nature of all entities—as a result of which we experience the lack of plenitude and completeness that is a central element in the *duḥkha* that is the First Noble Truth, and value all that we imagine may fill our lack. Contrariwise, Awake Ones, who do not

^a The Logical Categories of Learning and Communication, in Bateson (1971).

^b Tib. khorsum nampar mitokpe ledang drebu (Wylie, *'khor gsum rnam par mi rtog pa'i las dang 'bras bu*).

^c Skt. *paramata*; Tib. zhenlug (Wylie, *gzhan lugs*).

^d Skt. *svamata*; Tib. ranglug (Wylie, *rang lugs*).

^e Tib. zhenngo khelen (Wylie, *gzhan ngo khas len*): assertions propounding reasonings based on what others and only others take as established (Skt. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. zhendragkyi jesu pagpa [Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*]), etc. They are defined in contrast with reasonings that express what the proponent him or herself takes as established (Skt. *svaprasiddha*).

feel they are nuclei of consciousness at a distance from our common, original condition of *total plenitude and completeness* (*Dzogchen* when its primordial purity aspect is emphasized),²⁴⁹ and who therefore (are) themselves absolute plenitude and value, do not attribute any special value to any entity, activity or condition. When the Mongol emperor of China Godan Khan asked the Master Sakya Paṇḍita^a who was the richest person in Tibet, the Lama answered with the name of a *yogin* who lived naked in a cave in the mountains, whose only possession was a small provision of roasted barley flour: this yogin was free from the sensation of lack that is inherent in delusion. After a Nepalese disciple offered Guru Chöwang six Tibetan ounces of gold powder, the Master threw the powder into the air above a rushing stream, saying “what should I want gold for, when the whole world is gold for me?”²⁵⁰ Thus it is not difficult to see that progress on the Path of Awakening would allow people to feel totally fulfilled and attain absolute plenitude in frugality—which is indispensable if our species is to survive its present predicament. As Padmasambhava of Oḍḍiyāna put it:^b

A man is satisfied not by the quantity of food, but by the absence of greed.

We have also seen that, so far as we are affected by *avidyā*, we take ourselves to be separate, autonomous and substantial nuclei of consciousness that, on the basis of our own selfish interests, or of a set of values that is supposed to check the drives that issue from these selfish interests and keep society from becoming a war of each against all,²⁵¹ must choose a conduct to adopt and then dualistically and contrivedly implement this choice. This is the root cause of evil, for, as we have seen, the illusion of being separate selves automatically begets selfishness, which begets evil impulses that then are made doubly evil by the archetype and dynamics of the shadow discussed above, and that must be contained—yet being subject to the law of reverse effect, our attempts to contain or destroy evil reinforce it; etc. As we have also seen, it also gives rise to self-impediment, for the subject interferes with its subjectivity by establishing a link of being (cf. endnote 219) with the entity that is acting, which it takes as object; it judges the individual’s performance and tries to control and correct it while it is carried out; etc. Moreover, it is a source of anguish, which in contrast with the fear of facing unwanted events that do not depend on oneself, J.-P. Sartre defined as fear in face of one’s freedom: it is fear of producing unwanted events as a result of one’s decisions (which according to Sartre we elude by means of the self-deceit he called bad faith). Etc.

Contrariwise, Awake individuals *no longer* believe themselves to be nuclei of experience and agency separate from the flow of the single, true nature of all entities; therefore, they no longer control their behavior dualistically and hence become selfless channels allowing for the free manifestation of the consummate flow of our original *condition of total perfection* (*Dzogchen*, when its spontaneous perfection aspect is emphasized).²⁵² Since they are free from both selfishness and the “reverse law” that causes beings to give rise to evil through their attempts to avert evil and give rise to good, and since they have no dualistic self-consciousness and hence are not subject to self-hindering, their behavior is beneficial to all sentient beings.

^a Sapaṇ: Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (Wylie, sa skya paṇ ḍi ta kun dga’ rgyal mtshan): 1182–1251

^b Yeshe Tsogyäl (English, 1978).

Since a Buddha is an open channel for the unobstructed flow of the spontaneity of our true condition, which is no longer subject to the possibility of self-encumbering, her or his actions are consummately, unsurpassably skillful. Thus if one who has this realization is experienced in art or craftsmanship, he or she will be able to produce incomparable works of art or handicrafts without being subject to the possibility of self-encumbering. The *Zhuāngzǐ*^a expresses this as follows:^b

Chuí the artisan was able to draw circles by hand better than with the compass. His fingers seemed to accommodate so easily to the thing on which he was working that he didn't need to focus his attention. His mental faculties thus remained one (i.e. integrated) and thus suffered no impediment.

If the above artisan had needed to focus his attention on the object he was working on, and on the hands he was working with, and had needed to use his attention to control his activity, like the centipede of the poem cited in the previous chapter, he would have suffered self-obstruction.²⁵³ Another example from the same source is that of a butcher (sometimes rendered as cook) who never had to sharpen his knife, for it always cut the meat through the joints without even scraping or touching the bones. At any rate, the one who has become firmly established in the Awake state, becoming an unimpeded channel for the spontaneous flow of the selfless activities issuing from the true, single nature of all entities, will not be obstructed by self-consciousness even when he or she is observed by the most fastidious, critical, severe, respected and fearsome witness; if, as in the above examples, such an individual is skillful in a plastic art or in craftsmanship, he or she will be able to produce masterpieces right before the latter's eyes.

Concerning the second of the above mentioned results of Awakening—the fact that we get rid both of the evil that issues from selfishness and of the further evil resulting from trying to contain the evil that issues from selfishness—the ex-president of India, S. Radhakrishnan, stated:^c

Laws and regulations are necessary for [common human beings]. But for those who have risen above their selfish egos... there is no possibility of evil doing in them... Till the spiritual life is won, the law of morality appears to be an external command which man has to obey with effort and pain. But when the light is obtained it becomes the internal life of the spirit, working itself out unconsciously and spontaneously. The saint's action is an absolute surrender to the spontaneity of spirit, and is not an unwilling obedience to externally imposed laws. We have the free outpouring of an unselfish spirit that does not calculate the rewards of action or the penalties of omission.

Since the Awake Ones are fully aware that so long as we believe ourselves to be separate selves and experience ourselves as such we are possessed by selfishness, and know very well that our attempts to contain the ensuing often potentiate this evil,

^a 莊子; Wade-Giles, Chuang¹-tzu³.

^b Giles (1980; in the Chinese ed. of 1926, p. 242). Quoted in Watts (1956, p. 46). (In the original the name of the artisan was in Wade-Giles transliteration, which is Ch'ui; here Hànyǔ Pīnyīn was used, assuming the character was 垂 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Chuí; Wade-Giles, Ch'ui²). For a more recent version see Watson, B. (trans. 1968).

^c Radhakrishnan, S. (1923/1929, Vol. I, pp. 228-9).

their priority is, rather than providing us with moral guidelines, to help the unveiling in us of the universal, nondual, original condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection (Dzogchen), the spontaneity of which consummately responds to the needs of self and others, flawlessly accomplishing whatever is needed. Thus there can be no doubt that only progress on the Path of Awakening would give rise to a truly virtuous conduct—which in Daoism (Taoism) is said to flow as a function of the *dé*^a of *dào*^b—that, if generalized throughout our species, would allow it to enter a new Golden Age, Era of Perfection or Age of Truth.^c

The point is that, as noted above, Buddha-activity is a natural function of the spontaneous perfection^d aspect of Dzogchen-*qua*-Base that works as *action and fruit of action devoid of the threefold thought-structure*,^e which therefore does not involve the subject-object duality and thus is free from self-consciousness, intention or contrivance and is consummately skillful because it is not subject to the self-encumbering proper to self-conscious, intentional action, and which, being free from selfishness and from *samsāra*'s “reverse law,” effectively fulfills the purpose of both self and others—thus corresponding to the spontaneous flow of selfless activities that Daoism (Daoism) and Chán Buddhism call *action through nonaction*.^f As the term makes it clear, activities of this kind simply cannot be contrivedly achieved or intentionally produced, for they are uncontrived / unproduced / unconditioned / uncompounded: they naturally flow when our uncompounded, unconditioned, unmade and uncontrived original condition of *total completeness / plenitude and perfection*^g is neither veiled nor obstructed by the basic delusion called *avidyā* that is the source of all contrivance and intentionality.

To conclude, it must be clear by now that Awakening, being free of selfishness, is not subject to the short-sighted drive proper to ordinary, deluded people, that leads us to appropriate whatever we think would benefit us, to destroy whatever we believe could harm us, etc. In fact, as noted above, advancement on the Path of Awakening gradually mitigates our sense of lack, whereas Awakening yields absolute plenitude no matter how frugal our way of life may be. Likewise, advancement on the Path gradually mitigates the drive to destroy what is ordinarily experienced as threatening, and Awakening puts an end to perception of phenomena as other to ourselves and of ourselves as beings threatened by menacing phenomena and hence puts to the drive to destroy elements of the worldwide ecosystem. And since it involves Total Space-Time-Awareness, Awakening is absolutely free from the perceptual fragmentation illustrated with the story of the men and the elephant and the rest of the parables discussed in the preceding chapter. Therefore, the generalization of development on the Path of Awakening would remove the deepest causes of ecological crisis.

^a 道; Wade-Giles, *te*².

^b 德; Wade-Giles, *tao*⁴.

^c *kṛtayuga* (Tib. dzogden [Wylie, *rdzogs ldan*]; Ch. 圓滿時 (abridged 圓滿时) (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn shí*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ shih³*) or *satyayuga* (Tib. denden [Wylie, *bden ldan*]; Ch. 黃金時代 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *huángjīn shídài*; Wade-Giles, *huang²-chin¹ shih²-tai⁴*).

^d Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^e Tib. khorsum nampar mitokpe ledang drebu (Wylie, *'khor gsum rnam par mi rtog pa'i las dang 'bras bu*).

^f 為無為; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wéiwúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wei²-wu²-wei²*.

^g Tib. Dzogchen or Dzogpa Chenpo (Wylie, *rdzogs [pa] chen [po]*), which renders the term Santimaha (in Oḍḍiyāna language) and purportedly also renders the Skt. Mahāsāndhi.

AWAKENING VS TRANSPERSONAL, HOLOTROPIC AND NEARLY HOLISTIC COUNTERFEITS

In the brief story of Śākyamuni’s life in the first chapter of this book we saw that according to tradition the two teachers he followed had developed the ability to enter into and dwell in states that are very easily mistaken for the Third Noble Truth, and that the would-be Buddha quit them precisely because he realized that, just as not all that glitters is gold, not all the results of yogic practices and spiritual meditations were the Awakening he sought. Thus, in order to help others avert taking produced, contrived, conditioned samsaric absorptions for Awakening, it was necessary for him to show very precisely what these produced, contrived, conditioned states are like, and how do they differ from Awakening, which is the uncaused, uncontrived, unproduced, unconditioned and as such definitive, irreversible disclosure of the total completeness and plenitude proper to our uncompounded, unconditioned, original condition, and the unhindered, consummate functionality of the spontaneous perfection of this condition. To this end, the first step must be learning to distinguish between: (1) what Buddhists call “Awakening;” (2) those transpersonal states that pertain to *samsāra* but in which only the first aspect of *avidyā* is affecting human experience, as the other ones have not yet become active, and hence the individual remains in the neutral condition of the base-of-all, where there is no hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the contents of thought and hence there is no subject-object duality, yet the nondual Awake, undistorted awareness called *rigpa* has not manifested and, since the motility of awareness is arrested and, moreover, primordial gnosis and wisdom are lacking, there is no way to help sentient beings; and (3) transpersonal, holotropic states pertaining to fully active *samsāra*, which are *produced* and therefore *conditioned*, and involve *all three or four* aspects or types of the unawareness and delusion called *avidyā*.

(1) The condition of Supreme Sanity that Buddhists call “Awakening” consists in the irreversible disclosure and perfect functionality of our true, original condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection, in which is inherent the Awake, nondual self-awareness that the Dzogchen teachings call *rigpa*, by means of the nonconceptual and therefore nondual reGnition (of) *rigpa*’s own face.^a For this be clearly understood, it must be noted that Buddhist paths and vehicles must necessarily have three aspects, which are the Base, the Path and the Fruit, and that these are differently explained in the different vehicles. In the Dzogchen teachings, the Base is the nondual Awake, undistorted awareness called *nature of mind / essence of mind*^b with all of its unlimited manifesting power, yet without excluding the manifested—which although appearing, is in truth nonexistent. For its part, *rigpa*—a term that is most conspicuous in the Dzogchen teachings—refers to the disclosure, while on the Path or as the Fruit, (of) the true condition of both the nondual Awake awareness through which all phenomena manifest—that which is called the *nature or essence of mind*—and the phenomena that manifest through it, and the unhindered functionality of the nondual Awake awareness

^a Tib. rangngo shepa (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^b Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

in question. The point is that the Base can either be concealed and obstructed by *avidyā* / *marigpa* or unconcealed as *vidyā* / *rigpa*; when it is concealed and obstructed, and thus we are subject to all the distress and shortcomings that constitute the First Noble Truth, we need a Path for removing these and attaining the Fruit in which they manifest no more. In Dzogchen, the Path is no other than the disclosure and functionality of *rigpa* for limited periods while the impediments and stains at the root of *avidyā* and *duḥkha* have not yet been totally neutralized or burned out, and the Fruit is no other than the irreversible disclosure and unhindered functionality of the nondual Awareness that (is) the nature or essence of mind and that constitutes the Base.

Rigpa, or the *dharmakāya* (the mental aspect of Buddhahood), when manifest functions as an all-liberating single gnosis.^a This is so because the *dharmakāya* is free from the subject-object duality and hence functions as a *maṇi* pearl to which none of what is reflected in it can adhere and linger. The point is that, without self-grasping / self-preoccupation^b and without the duality of a grasper and a grasped^c comprehension and experience in terms of hypostasized / reified / valorized thoughts dissolve and therefore thoughts of whichever of the three types discussed in a previous section of this book self-liberate: (A) coarse or discursive, which in Dzogchen contexts I render as *word sound patterns resulting from mental syntheses that convey meanings*^d and that in the context of the Mahāyāna were identified by *ācārya* Dignāga; (B) subtle or intuitive, which in Dzogchen contexts I render as *universal concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings*^e and that in the context of the Mahāyāna were identified by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti; [C] the supersubtle thought that here I render as *threefold directional thought structure*^f and that is identified by Dzogchen and Tantric teachings we well as Third Promulgation *sūtras* such as the *Laṅkāvatāra*. In fact, it is when there is self-grasping / self-preoccupation, and when there is a grasper that holds to the contents of thought as the grasped, that thoughts leave traces and elicit further thoughts, having a continuity in the latter—and it is as the grasper and the grasped dissolve when *rigpa* / the *dharmakāya* manifests, that all thoughts self-liberate and thus do not create propensities. On the contrary, each and

^a Tib. *chikshe kundröl* (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*). I use the term “gnosis” to refer to gnitive events that are not co-gnitive because they do not involve the subject-object duality, and in particular to those that reveal the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena in a nonconceptual way. However, the term may also be applied to conceptual, dualistic cognitive events, for they arise in a nonconceptual, nondual gnosis, introducing the illusion of substantial dualism and plurality.

^b Skt. *ahaṃkāra*; Tib. *ngardzin* (Wylie, *ngar 'dzin*) / Skt. *ātmagraha*; Tib. *dagdzin* (Wylie, *bdag 'dzin*); Ch. 我執 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wǒzhí*; Wade-Giles, *wo³-chih²*) or 我慢 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wǒmàn*; Wade-Giles, *wo³-man⁴*).

^c Skt. *grāhaka-grāhya*; Tib. *dzinzung* (Wylie, *'dzin gzung*). The duality in question arises by virtue of Skt. *grāhyagrāhakavikalpa*; Tib. *sungwa dang dzinpa nampar togpa* (Wylie, *gzung ba dang 'dzin pa'i rnam par rtog pa*); Ch. 所取能取分別 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *suǒqǔ néngqǔ fēnbīé*; Wade-Giles, *so³-ch'ü³ neng²-ch'ü³ fen¹-pieh²*).

^d Skt. *śabdāsāmānya*; Tib. *drachi* (Wylie, *sgra spyi*); Ch. 論聲總 (simplified 论声总) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*). Both Dignāga and the Dzogchen teachings use this same term.

^e Skt. *arthaśāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*). Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and the Dzogchen teachings use this same term.

^f Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. *khorsum* (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

every time they self-liberate, propensities are partially neutralized (the degree to which they are neutralized depending, as noted above, on the intensity of emotional involvement and the height of the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness). It is important to note that, although the term “rigpa” is often taken for a synonym of “primordial gnosis,”^{a254} in the Dzogchen teachings rigpa refers mainly to the all-liberating single gnosis^b that does not arise or cease and that reveals itself in the countless events of primordial gnosis that occur on the Dzogchen Path: rigpa is not an event; those events in which rigpa becomes patent and exhibits its all-liberating quality are what is as a rule called *primordial gnosis*: this is why it is said that there is a single rigpa^c yet there are manifold primordial gnoses.

So far I have been referring to rigpa as the Tibetan translation of *vidyā*. This is due to the fact that I have been explaining *avidyā*, which in Tibetan is marigpa—even though, as explained above, the negative prefix *ma* in marigpa is not the one used in normal categorical negation. And since the Tibetan term marigpa had to be explained in relation to rigpa, I circumscribed myself to the Sanskrit *vidyā* as the Sanskrit term rendered as rigpa. However, rigpa is more often said to be a contraction of the Tibetan term rangrig (in full, rangi rigpa),^d which renders the Sanskrit terms *svasaṃvedana* and *svasaṃvitti[h]*. In Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavāda (which as already noted belongs to the Sūtrayāna^e), these terms can refer to:

- (i) The nondual, nonreflexive, nonpositional and nonthetic Awake awareness wherein and whereby all appearances manifest, as in a mirror or LED screen, which may be said to be a self-awareness if it is made clear that it is so in the nondualistic sense of being a nondual awareness (of) both awareness itself and (of) the appearances that manifest in it and by means of it, and that in *nirvāṇa* it reflects the true condition of reality without any distortion, whereas in active *saṃsāra* reflects delusive, dualistic appearances that are conditioned by hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts—but which even then (is) *in itself* is utterly nonconceptual;
- (ii) The nonconceptual, nondual, undistorted self-awareness (of) the true condition of both that nondual awareness itself and the appearances that manifest in it and through it—which is no other than the nondual Awake awareness called rigpa that manifests in Awakening and in the Contemplation state^f of higher practitioners;^g and
- (iii) The dualistic, reflexive self-consciousness which is aware that one is perceiving, or acting, or thinking, etc. and which therefore includes all types of apperception and of reflexive consciousness. For a detailed discussion of these three senses of rangrig, cf. Capriles, Introductory Study, in Chöphel & Capriles (in press).

In the Dzogchen teachings, however, the term rangrig as a rule refers to the nondual self-awareness that manifests in the state of Dzogchen and that reveals the true

^a Skt. *jñāna*; Tib. *yeshe* (Wylie, *ye shes*); Ch. 智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih*⁴; Jap. *chi*).

^b Tib. *chikshe kundröl* (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*).

^c Tib. *rigpa chikpu* (Wylie, *rig pa gcig pu*).

^d Wylie, *rang [gi] rig [pa]*.

^e Tib. *doi tekpa* (Wylie, Tib. *mdo'i theg pa*).

^f Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* (Wylie, *mnyam bzhaq*); Ch. 等引 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^g Skt. *ārya*; Tib. *phagpa* (Wylie, *'phags pa*); Ch. 聖 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng*⁴).

condition of reality, thus roughly corresponding to the above discussed sense (2) among those the term has in the Pramāṇavāda. This is also roughly the sense the term *naturally manifest primordial gnosis that (is) individually realized through the spontaneous awareness of the primordial, true condition*^a has in probably all versions of Nyingma and Kagyü Mahāmādhyaṃaka and Mādhyamaka Prāsaṅgika (including my own), in which the words *individually realized*—which render the prefix *prat* in Sanskrit and *so so* in Tibetan—may in general be taken to refer to the fact that rigpa manifests in an individual’s mental stream^b without this necessarily affecting other mental streams, which continue to be affected and possessed by *avidyā*.

The same may be said of the Sanskrit prefix *prat* and the Tibetan prefix *so so*, which as noted above I am rendering as *individually realized*, in the term here rendered as *individually realized primordial gnosis of spontaneous Awake awareness (rigpa)*.^c However, in the more specific explanations of this phrase offered by Tibetan Masters, the prefixes in question are said to have a twofold meaning: (1) that the Awake awareness in question is aware (of) all the distinct sensory data without mixing them up, and (2) more important, that rigpa can only be realized by the primordial gnosis that occurs in ourselves and not by virtue of anything external, including the introduction offered by a teacher or the latter’s blessings.^d At any rate, the latter sense implies the general one offered before these two alternatives—namely that when Awake awareness does manifest / is unconcealed in us, it does so only in our mental stream, without affecting other individuals. And indirectly it may be taken to imply that realization of rigpa is completely genuine and certain when we can have access to it without depending on a Master’s Introduction or blessings.

However, some Western teachers and scholars have understood the prefix *so so* or *individually realized* as negating that a single universal awareness manifests in and as all mental streams and is the latter’s true condition, dismissing whichever reference is made to a single universal awareness as a Mind-only^e misunderstanding and distortion. In this way, they feel justified to overlook the abundant statements that run throughout the Tantras of the Series of [the Nature of] Mind^f asserting all sentient beings and all other phenomena to issue from the single source of all experience that they refer to as All Creating King or Kunje Gyalpo^g (a name that Namkhai Norbu & Clemente [1997 / 1999] render as Supreme Source) and to continue to be that same All Creating King throughout their existence. For a series of cites from the *All Creating King Tantra* or *Supreme Source Tantra* and many of other Tantras and texts of the

^a Skt. *pratisaṃvid* (Dorje & Kapstein, in Dūdjom Rinpoche, 1991), *pratyātmagati*, *pratyātmādhigama* or *pratyātmavid* (Brunnhölzl, in Nāgārjuna & IIIrd Karmapa, 2007); Tib. soso ranggi rigpa (Wylie, *so so rang gi rig pa*).

^b Skt. *saṃtāna*; Tib. semgyü (Wylie, *sems rgyud*) or gyün (Wylie, *rgyun*); Ch. 相續 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*); in general used as 心相續 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnxiāngxù*; Wade-Giles *hsin¹-hsiang¹-hsü⁴*).

^c Skt. *pratyātmavedanīyajñāna*; Tib. soso rangrigpai yeshe (Wylie, *so so rang rig pa'i ye shes*).

^d Cf. for example Brunnhölzl, in Nāgārjuna & IIIrd Karmapa, 2007, pp. 64-65.

^e Skt. *Cittamātra*; Tib. Semtsampa (Wylie, *sems tsam pa*); Ch. 唯心 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wéixīn*; Wade-Giles, *wei²-hsin¹*): the Mind-only school of the Mahāyāna.

^f Tib. Semde gyü (Wylie, *sems sde rgyud*); Skt. *Cittavargatantras*.

^g Wylie, *kun byed rgyal po*; Skt. *Kularāja* or *Kulayarāja* (the original was in Oḍḍiyāna *prākṛta*, for which no diacritic marks have been created, as its pronunciation is unknown today—and hence in that language I will write the name as *Kularaja*).

Dzogchen Semde, see the endnote the reference mark for which is at the end of this paragraph.²⁵⁵

Nevertheless, it is not only the Semde Tantras, but *Tantras of all three series of Dzogchen teachings* that make the point that there is no plurality either of minds or of phenomena other than minds. Even Dzogchen Tantras pertaining to the Series of Pith instructions^a make the point that the nonconceptual, nondual Awake awareness is not multiple—outright contradicting those who have misinterpreted the sense of the words *individually realized*^b in terms such as *individually realized primordial gnosis of rigpa*. A Tantra of the Series of Pith instructions, *The mirror of the heart of Vajrasattva*,^c makes this point in a crystal clear way:

In the system of Ati, the Great Perfection,
when one thing is perfect, all is perfect and beyond all conventions.
Since there is no sacred commitment to keep, all lacks integrate themselves in the single,
[sole] spontaneous Awake awareness.
Of a fathomless profundity, it is free from all conventional expressions.
Immutable, it embraces everything within its awareness.
(Being a) *single*, [sole spontaneous Awake awareness], *it could not be multiple*; it is the
supreme Wisdom mind;
(being a) unity disengaged from all things, [its] luminosity, which is nothing in particular, is
the *saṃbhogakāya*.

Obviously, the above should not be taken to mean that there are no manifold mental streams—just as it should not be taken to signify that there is no plurality of mental streams, yet there is an endless plurality of phenomena other than awareness. As Longchen Rabjampa puts it:^d

Everything is subsumed within all-inclusive Awake awareness.
Since there is no phenomenon that is not included in Awake awareness,
the true condition of all phenomena is that of Awake awareness.

Although at first sight the above may seem equal or similar to the Mind-only view, it is utterly different from it. As Longchen Rabjampa expresses it:^e

Let me clearly outline the distinction [between Mind-only and Dzogchen]. In general, when the world of appearances and possibilities, whether [as] *saṃsāra* or *nirvāṇa*, is explained to be Awake awareness, what is meant is that phenomena are alike [in that they do not waver from the single awareness] and manifest naturally as the display, projective energy and adornment of that awareness. [On the basis of this, in Tantras of the Series of the Nature of Mind phenomena have been metaphorically said] to be mind, just as one uses the name ‘sun’ to refer to the rays of the sun when one says, ‘Sit in the midday sun’.

^a Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, *men ngag [gyi] sde*)

^b Tib. so so (Wylie, *so so*); Skt. *prat*.

^c Tib. *Dorje sempa nyinggi melong* (Wylie, *rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long*). Translation based on the French rendering by Philippe Cornu (1995, p. 53).

^d This is one of the stanzas of the root text of Longchenpa's Treasure text (Tib. terma [Wylie, *gter ma*]), the *Chöjing Dzö* (Wylie, *chos dbyings mdzod*). In Longchen Rabjam (2001a, p. 21, and 2001b, p. 53)

^e Longchen Rabjam (1998, pp. 84-87); the translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book.

At any rate, there should be no doubt that there is no plurality of awarenesses, for all Buddhist teachings, from those of the Mahāyāna through those of Dzogchen Ati, unambiguously state that there is only one *dharmakāya*, although there are countless *rūpakāyas* (*sambhogakāyas* and *nirmānakāyas*)—which implies that there is a single, universal nondual Awake awareness, even though it manifests as countless mental streams.^a This point becomes utterly clear in the following passage of a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa:^b

... my *yāna* does not misleadingly assert the existence of things that do not exist. Rather, it determines that all appearances are identityless, nonobjective, and merely delusive appearances—they are revealed as the single Base. So understand this! If each sentient being existed autonomously, then the Buddhas would exist like that, too. In that case, they would be ascertained as being multiple rather than as a single Base.

The same Tantra reads at an earlier point:^c

Rigpa is the self-arising Buddha.

Since Buddha is no other than the state of rigpa, if in each sentient being and in each Buddha there were a separate rigpa, the Buddhas would be manifold rather than (being) a single Base, as the above passage tells us. Therefore the misconceptions of those who claim that there are manifold rigpas are refuted: in whoever realizes rigpa, they are refuted by experience; as shown above, they are refuted by logic; and as also shown above, they are refuted by scriptural authority. Therefore, such misconceptions are utterly groundless and cannot be sustained!

To conclude the above terminological discussion, it must be kept in mind that the term rigpa has many synonyms, including ordinary awareness, natural condition of mind,^d and so on. Moreover, the terms I render as Base rigpa or rigpa *qua* Base^e are near synonyms of *nature or essence of mind*,^f for it refers to the all-embracing, pure element of nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness inherent in the Base's Gnitiveness which is the *nature or essence of mind*. And in the Abhidharma it has the

^a Skt. *saṃtāna*; Tib. *semgyü* (Wylie, *sems rgyud*) or *gyün* (Wylie, *rgyun*); Ch. 相續 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*); in general used as 心相續 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnxiāngxù*; Wade-Giles *hsin¹-hsiang¹-hsü⁴*).

^b *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjungsi sanggyé/ kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyengyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhagger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan brgyud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 200. The translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book.

^c *Ibidem*. Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 170. The translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book.

^d Tib. *semkyi nelug* (Wylie, *sems kyi gnas lugs*): this is why the phrase rigpa semkyi nelug (Wylie, *rig pa sems kyi gnas lugs*) is used.

^e Tib. *zhi rigpa* (Wylie, *gchi'i rig pa*) or *zhirnekyi rigpa* (Wylie, *gzhir gnas kyi rig pa*).

^f Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

sense of field of knowledge or science (as when the five fields of knowledge^a are listed). For its part, the terms I am rendering as *primordial gnosis*—namely the Skt. *jñāna* and the Tibetan *yeshe*^b—not only refer to events of rigpa, for a Base primordial gnosis,^c of which all primordial gnosises are manifestations, is also posited—and, moreover, the term may even refer to conceptual wisdom or even conceptual knowledge, as in the case of the *collection of wisdom*^d that is one of the two collections that according to the Mahāyāna give rise to Buddhahood.²⁵⁶ Likewise, the term I am rendering as *all-liberating single gnosis*^e is the one Chögyal Namkhai Norbu often renders as “know one, know all,” because this Gnosis is the center of a spontaneous^f Dzogchen *maṅḍala*, and whoever is established in it becomes aware of the relation between that center and any peripheral object of knowledge and thus may become “all-knowing”^g—this being the source of the gnosis of variety^h that is one of the two aspects of Buddha-omniscienceⁱ that manifest uninterruptedly in Buddhas but that, as noted above, before irreversible Buddhahood is attained, manifests in the post-Contemplation^j of superior practitioners.^k As a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa put it:^l

[Path wisdom] rests awareness in its own nature, wide-open and naked, and undefinable, without being modified by the intellect, mentation or concepts. Thus, its essence is empty, its nature is luminous, and its energy [lit. compassion] is naturally unimpeded and liberated, without entering into objects. By familiarizing yourself with this, words and meanings flow forth in the expanse, [which you spontaneously] understand, and without reliance on training, you have a limitless ability to compose commentaries and melodic verses. This is a creative expression of such wisdom. However, if you feel proud and cling to this ability, your wisdom will decline and you will stray from the Path. This is like being on the verge

^a Skt. *pañcavidyā*; Tib. *rigpai nenga* (Wylie, *rig pa'i gnas lnga*); Ch. 五明 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wǔmíng*; Wade-Giles, *wu³-ming²*).

^b Wylie, *ye shes*; Pāli *ñāṇa*; Ch. 智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*).

^c Tib. *zhii yeshe* (Wylie, *gzhi'i ye shes*); Skt. *āśrayajñāna*.

^d Skt. *jñānasambhāra*; Tib. *yeshekyi tsog* (Wylie, *ye shes kyi tshogs*); Ch. 智慧資糧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhìhuìzīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴-hui⁴ tzu¹-liang²*).

^e *chikshe kundröl* (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*).

^f Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*.

^g Tib. *kunkhyen[pa]* (Wylie, *kun mkhyen [pa]*); Skt. *sarvajña*; Ch. 一切智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqiēzhì*; Wade-Giles, *i¹-ch¹'ieh¹-chih⁴*) or 薩婆若 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sàpóruò*; Wade-Giles, *sa⁴-p¹'o²-jo⁴*).

^h Skt. *yāvadbhāvikajñāna*; Tib. *ji nyepa khyenpai yeshe* (Wylie, *ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes*); Ch. 如量智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúliángzhì*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-liang²-chih⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. *nampa thamche khyenpa* (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqiēzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹'ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^j Skt. *pr̥ṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. *jethob* (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*).

^k Skt. *ārya*; Tib. *phagpa* (Wylie, *'phags pa*); Ch. 聖 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng⁴*).

^l *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjung/ sanggyé/ kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyengyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhager bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan brgyud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 191. The translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book.

of acquiring great wealth but then losing it to a thief. When inconceivable sublime qualities flow forth from the expanse,^a make sure you do not succumb to pitfalls and errors! Mentation is the basis of the mind, and because it is modified and caught up in the experiences of rejecting and accepting, it is important not to take it as the Path. Wisdom entails not doing anything. Recognize this as the authentic Path.

The point in the warning is that the understanding and qualities in question flow forth from the universal nondual Awake awareness that is the nature of mind, whereas the mind that has the illusory mental subject as its core is no more than an appearance in the nature of mind, like a reflection in a primordial mirror. If one believes that the qualities of the mirror pertain to the separate, illusory subject that is the core of mind and hence of delusion, by switching from the perspective of rigpa to that of mind one blocks the flow of qualities and loses them, becoming possessed by the demon of selfhood and thus loaded and weighted down with *hybris*,^b pride and arrogance.

Note that the fact that rigpa lies in the disclosure of our original condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection through the dissolution of comprehension in terms of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts does not mean that rigpa is the mere cessation of all thoughts in a condition in which awareness is arrested and speech and body are in repose. Though the Hīnayāna views as a type of *nirvāṇa* the condition called *absorption of cessation (of mental activity)*^c wherein all the activity of awareness ceases, the Mahāyāna and higher vehicles deem that condition to be a temporary repose from which, in order to attain Awakening whoever has achieved that condition will have to be reborn in order to tread a higher path from the beginning. In fact, contrarily to conditions of cessation of active awareness, the nonconceptual and therefore nondual reGnition (of) rigpa's own face involves the vivid, sparkling, roaring patency²⁵⁷ of the Base—i.e. of is our true, original condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection—and *once it consolidates* it also involves a total freedom of awareness that unselfconsciously, spontaneously manifests myriads of actionless activities that benefit all [nonexistent] sentient beings. This explains why, according to the Dzogchen teachings, the above-mentioned “absorption of cessation (of mental activity)” is an instance of the neutral states discussed below under (2), which involves the first of the meanings of the terms *avidyā* and *marigpa*—which negate *vidyā* or rigpa and refers to the concealment of the true condition of the Base as this nature manifests upon Awakening.

I said *once it consolidates* because in nearly all cases, the initial disclosure of

^a In this book the term expanse renders the Skt. *dharmadhātu*, the Tib. *chöying* (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); the Ch. 法界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fǎ³-chieh⁴*), etc.—except when it designates the subtle object of the formless absorptions (Skt. *ārūpyasamāpatti*; Tib. *zugmepai nymjug* [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wú-sè-jìè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*], or Skt. *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *zugmé na chöpai samten* [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]). However, the term *expanse* will not always be used alone: I will often use *expanse of the true condition of phenomena*; *expanse of phenomena*; *total, empty expanse where all “physical” and “mental” phenomena manifest*; *total, intrinsically empty expanse of the dharmadhātu*; *total empty expanse of the dharmadhātu*; *empty expanse*; etc.

^b ὕβρις.

^c Skt. & Pāli, *nirodhasamāpatti*; Tib. *gogpai nyomjug* (Wylie, *'gog pa'i snyoms 'jug*); Ch. 滅盡定 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *mièjìndìng*; Wade-Giles, *mie⁴-jìng⁴-ding⁴*).

our original, true condition is not irreversible and for a long period will *not* become irreversible, as the propensities for all aspects or types of *avidyā* to occur will make them arise to obscure, distort and hinder the true, original condition in question. When rigpa is manifest for limited periods, it is what here I am calling rigpa-*qua*-Path: rigpa as it arises while the practitioner is on the Path. It is in this case that a Contemplation and a post-Contemplation state alternate, the former involving the gnosis that reveals the true condition and the latter involving an ever developing gnosis of variety. In the practice of Dzogchen, each and every time hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts self-liberate as rigpa becomes patent, the propensities for those thoughts to be hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized is neutralized to a certain extent—the extent depending partly on the intensity of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization in question at the time of the thoughts’ self-liberation and partly on how high the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness that was defined above is—and therefore in the long run all of the propensities for reification / hypostatization / valorization / absolutization of thought are totally neutralized, so that no aspect or type of *avidyā* manifests again to conceal or obstruct our true, original condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection.

It is at this point that rigpa may be referred to as rigpa-*qua*-Fruit, and that Total, Unsurpassable Awakening,^a may be said to have been attained. As a result of this, the three aspects of the Base listed in the Dzogchen teachings²⁵⁸ are effectively realized as the three *kāyas* of Buddhahood and fully actualized as such (which, however, takes place sequentially, beginning with the realization of the ngowo^b aspect of the Base and the dang form of manifestation of energy as *dharmakāya*)—and finally the absolutely free, spontaneous activity of primordial awareness that does not fall into dualism is never again concealed or hindered.

However, an in-depth discussion of the Path can only be undertaken in the consideration of the Fourth Noble Truth, and hence in this discussion of the Fruit it is enough to emphasize that rigpa (is) our original Awake, nondual self-awareness when nonconceptually^c and hence nondually self-reGnized^d in such a way as to make this nondual awareness’ own face patent, removing all and everything that may hinder its functionality.^{e259}

(2) The neutral^f states marked by *avidyā* in the first of the senses the terms have in the threefold classification adopted here: that of the basic unawareness that consists in the obscuration of the Base’s inherent nondual self-awareness by a contingent, beclouding

^a Skt. *anuttarāsamyaksambodhi*; Tib. yandakpar yongsu dzogpai changchub (Wylie, *yang dag par yongs su rdzogs pa'i byang chub*); Ch. 阿耨多罗三藐三菩提 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *ānòuduōluó sānmǎo sānpútí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-nou⁴-to¹-luo² san¹-miao³ san¹-p¹-u²-t¹i²*).

^b Wylie, *ngo bo*; this is one of the Tibetan renderings of the Skt. *svābhāva*, the other being rangzhin (Wylie, *rang bzhin*); Ch. 自性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tzü⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*).

^c Skt. *niṣprapañca*; Tib. thödräl (Wylie, *spros bral*); Ch. 不戲論 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *pu²-hsi⁴-lun⁴*) or Skt. *aprapañca*; Tib. töme or töpa mepa (Wylie, *spros [pa] med [pa]*); Ch. 無戲論 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *wu-hsi-lun*). In properly Dzogchen terminology, Tib. la dawa (Wylie, *la bzla ba*).

^d For a definition and justification of this term, cf. the section “Terminology and Titles of Eastern Texts.”

^e Tib. rangngo shepa (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^f Tib. lungmaten (Wylie, *lung ma bstan*).

element of stupefaction,^a prevents it from making its own face patent and hence from manifesting its all-liberating nature. Although in these states the first aspect or sense of *avidyā* forestalls the self-reGition of the Base's inherent nondual self-awareness that the Dzogchen teachings call rigpa or rangrig, so that *it may be said* that in them there is no rigpa and technically they are within *saṃsāra*, none of the other aspects or senses of *avidyā* have manifested. Hence there is neither (2) the delusive subject-object duality *as such* (although Longchen Rabjam says there is a grasper and a grasped),^b nor (3) the delusive perception of self-existing, substantial entities produced by hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of subtle / intuitive thoughts, or the illusion that coarse / discursive thoughts are inherently true or false that issues from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of those thoughts. In brief, the delusion lying in the perception of the insubstantial as substantial, the dependent as independent, the relative as absolute, the conditioned and produced as unconditioned and unproduced, that which lacks value and importance as having inherent value and importance,²⁶⁰ the unsatisfactory as being capable of providing satisfaction and so on is absent in this condition.

In ordinary individuals the Base that is both the source and true condition of all phenomena of *saṃsāra* and metaphenomena of *nirvāṇa* and that is primordially pure^c and spontaneously perfect^d has always been flowing with the contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction^e briefly discussed above, and therefore (a) its inherent nondual Awake self-awareness (i.e. its Base rigpa / rigpa-*qua*-Base^f) has always been obscured and therefore has been forestalled from making patent its own face in the conditions of rigpa-*qua*-Path or rigpa-*qua*-Fruit, and (b) its spontaneous perfection has always been impeded. When this is the case, the Dzogchen teachings refer to that Base by the terms that refer to phenomenal conditions in which neither *saṃsāra* nor *nirvāṇa* are *active* and that involve the phrase base-of-all^g discussed in the final section of the discussion of the Second Noble Truth. Though in this cases the term base-of-all has a phenomenal or phenomenological sense, this usage of the term does not contradict the use of the term base-of-all to refer to the mental stream^h that is held to contain and carry all karmic traces or propensities from one moment to the next and from one life to the next,²⁶¹ for the latter also manifests phenomenally (note that this is so not only in the Dzogchen teachings, for even Mahāyāna texts such as Vasubandhu's *Triṃśikā* use the term base-of-all to refer to phenomenal conditions).

That which we are concerned with at this point is that, since the states referred to by the term base-of-all are characterized by nonconceptuality, clarity or luminosity and bliss, Jigme Lingpaⁱ—one of the most famous Dzogchen Masters of the second millennium CE—prophesized that in our time many yogins would *mistake* them for the

^a Tib. mongcha (Wylie, *rmongs cha*).

^b Cf. endnote 263.

^c Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^d Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^e Tib. mongcha (Wylie, *rmongs cha*). At this point, this obscuring element is what is called **gyu dagnyi chikpai marigpa** (Wylie, *rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa*).

^f Tib. zhii rigpa (Wylie, *gzhi'i rig pa*) or **zhirnekyi** rigpa (Wylie, *gzhir gnas kyi rig pa*).

^g Tib. kunzhi (Wylie, *kun gzhi*); Skt. *ālaya*; Ch. 来源 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *láiyuán*; Wade-Giles, *lai²-yüan²*).

^h Skt. *saṃtāna*; Tib. gyün (Wylie, *rgyun*), semgyü (Wylie, *sems rgyud*) or simply gyü (Wylie, *rgyud*).

ⁱ Wylie, 'jigs med gling pa.

dharmakāya^a (the Mind aspect of Buddhahood, which, as noted above, is the first level of Awakening on the Path of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo).²⁶² The states in question may be of quite different types; for example, one of them is a condition in which one is at the same time fully awake and fully asleep, as in the highest realization of the Yoga and Sāṃkhya *darśanas*; another one is a state where all sensa are manifest yet there is no active (co)gnition; another one is the state between two thoughts; yet another one is the experience of limitless luminosity that manifests after falling asleep or dying,²⁶³ etc. A Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa, after explaining the facets of primordial gnosis inherent in the Base that is the true condition of reality, goes on to say:^b

Ignorance of the true condition is ascertained to be the cause of delusion. How? Mere ignorance of the true condition of the displays of the all-pervasive Base works as the cause. As this [ignorance] becomes somewhat fortified, it dwells as the actual base-of-all, which is formless like space—a blank, unthinking void. Entering this state corresponds to states such as fainting; abiding in meditative absorptions^c [and] meditative experiences induced by the contemplations;^d becoming engulfed in the base-of-all in a condition of deep sleep in which appearances have dissolved into the space of awareness; and reaching the point of death at which all appearances have vanished. This is called the actual base-of-all; free of clinging to experiences conditioned by the intellect and mentation, one is absorbed in a formless, basic [space].

Longchenpa describes four different instances of the base-of-all:^e

There are [different levels of] gnition^f which have no connection with liberation [from *samsāra*] and which are in the state of the base-of-all. They are (a) the gnition which is in the state of absorption, a stable absorption of tranquility, (b) the gnition which is in the absorption (of) clarity and no-thought, stable and [involving] a partial insight,^g and (c) the gnition which is [a] gross gnition arisen after (the appearances [of would-be]) objects with the dominant conditions,^h the six sense faculties. The virtuous and non-virtuous *karmas* accumulated through those three kinds of gnitions delude beings [and respectively result] in the formless realm, [the] form realm or [the] realm [of sensuality].... The reason is that they do not lead to liberation and do not transcend the [duality of] apprehender and apprehended.

^a Khyabje Thinle Norbu, personal teaching. Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, p. 55) thus comments that in order to practice the Nyingthik (Wylie, *snying thig*) or Essence of Potentiality teachings of the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions we must learn to distinguish between base-of-all (Tib. kunzhi; Wylie, *kun gzhi*) and *dharmakāya* (Tib. chöku [Wylie, *chos sku*]).

^b *Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorje'i nyingpo* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po*). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. III, p. 67).

^c Skt. *samāpatti*; Tib. nyomjug (Wylie, *snyoms 'jug*); Ch. 等至 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngzhì*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-chih⁴*) / 正受 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngshòu*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-shou⁴*).

^d Skt. *dhyāna*; Pāli *jhāna*; Tib. samten (Wylie, *bsam gtan*); Ch. 禪 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chán*; Wade-Giles, *ch'an²*).

^e Alternative translation in Tulku Thondup (1996, pp. 223-4). The term “is” is within parentheses for the reasons explained in the Introduction.

^f Tib. shepa (Wylie, *shes pa*). I used the term gnition instead of cognition because the prefix “co” implies the subject-object duality, which is absent in all forms of the base-of-all.

^g Tib. lhangthong (Wylie, *lhag mthong*); Skt. *vipāśyanā*; Pāli *vipassanā*; Ch. 觀 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *guān* [seemingly also *guàn*]; Wade-Giles, *kuan¹*; Jap. *kan*).

^h Tib. dagkyen (Wylie, *bdag rkyen*).

Here the state of absorption of no-thought is the apprehended and absorption on that one pointedly without wavering is the apprehender.

Though Longchenpa refers to a duality of apprehended and apprehender, in the base-of-all that duality has not yet manifested as it does when the threefold directional thought structure is reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized and thus the second aspect or type of *avidyā*—the one called *spontaneous illusion*^a—arises. In fact, as noted in the final section of the discussion of the Second Noble Truth, all (or nearly all) Dzogchen terms revealed in the last seven centuries, including the ones revealed by Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa, make the point that the only aspect or type of *avidyā* that is manifest in the phenomenal conditions of the base-of-all is the one I rendered as *innate beclouding of primordial*, nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake *awareness* or, figuratively, *unawareness*.^b Longchenpa makes it clear that enjoying objects (or suffering because of them) is not manifest in the base-of-all, for it arises when the *thought of a subject*^c arises:^d

Mind has three aspects: mind (*sems*), which is the [awareness of the base-of-all]; thought [and in particular the conception of a mental subject] (*gid*), which enters into everything and enjoys the objects; consciousness (*rnam shes*), which is the consciousness of the six [sense doors]. These three are cognitions of one [mental phenomenon], which is rooted in [unawareness (of) its own true condition and that begets the] five poisons [which are the five main passions].

It is also worth pointing out that the “neutral base-of-all”^e does not occur solely in absorptions; it also recurs again and again in normal, everyday human experience—in which, however, it usually goes unnoticed. Finally, it is also important to note that the term base-of-all not always refers to a samsaric condition, for some Bönpo teachers use it to refer to the Base—i.e. to Dzogchen-*qua*-Base—and, moreover, inherent in the base-of-all is an aspect of rigpa: the Awake or pure aspect of what is called the linking-up base-of-all^f (a term that in some works refers solely to this Awake or pure aspect of rigpa inherent in the base-of-all^g).

Finally, it is worth noting that the term “neutral” in “neutral Base-of-all” may be said to have a twofold sense: on the one side it has an ethical sense, which is the one that is normally emphasized, for in the condition in question no sense of good or bad

^a cf. Longchenpa (1975a, p. 51; 1976, pp. 24 and 122 note 10 [the latter from *Khandro Yangthik*, part III, p. 117 of edition used by the translator]), and Cornu (2001, p. 62). The Tibetan for this type or type of *avidyā* is *lenchik kyepai marigpa* (*lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*).

^b Tib. *gyu dagnyi chikpai marigpa* (Wylie, *rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa*); cf. Longchenpa, 1976, p. 24, and Cornu, 2001, p. 62.

^c Tib. *yi* (Wylie, *gid*); Skt. *manas*; Ch. 意 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yì*; Wade-Giles, *i⁴*).

^d In *Tsigdön Rinpochei Dzö* (Wylie, *tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*), 60b/3, as abridged by Tulku Thondup (1996, p. 213) and edited by Harold Talbott (as always, I adapted the translation to the terminology used in this book).

^e Tib. *kunzhi lungmaten* (Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*).

^f Tib. *yorwa döngyi kunzhi* (Wylie, *sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*). Cf. Tulku Thöndup (1996, p. 216), who cites Longchen Rabjampa's *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngalsoi Drelwa Shingta Chenpo* (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*), vol. I, 80a/1. It is in this work where the term linking-up base-of-all or *yorwa döngyi kunzhi* refers solely to the rigpa inherent in the Base.

^g Namely in the work by Longchenpa cited in the immediately preceding footnote.

obtains (this being the reason why the *karma of immobility*^a that results from resting in the boundless condition of awareness proper to this condition, and that causes rebirth in the formless realms, is viewed as a type of neutral *karma*), and on the other it has a sense similar to the one the term has in the phrase “neutral gear,” for just like in neutral gear a car moves neither forward nor backward, in the neutral base-of-all neither *nirvāṇa* nor *saṃsāra* is active (even though technically the base-of-all, since it involves one of the aspects or types of *avidyā*, lies within *saṃsāra*).

(3) Among transpersonal experiences and realms that, being *produced, contrived* and *conditioned*^b by all the aspects and types of *avidyā*, to active *saṃsāra*, most significant are the *four formless absorptions*^c and *matching four realms of the formless sphere*.^d It should be clear by now that these experiences and realms, which according to Buddhist teachings are the summit of the conditioned, cyclic existence they refer to as *saṃsāra*, are characterized by a major expansion of the focus of conscious attention and hence by an increased space-time-knowledge—and that therefore they may be mistaken for the Total Space-Time-Awareness of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*.

Formless states arise when, immediately following an occurrence of (2) the base-of-all, reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the *threefold directional thought-structure* turns the seeming infinitude of space proper to that condition into a proto-object (at which point it is no longer a real infinitude, for it excludes the subject), and hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of a subtle concept causes us to experience: (i) an infinitude of space;^e (ii) an infinitude of consciousness that is perceiving that infinitude and is one with it;^f (iii) something that, being infinite, cannot be embraced by any concept and thus is inconceivable;^g or (iv) something that cannot be conceived even as inconceivable, but that for this very reason is conceptualized as *not not this* and *not not that*.^h Although in this sphere the coarse

^a Skt. *ānījyakarma*; Pāli *aniñjitakamma*; Tib. migyowai le (Wylie, *mi gyo ba'i las*); Ch. 不動業 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùdòng yè*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-tung⁴ yeh⁴*).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^c Skt. *caturārūpyasamāpatti*; Tib. **zugmepai nyomjug zhi** (Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug bzhi*); Ch. 四空定 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sìkōng dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-k'ung¹ ting⁴*) or, perhaps slightly more precisely, four *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten** (Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*); Ch. 無色界定 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*). (Four *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*: Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten zhi** [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan bzhi*]; Ch. 四無色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sì wú-sè-jiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]).

^d Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. zugmepai kham (Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i khams*); Ch. 無色界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*).

^e The first of the four formless absorptions (*ārūpyasamāpatti* or *arūpasamādhi*) is (1) the dominion of the infinitude of space (Skt. *ākāśānantyasamāpatti*; Tib. namkha taye nyomjug [Wylie, *nam mkha' mtha' yas snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 空無邊處定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *kōng wúbiān chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *k'ung¹ wu³-pien¹ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*]).

^f The second of the four formless absorptions is (2) the dominion of the infinitude of consciousness (Skt. *vijñānantyasamāpatti*; Tib. namshe thaye nyomjug [Wylie, *rnam shes mtha' yas snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 識無邊處定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shì wúbiān chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *shih⁴ wu³-pien¹ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*]).

^g The third is (3) the dominion where there are no “whats” (Skt. *akiñcanyasamāpatti*; Tib. chiyang mepai nyomjug [Wylie, *ci yang med pa'i snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 無所有處定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wú suǒyǒu chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu² so³-yu³ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*]).

^h The fourth is (4) the dominion in which there is neither perception nor absence of perception (Skt. *naivasamjñānāsamjñāsamāpatti*; Tib. dusheme dushe memin gyi nyomjug [Wylie, *'du shes med 'du*

passions do not arise, *a posteriori* the mental subject derives pride from identifying with whichever of the four possible conceptualizations occurred in the corresponding individual's experience. As a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa put it:^a

[The base-of-all, despite obscuring the true condition of the Base,] is not a gloom-like covering of darkness, but it is likened to darkness because it obscures your own face. In reality, it abides as a blank, immaterial vacuity in which there are no thoughts of anything. There are four ways of grasping at this: as space-like, as nothingness, as neither existence nor nonexistence, and as boundless consciousness [in an] obscured [form]. Subtle grasping of your own consciousness weaves them into the base-of-all, and when this stabilizes, you are led astray in these four ways and get stuck in them. Those who remain in a blank, unthinking vacuity create the causes for [rebirth in a state that is] devoid of discernment.

By firmly establishing oneself in the neutral condition of the base-of-all or in one of the above four absorptions, one may then take birth in the corresponding realm among the four formless realms,^b corresponding to the four sections of the formless sphere:^c (1) activity field of the infinitude of space;^d (2) activity field of the infinitude of consciousness;^e (3) activity field where there are no “whats;”^f and (4) activity field where is neither perception nor its absence^g—this highest of all samsaric realms being

shes med min gyi snyoms 'jug]; Ch. 非想非非想處定 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fēixiǎng fēifēixiǎng chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *fei¹-hsiang³ fei¹-fei¹-hsiang³ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*), also called “Peak of Experience” (Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. *sīdtse* or *sidpai tsemo* (Wylie, *srid [pa'i] rtse [mo]*); Ch. 有頂天 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*]); cf. Capriles (2013a, note 75 and Vol. II, note 187). In the fourth formless absorption gross discrimination is left behind and there is only the subtlest of discriminations.

^a *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjungī sanggyé/ kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thīdu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyengyū chīkdzōgkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhagger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan brgyud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 190. The translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book.

^b Skt. *caturārūpyadhātu*; Tib. **zukme khampai ne zhi** (Wylie, *gzugs med khams pa'i gnas bzhi*); Ch. 四無色界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sì wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*); may also be [catur] *arūpaloka* or [catur] *ārūpyāvacara*. In the Chinese translation of the *Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Pūrvapraṇidhāna Sūtra* (Ch. 地藏菩薩本願經淺), these realms are also rendered by the Chinese names 四空處 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sì kōngchù*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ k'ung¹-ch'u⁴*), 四空天 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sì kōngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ k'ung¹-t'ien¹*).

^c Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. **zukmepai kham** (Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i khams*); Ch. 無色界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*); also *arūpaloka* or *ārūpyāvacara*.

^d Skt. *ākāśānāntyaṭātana*; Pāli *ākāśānañcāyatana*; Tib. **namkha thaye kyemche** (Wylie, *nam mkha' mtha' yas skye mched*); Ch. 空無邊處定 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *kōng wúbiān chù*; Wade-Giles, *k'ung¹ wu³-pien¹ ch'u⁴*).

^e Skt. *viññānānāntyaṭātana*; Pāli *viññānañcāyatana*; Tib. **namshe thaye kyemche** (Wylie, *nam shes mtha' yas skye mched*); Ch. 識無邊處 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shì wúbiān chù*; Wade-Giles, *shih⁴ wu³-pien¹ ch'u⁴*).

^f Skt. *ākīñcanīyāyatana*; Pāli *ākīñcaññāyatana*; Tib. **chiyang mepai kyemche** (Wylie, *ci yang med pa'i skye mched*); Ch. 無所有處 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wú suǒyǒu chù*; Wade-Giles, *wu² so³-yu³ ch'u⁴*).

^g Skt. *naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana*; Pāli *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*; Tib. **dusheme dushememin kyemche** (Wylie, *'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched*); Ch. 非想非非想處 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fēixiǎng fēifēixiǎng chù*; Wade-Giles, *fei¹-hsiang³ fei¹-fei¹-hsiang³ ch'u⁴*).

also called “Peak of Experience.”^a Since as already suggested the time dimension is directly proportional to the space dimensions, in these realms time is experienced as flowing in an extremely slow way, and hence the stays in these realms are experienced as lasting for extremely long periods.

However, even some experiences that do not involve the expansion of the focus of conscious attention or an increased space-time-knowledge—such as, for example, the noted four contemplations with form^b (which correspond to the realms of the sphere of form) and states that correspond to conditions within the gods’ realms^c of the sphere of desire²⁶⁴—often become the spurious aims of misguided spiritual practice.

In terms of the general, common psycho-cosmology of Buddhism discussed in a previous chapter of this book, most of the experience of sentient beings belongs to the samsaric “sphere of sensuality,”^d which just like the “sphere of form” involves the figure-ground division that results from the circumscription of conscious attention to one segment of the sensory field that is perceived as figure, while the rest of the field is engulfed in a kind of penumbra of attention, becoming background—yet unlike the sphere of form involves recurring, ceaseless emotional reactions of the mental subject toward its objects whereby the former tries to assert and confirm its own existence as an absolutely true and extremely important entity. Thus, it is clear that this is a sphere conditioned by the passions, and that in it pleasure is of the sensual kind. And, in fact, by intensifying sensual pleasure and making it more stable, some beings of this sphere climb to the higher regions of the sphere of sensuality, achieving contemplations that correspond to those of the gods realms^e and in particular of the “gods of sensuality” and that serve as a cause for rebirth in the “realm of the gods of sensuality.”

As shown in the same previous section, the sphere that is immediately higher is the “sphere of form,”^f which may be said to lie in its entirety within the realms of the gods,^g and the characteristics of which are to some extent comparable to those of the experiences of aesthetic appreciation reviewed in a previous chapter. Experiences that correspond to those of the sphere under consideration often result from grasping at one of the initial stages in the development of active *samsāra* from the neutral condition of the base-of-all as described in some Dzogchen teachings,²⁶⁵ and that they also may be

^a Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. sidtse (Wylie, *srid rtse*) or sidpai tsemo (Wylie, *srid pa'i rtse mo*); Ch. 有頂天 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*).

^b Skt. *caturdhyāna* or [four] *rūpādhyāna*; Pāli *catujhāna* or [four] *rūpājhāna*; Tib. *zugkhamkyi samten zhi* (Wylie, *gzugs khams kyi bsam gtan bzhi*); Ch. 四定 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sìdìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-ting⁴*) or 四禪 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sìchán*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-ch'an²*). Also *rūpāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *rūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *gzugs na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*; Ch. 色界定 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*).

^c Skt. *devagati* / *suragati* / *devaloka* / *devagati*; Tib. *lha drowa* (Wylie, *lha 'gro ba*); Ch. 天趣 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien¹-ch'ü⁴*).

^d Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. *dōpai kham* (Wylie, *dod pa'i khams*); Ch. 欲界 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *yùjiè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*).

^e Skt. *devagati* / *suragati* / *devaloka* / *devagati*; Tib. *lha drowa* (Wylie, *lha 'gro ba*); Ch. 天趣 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien¹-ch'ü⁴*).

^f Skt. *rūpadhātu*; Pāli, *rūpaloka*; Tib. *zugkham* (Wylie, *gzugs khams*); Ch. 色界 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *se⁴-chieh⁴*).

^g Skt. *devagati* / *suragati* / *devaloka* / *devagati*; Tib. *lha drowa* (Wylie, *lha 'gro ba*); Ch. 天趣 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien¹-ch'ü⁴*).

achieved as the result of deviations in the practice, such as developing attachment to visualizations of the Tantric stage of creation^a or other concentrations that involve the figure / ground contrast. It is important to note that the contemplations that correspond to the various realms of the gods of this sphere may serve as a cause for rebirth in these realms (another cause was described above in a cited passage from Longchenpa). At any rate, both the contemplations and the realms in question, like those of sensuality, are distinguished by the figure / ground division resulting from the circumscription of conscious attention at a time to one segment of the sensory field that is perceived as figure, while the rest of the field is engulfed in a kind of “penumbra of attention” and thus comes to constitute the ground. However, unlike the sphere of sensuality, the contemplations and realms of form do not involve coarse passions. And in the most advanced Dzogchen practices—namely those of Thögel and the Yangthik that will be discussed below—the dynamics of this sphere may be the key catalyst for optimizing the spontaneous liberation of delusion, for it has been rightly said that “The sphere of form is an ocean of vibration that becomes ever more turbulent as one moves away from its peaceful profundities; sensitive to the slightest tremor of pain or displeasure, the impulses [that are proper to this sphere] formulate their own antidote to disharmony.”^b In fact, in the aforementioned practices visions of light manifest that, when the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought is active and hence dualism is manifest, are perceived within the samsaric sphere of form; then the dynamics of the ocean of vibration that becomes ever more turbulent as one moves away from its peaceful profundities, due to sensitivity to the slightest tremor of pain or displeasure, activate the impulses proper to this sphere that, as the quotation notes, “formulate their own antidote to disharmony.” How this happens will be considered in the discussion of the practices in question. At any rate, it must be kept in mind that this potential function of the sphere of form can only lead to spontaneous liberation in duly prepared individuals: undertaking practices such as Thögel^c or the Yangthik without having developed a sufficient capacity of spontaneous liberation by means of Tekchö practice, rather than resulting in advance on the Path of Awakening, would only create great trouble potentially resulting in great harm.

The sphere that the vehicles and schools of the Buddhist Path of Renunciation deem highest and that may be regarded as the highest region of the realms of the gods is the “formless sphere.”^{d266} The contemplations that correspond to the realms of this sphere are reached when, being still conditioned by the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the contents of thoughts at the root of basic human delusion, our scope of consciousness—and therefore our space-time-awareness—is enlarged and hence experiences arise that do not involve a narrow focus of conscious attention and thus may be said to be holotropic, and the individual’s sense of self is not circumscribed to the entity designated by the individual’s name and hence may be said

^a Skt. *utpattikrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. *kyerim* (Wylie, *bskyed rim*); Ch. 生起次第 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngqǐ cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ch¹’i³ tz’u⁴-ti⁴*).

^b Padmasambhava and others (1973, Italian, 1977, p. 15).

^c Wylie, *thod rgal*, which etymologically conveys the idea of instantly crossing over a mountain pass, yet here I render as “swift transition.”

^d Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. *zugmepai kham* (Wylie, *gzugs med pa’i khams*); Ch. 無色界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*).

to be transpersonal.²⁶⁷ As a result, rather than attaining the state of supreme sanity that Buddhists call Awakening, we obtain a conditioned, impermanent experience of the highest realms of cyclic existence or *saṃsāra*, the core of which continues to be *avidyā* in all senses of the term discussed in this book.

The point is that the progressive panoramification of consciousness in deluded individuals, which causes the scope of conscious attention and space-time-knowledge to widen, at some point may produce the illusion that the figure-background division has collapsed, inducing transpersonal experiences of seeming oneness and totality that are conditioned by the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure and of intuitive / subtle thoughts. Since in those cases the mental subject will tend to identify (so to speak²⁶⁸) with the pseudo-totally that is perceived,²⁶⁹ it will obtain the illusion of having become one with the object and thus having gone beyond the subject-object duality. Since transpersonal experiences of this kind cause delusion and *saṃsāra* to become amplest, quietest and conflict-free for a considerable length of time, so long as deluded individuals dwell in the formless sphere it will be hardly possible for them to overcome delusion and *saṃsāra*—and if on the top in their post meditation they wrongly believe they have overcome *saṃsāra* and attained *nirvāṇa*, it will be absolutely impossible for them to move from *saṃsāra* to *nirvāṇa*.

The supreme sanity that results from successful Buddhist practice is free from conditioning by any of the three possible types of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thought discussed in a previous chapter—coarse, subtle/intuitive, or super-subtle. In terms of the image used by Alfred Korzybski,^a the point is not to confuse the maps consisting of thoughts and chains of thoughts with the territory of the *given*,^b as happens when the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the three main types of thoughts is active. In the case of the noted supersubtle thought called threefold directional thought-structure, its dissolution is the dissolution of the distortion consisting in the subject-object duality. In the case of subtle, intuitive thoughts,^c when not hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized, the analog and hence continuous field of *sensa* is not distorted by being experienced in digital and therefore discontinuous terms. And in the case of coarse, discursive thoughts,^d when not hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized, we do not to believe that a given thought or chain of thoughts is absolutely correct and true concerning what it interprets, and that the opposite thought or chain of thoughts is absolutely incorrect and false.

An advanced practitioner of Dzogchen Atiyoga simply remains in the state of nondual Awake, undistorted awareness called *rigpa* that makes patent and functional

^a Korzybski (2d. ed. 1941).

^b Cf. endnote 67.

^c Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*), which in a Dzogchen context I render as universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] conveying a meaning.

^d Skt. *śabdāsāmānya*; Tib. *drachi* (Wylie, *sgra spyi*); Ch. 論聲總 (simplified 论声总) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*). In Dzogchen contexts I render this term as word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings.

the all-liberating single gnosis^a inherent in the state in question, so that hypostasized / reified / valorized thoughts of all possible types liberate themselves spontaneously as they arise. If the individual is not fully realized and at some point thoughts of one of the already discussed main three types fail to liberate themselves spontaneously, he or she will look into their essence^b (which is the *dharmakāya* that she or he has already become familiar with²⁷⁰), thus offering those thoughts a chance to liberate themselves simultaneously with the mind perceiving them, in the bare disclosure of the state of rigpa by a nonconceptual and hence nondual primordial gnosis. In particular, if a Dzogchen practitioner who is not yet fully realized enters the conditioned transpersonal sphere—for example, having an experience that corresponds to one of the formless realms^c—he or she will instantly realize his or her experience to be tinged by the three types of thought, and thus will look at these thoughts so as to reGnize their stuff, which is the mode of manifestation of energy^d that the Dzogchen teachings call dang,^e and in this way reGnize their essence—upon which the *dharmakāya* is instantly revealed as they liberate themselves spontaneously in the patency of the state of rigpa.

Therefore, as shown in a recent four-volume book of mine,^f in the provisional versions of a three-volume book,^g and in several of my papers and book chapters,^h the experiences of whichever level or realm among those described by transpersonal and integral psychologists such as Stanislav Grof, Ken Wilber and so on, will be instances of delusion that pertain to active *samsāra* if tinged and conditioned by super-subtle, intuitive or discursive hypostasized / reified / valorized thoughts, and will pertain to dormant *samsāra* if they are free from all types of thought yet the first sense or aspect of *avidyā* conceals the true condition of ourselves and the whole universe. However, so far transpersonal and so-called integral psychologies do not have distinguished these three possibilities, among which, as it was shown earlier in this chapter, it is imperative to discriminate: (1) Awakening or *nirvāṇa*, wherein one is not conditioned by any of the possible types of hypostasized / reified / valorized thought; (2) states technically pertaining to *samsāra* and hence excluding *nirvāṇa* wherein, nevertheless, *samsāra* is nor actively functioning; and (3) samsaric transpersonal experiences of cosmic oneness and so on involving a partial enlargement of the scope of conscious awareness (i.e. of space-time-knowledge), yet being tinged and conditioned by thoughts. Moreover, the earlier works by Maslow and others seemed to view so-called peak experiences as ends in themselves, and although this pioneer of transpersonal psychology warned against this in his later works, laymen influenced by transpersonal and related psychologies, and even transpersonal and related psychologists themselves, all too often pursue samsaric, thought-tinged transpersonal highs that then are succeeded by lows, or states

^a Tib. chikshe kundröl (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*).

^b Tib. ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*): the first of the three aspects of the Base / Dzogchen-*qua*-Base.

^c I.e. one of the four realms of the formless sphere (Skt. *arūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. zugmepai kham [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i khams*]; Ch. 無色界 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsejiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*]).

^d Tib. *thugs rje*: the third of the three aspects of the Base / Dzogchen-*qua*-Base.

^e *gdangs*.

^f Capriles (2013abcd).

^g Capriles (2007a Vol. II).

^h The ones in the Reference section that have the terms transpersonal or metatranspersonal in the title or subtitle, and others that are not listed there.

wherein neither *saṃsāra* nor *nirvāṇa* are active. And the same occurs to followers of some Hindu spiritual systems, including those of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga *darśanas*.

In particular, as shown in the discussion of the First Noble Truth, in thought-tinged and hence conditioned, samsaric transpersonal states, the delusive identification (so to speak)²⁷¹ with a subtle, intuitive conceptualization of oneness, whether or not it is subsequently expressed in terms of a concatenation of discursive thoughts such as “all is One,” or with a subtle, intuitive conceptualization of infinity, etc.,²⁷² may give rise to a sense of power and supremeness that cause the individual to adhere to those thoughts, making it almost impossible for him or her to recognize *saṃsāra* as such. It is therefore possible that the individual may succeed in making such conditioned states stable and come to believe that by so doing he or she has gone beyond the ego—in which case he or she might go so far as to attain what Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche called “the totally demonic state of complete egohood.” In fact, in order to free ourselves from *saṃsāra*, rather than climbing peaks or resting on plateaus and clinging to them, we need to have direct access to the unconditioned all-liberating single gnosis^a in which all samsaric, thought-tinged experiences—including peaks, plateaus, valleys and deep pits—liberate themselves spontaneously upon arising.

If individuals cease identifying (so to speak) with the limited entities designated by their names, yet come to identify (so to speak) with something far more extensive, though they may believe that they are getting rid of their egos, in truth they will be *enlarging and reinforcing those egos*.²⁷³ This is precisely what happens in the four realms or absorptions of the formless sphere.^b In fact, (1) in the lowest, which is the “infinite of space,”^c the figure-ground division seems to have totally dissolved; all that previously was perceived as substantial entities is experienced as limitless space, beyond obstructions or variety, and one identifies (so to speak) with what seems to be an infinitude of space—*a posteriori* (i.e. while in post-meditation, in which the realm of sensuality is reestablished) taking pride in this grandiose identity. (2) In the “infinite of consciousness,”^d which may be entered when, having perceived the previous state as gross and having surpassed it by means of stabilizing meditation, the meditator dwells on the subtle thought that the seeming infinitude appearing as object *is* the seemingly limitless, unchanging, absolute, pure, undifferentiated and peaceful consciousness that is apprehending it—*a posteriori* (i.e. in post-meditation in the realm of sensuality) taking pride in this grandiose identity. (3) In the “infinite of nothingness,”^e which is the result of perceiving the previous state as gross and surpassing it by cultivating a mental state in which only nothingness appears, there is no idea of anything positive—space, consciousness or anything else—yet the threefold directional thought structure is still hypostasized / reified / valorized and one identifies

^a Tib. chikshe kundröl (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*).

^b I.e. one of the four realms or absorptions of the formless sphere (Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. zugmepai kham [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i kham*]; Ch. 無色界 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*]).

^c Skt. *ākāśānantyasamāpatti*; Tib. namkha taye nyomjug [Wylie, *nam mkha' mtha' yas snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 空無邊處定 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *kōng wúbiān chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *k'ung¹ wu³-pien¹ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*]).

^d Skt. *vijñānāntyasamāpatti*; Tib. namshe thaye nyomjug [Wylie, *rnam shes mtha' yas snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 識無邊處定 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shì wúbiān chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *shih⁴ wu³-pien¹ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*]).

^e *ākāñcanyasamāpatti*; Tib. chiyang mepai nyomjug [Wylie, *ci yang med pa'i snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 無所有處定 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wú suǒyǒu chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu² so³-yu³ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*]).

(so to speak) with the seeming infinitude of nothingness—*a posteriori* (i.e. in post-meditation, back in the realm of sensuality) taking pride in this grandiose identity. (4) In the highest formless realm, which is the “infinitude of neither recognition nor non-recognition,”^a also referred to as “peak of existence”,^b and which results from perceiving the previous state as gross and then surpassing it by transcending coarse discrimination between nothingness and not-nothingness, recognition and non-recognition, etc., one is not free from hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure and of subtle thoughts, and therefore one identifies (so to speak) with the subtle concept appearing as object that establishes the impossibility to conceptualize one’s identity in any possible way—*a posteriori* (i.e. in post-meditation, back in the realm of sensuality) taking pride in this grandiose identity. As a realm in which one takes rebirth, this “peak of existence” is said to involve extremely long lifespans in which nothing unpleasant is perceived and discrimination is only of the subtlest kind. The extraordinary length of this lifespan is due to the fact that, of all conditioned states, this is the one in which space-time-awareness is largest: it is insofar as time is so ample, that one’s lifetime is experienced as being exceedingly long.

In short, unlike other systems of psychology, transpersonal psychology agrees with Buddhism that sanity or mental health cannot lie in “normality,” understood as a relatively conflict-free functional adaptation to a socially sanctioned and conditioned pseudo-reality. However, in agreement with the [meta]phenomenological criterion of sanity and insanity shared by various beacons of antipsychiatry in the ample sense of the term,²⁷⁴ Buddhism is unambiguous in using as a criterion for true sanity and true insanity the absence or presence of delusion (which in the case of Buddhism is coupled with unawareness of the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena): true sanity consists in the eradication of *saṃsāra* and the attainment and irreversible stabilization of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*; partial sanity lies in the alternation of rigpa in the Contemplation state^e of higher bodhisattvas,^d yogins, siddhas, etc., and mitigated delusion in the state of post-Contemplation;^e and insanity ranges from normality to psychosis. Thus Buddhism contrasts with those naïve, unsophisticated systems of transpersonal psychology that attribute the same value to all sorts of unspecific, generic transpersonal experience. Actually, the fact that neither transpersonal, holotropic experiences within the bounds of *saṃsāra*, nor transpersonal, holotropic experiences in which *saṃsāra* is not active yet technically pertain to *saṃsāra* and thus are not *nirvāṇa*, either constitute

^a Skt. *naivasamjñānāsamjñāsamāpatti*; Tib. dusheme dushe memin gyi nyomjug [Wylie, *'du shes med 'du shes med min gyi snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 非想非非想處定 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fēixiǎng fēifēixiǎng chùdìng*; Wade-Giles, *fei¹-hsiang³ fei¹-fei¹-hsiang³ ch'u⁴-ting⁴*].

^b Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. sidtse (Wylie, *srid rtse*) or sidpai tsemo (Wylie, *srid pa'i rtse mo*); Ch. 有頂天 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*].

^c Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. nyamzhak (*mnyam bzhaq*); Ch. 等引 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*].

^d Skt. *āryabodhisattva*; Tib. changphak (Wylie, *byang 'phags*) or changchub sempa phagpa (Wylie, *byang chub sems dpa' 'phags pa*). Term not used in Chinese, except in titles of canonical texts, where it is rendered as 聖菩薩 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèng púsà*; Wade-Giles, *sheng⁴p'u-sa*];

^e Skt. *prṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. jethob (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*].

true sanity or are the means to achieve true sanity, simply cannot be emphasized too much. The *Dzogchen Kunzang Lama*^a reads:^b

By practicing a meditative absorption in which no sense of good and evil obtains and conceiving this state as liberation, they are born as gods of the sphere beyond perception and lack of perception²⁷⁵ and stay in this absorption for many great aeons. But when the *karma* that gave rise to this state becomes exhausted, on account of their erroneous view (of setting out to build a constructed / conditioned state that as such is transient and pertains to *samsāra*, and mistaking it for liberation), they are reborn in the lower realms of existence. Hence this state is an unfavorable condition for practicing the *dharma*.

As noted in a previous chapter, dwelling in such “highs” causes us to become disaccustomed to the discomfort and suffering proper to lower realms, and so when the “fuel” consisting of the actions and habits—that is, the *karma*—that allowed us to climb to the highest samsaric realm is exhausted, or when the secondary causes or contributory conditions that allowed us to remain therein are no longer present, and therefore we “fall” to lower spheres involving a smaller space-time-knowledge and coarser sensations and thoughts to which we are no longer accustomed, we will reject these frantically—and since the very high energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^{c276} that sustains such formless conditions impairs the mechanisms of elusion (Laing) or repression (Freud),²⁷⁷ by so doing we might well give rise to the experience of one of the most painful realms of existence. The “Great Fifth” Dalai Lama wrote:^d

The *King of Meditations Sūtra (Samādhirājasūtra)* says: “Though they cultivate those [absorptions of the peak of existence and so forth], they do not destroy the discrimination of self. Therefore, the afflictions return, and they are thoroughly disturbed—as in the case of the cultivation of the concentrations by Udraka Rāmaputra.” Through the force of not having abandoned the conception of inherent existence, they are disturbed again by the afflictions, as in the case of the forger^e Udraka Rāmaputra. They again fall into a consciousness of lower states. Therefore, how could it be that trainees who are beings of greatest capacity would seek worldly special insight that only suppresses manifest afflictions?

In fact, ascent to “higher realms” through application of spiritual methods or other activities or circumstances has been compared to an arrow shot upwards. Since the arrow climbs by the impetus of the limited energy of the action of shooting and

^a *rdzogs chen kun bzang bla ma*.

^b This quote from the *Dzogchen Kunzang Lama* (Wylie, *rdzogs chen kun bzang bla ma*) was taken from Capriles (1977). Since the precise location of the extract in the original text and the latter’s data were not provided in that old text of mine (which was not written according to any established academic methodology), it is not currently available. The same quote was reproduced in Capriles (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.) and elsewhere.

^c Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*)—in this sense, somewhat akin to the Skt. *kuṇḍalinī*.

^d Fifth Dalai Lama, English 1974. Quoted in Capriles (1977) and then reproduced in Capriles (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.). The original read “concentrations” instead of “absorptions.”

^e The original translation read forder instead of forger. Since forder is not an English word and since those who climb to the formless realms are forgers of Awakening, I emended the translation. It had *tirthaka* as the Sanskrit term thus rendered: *tīrthika* is the Buddhist term for those who believe in the existence of a truly existing, substantial individual self.

since the force of gravity attracts it downwards, sooner or later it will have to fall. Chán (Zen) Buddhist Master Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh wrote:^a

“When the force that drives the arrow is spent
it will fall back to the ground
and its ascent will only have created adverse *karma*
for the times to come.”

In Tibet, the individual who, through the application of spiritual techniques, ascended to the “formless sphere,” was compared to a bird taking flight whose shadow grew in size as it rose, but which eventually would have to come down. Nowadays, we can replace the bird with an airplane and note that the plane’s shadow represents the understanding of oneself in terms of (coarse or subtle) hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized thoughts that causes one to *become* a particular ego or “I.” The plane rises and stays up in the air thanks to the fuel that feeds its engines (the actions at the base of the relevant wholesome habits) and the contributory circumstances that allow it to stay up in the air (such as an especially calm environment, the admiration of disciples, the amplitude of personal fame, the absence of adverse opinions, etc.—and, in some cases, even objects or substances). As the plane ascends, its shadow becomes larger and less distinct, until, having reached a given altitude, it seems to disappear: as we ascend to the peak of conditioned existence, our delusory sense-of-self expands to the point of embracing the entire cosmos and finally at some point we achieve the illusion that it has dissolved as we come to dwell on the idea of the impossibility of defining the seemingly limitless condition with which we identify—for this causes us to have the illusion of “being someone who has transcended the notion-of-self.” However, though the airplane’s shadow (the individual’s sense-of-self) may have remained invisible for some time, it never ceased to exist. And since no aircraft can fly ceaselessly—for it carries a limited quantity of fuel and at some time unfavorable conditions will replace the favorable ones that allow it to fly—sooner or later it will have to descend and, once more, be confined to the tight limits of a narrow shadow. As repeatedly noted, since individuals who “descend” from partially panoramic states have become used to their ampleness and seeming limitlessness, when they find themselves once again within the narrow limits to which they had been confined before their ascent, very likely they will experience claustrophobia, to which they will react with forceful rejection. And since the rejection of experience turns whichever sensations may be experienced—including the mental sensation that accompanies each and every cognition and action—into pain, and since the individual coming down from partially panoramic states is likely to have a quite elevated energetic volume determining the scope of awareness, he or she is likely to face a hellish experience—as noted above, this being the reason why the teachings affirm that upon falling from formless realms individuals likely take rebirth in the purgatories^b (impermanent hells).

^a Yoka Daishi / Taisen Deshimaru (Spanish 1981). Yōka Daishi or Yōka Genkaku are the Japanese pronunciations of 永嘉玄覺—the name of Yōngjiā Xuánjué (Wade-Giles Yung³-chia¹ Hsüan²-chüeh²), one of the five Chinese spiritual heirs of Huìnéng (惠能: Wade-Giles, Hui⁴-neng²; Cantonese [Huìnéng’s own language]: Wai⁶-nang⁴ [often rendered as Wei-lang]; Jap. Enō), the sixth patriarch of Chán (禪; Wade-Giles, Ch’an²; Jap. ぜん (hiragana) / Zen (romaji); Korean, 선 [Seon]; Viet. Thi ền).

^b Skt. *naraka*; Tib. myalwa (Wylie, *dmyal ba*).

The fuel that makes one climb to spiritual heights and sustains the “high” thus achieved is the repeated action^a that establishes the wholesome habits or attitudes at the root of the ensuing condition. Buddhists call it “principal cause”^b and compare it to the seed from which a plant sprouts and grows, while comparing the “contributory conditions”^c—which, as remarked above, include the environment and so on, and in some cases may even include the action of objects or substances—to light, moisture, earth, heat, etc. When the fuel is used up or the conditions change—in terms of the metaphor, when the airplane’s fuel is exhausted or when atmospheric or mechanical conditions make it impossible for it to keep flying—the individual will again have to face the narrow limits of her or his “shadow.”²⁷⁸

Just as the *karma* of immobility^d that is the main cause^e of birth in formless and form realms is exhausted, so does the good karma yielded by our well-meaning, good actions. This is why it was previously stated that the solution to our problems could not lie simply in avoiding bad actions^f and accumulating good ones. Whenever we act in an intentional, self-conscious manner, our consciousness for an instant takes as its object the entity that is acting (the individual with its aspects of body, voice, mind, qualities and activities), accepting it when, according to our natural sensitivity²⁷⁹ and the synthetic moral criterion conditioning us (the superego of the Freudian second topic), the action is “good,” rejecting it when it is “bad,” and remaining indifferent when it is “neutral.”²⁸⁰ This is why lie detectors work: when someone lies, for an instant consciousness rejects the lying self, and this rejection produces a subtle contraction that is registered by the machine.²⁸¹ Every act that, being deemed bad, causes consciousness to reject the agent, will establish propensities for rejection—which, since rejection begets pain, are propensities for future experiences of pain (which, when the necessary contributory conditions are present, will certainly give rise to hellish rebirths²⁸²). Furthermore, all kinds of intentional, self-conscious action affirm and sustain the illusion of a separate agent-perceiver that is the core of *avidyā* (unawareness *cum* delusion), maintaining *samsāra*; since it is impossible for the apparently separate agent-perceiver to accept experience continuously, acceptance sooner or later will give rise to rejection, and so every ascent to “higher realms” will result in a later descent to “lower” ones. This may allow us to clearly understand why the definitive uprooting of suffering is not achieved by abandoning bad actions (*karmas*) and accumulating good ones, but by overcoming *action* itself—or in other words, by transcending all *karma*.

The same applies to helping others, which is the aim of Mahāyāna practice: so long as we are not Awake, our capacity to help others will be insignificant, and due to

^a Skt. *karma*; Tib. le (Wylie, *las*); Ch. for *karma* is 業 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yè*; Wade-Giles *yeh*⁴). (Also 羊石 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yángshí*; Wade-Giles, *yang*²-*shih*²] and 業障 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yè-zhàng*; Wade-Giles, *yeh*⁴-*chang*⁴]). Ch. for *action* is 举动 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jǔdòng*; Wade-Giles, *chū*³-*tung*⁴).

^b Skt. and Pāli *hetu*; Tib. *gyu* (Wylie, *rgyu*); Ch. 因 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *yīn*; Wade-Giles *yin*¹].

^c Skt. *pratyaya*; Pāli *paccaya*; Tib. *kyen* (Wylie, *rkyen*); Ch. 緣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *yuán*; Wade-Giles *luan*²).

^d Skt. *anīṅjakarma*; Pāli *anīṅjitakamma*; Tib. *migyowai le* (Wylie, *mi gyo ba'i las*); Ch. 不動業 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùdòng yè*; Wade-Giles, *pu*⁴-*tung*⁴ *yeh*⁴).

^e Skt. and Pāli *hetu*; Tib. *gyu* (Wylie, *rgyu*); Ch. 因 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *yīn*; Wade-Giles *yin*¹].

^f Skt. *karma*; Tib. le (Wylie, *las*); Ch. for *karma* is 業 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yè*; Wade-Giles *yeh*⁴). (Also 羊石 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yángshí*; Wade-Giles, *yang*²-*shih*²] and 業障 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yè-zhàng*; Wade-Giles, *yeh*⁴-*chang*⁴]). Ch. for *action* is 举动 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jǔdòng*; Wade-Giles, *chū*³-*tung*⁴).

the “law of inverted effect” we may harm them while trying to help them. Elsewhere I have quoted the following stanza by Thogme Zangpo:^a

The gods of this world are not yet free from sorrow,
for caught in *samsāra*, some day they must fall.
If they’re bound as we are, how can they protect us?
How can someone in prison free anyone else?

Only the eradication of *avidyā* will uproot *duḥkha* and put an end to the revolving human existence that Buddhists call “the wheel” (*samsāra*). In fact, we will be able to reach plenitude and stop being at the mercy of others and of adventitious circumstances if and only if, by practicing the methods for Awakening and liberation transmitted by a genuine, millenary wisdom-tradition, we finally obtain the irreversible dissolution of the veil that conceals our true condition and of the delusion that distorts it and that has as its core our apparently separate, dissatisfied, ever-frustrated dualistic consciousness, thus becoming established in the absolute plenitude and completeness of our original, true condition. This cannot be brought to pass irreversibly from one day to the next, yet it can be attained at some point if one treads the self-liberating Path that lies in the repeated dissolution of delusion that progressively neutralizes the propensity for the latter to manifest and endows our lives with ever-increasing meaning, making us feel ever more complete—and, at the end, putting an end to craving^b in general and craving-for-existence / thirst-for-existence^c in particular, as we become established in the absolute plenitude of Awakening.

The fact that, so long as we are possessed by the delusion called *avidyā*, we are doomed to lack of plenitude, dissatisfaction, discomfort, frustration and recurrent pain and suffering, does not imply that we must abandon our current profession and habitual activities and way of life. When we consider the various Paths and vehicles of the Old or Nyingmapa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, we will see that it is only in the context of the Path of Renunciation that *some* individuals (those who decide to become monks or nuns) must adopt a wholly new way of life. Other practitioners, in spite of being aware that no human activity can be totally satisfactory in and of itself, do not deem it necessary to renounce possessions, spouse, pleasures, renown, etc. For example, in the higher vehicles of the Path of Transformation discussed below, relationships with a partner and erotic pleasure, as well as moderate consumption of alcohol and meat, and other activities that the Path of Renunciation abhors,²⁸³ can be very important elements on the Path to Awakening. Likewise, for those who fulfill the necessary requirements, teaching other individuals or groups, writing books and so on can be of the greatest importance. In fact, what Buddhist practitioners must achieve is the total uprooting of delusion, so that the whole of our activities may be approached in a radically different way, and so that we discover a plenitude that, unlike the most intense and sustained pleasure, is truly fulfilling.

^a Quoted in Capriles (1977 [the data of the text from which the quotation was taken were lost]). Then cited in Capriles (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.).

^b Pāli, *taṇhā*; Skt. *trṣṇā*; Tib. *sepa* (Wylie, *sred pa*); Ch. 愛 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *nài*; Wade-Giles, *nai*⁴).

^c Skt. *bhavātrṣṇā*; Pāli *bhavataṇhā*; Tib. *sidpai sepa* (Wylie, *srid pa'i sred pa*); Ch. 有愛 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yǒuài*; Wade-Giles, *yu*³-*ai*⁴).

In brief, our psychological mechanisms—the effectivity of which depends on the relatively impermeable character of the limits of our focus of conscious attention—keep us from becoming fully aware of the fact that in our habitual condition are inherent a lack of plenitude, dissatisfaction, uneasiness and discomfort that cannot be overcome so long as this condition persists, and that repeated frustration, reiterated pain and recurrent suffering are inherent in this condition. For that reason, in order to overcome delusion and the *duḥkha* inherent in it, we must first of all realize that the hair of *duḥkha* pervades the totality of our experience, ceasing to be like the palm of a hand and coming to be like an eye. In fact, the jail of our mental mechanisms has invisible walls, and in order to escape from jail, first of all we will have to see the walls. For us to be cured from an illness, first of all we will have to realize we are ill. In order to escape from a house in flames, first of all we will have to realize that the house is burning. Likewise, in order to put an end to *saṃsāra*, we will have to realize we are in *saṃsāra*, come to understand what the defects of *saṃsāra* are, and come to know that there is a condition different from *saṃsāra* that does not involve the defects of the latter.

However, in the Mahāyāna and higher vehicles it is not enough with wanting to free ourselves from suffering; we must have a call to work for the Awakening of all other beings rooted in equanimous universal compassion—which is an antidote to the selfishness of the desire to free ourselves alone from the sufferings of *saṃsāra*, which reinforces the cause of these sufferings, of which a central aspect is the illusion of being separate and independent sentient beings, and the feeling that we are the center of the universe with the egotism inherent in it. Therefore, in these vehicles practitioners are required to uproot the self-cherishing that makes us impervious to the sufferings and needs of others, and our motivation should not be merely to achieve our own freedom with regard to *duḥkha* and the wheel of *saṃsāra*, but to effectively help all beings liberate themselves from these two. However, if one is to help others effectively liberate themselves from *duḥkha* and the wheel of *saṃsāra*, one must have become free from these two by ridding oneself of their cause, which is the basic delusion called *avidyā*. In fact, this delusion causes us to confuse the cardinal points, and hence so long as we are under its power we cannot lead others to the safe haven of *nirvāṇa*: when the blind follow the blind, all fall together into the abyss.

THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH AND THE THREE MAIN PATHS OF BUDDHISM

The Fourth Noble Truth, which, as we have seen, is the Path allowing the individual to overcome the first two Truths and attain the Third, was originally explained—and on the Path of Renunciation consisting of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna it is regularly explained in our time as well—in terms of the renowned “Eightfold Noble Path,”^a consisting of the following eight elements: (1) right view,^b consisting in adherence to key Buddhist concepts such as the Four Noble Truths, dependent origination, cause-and-effect and so on, and in uprooting all wrong views; (2) right thought,^c consisting in cultivation of a mental attitude centered in following the Buddhist Path to its final destination; (3) right speech,^d consisting in avoiding harsh words, lying, slander and gossip, and cultivating their opposites; (4) right disciplined behavior,^e consisting in acting in accordance with whichever precepts one has taken on; (5) right livelihood,^f consisting in the avoidance of occupations harmful to beings; (6) right effort or diligence,^g consisting in doing good and avoiding evil, adopting a mind-set aiming at liberation from *samsāra*, and implementing the practices prescribed to this aim; (7) right presence, collectedness or mindfulness,^h consisting in maintaining constant awareness and presence of mind and regulating one’s behavior with it; and (8) right meditative absorption,ⁱ consisting in the good capacity to fix the mind on an object

^a Skt. *āryāṣṭāṅgamārga*; Pāli *ariyāṭṭhaṅgikamagga* / *ariyoaṭṭhaṅgikomaggo*; Tib. **phagpai lam yenlak gye** (Wylie, *'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad*); Ch. 八正道 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *bāzhèngdào*; Wade-Giles, *pa¹-cheng⁴-tao⁴*).

^b Skt. *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*; Pāli *sammādiṭṭhi*; Tib. **yangdakpai tawa** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i lta ba*); Ch. 正見 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngjiàn*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-chien⁴*).

^c Skt. *samyaksamkalpa*; Pāli *sammāsaṅkappa*; Tib. **yangdak dakpai togpa** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i rtog pa*); Ch. 正思惟 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngsīwéi*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-ssu¹-wei²*).

^d Skt. *samyagvāc*; Pāli *sammāvācā*; Tib. **yangdakpai ngag** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i ngag*); Ch. 正語 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngyǔ*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-yü³*).

^e Skt. *samyakkarmānta*; Pāli *sammākammanta*; Tib. **yangdakpai lekyi tha** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha*); Ch. 正業 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngyè*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-yeh⁴*).

^f Skt. *samyagājīva*; Pāli *sammājīva*; Tib. **yangdakpai tsowa** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i 'tsho ba*); Ch. 正命 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngmìng*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-ming⁴*).

^g Skt. *samyagvyāyāma*; Pāli *sammāvāyāma*; Tib. **yangdakpai tsölwa** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i rtsol ba*); Ch. 正精進 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngjīngjìn*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-ching¹-chin⁴*).

^h Skt. *samyaksmṛti*; Pāli *sammāsati*; Tib. **yangdakpai tenpa** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i dran pa*); Ch. 正念 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngniàn*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-nien⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *samyaksamādhi*; Pāli *sammāsamādhi*; Tib. **yanggagpai tingngedzin** (Wylie, *yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin*); Ch. 正定 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zhèngdìng*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-ting⁴*).

resulting from the previous aspects, which should allow one to develop the four absorptions of the *rūpa loka* or *rūpadhātu* and, finally, attain liberation.

Considering the Path in general rather than the above eight aspects (which, *if taken literally*, apply quite precisely to the Path of Renunciation of the Sūtrayāna, but not to the other two Paths which will be considered later on), it was already noted that according to the Theravāda, *nirvāṇa*^a is nonfabricated, unconditioned, unproduced, uncontrived, uncompounded and /or unconfigured^b—and now it must be noted that in its view it is the *only dharma* in this category. Since this implies that it cannot be contrived, built, constructed, produced or achieved through conditioning practices, it is easy to understand why Buddhaghosa’s *Atthasālinī*, which is a Theravāda treatise, contrasts the path of constructing / counterfeiting (which in Judeo-Christian lore is comparable to *building* the tower of Babel in order to reach Heaven), with the Path of dismantling whatever is fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and / or compounded.^c In fact, the text clearly tells us that the way to demolish birth and death, so that we may become firmly established in the timeless sphere of the unborn, uncreated and indestructible condition, which is *nirvāṇa*, is through *undoing* all that is made and conditioned and therefore belongs to *saṃsāra*, “by bringing about a deficiency in those conditions which tend to produce birth and death.”^d

While healthy attitudes and meditative practices ranging over the three saṃsāric spheres [which are that of sensuality, that of form and that of formlessness] build up and make grow birth and death in a never-ending circle and hence are called building-up practices, it is not so with this meditation. Just as if a man were to erect a wall eighteen cubits high, while another man were to take a hammer and to break down and to demolish any part as it gets erected, so also this meditation sets about to break down and to demolish death and rebirth that have been built up by healthy attitudes and meditative practices ranging over the three worlds, by *bringing about a deficiency in those conditions which tend to produce birth and death*, and therefore this meditation is called “the tearing down one” (*apacayagāmi*).

The Mahāyāna is equally aware that *nirvāṇa*—which in this case is nonstatic *nirvāṇa*, which from the Mahāyāna’ perspective is the true, fully fledged *nirvāṇa*—cannot be constructed, built or produced, for then it would be another fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and /or compounded^e state, and hence it subscribes to the notion that the Path to it could by no means lie in *producing* states through training in meditative practices, in *producing* qualities through imitation, and so on. However, as noted above, according to the Promulgations that make up the doctrinal basis of the Wider Vehicle it is *not only nirvāṇa* that is nonfabricated, unconditioned, unproduced, uncontrived, uncompounded and /or unconfigured: the

^a Pāli *nibbāna*; Tib. **myangenle depa** (Wylie, *mya ngan las ’das pa*) or myangde (Wylie, *myang ’das*); Ch. 涅槃 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *nieh⁴-p’an²*); Jap. *nehan*; etc..

^b Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dūmache* (Wylie, *’dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *dūche* (Wylie, *’dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^d Attributed to Buddhaghosha, *Atthasālinī*; in Guenther (1957, 2d. Ed. 1974).

^e Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *dūche* (Wylie, *’dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

true condition of all phenomena of *saṃsāra* is equally nonfabricated, unconditioned, unproduced, uncontrived, uncompounded and /or unconfigured—yet *avidyā* causes us to have illusory fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, and /or compounded experiences of what in itself is unconditioned and unmade, thereby giving rise to the infernal Ferris wheel that brings about recurring frustration and suffering and that involves constant lack of plenitude and discomfort called *saṃsāra*.

In particular, the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* and related commentaries, as well as the Mahāmādhyaṃyaka philosophical school, compare Buddhahood to the sun that has always been shining in the sky, even while it was covered by the passing clouds that represent the delusive obstructions^a that conceal the Buddha-nature and which consist mainly in the hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts of the three main kinds that were described above and that are referred to throughout this book—thus illustrating a view that is shared by the higher Tantras, but which as noted above only the Dzogchen teachings explain and apply in a perfect and noncontradictory way. At any rate, it is a fact that since beginningless time Buddhahood has been manifest and actual with its three *kāyas* and the totality of the qualities of Awakening, as the Base of both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—yet has been hidden and obstructed in *saṃsāra* and has become evident and unobstructed to those who attain full nonstatic *nirvāṇa*.²⁸⁴

Thus for Mahāmādhyaṃyaka and the *Vajra Vehicles*, but most thoroughly for the Dzogchen teachings, the True Path must necessarily consist in repeatedly *seeing through* the spurious, produced, fabricated, contrived, conditioned, configured and /or compounded experiences of *saṃsāra*, into the unmade, unproduced, uncontrived, nonfabricated, unconditioned, uncompounded and /or unconfigured Base of all that there is, and thus progressively freeing ourselves from their grip on us (which to some extent could be compared to freeing ourselves from the grip of a nightmare by recognizing it to be only a dream). This outright contradicts the Theravāda view according to which only *nirvāṇa* is unmade and unconditioned—which implies that it would be impossible to discover the unmade and unconditioned by apprehending the true nature of the phenomena of *saṃsāra*. However, the Mahāmādhyaṃyaka view also implies that, as the *Atthasālinī* rightly asserted, a pivotal element of the Path consists in bringing about a deficiency in those conditions that produce birth and death—for impairing the mechanisms that produce the conditioned and made is the very key to seeing *through* the conditioned and made, *into* its unconditioned and unmade nature. This is what, in his *Bodhicaryāvatāra* or *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, Śāntideva implied when he compared *saṃsāra*'s *all-pervading duḥkha*^b to a hair, the normal individual to the palm of a hand and the *bodhisattva* or individual *en route* to Awakening to the eyeball, and declared that in the palm of the hand the hair can remain undetected indefinitely, but in the eyeball, where its presence becomes evident and unbearable, it cannot persist for long: being like the eyeball stands for having deficient mechanisms for concealing *duḥkha* and hence lacking the conditions for indefinitely continuing in the round of birth and death, oblivious to the suffering this entails.

^a Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*). These are of two kinds that will be discussed later on in the regular text.

^b Skt. *saṃskāraduḥkhatā*; Pāli *saṃkhāra-dukkha*; Tib. *duchékyi dugndäl* (Wylie, 'du byed kyi *sdug bsngal*); Ch. 行苦 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíngkǔ*; Wade-Giles, *hsing²-k'u³*).

The image Buddhaghōṣa chose to illustrate a pivotal element of the Path in the above quoted passage is that of actively and intentionally destroying what, being built and conditioned, was spurious, would not be used by the Dzogchen teachings: though they would agree to the fact that *nirvāṇa* cannot be built or constructed, they would by no means agree to presenting the undoing of *samsāra* as a process based on continuous action by the spurious mental subject—even though the passage rightly explains that it is actually a matter of “*bringing about a deficiency in those conditions which tend to produce birth and death,*” thus making it clear that the hammer image is an imperfect simile he resorted to for lack of a more precise one. In fact, in Dzogchen practice *seeing through* the spurious, produced, fabricated, contrived, conditioned, configured and / or compounded samsaric experiences, into the unmade, unproduced, uncontrived, nonfabricated, unconditioned and / or un compounded Base, is utterly free from action, intention and contrivance—and, in fact, only then it is this *seeing through* also unmade, unproduced, uncontrived, nonfabricated, unconditioned, un compounded and / or un configured—and hence what it reveals is also the unmade, unproduced, uncontrived, nonfabricated, unconditioned and / or un compounded. The practice of Dzogchen achieves this by means of the skillful, masterful use it makes of the spontaneous perfection / self-rectification^a aspect of the Base, which is unlike the contrived methods of other paths and vehicles, and unrivaled by the latter. Nevertheless, once more it must be emphasized that no matter the vehicle one may be practicing, whenever such *seeing through* occurs, it does so beyond action, intention or contrivance, for only in this way can the *seeing through* in question take place.

Moreover, also some Buddhist traditions other than Dzogchen make the same point—including one *Mahāyānasūtra*, some Mahāmādhyaṃika texts, the whole of the Sudden Mahāyāna^b and various Vajrayāna sources. The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*, for example, reads:^c

The bodhisattva Punyakṣetra declared, “It is dualistic to consider actions meritorious, sinful, or neutral. The non-undertaking of meritorious, sinful, and neutral actions is not dualistic. The intrinsic nature of all such actions is emptiness, wherein ultimately there is neither merit, nor sin, nor neutrality, nor action itself. The nonaccomplishment of such actions is the entrance into nonduality.”

Action must necessarily be meritorious, sinful, or neutral, and hence asking us not to undertake actions of any of these three kinds is an invitation to go beyond action. In the Introduction to an online version of the above-cited translation of the same *sūtra* we read:^d

The secret lies in nonduality: the nongrasping and nonrejecting, the destruction and nondestruction, the nonaction and non-nonaction.

^a Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*; Tib. lhundrub (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^b i.e. Ch. 禪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Chán; Wade-Giles, Ch’an; Jap. 禅 (hiragana) / Zen (romaji); Korean, 선 / Seon; Viet. Thi ền): Chán Buddhism.

^c Thurman (1976); this online version, p. 58. This translation was made from the Tibetan version. In order to keep the methodology of this book I emended “Punyakshetra” as Punyakṣetra.

^d <http://honsing.com/Vimalaintro.pdf>, p. 6. This version reads: “Sutra translated by Robert A. F. Thurman; Commentaries by Hon Sing Lee and Chiew Hoon Goh.”

In fact, as remarked at the end of the last chapter, intentional, self-conscious action, since it affirms and sustains the illusion of a separate agent-perceiver that is the second aspect or type of the delusion called *avidyā*, maintains *samsāra*: this is why the definitive uprooting of suffering necessarily involves going beyond action, or, in other words, transcending *karma*. It was also noted that *action* is by definition *made, produced and contrived*^a (it is something we *do*) and *conditioned*^b (when we act we are *conditioned* by our *karma* and we create more conditioning *karma*): it is the main *cause*^c that, given a set of contributory conditions,^d will *produce* an effect—which, being *produced*, necessarily will be *conditioned* and *made*^e (note that this applies to whichever psychological states may be produced in this way). In fact, as the teachings most clearly note, *all that arises from causes and contributory conditions is spurious, produced, fabricated, contrived, conditioned and / or compounded*.^f

Why using action in order to eliminate delusion will maintain delusion, may be clearly illustrated with the story of how Huìnéng^g became the sixth patriarch of Chán Buddhism in China. The fifth patriarch, Hóngrěn,^h had already recognized Huìnéng’s qualities; however, beside being a newcomer, the latter was an illiterate woodcutter and a “barbarian” from Guǎngdōngⁱ (Canton), whereas the rest of the monks were of noble extraction and were accomplished scholars, and therefore it would have been dangerous for his safety—as well as for his own development on the Path—if he had celebrated his realization from the very outset of their relationship. Thus he dismissed the statement of realization by which Huì introduced himself and sent him to work in the kitchen, taking good care that no one would come to know the newcomer already had some realization and was on his way to becoming an outstanding practitioner and realized Master. When the time came for the fifth patriarch to prepare his succession, he called for a poetry contest, saying that the winner would obtain the Patriarchy. The poem by Shénxiù,^j the most renowned scholar and meditator in the monastery, was praised so profusely by Hóngrěn that nobody dared to compete against him. Since Huìnéng was illiterate, he had been unable either to participate in the contest or to read the poem by the erudite monk;

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^c Pāli and Skt. *hetu*; Tib. *gyu* (Wylie, *rgyu*); Ch. 因 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *yīn*; Wade-Giles *yīn¹*).

^d Pāli *paccaya*; Skt. *pratyaya*; Tib. *kyen* (Wylie, *rkyen*); Ch. 緣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *yuán*; Wade-Giles *yuán²*).

^e Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^f Cf. the preceding footnote.

^g 惠能; Wade-Giles, Hui⁴-neng²; Cantonese (Huìnéng’s own language) Wai⁶-nang⁴ (often rendered as Wei-lang); Jap. Enō. With posthumous title: Dàjiàn Huìnéng (大鑒惠能; Wade-Giles Ta⁴-chien⁴ Hui⁴-neng²; Jap. Daikan Enō).

^h 弘忍 (Wade-Giles, Hung²-jen³). With honorific, posthumous title: 大滿弘忍 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn: Dàmǎn Hóngrěn; Wade-Giles Ta⁴-men³ Hung²-jen³; Japanese: Daiman Gunin or Daiman Konin).

ⁱ 廣東; Wade-Giles, Kwang³-tung¹; Jyutping, Gwong² dung¹.

^j 神秀; Wade-Giles, Shen²-hsiu⁴; Jap. Jinshū.

consequently, so that the future sixth patriarch would become aware of its contents, Hóngrěn asked for it to be written on a wall and for everyone to recite it. The poem said:^a

Our body is the *bodhi*-tree;
a brilliant mirror is our mind.
Keep cleaning the mirror to guarantee
that no dust its reflectiveness will blind.

Upon hearing Shénxiù's poem, Huìnéng knew the author still had not reached the level of realization of the Fifth Patriarch, and found himself compelled to reply with a poem that demonstrated that, even though Hóngrěn would still not recognize him owing to the danger from the envy and jealousy of the scholars in the face of the success of a barbarian, illiterate woodcutter, he had a far more correct understanding of the Path than the renowned scholar-monk. His reply read:^b

There has never been a *bodhi*-tree,
nor has there been a mirror-mind;
since everything is substance-free
no dust our true nature may blind!

The point is that each and every action of the spurious subject that appears to be a separate and autonomous source of thought and action affirms and sustains the illusion of its existence, and so if the action of cleaning the mirror is to be carried out ceaselessly, the subject will maintain itself endlessly, and the true condition of both ourselves and the whole universe will continue to be concealed. Furthermore, if we try to remove something, it is because we believe it truly exists, and to the extent that we endeavor to remove it, we confirm and maintain the illusion of its existence. Consequently, the effects of implementing Shénxiù's teaching would be like those of cleaning a mirror with a dirty rag: the more we clean it, the dirtier it will become.

For his part, Huìnéng proposed using emptiness as an antidote to the delusion that lies in taking the mental subject and its objects to be self-existent—which is a perfect Mahāyāna strategy, yet is not consistent with the principle of Dzogchen. In terms of the example of the mirror, the strategy of the Semde^c series of Dzogchen teachings consists recognizing all reflections and apparent taints in it as *reflections that manifest clearly without existing anywhere, outwardly or inwardly*^d and that are the play / display of the energy^e of the mirror itself—which as such do not have a nature different from that of the latter, of which they are not at a distance—and thus realize the true condition of both the mirror and the reflections and seeming stains,

^a This is a free rendering of the poem, made for it to nearly rhyme.

^b This is also a free rendering of the poem, made for it to nearly rhyme; the original said that, since the mirror is void, the dust has nowhere to alight.

^c Wylie, *sems sde*.

^d Longchen Rabjam (2001, p. 156).

^e The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei*¹—lit. *sadness* or *mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*. The reason why this term is used is explained in a footnote to the Introduction.

which is primordially pure^a and spontaneously perfect.^b The Dzogchen Series of pith instructions,^c for its part, teaches us to look right in the face of whichever reified / hypostasized / valorized / absolutized thought may arise—coarse, subtle or supersubtle—so as to see the stuff of which it is made—i.e., the energy that makes up thought, which is of the kind that the Dzogchen teachings call dang^d and which is one of the forms of manifestation of the energy^e aspect of our nonfabricated, unmade, unconditioned, uncompounded, unproduced, uncontrived and unconfigured^f original, true condition, which at the outset of the Path revealed itself in Direct^g Introduction^h (see Part Two of this book)—and reGnize that stuff rather than perceiving it as object in terms of hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized contents of thought. The true condition of dang energy is the *dharmakāya*, and since as noted repeatedly the latter (is) an all-liberating single gnosis,ⁱ its reGnition automatically results in the spontaneous liberation of the hypostasized / reified / valorized thoughts that had been conditioning our experience.²⁸⁵ (This must be done no matter which of the three types of thought is being absolutized / hypostasized / reified / valorized and no matter how intensely it is being charged by the vibratory activity at the root of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought—those that are most intensely charged being those that give rise to stronger reactions, and that therefore give rise to the passions that the Path of Renunciation^j views as poisons to be eliminated: they are all to be reGnized the moment they arise so that they instantly self-liberate.)

Another Chán (Zen) story that illustrates why true spiritual realization cannot result from action or in any way be *produced* is that of the dialog between Mǎzǔ Dàoyī,^k who at the time was still an ordinary practitioner, and Chán Master Nányuè Huáiràng,^l his future teacher:^m

Mǎ was sitting in meditation when Huáiràng arrived and asked him what the aim of sitting in meditation was. Mǎ replied:

“To become a Buddha.”

Huáiràng picked up a tile and began to polish it. When Mǎ asked what he was doing, he answered:

“I am making a mirror.”

^a Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^b Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^c Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*); Skt. *Upadeśavarga*.

^d Wylie, *gdangs*.

^e Tib. thukje (Wylie, *thugs rje*, which corresponds to the Skt. term *karuṇā* and which refers to one of the three aspects of the Base that were mentioned above in the regular text and that later on will be discussed in detail in that same text.

^f Skt. *asamskrīta*; Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Tib. dūmache (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^g Tib. thogtu (Wylie, *thog tu*).

^h Tib. ngo trepa (Wylie, *ngo sprad pa*) or ngotre (Wylie, *ngo sprad*). “Direct Introduction” is thus thoktu ngotre (Wylie, *thog tu ngo sprad*) or thoktu ngotrepa (Wylie, *thog tu ngo sprad pa*).

ⁱ Tib. chikshe kundröl (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*).

^j Tib. pong lam (Wylie, *spong lam*).

^k 馬祖道一; Wade-Giles, Ma³-tsu³ Tao⁴-i¹; Jap. Baso Dōitsu.

^l 南嶽懷讓; Wade-Giles, Nan²-yüeh⁴ Huai²-jang⁴; Jap. Nangaku Ejō.

^m Adapted from Suzuki, D. T. French 1940/1943, 1972 (vol. I), pp. 277-278, and Watts, A. W. 1956. Cited in various works of mine, including Capriles (2013b).

Mǎ asked:

“And how could polishing a tile make a mirror?”

Huáiràng replied:

“And how could one become a Buddha by sitting in meditation?”

The principle behind the above examples may be expressed in the renowned words of the *Śūraṅgamasūtra*:^a

If the causal basis is false, its fruit will be false, and the search for the Buddha’s Awakening will lead to failure.

Though the Mahāyāna is a causal vehicle^b and the *sūtra* is making its point in terms of causality (it posits a “causal basis” and “its fruit”), from the standpoint of Mahāmādhyaṃka and of the Sudden Mahāyāna (Chán) the *sūtra*’s statement may be understood as warning us that actions, activities and so on, since they are *conditioned* and *made*^c and in turn *condition* and *produce*, cannot beget *nirvāṇa*, recognized by all forms of Buddhism to be *unconditioned* and *unproduced*.^d In fact, whichever fruit may be borne by *production* or *conditioning* will be spurious and false. Moreover, in the Cause-based vehicles^e the Fruit is sought as the effect of a cause of a nature dissimilar from that of the expected result (as is clearly the case in the Mahāyāna, in which the rūpakāya must be *produced* by completing the collection of merits,^f the nature of which is definitely dissimilar from that of the rūpakāya). That is not the case in the Fruit-based vehicles^g in which the Fruit is to be achieved through the development of an initial *example of primordial gnosis*^h that mimics the *true primordial gnosis* that makes rigpa patent and that repeatedly manifests in the Path and constantly manifests as the Fruit. However, all that is produced by *causes and conditions* is fabricated, conditioned, produced, contrived, configured and /or compoundedⁱ—and, as already noted, and as will be explained in greater detail in a subsequent section, the Path of transformation of the Vajrayāna, in spite of being Fruit-based, is blocked and marred by causality. This is why most effective, swift and direct is the vehicle that is wholly beyond the cause-effect relation and that as such cannot be considered to be based either on a cause^j or a Fruit:^k the Dzogchen Atiyoga, in which realization is attained through the repeated, spontaneous dissolution (i.e.

^a Luk, Charles (*upāsaka Lü Kuan Yu*) (trans. 1973).

^b Skt. *hetuyāna*; Tib. gyui tegpa (Wylie, *rgyu’i theg pa*).

^c Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *’dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^d Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. dümache (Wylie, *’dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^e Skt. *phalayāna*; Tib. drebui thekpa (Wylie, *’bras bu’i theg pa*).

^f Skt. *puṇyasambhāra*; Tib. sönamkyi tsog (Wylie, *bsod nams kyi tshogs*) *puṇyasambhāra*; Tib. sönamkyi tsog (Wylie, *bsod nams kyi tshogs*); Ch. [宿] 福德資糧 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, [*sù*] *fúdé zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, [*su⁴*] *fu²-te² tzu¹-liang²*).

^g Skt. *phalayāna*; Tib. drebui thekpa (Wylie, *’bras bu’i theg pa*).

^h Tib. peyi yeshe (Wylie, *dpe yi ye shes*).

ⁱ Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *’dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^j Skt. *hetu*; Tib. gyu (Wylie, *rgyu*); Ch. 因 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yīn*; Wade-Giles *yin¹*).

^k Skt. *phala*; Tib. drebu (Wylie, *’bras bu*); Ch. 果 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *guǒ*; Wade-Giles *kuo³*).

“liberation”) of the apparently separate, illusory nucleus of thought, perception and action, rather than as an effect of the latter’s actions.²⁸⁶

In fact, as implied by the whole of the above, all that is conditioned may be produced by creating the main cause and arranging the contributory conditions, but Awakening, *qua* unconditioned realization of the unconditioned nature, can only result from the *spontaneous liberation* of delusion, which cannot be produced, induced or arranged. Dūdjom Rinpoche^a wrote that during the Second Promulgation of the transmitted precepts, Śākyamuni did not reveal the structure of the fundamental reality, though he did extensively teach the inconceivable, abiding nature (i.e., the *dharmakāya*’s basic, primordial emptiness) without referring to elaborately conceived symbols, and that during the Third Promulgation, though he did reveal the structure of the fundamental reality, he did not teach the characteristic Path through which it is actualized. In fact, the Path through which the structure of the fundamental reality is actualized is that of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo.

After the explanations in the preceding chapter and those provided so far in this chapter, the fact that merely entering the transpersonal sphere cannot give rise to the true, absolute sanity Buddhism calls Awakening must have become crystal clear. Clinging to a seemingly limitless condition that seems to embrace the whole universe would prove that one is under the yoke of the hypostatization / absolutization / reification / valorization of thought: since in nontranspersonal states this reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization most of the time produces a greater or lesser degree of pain, one may try to elude this pain by clinging to the transpersonal sphere. Nothing like this happens when one is no longer subject to the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought, without which no experience whatsoever would involve suffering—nor is there the conception of an “I” that must elude suffering.

True sanity and freedom that cannot be hampered are only possible when the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thoughts that produces the experiences of the different realms have been eradicated. No matter what type of experience we face or what conditions we find ourselves in, we must not allow reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized thoughts to take hold of us or carry us away—whether these are discursive thoughts may link up and trap us in a circle of confusion, passion and delusion; intuitive thoughts such as those that play the leading role in sensory perception or abstract understanding; or the “threefold directional thought structure” at the root of the illusory subject-object duality. As we will see in Part Two of this book, the instant practitioners of Tekchö^b (first level of practice in the Pith instructions series^c of Dzogchen teachings) notice that they have been deceived by a thought and thus are facing a fabricated, contrived, conditioned, configured and / or compounded^d experience that as such is baseless and deceitful, and instantly look into that thought in order to directly See its unproduced, nonfabricated, uncontrived,

^a Dūdjom Rinpoche (1991, vol. I, pp. 300-301).

^b Wylie, *khregs chod*.

^c Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*).

^d Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

unconditioned, unconfigured, uncompounded^a stuff and true condition, thus creating the conditions for the spontaneous liberation of the thought by virtue of the *nondual, all-liberating single gnosis* of the *dharmakāya* that is the true nature of dang energy and in general of our own awareness (i.e. of our cognitive capacity, which has been compared to a mirror) and all thoughts (i.e. all reflections)—which (is) inconceivable, nonfabricated and unconditioned. This spontaneous dissolution of delusion in the disclosure of our own original condition of total plentitude and perfection may be compared to waking up from a dream or to the removal of a veil.

The Twofold Lineage of Awakening

Both in the analysis of the Second Noble Truth and in that of the Third Noble Truth the concepts of the Base which is the Buddha-nature *qua* actuality (rather than the Buddha-nature *qua* mere potentiality), of the Base's primordial purity aspect, and of the base-of-all were discussed: in the analysis of the Second Noble Truth, this was done in order to establish how does *saṃsāra* arise from the neutral condition of the base-of-all; in the analysis of the Third Noble Truth, it was done in the context of distinguishing between, on the one hand, the state of rigpa as it manifests on the Path and as the Fruit, and, on the other hand, the conditions that may be confused with it—namely the neutral condition of the base-of-all and the top realms of *saṃsāra*, which are those of formlessness. At this point, it is imperative to discuss the same concepts with regard to the Path, in the context of making it clear that only the Path that is not based on creating anything that was not there since beginningless time, and that is beyond action and hence beyond causality, can yield the true Fruit of Buddhahood.

Since Buddhahood is fully manifest as actuality in and as the Base that is the Buddha-nature, the process of Awakening consists in removing all of that which in *saṃsāra* obscures and impedes that nature. In the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* (which as we know pertain to the Third promulgation) and the treatises based on them, this is explained in terms of the concept of lineage. Longchen Rabjam writes in the *Shingta Chenpo*:^b

When one is a living being, in the suchness or thatness of one's mind one possesses [both] the perfections of the virtues of the form dimension [(*rūpakāya*) of Buddhahood] in its aspect of appearances and the virtues of the *dharmakāya* in its aspect as emptiness. However, [the Buddha-nature] has been obscured by defilements and its [inherent] virtues have become manifestatively [impeded and] blurred. [Because of this] it is called nature^c or lineage.^d

^a Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dūmache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²).

^b Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*, vol. I, 99b/3 (cited in Tulku Thondup, 1996, p, 238; I replaced some terms for the ones used in this book: terms and phrases within brackets are my own additions or modifications).

^c Skt. *dhātu*; Tib kham (Wylie, *kham*s) or ying (Wylie, *dbyings*s), according to the case; Ch. 界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jiè; Wade-Giles, chieh⁴) or 法界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, fǎjiè; Wade-Giles, fa³- chieh⁴) according to the case.

^d Tib. rig (Wylie, *rig*s).

When one becomes a Buddha, one will be [utterly] free from all obscurations [and all impediments]. So it is called Awakening. The difference is just whether the power^a of the nature of awareness is fully manifested [or not]. We do not assert that [Buddhahood] is the arising or development of a new virtue that did not exist when one was [an ordinary] sentient being, for the nature is changeless.

The texts that use the concept of lineage, divide the latter into two aspects: the “naturally manifest lineage”^b and the “developing lineage.”^c Drime Öser^d writes in the *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngälso*:^e

The basis of virtues is the lineage^f
 which (is) the luminous natural^g state of awareness,
 the immaculate nature,^h and that is the “naturally manifest lineage.”
 The appearance aspectⁱ of the [true essence or nature] is the two bodies,
 which have been characterized by nine examples.
 It is the essence or nature of primordially manifest energy or compassion, and
 it is the “developing lineage.” This was said by the Bliss-gone (Buddha).

Since the Mahāyāna is a causal vehicle, it teaches the view according to which the two dimensions of Buddhahood, which are the two great dimensions that (are) the *dharmakāya* and the *rūpakāya* (the form dimension, constituted by the *saṃbhogakāya* plus the *nirmāṇakāya*) are causal results of the two accumulations: the *dharmakāya* is viewed as the fruit of the accumulation of primordial gnosis,^j and the *rūpakāya* is presented as the fruit of the accumulation of merits.^k If this were taken literally, then Buddhahood would be fabricated, caused, contrived, conditioned and/or compounded and hence it would be impermanent and subject to suffering. However, the so-called *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* of the Third promulgation and the treatises based on them are clear that this is not the case, for the two accumulations are inherent in the Buddha-nature *qua* Base and as such are not created, fabricated, produced, or compounded. In order to make our primordial Buddhahood free from all that obscures it and impedes it, one is said to depend on the twofold lineage that was

^a Tib. *nüpa* (Wylie, *nus pa*).

^b Tib. rangzhin *nerig* (Wylie, *rang bzhin gnas rigs*).

^c Tib. *gyegyurgyi rig* (Wylie, *rgyas 'gyur gyi rigs*).

^d Wylie, *dri med 'od zer*.

^e Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso*.

^f Tib. *rig* (Wylie, *rigs*).

^g Tib. rangzhin (Wylie, *rang bzhin*).

^h Tib. *kham* (Wylie, *kham*).

ⁱ Tib. *nangcha* (Wylie, *snang cha*).

^j Skt. *jñānasambhāra*; Tib. *yeshekyi tsog* (Wylie, *ye shes kyi tshogs*); Ch. 智慧資糧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhìhuìzīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴-hui⁴-tzu¹-liang²*).

^k *puṇyasambhāra*; Tib. *sönamkyi tsog* (Wylie, *bsod nams kyi tshogs*); Ch. [宿] 福德資糧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, [*sù*] *fúdé zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *fu²-te² tzu¹-liang²*). (The prefix 宿 *sù* means former and need not be used.)

outlined in a citation above and that Longchen Rabjam further explained and subdivided in the *Shingta Chenpo*:^a

There are two divisions [in the lineage: (a) The naturally manifest lineage,^b which [has (been) primordially manifest, and (b) the developed lineage,^c which is generated depending on the cleansing of the adventitious defilements.

(1) In the naturally [manifest lineage there are two aspects]:

(a) The naturally manifest lineage of the absolute nature of phenomena,^d which (is) emptiness free from all fabrications, the essence or nature of mind,^e and the cause of the *svabhāvikāya*. (b) The naturally manifest lineage of phenomena, which is the cause of freedom of the form dimension [which is the *rūpakāya*]. They abide as phenomena [(i.e. appearances)] and their true condition [(i.e. emptiness)] since primordial time ...

(2) The developed lineage: through training in the development of the mind of Awakening and so on, the skillful means and wisdom of the path of application or path of preparation^f and the dual accumulation [which consists in] the accumulation of merit and [the accumulation] of primordial gnosis, perfect one into the naturally manifest lineage.

At any rate, both of the above aspects are causal and as such yield contrived / fabricated / produced / conditioned and/or compounded^g fruits, and thus pertain to and perpetuate *samsāra*. This is why throughout this book emphasis has been laid on the fact that Awakening always occurs utterly beyond the cause-effect relation, even when it occurs on cause-based vehicles^h (it was noted that even the Awakening of the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, Awakening was totally spontaneous, free from effort and action), or on the causality-ridden vehicles of the path of Transformation that are classified within the fruit-based vehicle.ⁱ

In fact, the above lineages are based on the “base-of-all of variegated traces or propensities”^j (note that it was already stated that the “absolute base-of-all of linking, or absolute linking-up base-of-all”^k was a neutral state which is the foundation of the aspect of action^l and the root foundation that connects [one] to *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* through different deeds, and that it pertained to the “base-of-all of variegated traces or propensities”), and all that arises through this aspect of the base-of-all pertains to *samsāra*. And, as emphasized throughout this volume, nonstatic *nirvāṇa* **cannot be caused**, and hence no deed can make it manifest: it (is) uncontrived / nonfabricated /

^a Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*, vol. I, 101a/3 (cited in Tulku Thondup, 1996, p, 239; I replaced some terms for the ones used in this book: terms and phrases within brackets are my own additions or modifications).

^b Tib. rangzhin nerig (Wylie, *rang bzhin gnas rigs*).

^c Tib. drubpai rig (Wylie, *bsgrub pa'i rigs*).

^d Tib. chönyi (Wylie, *chos nyid*).

^e Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^f Skt. *prayogamārga*[h]; Tib. jorlam (Wylie, *sbyor lam*); Ch. 加行道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiāxíng dào*; Wade-Giles *tzu¹-liang² tao⁴*; J. *kegy ōdō*; K. *kahaeng to*).

^g Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^h Skt. *hetuyāna*; Tib. gyui tegpa (Wylie, *rgyu'i theg pa*).

ⁱ Skt. *phalayāna*; Tib. drebui thekpa (Wylie, *'bras bu'i theg pa*).

^j Tib. bagchag na tsogpai kunzhi (Wylie, *bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*).

^k Tib. jorwa döngyi kunzhi (Wylie, *sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*).

^l Skt. *karma*; Tib. le (Wylie, *las*); Ch. 業 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yè*; Wade-Giles *yeh⁴*).

unproduced / unconditioned and uncompounded,^a and for it to manifest the illusory doer must dissolve, so that one goes beyond action and therefore beyond *karma*. Longchenpa writes in Ch. IV of the *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngalsoi Drelwa Shingta Chenpo*:^b

“[The base-of-all of traces or propensities^c] is not the basis of the [true condition]^d [or of its full patency and unhindered functioning in nonstatic *nirvāṇa*]. So it does not act other than as merely the basis of (becoming) [Awake] through the training on the [produced, conditioned,] compounded [and/or contrived]^e bodhisattva path of accumulation of merits and wisdom.^f [The two] (accumulations) belong to the category of ‘the Truth of the Path,’ and they are delusory and temporary, because of their being based on the [base-of-all of traces or propensities].”

Then Longchenpa goes on to explain that a training based on traces or propensities can be harmful to traces or propensities in the same way that a fire based on wax or wood burns the wax or wood itself. However, for this to occur, the practice must be applied in the sphere of absolute truth. As Longchen Rabjam expresses it in the *Shingta Chenpo*:^g

Samsaric beings perceive [virtuous deeds] as substantial and as having characteristics. However, for [liberative virtues, to lead to Awakening], from the beginning of the training [there must] be no perception [either of the virtues or of the trainee] as substantial or as having characteristics. [Trainees must] be free from the concepts of merits and demerits, and [must] have the essence of emptiness and compassion.

According to Longchenpa:^h

“...later on, the antidotes, the means of purification, [as well as the two accumulations] themselves, will also be burn down because they are virtues imagined by the [deluded] mind.”

However, the above is a view proper to the causal vehicles, and in particular to the cause-based vehicles, which is utterly transcended by the training of the Series of Pith Instructions of Dzogchen, and in particular by the practice of Thögel, which is

^a Skt. *asamskrta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^b Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*, vol. I, 97a/6 (cited in Tulku Thondup, 1996, p, 236; I replaced some terms for the ones used in this book: terms and phrases within brackets are my own additions or modifications).

^c Tib. *bagchag na tsogpai kunzhi* (Wylie, *bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*).

^d Tib. *kham* (Wylie, *kham*).

^e Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli: *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^f Skt. *sambhāramārga[h]*; Tib. *tsoglam* (Wylie, *tshogs lam*); Ch. 資糧道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zīliáng dào*; Wade-Giles *tzū¹-liang² tao⁴*).

^g Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po*, vol. I, 101a/3 (cited in Tulku Thondup, 1996, p, 239; I replaced some terms for the ones used in this book: terms and phrases within brackets are my own additions or modifications).

^h *Ibidem*.

totally based on the spontaneous perfection / spontaneously rectifying / spontaneously accomplishing aspect of the Base, and hence on pure nonaction. This is the reason why a treasure teaching revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa reads:^a

In short, even if you strive diligently in this phase of these practices for a long time, taking the mind [which is based on the base-of-all and is *produced and/or conditioned etc.*] as the path does not bring you even a hair's breadth closer to the paths of liberation and omniscience, and your life will certainly have been spent in vain! So understand this, you fortunate people.

For his part, the late Dūdjom Rinpoche emphasized the fact that:^b

The Sugata (Buddha), during the Intermediate [i.e. the Second] Promulgation of the transmitted precepts, did not reveal the structure of fundamental reality, though he did extensively teach the inconceivable, abiding nature^c without referring to symbols of elaborate conception. End, during the Final [i.e. the Third] Promulgation [which comprises the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras*], though he did reveal the structure of the fundamental reality, he did not teach the characteristic Path through which it is actualized. Therefore, the conclusive intent of the Two Promulgators [(Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga)], actually abides without contradiction in the nature of Dzogpa Chenpo.

Then Dūdjom Rinpoche went on to explain and refute the approaches of all vehicles, including the means of the path of Transformation that involve practices with either channels, currents and energy potential, or a secret consort, that yield fabricated / contrived / produced / conditioned and/or compounded^d bliss, and finally concludes:^e

Without realizing the natural and utterly pure wisdom [proper to] Dzogpa Chenpo, by such attainments the aspects of the Truth of the Path do not transcend the contrived / fabricated / produced / conditioned and/or compounded^f fundamental virtues attained by the ideas and scrutiny of discrete recollections and thought. These aspects include the three vows,^g the six transcendences^a and the creation and completion or perfection stages^b

^a In *Dagnang yeshe dwawa le katak kunto zangmoi ying lhundrub dzogpa chenpoi zö sherig dorje nönpoi gyü sangchen nagkyi yangchü* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drwa ba las | ka dag kun to bzang mo'i dbyings | lhun grub rdzogs pa chen po'i mdzod | shes rig rdo rje rnon po'i rgyud | gsang chen snags kyi yang bcud*), in vol. 17 of *Collected Works*, as rendered in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. I, pp. 30-1) (phrases within brackets are my own explanatory additions).

^b Dūdjom Rinpoche (1991, Vol. I, pp. 300-301). As always, the terminology was adapted to the one used in this book.

^c Skt. *pariniṣpanna*; Tib. *yongdrub* (Wylie, *yongs grub*); 圓成實性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánchéng shíxìng*; Wade-Giles, *yuán²-ch'eng² shih²-hsing⁴*).

^d Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^e Dūdjom Rinpoche (1991, Vol. I, pp. 302). As always, the terminology was adapted to the one used in this book.

^f Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^g The three [sets of] vows are (1) those of the *Prātimokṣa* for the Hīnayāna level; (2) those of the *Bodhisattva* for the gradual Mahāyāna level and (3) the *samayās* of Vidyādhara for Tantric vehicles.

which refer all to objects of the intellect, and their various means whereby the mass of conflictive emotions are [respectively] renounced by *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, obstructed by bodhisattvas, and transmuted into the Path by the secret *mantra* and so on.

The Threefold Division of the Path

In recent centuries, all Tibetan traditions have divided the Path (i.e. the Fourth Noble Truth) into the same three paths, which are the Hīnayāna, the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna, yet the different traditions have differed in their division of the Path into vehicles: whereas the tradition currently called Ancient or Nyingmapa^c classifies them into nine vehicles, the New or Sarmapa^d Schools subdivide them into seven vehicles. However, as stated in the Introduction, in this book I will explain the Path in terms of an older and more natural and self-consistent tradition taught in Tibet during the first dissemination, which also classifies the Path that is the Fourth Noble Truth into nine vehicles and three paths, yet does not posit as the three paths the Hīnayāna, the Mahāyāna, and the Vajrayāna. This way of classifying the paths is based on the Buddhist view of both the individual and Buddhahood as having three aspects, which are: body, the Awake aspect of which is the *nirmāṇakāya*; voice or speech, the Awake aspect of which is the *sambhogakāya*; and mind, the Awake aspect of which is the *dharmakāya*—for according to the two extant ancient works that teach this classification, each path has its source in one of the three *kāyas* and is more directly related to one of the three aspects of the individual. The three Paths according to this classification are the ones that were enumerated and scantily explained in a previous chapter: (1) the Path of Renunciation,^e known as Sūtra Vehicle or Sūtrayāna and based mainly on the level of the body, which was taught by the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni and is subdivided into Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna; (2) the Path of Transformation,^f which is the Immutable / Indestructible Vehicle or Vajrayāna, Continuity Vehicle or Tantrayāna, or Secret Mantra Vehicle or Guhyamantrayāna, based mainly on the level of the voice, which arose through *sambhogakāya* manifestations, and which is classified into outer and inner Tantras; and (3) the Path of Spontaneous Liberation,^g lying in the Continuity Vehicle of the Primordial Yoga or

Strictly speaking, however, the principle of vows is exclusive to the Hīnayāna, and so when three vows are spoken of this is either because the principle in question is being borrowed from the Hīnayāna by other vehicles, or because the terminology is borrowed even though the principle is not.

^a Skt. *paramita*; Tib. pharphyin (Wylie, *phar phyin*) or, in full, pha rölto phyinpa (Wylie, *pha rol tu phyin pa*); Ch. 波羅蜜 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-luo²-mi⁴*).

^b Respectively, (1) Skt. *utpattikrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. kyerim (Wylie, *bskyed rim*); Ch. 生起次第 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngqǐ cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ch¹'i³ tz⁴-ti⁴*); ; and (2) Skt. *saṃpannakrama*, *niṣpannakrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. dzogrim (Wylie, *rdzogs rim*); Ch. 圓滿次第 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ tz⁴-ti⁴*).

^c Wylie, *rnying ma pa*.

^d Wylie, *gsar ma pa*.

^e Tib. ponglam (Wylie, *spong lam*).

^f Tib. gyurlam (Wylie, *sgyur lam*).

^g Tib. dröllum (Wylie, *grol lam*).

Atiyogatantrayāna^a and based mainly on the level of the mind, which—according to Namkhai Nyingpo’s *Kathang Denga*^b and Nubchen Sangye Yeshe’s *Samten Migdrön*,^c though not so according to the texts that include Ati Dzogpa Chenpo within the Vajrayāna²⁸⁷—arose directly from the *dharmakāya* and which features three series of teachings: the Series of [the essence or nature of] mind,^d the Series of space^e and the Series of pith instructions,^f often referred to by its Sanskrit name, which is Upadeśavarga.

This threefold Buddhist Path containing nine vehicles was originally taught in Oḍḍiyāna, which at some point researchers identified with Odisha (formerly Orissa) in North-Eastern India—which did not make sense, since all references to the country placed it North-West of Central India—but then Giuseppe Tucci (1940) identified as the Swat Valley in today’s North-Western Pakistan—a view that most researchers and teachers, including Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, have adopted. However, in 1970 Tucci himself reported findings by the Italian Archeological mission that suggest that Oḍḍiyāna was an area far wider than the mere Swat Valley—which suggested that Dza Petrul Rinpoche was right when he identified Oḍḍiyāna as a region right in the middle between Chitral, Gilgit and Swat that included present day North-eastern Kashmir, which is currently part of Pakistan (though Tucci himself did not draw this or any other conclusion from those archeological findings). In fact, Oḍḍiyāna could have included the greater Ladakh region and possibly even reached as far as Mount Kailāśā to the East and Chitral and Gilgit to the West²⁸⁸—and perhaps, in the latter direction, even as Eastern Afghanistan, though it seems more likely that the Buddhist remains unearthed in Eastern Afghanistan would have lay in the land that was known as Śambhala.²⁸⁹

At any rate, the Path in question was established in Tibet in the eighth century CE, and it clearly constitutes the most complete, natural and self-consistent system of Buddhism that has come to us: it is the most complete because it contains the nine vehicles, which comprise the widest variety of views and methods, corresponding to the widest variety of individuals; it is the most natural and self-consistent because each of the Paths responds to one of the three aspects of the individual and has its source in one of the three *kāyas* (aspects or dimensions) or Buddhahood—which is not the case with the division into Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, which arose mainly as a result of historical conditions—and, moreover, the principles proper to each of these paths are more distinct from each other than those of the better-known classification, which erroneously subsumes the principle of spontaneous liberation of Dzogchen Atiyoga under that of transformation proper to the rest of the Tantras. As briefly noted in a previous chapter, these three paths are:

^a The Sanskrit equivalent of this term would be Ādiyogatantrayāna; since the term Atiyogatantrayāna is in Oḍḍiyāna language, and the pronunciation and hence the diacritics to be used in the transliteration of its terms are unknown (at least to this writer), I simply skip the diacritical marks.

^b (gnubs) nam mkha’i snying po’s *bka’thang sde lnga*.

^c gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes’ *bsam gtan mig sgron*.

^d Tib. Semde (Wylie, *sems sde*); Skt. Cittavarga.

^e Tib. Longde (Wylie, *klong sde*); Skt. Abhyantaravarga.

^f Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or Menngaggyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

(1) The Path of Renunciation,^a called the Sūtra Vehicle or Sūtrayāna, which is the cause-based vehicle^b or cause-based vehicle of [discrimination of] characteristics.^c On this path one *is supposed to* attain the Fruit when causes^d come to fruition due to the concurrence of secondary conditions;^e moreover, as noted above, the Fruit sought is incongruous with the cause, for it has an utterly dissimilar nature: the Mahāyāna was taken as example, for in that vehicle the rūpakāya must be *produced* by completing the collection of merits,^f the nature of which is of an absolutely dissimilar nature than the Fruit it is supposed to bear. Therefore, it is a quite slow path; for example, in the Mahāyāna the Fruit is purportedly attained at the term of three immeasurable time cycles / aeons.^g

The principle of renunciation corresponds mainly to the level of the body. The source of this path is at the level of the body, for the true condition of the body is the *nirmāṇakāya*, and this Path manifested through the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni, by means the three successive “Promulgations of a cycle of teachings” discussed in a previous chapter. In a sense, its practice also takes place principally at the level of the body, for it requires us to strictly regulate our behavior (in the case of the Hīnayāna, by taking vows; in that of the Mahāyāna, by undertaking a training) in ways that have a concrete physical correspondent (for example, wearing the habits of a monk or of a nun in the case of the Hīnayāna, or the white clothes of a householder in the case of both the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna), and keep physically away from certain stimuli. Moreover, the vows are valid only so long as the physical body keeps alive and while the individual is awake (for example, monks are forbidden from all types of sex, but they will have no problem with their vows if they have a wet dream).

This Path is easiest to understand and apply because the level of the body is the most concrete and tangible aspect of existence, which all beings can perceive through the senses and experience through sensations that all of us are very familiar with—such as the pain and suffering that Śākyamuni explained in the context of the Four Noble Truths (which are the most basic and general teaching of this Path). In it, the passions are viewed as poisons, and the stimuli that potentially activate them as venomous snakes to be warded off. Perhaps it could be said that its functional principle consists in preventing the arising of the passions, their taking hold of us and their dragging us into chain reactions, and in progressively developing the mental calm and capacity of introspection necessary in order to apply the essential methods of the specific vehicle of this Path that we have set out to practice, so that by so doing we may possibly attain the condition that vehicle regards as the unconditioned, unmade and definitive realization.

To conclude, according to one Vajrayāna interpretation of this Path, its Fruit or point of arrival is the realization of emptiness.²⁹⁰ In the Hīnayāna, the realization in

^a Tib. ponglam (Wylie, *spong lam*).

^b Skt. Hetuyāna; Tib. gyui thekpa (Wylie, *rgyu'i theg pa*).

^c Skt. Hetulakṣanayāna; Tib. gyu tsennyi thekpa (Wylie, *rgyu mtshan nyid/phyi'i theg pa*).

^d Skt. *hetu*; Tib. gyu (Wylie, *rgyu*); Ch. 因 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *yīn*; Wade-Giles *yin*¹).

^e Skt. *pratyaṅga*; Tib. kyen (Wylie, *rkyen*); Ch. 緣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *yuán*; Wade-Giles *yuán*²).

^f Skt. *puṇya*; Pāli *puñña*; Tib. sönam (Wylie, *bsod nams*); Ch. 福 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fú*; Wade-Giles, *fu*²).

^g Skt. *kalpa*; Pāli *kappa*; Tib. kalpa (Wylie, *bskal pa*); Ch. 劫 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh*²; jap. *gō*). One of the measures for a kalpa is 3.420.000.000 years; however, in this case the kalpas are immeasurable.

question is circumscribed to the emptiness of human beings,²⁹¹ for as explained in a previous chapter, although physical phenomena are disassembled into collections of infinitesimal particles, the particles in question are deemed to exist absolutely (i.e. to be absolute truth). In the Mahāyāna that realization is thorough, for not only human beings are absolutely empty: also the infinitesimal particles that according to the Hīnayāna and many Mahāyāna texts make up physical phenomena are deemed to be totally empty. As briefly noted in a previous section, the subschools of Mādhyamaka Rangtongpa, in particular, understand emptiness as being in all cases the absence of self-existence^a or inherent / hypostatic existence^b of entities.

(2) The Path of Transformation,^c referred to as Immutable / Indestructible Vehicle,^d Continuity vehicle^e or Secret *Mantra* vehicle,^f is the Fruit-based vehicle,^g in which the Fruit is supposed to be attained as a result of the unfolding of what is referred to as *example of primordial gnosis*,^h rather than as an effect of causes incongruous with the Fruit that must be catalyzed by conditions. The *example of primordial gnosis* is so named because it is an experience that aptly exemplifies the nonconceptual, nondual primordial gnosis that reveals the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena and that must manifest on the Path and consolidate as the Fruit, yet is not the actual primordial gnosis in question. This “example of primordial gnosis” manifests in the context of the Tantric empowerment and totally on the Master blessings of the; through him or her, of the lineage; and through both of these, of the Buddha-nature. This is the reason why, as will be explained in the chapter on Refuge, on this Path realization depends on the Master’s blessings and one’s relationship with him or her.

This Path is said to be related principally to the voice, which is literally true because it emphasizes the pronunciation of *mantras*; however, on a deeper level the voice represents our energy, of which the vibrations that make up our voice are a perceptible aspect (and which, just like the voice, is connected to breathing, and is a link between body and mind). In fact, on this Path we have to work on and with the organism’s energetic system, and we are supposed to modify our vision, which is a function of the clarity of the nature or rangzhin aspect of the Base,²⁹² as well as of the unobstructedⁱ and all-pervasive,^j uninterrupted^k flow of our energy^{l293} that issues from

^a Skt. *svabhāvaśūnyatā*; Tib. rangzhin[gyi] tongpañi (Wylie, *rang bzhin [gyi] stong pa nyid*); Ch. 自性空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkōng*; Wade–Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴-k’ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^b Skt. *prakṛtiśūnyatā* or *svabhāvaśūnyatā*; Tib. rangzhin[gyi] tongpañi (Wylie, *rang bzhin [gyi] stong pa nyid*); Ch. 自性空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkōng*; Wade–Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴-k’ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^c Tib. gyur lam (Wylie, *sgyur lam*).

^d Skt. Vajrayāna; Tib. dorjei thekpa (Wylie, *rdo rje’i theg pa*); Ch. 金剛乘 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāng shèng*; Wade–Giles, *chin¹-kang¹ sheng⁴*).

^e Skt. Tantrayāna; Tib. gyūkyi thekpa (Wylie, *rgyud kyi theg pa*).

^f Skt. Guhyamantrayāna; Tib. (Wylie, *gsang sngags theg pa*).

^g Skt. Phalayāna; Tib. drebu thekpa (Wylie, *’bras bu theg pa*).

^h Tib. peyi yeshe (Wylie, *dpe yi ye shes*).

ⁱ Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*, *’gag med* or even *ma ’gags*.

^j Wylie, *kun khyab*.

^k Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*, *’gag med* or even *ma ’gags*.

^l The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade–Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness* or *mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*. The reason why this term is used is explained in a footnote to the Introduction.

that clarity and that aspect. Furthermore, since the energy in question does not come to an end with the death of the body, the Tantric promise or *samaya* that characterizes this Path does not come to an end upon the death of the physical body, and must be observed also during sleep (for example, a practitioner who has made the promise of retaining the seed-essence must also do so during sleep, and hence while dreaming of sex must keep awareness that the dream is a dream and, should he be about to lose the seed-essence, retain it with the physical body rather than trying to do so with the body of dream).

The level of energy is far more difficult to apprehend and understand than that of the body, for most of us cannot perceive it through the senses.²⁹⁴ Chögyal Namkhai Norbu often resorts to the example of seeing a person far away coming toward us: we can recognize the individual because we can see his or her physical form, gait and gestures, etc. but we cannot see his or her energy. Therefore, this Path requires a much higher capacity than the Path of Renunciation, which is accessible to all kinds of human beings; in order to practice it and bring it to fruition, one must have the capacity to apprehend, or somehow work with, the subtle luminous dimension of the essence of elements.²⁹⁵

This Path was communicated to humans through the visionary level of energy / voice, which in the state of *rigpa* corresponds to the *sambhogakāya*, for the initial human links in the transmission of the various Tantras received the transmission and the respective methods through manifestations of this dimension, aspect or *kāya* of Buddhahood (this being so regardless of whether the manifestations in question were generated by Śākyamuni in order to instruct disciples of higher capacity, as asserted in accounts appended to Anuttarayogatantras of the New Translations,^a or whether the Mahāyoga manifested spontaneously to greatly realized adepts^b in Oḍḍiyāna and the Anuyoga manifested spontaneously to greatly realized adepts in the country called Drusha^c in Tibetan—which Chögyal Namkhai Norbu identifies as the current Kyrgyz Republic or Republic of Kyrgyzstan—as asserted in the accounts associated with some Tantras of the Ancient Translations).

An example of the general principle of transforming vision that is common to the Path of purification of the outer Tantras and the Path of Transformation of the inner Tantras could be the perception that someone is creating problems for us: if we transform our vision so as to find ourselves in a pure dimension of male and female Buddhas, *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs*, and so on, there is no way we can get angry at the person we were perceiving as a source of problems, for we are aware that she or he is insubstantial and empty—and, at any rate, we know that Awake individuals such as Buddhas, *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs* never harbor bad intentions or harm others. On the Path of Transformation properly speaking (as distinct from the Path of purification taught in the outer Tantras) the passions, which are particularly intense manifestations of

^a I.e. the Anuttarayogatantra (note that some Sarmapa Anuttarayogatantras are also Mahāyogatantras of the Nyingmapa).

^b Skt. *mahāsiddhas*; Tib. *drubchen* (Wylie, *sgrub chen*); Ch. 大聖 (simplified, 大圣) (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dàshèng*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-sheng⁴*).

^c Wylie, *bru sha*.

delusion and hence of conditioned^a vision, are the means for discovering the unproduced, nonfabricated, uncontrived, unconditioned, uncompounded^b nature that the Dzogchen teachings call the Base. For example, if we come to be possessed by a strong anger, applying the principle of Anuyoga²⁹⁶ through visualization we instantly transform ourselves into a wrathful *sambhogakāya* deity as big as the whole universe with regard to which therefore there is nothing external. The anger may increase to the point of making the whole universe tremble;^c however, if by means of the practice we get beyond the subject-object duality and therefore no longer have the notion that there is an external entity that harmed, threatened or offended us (etc.), given the fact that all passions are attitudes of a subject to an object, anger is reverted into its true, original condition—namely the nondual clarity of the mirror-like primordial gnosis.^d Moreover, in terms of the symbolism that represents the nature of mind as a mirror and our experiences as reflections in the mirror, this powerful experience of clarity may be used as a reflection that allows us to discover that in which and by means of which it appears, which is the nature of mind that is represented with the mirror.^e This, of course, requires a higher capacity than the method of renunciation: practitioners of the Sūtrayāna who lack this capacity are quite right to be afraid to confront their anger, and to apply methods to cause it to subside, for if they allow it to develop, the passion could lead them to harm both themselves and others.²⁹⁷ Thus in order to become a Tantric practitioner we must have the capacity to let anger, or whichever passion manifests, develop and increase without being obfuscated by it, maintaining the capacity to apply the corresponding methods—so that we may use the anger as a vehicle to realize the true condition of the Base. The same applies to all passions, but as will be shown in a subsequent section, the use of erotic desire in yab-yum^f practice is the preeminent use of a passion on this path, since it may result in very powerful illusory experiences of all three of the main classes employed in the higher vehicles: that of pleasure, corresponding to the level of the body, which becomes total pleasure due to the retention of the seed-essence and the generation of heat; that of clarity, which corresponds to the level of energy or voice, which arises through visualizing oneself and one's consort as a divine couple;²⁹⁸ and that of emptiness, corresponding to the level of mind, due to the panoramification of the scope of awareness that may take place as an effect of the increase in the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness that for its part may result from the retention of the seed-essence and in many cases of the work with channels, winds and

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^b Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c Namkhai Norbu (Clemente trans. 1986, p. 35).

^d Skt. *ādarśajñāna* or *mahādarśajñāna*; Tib. melong tawui yeshe (Wylie, *me long lta bu'i ye shes*); Ch. 大圓鏡智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dàyuánjìng zhì*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-yüan²-ching⁴ chih⁴*). One of the five facets of primordial gnosis (Skt. *pañcajñāna*; Tib. yeshe nga [Wylie, *ye shes lnga*]; Ch. 五智 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wǔzhì*; Wade-Giles, *wu³-chih⁴*]).

^e Skt. *ādarśa*; Tib. melong (Wylie, *me long*); Ch. 圓鏡 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánjìng*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-ching⁴*).

^f *yab* means father and *yum* means mother; *yab-yum* refers to coitus, which in this case is an important yogic practice.

energy^a (for in that limitless space it is obvious that phenomena, rather than substantial, are segments of totality that are singled out for perception). However, if the practitioners lack the due capacity, they will feel compelled to increase the sensation of pleasure in the ordinary way and end up losing the seed-essence without obtaining the experiences of the practice and thus break the *samaya* and lose the possibility of applying the method they had set out to apply.

The use of the venom of the passions in order to neutralize the delusion of which the passions are particularly intense manifestations, thereby attaining the most precious object of human yearning, which is Awakening, has been compared to the manufacture of anti-snake serum out of snake venom, to the homeopathic principle of healing syndromes through a particular way of applying the agents that normally induce them,^b and to the transformation of poisons into medicines or of coarse metals into precious ones through alchemical means. This is always a risky business—a fact that the teachings of this vehicle illustrate with the risk involved in turning *mākṣika* mercury into medicine).²⁹⁹ It is said that on this Path the passions are like firewood and wisdom is like fire: the more wood, the greater the fire. In fact, realization here depends on two factors: *amṛta*^c or nectar of detached wisdom, symbolized by human semen, and *rakta*^d or blood of passion, represented with human menstrual blood.³⁰⁰

Finally, it must be noted that the starting point of this Path is the realization of emptiness that, according to many explanations, is the point of arrival of the Path of Renunciation (but which here may be obtained directly by the means proper to this vehicle),³⁰¹ and the arrival point is the realization of rigpa (disclosure of Awake Awareness) that is the starting point of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation.

(3) The Path of Spontaneous Liberation,^e called the “continuity vehicle of primordial yoga” or Atiyogatantrayāna^f—where the suffix yoga, rather than referring to *union* as it does in Sanskrit, has the etymological meaning of the Tibetan translation of this term, which is that of [*direct realization of our*] *original, unmodified condition*,^g and thus designates the nonconceptual, nondual discovery of that true, natural condition, which excludes nothing and therefore is free of duality, allowing for neither union nor separation—corresponds to the vehicle entirely beyond the cause-Fruit relation and therefore beyond both Hetuyāna and Phalayāna (note that most of those works that divide the Buddhist Path into Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna nonetheless place it within the Phalayāna). Its practice can unfold only once we have had an initial reGnition (of) the Base that is the true condition of all reality (with the emphasis on

^a Skt. *nāḍī-prāṇavāyu-bindu*; Tib. tsa-lung-thigle (Wylie, *rtsa-rlung-thig le*).

^b Expressed by the Latin sentence *similia similibus curantur*.

^c Pāli *amata*; Tib. dütsi (Wylie, *bdud rtsi*) or chime (pronounced cheemé; Wylie, *'chi med*); Ch. 甘露 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *gānlòu*; Wade-Giles, *kan¹-lou⁴*). As a medicine or elixir, Tib. dütsi men (Wylie, *bdud rtsi sman*); as elixir or medicine of attainment, Tib. dütsi mendrub (Wylie, *bdud rtsi sman grub*).

^d Tib. rakta (Wylie, *rak ta*); Ch. 女血 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *nǚxiè*; Wade-Giles, *nu³-hsieh¹*).

^e Tib. dröl lam (Wylie, *grol lam*).

^f Atiyogatantrayāna is language of Oḍḍiyāna; its Sanskrit equivalent is Ādiyogatantrayāna; Tib. shintu naljorgyi gyükyi thekpa (Wylie, *shin tu rnal 'byor gyi rgyud kyi theg pa*).

^g The Tibetan translation of *yoga* is naljor (Wylie, *rnal 'byor*): nalma (Wylie, *rnal ma*) means original, unmodified condition (of something), whereas jorwa (Wylie, *'byor ba*) means “to possess.”

its essence^a aspect), in what is referred to as Direct introduction to the Base^b or Direct introduction to rigpa.

This Path is chiefly related to the mind—or more specifically, to the mind’s true nature, which is the nondual Awake awareness called nature or essence of mind^c or Base *dharmakāya*³⁰²—and hence it does not require us either to avoid some kinds of entity at the physical level, as does the path of Renunciation, or to transform our impure vision into pure vision, as does the Path of Transformation (in the amplest sense in which it includes both the path of Purification of the lower Tantras and the path of Transformation properly speaking, which is the one communicated by the inner or higher Tantras). The passions arise and develop when, within the compass of the sphere of sensuality, contents of thought are reified / hypostasized / valorized in a particularly intense way by the vibratory activity that has its core in the center of the trunk at the level of the heart, begetting a particularly charged attitude of a mental subject toward an object. Since the true condition of thought and of the whole of the perceivable reality is the nondual Awake awareness called nature or essence of mind, which therefore does not exclude anything; since when its true condition is reGnized the nondual awareness in question is rigpa / *dharmakāya*; and since this rigpa / *dharmakāya* is intrinsically all-liberating—as noted repeatedly, this is the reason why it is called or *all-liberating single gnosis*^d—it suffices to reGnize the true condition of the thoughts at the root of the passions for the *dharmakāya* to manifest and thought to liberate itself spontaneously together with all associated tensions. Furthermore, so long as rigpa / *dharmakāya* is manifest, whichever thought of any class (whether of the three classes discussed in this book or of any of the other ones posited by the Dzogchen teachings) may begin to arise, will instantly liberate itself spontaneously like a drawing on water and therefore will not conceal the unmade and unconditioned essence of all reality. However, this does not mean that our practice depends on the manifestation of the passions, as, on the contrary, is the case on the Path of Transformation: whichever thought-tinged and hence conditioned experience may veil the unconditioned essence will dissolve spontaneously upon reGnizing the thought’s true condition.

Since the level of mind is far subtler than the level of energy, this Path requires a considerably higher capacity than the Path of Transformation. Furthermore, since on the Path of Transformation before realization we are not so completely and directly aware of our own potentiality, we have to purify our dimension and attain realization by the power of a deity received from the Master, which in spite of being an embodiment of our own potentiality, works as a mediator so that the latter may manifest its purifying / Awakening power. Contrariwise, on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, since we are *directly* aware (of) our own potentiality, we can purify our dimension and attain realization *directly* through it, without a need for it to assume

^a Tib. ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*), which renders one of the meanings of the Skt. *svabhāva* (Ch. 自性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tz'u⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*]).

^b Tib. zhi dang ngothröpa (Wylie, *gchi dang ngo phrod pa*).

^c Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^d Tib. chikshe kundröl (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*). In Tibetan primordial gnosis is called *ye shes* (Skt. *jñāna*; Ch. 智 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*]); *gcig shes* means “single (or unique) gnosis,” and *kun grol* means “all liberating.”

the guise of a deity. For example, in the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions^a there are two levels of practice, which are Tekchö^b and Thögel.^c In the practice of Tekchö all delusions are directly purified and the initial stages of realization are attained through the reGnition (of) the true condition of the essence or the stuff of thought—its essence being the essence^d aspect of the Base, which is its primordial purity^e (= emptiness) and which was reGnized in our Direct Introduction, and, as noted above, its stuff being the dang^f form of manifestation of the energy^g aspect of the Base, the true condition of which is the *dharmakāya*, mind aspect of Buddhahood. The very instant we realize that we have fallen under the sway of delusion, we look right into whichever thought is present and reGnize its essence and stuff, whereupon the *dharmakāya* manifests and the thought instantly liberates itself spontaneously.³⁰³ Then in the practice of Thögel the other two aspects of the Base are integrated^h into this reGnition, by means that will only bear the expected results if an intensive, high-energy practice of Tekchö has endowed us with a sufficiently high capacity of spontaneous liberation. (I reviewed the practice of Thögel and briefly explained its principle in Capriles, 2013, Vol. II, and will discuss it in greater detail in Vol. II of this book.)

Contradicting the texts that teach in terms of the threefold division of the Path into Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, the two extant Buddhist texts that convey the threefold classification that is being expounded here—Nub Namkhai Nyingpo’s *Katang Dennga* (revealed in the fourteenth century CE by the great tertönⁱ Orgyen Lingpa) and Nubchen Sangye Yeshe’s *Samten Migdrön* (unearthed in Dùnhuáng^j at the beginning of the twentieth century)—assert the first link of transmission in the human dimension to have received this Path through the true condition of level of mind, the unadorned state of *dharmakāya*^k (since its methods work at the level of mind, there was no need for the first human links to have visions that thereafter would become methods of the practice). In fact, its practice takes place mainly at the level of mind, even though its most advanced stages (and in particular practices like that of above mentioned Thögel and the Yangthik^l) involve the most consummate use of the visionary level of energy / voice possible—which, unlike the use of energy in the Path of Transformation, does not involve applying action in order to reach a given level of realization (which in the Tantras of Transformation is the one that they call

^a Tib. Memngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*).

^b Wylie, *khregs chod*.

^c Wylie, *thod rgal*.

^d Tib. ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*), which is one of the Tibetan renderings of the Skt. *svabhāva* (Ch. 自性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tzü⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*]).

^e Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^f Wylie, *gdangs*: the *gdangs* form of manifestation of the energy or aspect of the Base.

^g The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness or mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*.

^h Tib. sewa (Wylie, *bsre ba*).

ⁱ Wylie, *gter ston*: Revealer of spiritual treasures.

^j 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun²-huang⁴; also known as 燉煌 (simplified Chinese, 炖煌).

^k Not the Base *dharmakāya*, but the *dharmakāya* properly speaking—namely as realized on the Path and Fruit.

^l Wylie, *yang thig*.

svabhāvikāya, but which according to the Dzogchen teachings is actually the *dharmakāya*³⁰⁴), but on the principle of spontaneous perfection or self-rectification,^a which is utterly beyond action, and which has the function of *expanding* the realization of the *dharmakāya* into the most thorough, complete realization of the *trikāya* (i.e. of full Buddhahood) that may be attained through any spiritual Path.³⁰⁵

Furthermore, the principle of spontaneous perfection or pure spontaneity is not limited only to the advanced stages of the Path: though some of the explanations in previous paragraphs may have given the reader the mistaken idea that in it the practitioner *causes* the liberation of thoughts and experiences by looking into their true nature and so on, the truth is the very opposite: as the term *spontaneous liberation* makes it clear, on this Path the liberation of delusions occurs spontaneously in such a way that it becomes perfectly evident that it *cannot be caused*—which is the reason why this vehicle is utterly beyond the principle of cause and effect.³⁰⁶ However, this emphasis in *nonaction*^b is not circumscribed to Dzogchen: even some Mahāyāna *sūtras* make it clear that *action* affirms and sustains the delusive appearance of a hypostatistically, inherently existing being that is acting; above a cite of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra* preaching *nonaction* was included. However, this emphasis on spontaneity instead of action is not suited to beings of lower capacities, as it could lead them into a state of apathy rather than spurring them to engage in the practice of the teachings, and hence instead of directly preaching nonaction, in the First Promulgation Buddha Śākyamuni circumscribed himself to noting that the craving^c that according to that Promulgation was the Second Noble Truth and as such was the cause of *duḥkha* could in Buddhist practitioners turn into craving for extinction in *nirvāṇa*^d—which paradoxically would sustain *samsāra*. (In Part Two of this book the principle called lhundrub or “pure spontaneity,” which is the reason why the Atiyogatantra is utterly beyond cause and effect, will be discussed in greater detail.)

Since, just as happens with the level of energy, the mind does not end upon the death of the physical body, the commitment^e of this Path (which consists in the four or ten absences that will be considered in a subsequent chapter) does not come to an end at the term of this human life and does not become inactive during sleep.

On this Path the starting point is the realization of rigpa (disclosure of Awake Awareness) that is the arrival point of the Path of Transformation,³⁰⁷ and the point of arrival is the exhaustion of *samsāra*, involving the definitive uprooting of the subject-object duality and of the illusion of a chasm separating an internal dimension from an external dimension, which results in realizations such as the rainbow body,^f the body of infinitesimal particles,^g the body of light^h or the total transference,^a which are

^a Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^b Chinese, 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c Skt. *trṣṇā*; Pāli, *taṇhā*; Tib. *sepa* (Wylie, *sred pa*); Ch. 愛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *nài*; Wade-Giles, *nai⁴*).

^d Skt. *vibhavaṭṛṣṇā*; Pāli *vibhavatanhā*; Tib. *mepai sepa* (Wylie, *med pa'i sred pa*); Ch. 有愛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuài*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ai⁴*).

^e Skt. *samaya*; Tib. *damtsik* (Wylie, *dam tshig*); Ch. 三摩耶 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānmóyé*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mo²-ye²*).

^f Tib. *jalü* (Wylie, *'ja' lus*).

^g Tib. *lūdül threndu deng* (Wylie, *lus rdul phran du dungs*).

^h Tib. *ökyiku* (Wylie, *'od kyi sku*) or *öpfung* (Wylie, *'od phung*).

exclusive to this supreme Path of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo. Thus it is easy to understand why it is said that the Path of Spontaneous Liberation may lead those with the appropriate capacities to a more thorough Awakening in a shorter time.

However, the fact that the starting point of the Path of Transformation is the point of arrival of the Path of Renunciation, and that the starting point of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation is the point of arrival of the Path of Transformation, does *not* mean that we have to practice the three Paths successively, following each to the end before we can approach the next. On the contrary, if we have the right capacity we can enter directly the Path of Spontaneous Liberation through Direct introduction to the state of rigpa without previously having followed any other Path. And if we lack the capacity necessary for practicing this Path, this does *not* mean that we are doomed not to do so in this lifetime, for we can develop the capacity by applying the methods to this aim found in the Dzogchen teachings. Conversely, if we have the required capacity but at any given moment this Path is not working for us, we apply whichever method of the Path of Transformation or of the Path of Renunciation will be effective in the situation we are facing.

In terms of contemporary science, perhaps it may be said that the Sūtrayāna Path of Renunciation works mainly with the three types of concepts discussed above and the digital logic that (in people who have suffered no brain damage) is mainly associated with the left brain hemisphere, in order to directly effect the changes we want to carry out—which is not the most effective method, for all that depends on this kind of functioning is subject to the “reverse law” or “law of inverted effect” that has already been considered and that results from the inverted reading by the analogic primary process of the digital language of secondary process (*for example*, since the former’s code does not entertain negation, primary process reads as affirmations our secondary process negations). For its part, the Vajrayāna Path of Transformation is based mainly on modifying our vision, which also involves the use of concepts, yet acts more directly on the right brain hemisphere that in healthy people as a rule has an analog functioning—a strategy that is far more skillful as a means to transform one’s psyche. However, on the Mahāyāna level of the Path of Renunciation Mādhyamaka in general—except in Je Tsongkhapa’s^b interpretation of Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka—has the aim of leading beyond understanding in terms of the contents of all three classes of thoughts, and in the inner or higher Tantra of the Path of Transformation, once more except in the interpretation of Anuttarayogatantra by Je Tsongkhapa (who in one specific point of based himself on Marpa Lotsawa^c), the practice in general is intended to lead beyond understanding in terms of the contents of all three classes of thoughts—being more effective to this aim than the Mahāyāna. However, it is the Atiyogatantrayāna Path of Spontaneous Liberation that from the outset of the Path achieves the spontaneous dissolution of all thoughts and, in the long run, exhausts the potentiality for understanding and experiencing in terms of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts. Moreover, one of the key principles of this Path is the *skillful activation* of the *reverse law* or *law of reverse effect* so that spontaneous

^a Wylie, *'pho ba chen po*.

^b Wylie, *rje tsong kha pa*: 1357-1419.

^c Wylie, *dmar pa lo tsā ba*: 1012–1095/1097.

self-rectifying (lhundrub)³⁰⁸ loops are unleashed that lead delusion to its *reductio ad absurdum* and subsequent spontaneous liberation—which is the most skillful and direct method of Buddhism, leading to the most complete realization in the shortest time.³⁰⁹

SCHEMA OF THE PATHS AND VEHICLES

To conclude this introduction to the Fourth Noble Truth, it is necessary to arrange Namkhai Nyingpo's and Nubchen Sangye Yeshe's classification of the nine vehicles of the Nyingmapa plus the Sudden Mahāyāna (which was also considered by these two Masters and authors) into Path of Renunciation, Path of Transformation and Path of Spontaneous Liberation, in a schematic way that may allow the reader to fully grasp it.

The totality of possible vehicles is classified into: (A) the mundane vehicle, the aim of which is merely to improve the quality of samsaric existence, and (B) supramundane vehicles, the aim of which is to lead the practitioner beyond *samsāra*. The supramundane vehicles are classified as follows:

			(1) Śrāvakayāna
		Hīnayāna	(2) Pratyekabuddhayāna
Hetuyāna or Causal Vehicle	Path of Renunciation		(3a) Bodhisattvayāna
		Mahāyāna	(3b) Sudden Mahāyāna (Chán / Zen)
		Outer Tantras (Path of Purification)	(4) Kriyātantrayāna (5) Ubhayatantrayāna (6) Yogatantrayāna ³¹⁰
Phalayāna or Fruit-Based Vehicle	Path of Transformation	Inner Tantras (Path of Transformation <i>stricto sensu</i>)	(7) Mahāyogatantrayāna (8) Anuyogatantrayāna

Vehicle			
Beyond Cause	Path of Spontaneous Liberation	(9) Atiyogatantrayāna	Mind series ^a
-Fruit Relation		(Dzogchen <i>qua</i> Path)	Space series ^b Secret oral instruction series ^c

^a Tib. Semde (Wylie, *sems sde*); Skt. Cittavarga.

^b Tib. Longde (Wylie, *klong sde*); Skt. Abhyantaravarga.

^c Tib. Menggag[gyi]de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION CONSISTING OF THE CAUSAL VEHICLES^a

As we have seen, the Path of Renunciation is what is known as the *Sūtra* Vehicle or *Sūtrayāna*, in which the stimuli that activate the passions are seen as venomous snakes to ward off. The reason why this Path views the defiling emotions as poisons is that, if the individual does not exert effective self-restraint and allows them to manifest and well up, they could lead him or her to commit negative actions of speech and body (quite often the emotions are *themselves* negative actions of the sphere of mind³¹¹) that are harmful to others—as well as to the agent him or herself, who as a result will have to go through the suffering involved in the experiences of the lower realms or psychological states (i.e. that of purgatory [noneternal-hell], that of *pretas*³¹² and that of animals). Furthermore, the manifestation of conflicting emotions would keep the practitioner in a state of agitation, barring her or him from progressively developing the detachment, mental calm and capacity for introspection that are indispensable for applying the most essential methods of the vehicle of the Path of Renunciation that she or he has set out to practice.

The canonical teachings of the gradual vehicles of the Path of Renunciation—the Śrāvakayāna and the Bodhisattvayāna or Gradual Mahāyāna—are contained, respectively, in the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna versions of the Tripitaka or “triple basket” of Buddhist teachings—which, when the term is understood *lato sensu*, comprises the Sūtrapitaka, the Abhidharmapitaka, the Vinayapitaka, and the Tripitaka in the term’s narrowest sense.³¹³ The *sūtras* transmit teachings on the theoretical view and training in Contemplation. The *Abhidharma*, for its part, explains the functionality of human experience in fields that range from physics to psychology and epistemology.³¹⁴ Finally, the *Vinaya* has to do with training in the rules of morality and discipline. After their codification, the teachings of these three “baskets” were expounded and commented upon by important teachers who produced the commentaries or *sāstras* and other texts of greater or lesser importance.

The gradual teachings of the Path of Renunciation or *Sūtrayāna* divide the way into five successive paths,^b which are: (1) the path of accumulation,^c (2) the path of preparation or path of application,^d (3) the path of Vision,^e (4) the path of Contemplation,^a

^a Skt. Hetuyāna; Tib. gyui tegpa (Wylie, *rgyu'i theg pa*).

^b *mārga(h)*; Pāli *magga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); Ch. 道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles *tao*⁴).

^c Skt. *sambhāramārga[h]*; Tib. tsoglam (Wylie, *tshogs lam*); Ch. 資糧道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zīliáng dào*; Wade-Giles *tsu¹-liang² tao⁴*): “path of accumulation” or “path of equipment.”

^d Skt. *prayogamārga[h]*; Tib. jorlam (Wylie, *sbyor lam*); Ch. 加行道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiāxíng dào*; Wade-Giles *tsu¹-liang² tao⁴*): “path of preparation” or “path of application.”

^e Skt. *darśanamārga[h]*; Tib. thoglam (Wylie, *mthong lam*); Ch. 見道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiàndào*; Wade-Giles *chien⁴-tao⁴*): path of Seeing or path of Presence.

and (5) the path of no more learning.^b The accumulation of merits and wise knowledge, as well as the “thorough abandonings”^c whereby four factors are developed through meditation and moral training,³¹⁵ are the essence of the path of accumulation. The path of preparation or application, as its name suggests, prepares the practitioner to enter the supramundane (i.e., nirvāṇic) sphere that is accessed on the next path, by allowing him or her to overcome the fear that bars entrance to it—and by the same token closes the doors to lower realms. The path of Vision, being the first supramundane path, represents the entrance to the Path in a truer and more thorough sense; in the Hīnayāna this is marked by the transition from blind faith in the Four Noble Truths to the actual, true understanding of these Truths, whereby the individual becomes a “stream enterer;”^d in the Mahāyāna, entrance to this path—which corresponds to the first *bodhisattva* level^e—is gained when emptiness is realized in a nonconceptual and therefore nondual way and absolute mind-of-Awakening^f *qua* indivisibility of emptiness and compassion manifests. The path of Contemplation involves the gradual unfoldment of the realization obtained in the previous path, which in the Mahāyāna involves the progressive development from the second *bodhisattva* level to the tenth. Finally, the path of no more learning is the attainment of the final Fruit of the Path one is following; if one is a follower of the Mahāyāna, one becomes a *Samyaksambuddha* or fully Awake One.

Although the gradual forms of the Path of Renunciation—the Śrāvakayāna and the Bodhisattvayāna, which are the ones that divide the Way into five paths—are effective in leading to their respective Fruits, they are far more arduous and slower than the vehicles of the Path of Transformation and than the Path of Spontaneous Liberation—and even than the sudden or abrupt vehicles within the Path of Renunciation. For example, as noted above, in the Mahāyāna the Fruit is purportedly attained at the term of three immeasurable time cycles / aeons^g—an incalculably long time that is nearly eternal (if the latter phrase were logically permissible).

The Vehicles of the Path of Renunciation of the Sūtrayāna

It is clear by now that the Mahāyāna and higher vehicles classify the vehicles that constitute the Path of Renunciation,^h Vehicle of the Sūtrasⁱ or Cause-based vehicle,^a into

^a Skt. *bhāvanāmārga*[h]; Tib. gomlam (Wylie, *bsgom lam*); Ch. 修道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūdào*; Wade-Giles *hsiu¹-tao⁴*): path of Contemplation.

^b Skt. *asaikṣamārga*[h]; Tib. milobpai lam (Wylie, *mi slob pa'i lam*); Ch. 無學道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxuédào*; Wade-Giles *wu²-hsüueh² tao⁴*): path of No More Learning.

^c *samyakprahāṇa*; Pāli *sammappadhāna*; Tib. yangdak par pongwa (Wylie, *yang dag par spong ba*); Ch. 四正勤 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sìzhèngqín*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-cheng⁴-ch'in²*).

^d Skt. *srotaāpanna*, *srotāpanna* or *śrotāpanna*; Pāli *sotāpanna*; Tib. gyūndu zhukpa (Wylie, *rgyun du zhugs pa*); Ch. 預流[果] (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yùliú [guǒ]*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-liu² [kuo³]*) / 須陀洹 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xūtuóhuán*; Wade-Giles, *hsü¹-t'o²-huan²*).

^e Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

^f Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. changchub sem (Wylie, *byang chub sems*) or changchubkyi sem (Wylie, *byang chub kyi sems*); Ch. 菩提心 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p'u²-t'i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodaishin*).

^g Skt. *kalpa*; Pāli *kappa*; Tib. kalpa (Wylie, *bskal pa*); Ch. 劫 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh²*; jap. *gō*). One of the various measures for a kalpa is 3.420.000.000 years; however, in this case the *kalpas* are immeasurable.

^h Tib. pong lam (Wylie, *spong lam*).

ⁱ Skt. Sūtrayāna; Tib. doi thekpa (Wylie, *mdo'i theg pa*).

Hīnayāna or Narrow Vehicle and Mahāyāna or Wider Vehicle, and that the Hīnayāna is subdivided into the Vehicle of the *śrāvakas* or Śrāvakayāna and the Vehicle of the *pratyekabuddhas* or Pratyekabuddhayāna—and that the *Kathang Dennga* and the *Samten Migdrön* (the extant Nyingma Buddhist texts that expound the classification of Buddhist Paths in terms of the Paths of Renunciation, Transformation and Spontaneous Liberation) subdivide the Mahāyāna into the gradual vehicle of bodhisattvas or Bodhisattvayāna and the sudden Mahāyāna, which corresponds to the Dhyāna, Chán or Zen school.^{b316} As the preceding section’s last sentence implied, within the Hīnayāna the Pratyekabuddhayāna is swifter and leads to a more thorough realization than the Śrāvakayāna, and within the Mahāyāna the Sudden vehicle (Chán), is swifter than the Bodhisattvayāna or gradual Mahāyāna.

In Tibetan Buddhism, the first three vehicles of the Sūtrayāna listed above—i.e. all the vehicles of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna with the exception of the sudden Mahāyāna, which are the ones listed in the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna sections of all ninefold Nyingma classifications of the supramundane Path (the Path that leads beyond *saṃsāra*) except for those expounded in the *Kathang Dennga* and the *Samten Migdrön*—are also known as the vehicles of philosophical characteristics. In *The Precious Vase*, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu quotes Rongzompa’s explanation of this term:^c

The tradition that mainly teaches the [various] characteristics [of the phenomena of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*] is called the Philosophical Characteristics Vehicle. In fact it discloses the general and particular characteristics [of phenomena, and in particular] the characteristics of the [impure] dimension of the emotions and those of the totally purified dimension and so on.

Thus concerning their approach to teaching and application, these vehicles may be said to be based on intellectual discrimination between this and that, and therefore on the conditioned and made, rather than on directly entering the unmade and unconditioned dimension and thus going beyond discrimination. However, all vehicles of philosophical characteristics must have their own methods for gaining access to the unconditioned and unmade (in the case of the Mahāyāna and higher vehicles, by Seeing into it through the conditioned and made), for otherwise they would not be deemed actual Buddhist vehicles. (Note that the *Lotus Sūtra* or *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* teaches that the three vehicles of philosophical characteristics are makeshift only.³¹⁷)

THE HĪNAYĀNA

With respect to the Hīnayāna, it is fitting to point out that each of its two vehicles is appropriate for a different type of individual and culminates in a different type of Fruit:

(a) The Śrāvakayāna is the vehicle of the *śrāvakas* or “listeners,” who constantly follow a Buddha or a practitioner with greater experience than themselves, applying the

^a Skt. Hetuyāna; Tib. gyui tegpa (Wylie, *rgyu’i theg pa*).

^b 禪宗 (Wade-Giles, Ch’an²-tsung¹); Jap. ぜんしゅう (hiragana) / Zen-shū (romaji); Korean, 성종 / Seonjong; Viet. Thi ần Tông.

^c Tibetan Text 4, p. 197, 1. Cited in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001. I altered the translation found in the cited work to express more precisely what I see as the meaning of the passage.

teachings they receive in order to stop the causes of *duḥkha* and their effects, and thus transform themselves into arhats^a or realized ones of this vehicle.

(b) The Pratyekabuddhayāna is the vehicle of the *pratyekabuddhas* or “solitary realizers,” who in the Buddhist spiritual hierarchy occupy a place superior to that of the *śrāvakas* who have reached the state of *arhat*, but inferior to that of a Buddha. In fact, although the title *pratyekabuddha* contains the term “*buddha*,”³¹⁸ the “solitary realizer” does neither have the distinctive qualities nor exhibit the characteristic traits of the perfect and totally Awake One,^b such as Buddha-omniscience,^c the ten powers,³¹⁹ the four confidences or fearlessnesses,³²⁰ the eighteen special qualities or distinct attributes of the Buddha,³²¹ the major and minor marks,³²² and so on. (According to the Sūtrayāna, in each different age there is only one perfect and totally Awake One, who in our age is Buddha Śākyamuni; according to the higher vehicles, in each age there may be countless perfect and totally Awake Ones, for all human beings have the potentiality to reach the definitive Fruit of the Ample vehicle, which is full Buddhahood.)

Essence of the View of Śrāvakas³²³

Concerning the definition of the term *śrāvaka*, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu quotes Rongzompa:^d

The term *śrāvaka* stands for ‘listeners,’ and in fact the *śrāvakas* are so called because, unlike the *pratyekabuddhas*, they cannot waive receiving teachings from a teacher, as in order to realize the Fruit they need the basis of a teacher’s teachings. At times the term ‘*śrāvaka*’ is interpreted to mean ‘listen and propagate’ because, unlike the *pratyekabuddhas*, the *śrāvakas* transmit to others [the knowledge of] the Fruit they have accomplished [and the Path they have followed].

According to the *śrāvakas*, of the non-Buddhist theories that Buddhism regard as extremist, those that assert substantiality and/or eternity imply an exaggeration of the truth (i.e. an overestimation^e) and as such we can compare them to mistaking a rope for a snake, whereas those that assert total nonexistence imply a degradation of the truth (i.e. an underestimation^f) and as such may be compared to mistaking a snake for a rope—which is far more dangerous, for taking a rope for a snake may elicit dread, but taking a snake for a rope may cause one to fall victim to the snake’s venom.³²⁴

What the *śrāvakas* deem absolutely true are the instants of consciousness, and the infinitesimal particles of the four elements (*solid-static*, *liquid-cool*, *gaseous-windy* and

^a Skt. *arahant* Pāli *arhat* Tib. drachompa [Wylie, *dgra bcom pa*]; Ch. 阿羅漢 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *ālúohàn*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-luo²-han⁴*], often shortened to 羅漢 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *luóhàn*; Wade-Giles, *luo²-han⁴*].

^b *anuttarā samyaksambudha*; Tib. yangdakpar dzogpai sangye (Wylie, *yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas*); Ch. 正遍知 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngbiànzhī*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-pien⁴-chih¹*).

^c Skt. *sarvākārājñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, *nam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹-ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^d Tibetan Text 4, p. 198, 2. Cited in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001. The phrase “and the Path they have followed” is my own addition.

^e Skt. *samāropa*; Tib. drotakpa (Wylie, *sgro btags pa*) or drodok (Wylie, *sgro 'dogs*); Ch. 增益 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zēngyì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng¹-i⁴*).

^f Skt. *apavāda*; Tib. kurdeb or kurpa debpa (Wylie, *skur [pa] 'debs [pa]*); Ch. 損減 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sǔnjiǎn*; Wade-Giles, *sun³-chien³*).

igneous-hot) that in their view make up the five aggregates^a (*form*, or *material form*;^b *mental sensation / feeling*, or *sensation / feeling in general*;^c *recognition*, or *perception*;^d *habitual mental formations or impulses that move the mind*;^e and *consciousness*, or *apperception*^f), twelve sense bases^g (the six external constituents, which are the fields of the six sense objects wherein objects are singled out, plus the six internal constituents, which are the six sense organs),³²⁵ and eighteen sense constituents^h (the twelve sense bases just enumerated, plus the consciousness of the six senses³²⁶).³²⁷ By meditating successively on each of the Four Noble Truths, from the first to the fourth, they progressively realize the four Fruits or four types of result: stream-enterer,ⁱ once-returner,^j nonreturner^k and *arhant*.^l

Concerning schools of thought, in principle the *śrāvakas* may adhere to any of the eighteen schools of the Hīnayāna, or to any of the other schools of this vehicle, such as the Vaibhāṣika, the Sautrāntika, the Theravāda and so on. However, in our time *śrāvakas* in their totality belong to the Theravāda School,³²⁸ which prevails in Sri Laṅkā, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea and part of Vietnam. In Tibet, in particular, from the first dissemination^m of Buddhism the *śrāvakas* were usually associated with the Sarvāstivāda or realistic Vaibhāṣika view and with the slightly less realistic Sautrāntika view, which were the two Hīnayāna schools of thought taught in the land of the snows. In fact, although some Sarmapa texts have associated the view of the Sautrāntikas with the vehicle of the *pratyekabuddhas*,³²⁹ most Nyingma treatises, and even Tantras, make it clear that the Sautrāntika is one of the philosophical schools of the *śrāvakas*; for example, the *Rigpa Rangshar Tantra* of the Dzogchen Series of Instructionsⁿ reads:^o

In the *Śrāvaka* Vehicle the entrance gate consists of the four Truths...

Within [this Vehicle] there exist two streams: the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas.

^a Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandha*; Tib. *phungpo* (Wylie, *phung po*); Ch. 蘊 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yùn*; Wade-Giles, *yün*⁴).

^b Skt. and Pāli *rūpa*; Tib. *zug* (Wylie, *gzugs*); Ch. 色 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *sè*; Wade-Giles, *se*⁴).

^c Skt. and Pāli *vedanā*; Tib. *tsorwa* (Wylie, *tshor ba*); Ch. 受 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou*⁴).

^d Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushe* (pronounced *dooché*; Wylie, *'du shes*); Ch. 想 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang*³).

^e Skt. *saṃskāra*; Pāli *sankhāra*; Tib. *duche* (Wylie, *'du byed*); 行 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *xíng* Wade-Giles, *hsing*²)

^f Skt. *vijñāna*; Pāli *viññāna*; Tib. *namshe* (Wylie, *rnam shes*), *nampar shepa* (Wylie, *rnam par shes pa*); 識 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *shí*; Wade-Giles, *shih*²).

^g Skt. *āyatana*; Tib. *kyemche* (Wylie, *skye mched*); Ch. 處 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *chǔ*; Wade-Giles, *ch'u*³).

^h Skt. *dhātu*; Tib. *kham* (Wylie, *kham*s); Ch. 界 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *jiè*; Wade-Giles, *chieh*⁴).

ⁱ Skt. *srotāpanna*, *srotāpanna* or *śrotāpanna*; Pāli *sotāpanna*; Tib. *gyündu zhukpa* (Wylie, *rgyun du zhugs pa*); Ch. 預流[果] (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yùliú* [guǒ] ; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-liu²* [kuo³]) / 須陀洹 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *xūtuóhuán*; Wade-Giles, *hsü¹-t'o²-huan²*).

^j Pāli: *sakadāgāmi*; Skt. *sakṛdāgāmin*; Tib. *lenchik phyr ongwa* (Wylie, *lan gcig phy ir 'ong ba*); Ch. 一來 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yīlái*; Wade-Giles, *i¹-lai²*); 斯陀含 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *sītúóhán*; Wade-Giles, *ssu¹-t'o²-han²*).

^k Pāli: *anāgāmi*; Skt. *anāgāmin*; Tib. *phyr miongwa* (Wylie, *phy ir mi 'ong ba*); Ch. 阿那含 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *ānàhán*; Wade-Giles, *a⁵-na⁴-han²* / 不還 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *bùhuán*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-huan²* / 不來 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *bùlái*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-lai²*).

^l Pāli: *arhat*; Tib. *drachompa* (Wylie, *dgra bcom pa*); Ch. 阿羅漢 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *ālúóhàn*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-luo²-han³*), often shortened to 羅漢 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *luóhàn*; Wade-Giles, *luo²-han³*).

^m Tib. *ngadar* (Wylie, *snga dar*).

ⁿ Tib. *Menngag[gyi]de* (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*); Skt. *Upadeśavarga*.

^o Tibetan Text 5, p. 507, 4. Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 152).

The Śrāvakayāna designates those who reach the third path (which, as we have already seen, is that of Vision) as “stream-enterers.”^a On the fourth path (which, as we have seen, is that of Contemplation), the *śrāvakas* gradually free themselves from the sensual desires proper to the sphere of sensuality:^b when they overcome the six strongest degrees of desire among the nine enumerated, they are known as “once returners;”^c when they have transcended the three remaining degrees of desire, they come to be known as “nonreturners.”^d Finally, when they have also freed themselves from the illusion of absolute existence with respect to the sphere of form^e and the sphere of formlessness,^f they reach the final path, which means that they have obtained the fruit that they view as liberation.^g

The practice of this vehicle has been explained in terms of the Four Noble Truths as “eliminating the cause, the effects are cleared.” However, as the *Kunje Gyälpo* puts it:^h

Coining the terms “cause and effect,”
 some believe that by eliminating both virtue and negativities
 they can release themselves from this world:
 however, this merely shows complacency in accepting and rejecting...
 Followers of the vehicles based on cause and effect
 [hold diverse views about the nature] of existence.
 [The *śrāvakas*] deem it poison and form the concept of “renunciation.”
 When desire and aversion arise, [the *śrāvakas*]
 deem [the five sense objects] to be the cause of the passions and of suffering.
 Consequently, they try to eliminate them, even though
 precisely these five natural objects are self-arisen wisdom.
 Being unable to eliminate them in less than three kalpas,
 they continue to transmigrate in the three worlds (*kama*, *rūpa* and *ārūpa*).

In fact, in the discussion of the Mahāyāna below, it will be shown that also according to the Wider Vehicle of Renunciation the *śrāvakas* do not obtain a definitive Fruit, for

^a Skt. *srotaāpanna*, *srotāpanna* or *śrotāpanna*; Pāli *sotāpanna*; Tib. gyüнду zhukpa (Wylie, rgyun du zhugs pa); Ch. 預流[果] (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yùliú [guǒ] ; Wade-Giles, yü⁴-liu² [kuo³]) / 須陀洹 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, xūtuóhuán; Wade-Giles, hsü¹-t’o²-huan²).

^b Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. döpai kham (Wylie, dod pa’i kham); Ch. 欲界 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yùjiè; Wade-Giles, yü⁴-chieh⁴).

^c Pāli: *sakadāgāmi*; Skt. *sakṛdāgāmin*; Tib. lenchik phyr ongwa (Wylie, lan gcig phy ir ’ong ba); Ch. 一來 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yīlái; Wade-Giles, i¹-lai²); 斯陀含 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sītóhán; Wade-Giles, ssu¹-t’o²-han²).

^d Pāli: *anāgāmi*; Skt. *anāgāmin*; Tib. phyr miongwa (Wylie, phy ir mi ’ong ba); Ch. 阿那含 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, ānàhán; Wade-Giles, a⁵-na⁴-han² / 不還 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, bùhuán; Wade-Giles, pu⁴-huan² / 不來 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, bùlái; Wade-Giles, pu⁴-lai²).

^e Skt. *rūpadhātu*; Pāli, *rūpaloka*; Tib. zugkham (Wylie, gzugs kham); Ch. 色界 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sèjiè; Wade-Giles, se⁴-chieh⁴).

^f I.e. one of the four realms of the formless sphere (Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. zugmepai kham [Wylie, gzugs med pa’i kham]; Ch. 無色界 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúsèjiè; Wade-Giles, wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴]).

^g This is the result known in Pāli as *arhat*, in Sanskrit as *arahant*, in Tibetan as drachompa (Wylie, dgra bcom pa) and in Chinese as 阿羅漢 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, āluóhàn; Wade-Giles, a¹-luo²-han³)—often shortened to 羅漢 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, luóhàn; Wade-Giles, luo²-han³).

^h Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, pp. 169, 151, 182).

should they develop the thought-of-Awakening, in order to proceed to Awakening they would have to enter the Mahāyāna Path from the very beginning.

Essence of the View of Pratyekabuddhas

Just like the *śrāvakas*, the *pratyekabuddhas* assert that, among the non-Buddhist theories that Buddhism regard as extremist, those that assert substantiality and/or eternity imply an exaggeration of the truth (i.e. an overestimation^a) and as such we can compare them to mistaking a rope for a snake, whereas those that assert total nonexistence imply a degradation of the truth (i.e. an underestimation^b) and, as we have seen, as such may be compared to mistaking a snake for a rope.

According to most texts of the Mahāyāna and higher vehicles, both *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* overcome all impediments to individual liberation because they fully realize the nonexistence of human beings;³³⁰ however, some of the most renowned among those texts assert that the *pratyekabuddhas* hold the belief that the supposedly internal, subjective consciousness genuinely does indeed exist—which, since the illusory mental subject that is the core of dualistic consciousness is perhaps the main element or aspect of the illusion of selfhood in human beings, would make their realization of nonexistence of human beings partial, to say the least.^c For example, the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, authored by Maitreya-nātha, reads:^d

Since they renounce the idea of objects
but they do not renounce the subject,
one must know the Path genuinely subsumed therein
to be that of a rhinoceros-like recipient (i.e. of a *pratyekabuddha*)

It is said that they renounce the idea of objects because, unlike the *śrāvakas*, who do not realize the nonexistence of phenomena other than human beings to any degree whatsoever and therefore do not succeed in overcoming any of the obstructions to omniscience, the *pratyekabuddhas* have as their characteristic feature the understanding of the absence of independent being in the aggregate of form (one of the five *skandhas*) and in part of the constituents of all of those phenomena that are not human beings (which means that, unlike the *śrāvakas*, they realize the emptiness of at least some elements or aspects of entities that are not human beings³³¹). Therefore, it is asserted that they abandon the coarser obstructions to omniscience but not so the subtler ones, which are overcome only by means of the Mahāyāna and superior vehicles, where practitioners fully realize the emptiness of phenomena that are not human beings. This is why the *Rigpa Rangshar Tantra* of the Dzogchen Series of Instructions^e reads:^f

^a Skt. *samāropa*; Tib. *drotakpa* (Wylie, *sgro btags pa*) or *drodok* (Wylie, *sgro 'dogs*); Ch. 增益 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zēngyì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng¹-t⁴*).

^b Skt. *apavāda*; Tib. *kurdeb* or *kurpa debpa* (Wylie, *skur [pa] 'debs [pa]*); Ch. 損減 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sǔnjiǎn*; Wade-Giles, *sun³-chien³*).

^c Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, p. 159).

^d Quoted *ibidem*.

^e Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or menngaggyide (*man ngag gyi sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^f Tibetan Text 5, p. 510, 6. Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 154).

“In the *sūtra* system of the *pratyekabuddhas*
the entrance gate consists of the twelve links of interdependence.
The view consists in understanding the absence of identity of the human being
and of one half of the phenomena that are not human beings.”³³²

Concerning the meaning of the name *pratyekabuddha*, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu quotes Rongzompa’s commentary^a:

The *pratyekabuddhas* [solitary Buddhas] are so called because [in order] to accomplish the Fruit, unlike the *śrāvakas* they do not follow the oral teachings of a teacher and above all they do not communicate to others with words the *dharma* they attain [(though they do so by means of gestures)]. At times it is explained that they are so called because, unlike the bodhisattvas, they do not generate the aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of many beings, but aspire solely to their own liberation. According to a further explanation, the terms *prata* and *buddha* mean ‘secondary cause’ and ‘understanding’ [respectively], because, after having accumulated merit [and wisdom] for countless *kalpas* [(aeons)] by means of a secondary cause, the *pratyekabuddhas* finally realize the state of Awakening; or because, understanding the secondary causes that underpin the twelve links of interdependence, such as the secondary cause of ignorance producing mental formations and so on, they attain realization. Thus they do understand secondary causes.

Of course, what they realize is not the Awakening of a Buddha, but merely the realization of a *pratyekabuddha*. At any rate, since it is said that Śākyamuni did not teach the Pratyekabuddhayāna directly, and since the *pratyekabuddhas* abstain from offering verbal teachings, the precise origin of this vehicle is unknown. However, the twelve links^b of interdependent origination,^c which beyond doubt were taught by Śākyamuni, and the understanding of which is at the root of the realization of *pratyekabuddhas*, may be explained as follows:^d

(A) The first three, which are the determining causes, are:

(1) *Avidyā*,^e which Tsongkhapa and Gorampa interpreted differently: for the former it is the conception and experience of entities as truly existent (which according to the view expressed in this book depends on the previous and underlying unawareness of our true condition); for the second, the first link is passional delusive obstruction,^f whereas the conception and experience in question—which are what I am calling cognitive delusive obstruction^g—are the *cause* of the twelve links.³³³ At any rate, the said conception and

^a Tibetan Text 4, p. 198, 5. Cited in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, p. 154. Some of the phrases and words within brackets are my own explanatory additions, while others were introduced by the translator.

^b Pāli and Skt. *nidāna*; Tib. drel (Wylie, ’brel); Ch. 尼陀那 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *nítuónà*; Wade-Giles, *ní²-t’o²-nā⁴*).

^c Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; Tib. tendrel or **tenching drelwar** (Wylie, *rten [cing] ’brel [bar]*); Ch. 因緣 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yīnyuán*; Wade-Giles, *yin¹-yüan²*).

^d Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 153).

^e Pāli *avijjā*; Skt. *avidyā*; Tib. marigpa (Wylie, *ma rig pa*); 無明 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wú míng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-ming²*).

^f Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *kilesāvaraṇa*; Tib. nyöndrib or nyönmongpai dribpa (Wylie, *nyon [mong pa’i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 煩惱障 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fán nǎo zhàng*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³ chang⁴*).

^g *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *ñeyyavāvaraṇa*; Tib. shedrib or shejai dribpa (Wylie, *shes [bya’i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 所知障 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sūozhī zhàng*; Wade-Giles, *so³-chih¹ chang⁴*).

experience *are* the source of both *duḥkha* and the round of suffering that the Buddha called *saṃsāra*,

(2) Repetitive mental formations,^a and

(3) Consciousness;^b

(B) The four links that are the result of the determining causes are:

(4) Name-and-form,^c

(5) Sense bases,^d

(6) Contact,^e and

(7) Sensation;^f

(C) The three links that are the causes of existence are:

(8) Desire,^g

(9) Attachment,^h and

(10) Becoming.ⁱ

(D) The two links that are the result of the causes of existence are:

(11) birth,^j and

(12) old-age-and-death.^k

The Pratyekabuddhayāna considers that a realized individual of this vehicle has accumulated an immeasurably greater amount of merit than the *śrāvaka*, and asserts that there are two types of solitary realizers:^l (1) Rhinoceros-like solitary realizers, who are the ones with the highest capacity, who live in times when no manifest Buddha is teaching, and who go alone to live in the forest, reaching liberation without the help of a teacher or spiritual friend by meditating on the *twelve links of interdependent origination* or *twelve nidāna* of the *pratīyasamutpāda* in reverse order. They are self-ordained monks and obtain *parinirvana* (term that refers to the physical death of a realized individual) four days after reaching realization.³³⁴ (2) Those who live when a Buddha is teaching and therefore do not have to go to the forest, and who are ordained as monks in the regular

^a Pāli, *saṅkhāra*; Skt. *saṃskāra*; Tib. *duche* (Wylie, 'du byed); Ch. 行 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng*; Wade-Giles, *hsing*²)

^b Pāli, *viññāna*; Skt. *viññāna*; Tib. *namshe* (Wylie, *rnam shes*); Ch. 識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shí*; Wade-Giles, *shih*²).

^c Pāli and Skt. *nāmarūpa*; Tib. *mingzuk* (Wylie, *ming gzugs*); Ch. 名色 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *míngsè*; Wade-Giles, *ming²-se⁴*).

^d Pāli and Skt. *ṣaḍāyatana*; Tib. *kyemche* (Wylie, *skye mched*); Ch. 六入 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *liùrù*; Wade-Giles, *liu⁴-ju⁴*).

^e Pāli *phassa*; Skt. *sparśa*; Tib. *regpa* (Wylie, *reg pa*); Ch. 觸 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chù*; Wade-Giles, *ch'u⁴*).

^f Pāli and Skt. *vedanā*; Tib. *tsorwa* (Wylie, *tshor ba*); Ch. 受 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou⁴*).

^g Pāli, *taṇhā*; Skt. *trṣṇā*; Tib. *sepa* (Wylie, *sred pa*); Ch. 愛 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *nài*; Wade-Giles, *nai⁴*).

^h Pāli and Skt. *upādāna*; Tib. *lenpa* (Wylie, *len pa*); Ch. 取 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qǔ*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ü³*). This attachment has as its object the aggregates—and hence it is referred to by the Sanskrit term *upādānaskandha*.

ⁱ Pāli and Skt. *bhava*; Tib. *sidpa* (Wylie, *srid pa*); Ch. 有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒu*; Wade-Giles, *yu³*).

^j Pāli and Skt. *jāti*; Tib. *kyewa* (Wylie, *skyed ba*); Ch. 生 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹*).

^k Pāli and Skt. *jarāmaraṇa*; Tib. *gashi* (Wylie, *rga shi*); Ch. 老死 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *lǎosǐ*; Wade-Giles, *lao³-ssu³*).

^l Pāli *paccekabuddha*; Skt. *pratyekabuddha*; Tib. *rang sangye* (Wylie, *rang sangs rgyas*); Ch. 獨覺 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dújué*; Wade-Giles, *tu²-chüeh²*).

way. The realizations of both types of solitary realizers are higher than those of a *śrāvaka*. And although their paths are deemed to be equivalent to those of the *śrāvakas*, in this vehicle titles such as “stream enterer,” “once returner” and “nonreturner” are not used.

An example of (1) a rhinoceros-like solitary realizer—who as such lived at a time when there was neither Buddha,^a nor teaching,^b nor community of practitioners,^c and who attained realization by meditating on the twelve links of interdependent origination in reverse order—is that of the individual who spontaneously identified the twelve links after finding a skeleton. This finding led him to think of old age and death, the twelfth link, and then to identify birth as the cause of old age and death—these two being “the links that constitute the result of the causes of existence.” Then he went on to identify the tenth link, becoming, followed by the ninth, attachment to the aggregates, and the eighth, desire or craving—these being “the three links that constitute the causes of existence.” Then he managed to identify the seventh link, sensation, followed by the sixth, sensory contact, and then by the fifth, sense bases, and the fourth, name-and-form—these being “the four links that constitute the result of the determining causes.” Immediately he identified the third link, consciousness, then the second, repetitive mental formations, and finally the first, *avidyā*—these being “the first three links, which constitute the determining causes.” Thus the man identified the twelve links and, by meditating on them, attained the realization of a solitary realizer without having received teachings in that lifetime.

With regard to the *pratyekabuddhas*, the *Kunje Gyälpo* states:^d

When the five objects of the single, natural condition manifest,
 due to desire and aversion [the *pratyekabuddhas*]
 deem them to be the cause of *saṃsāra*. Consequently,
 they try to eliminate them, even though in reality
 precisely these are self-arisen wisdom.
 Thus, unsuccessful for many kalpas,
 they continue to transmigrate in the three worlds.

Even though the fundamental nature, pure and total Awake awareness,
 is one alone, [the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*]
 speak of the Four Noble Truths concerning suffering and its origin.
 Affirming that the origin of suffering is the cause of rebirth in the three lower states,
 they forsake the fundamental nature that is pure and total Awake awareness.
 Thus, not understanding the fundamental nature, they forsake it.

THE MAHĀYĀNA

We have seen that the Hīnayāna asserted that human beings do not exist truly and independently as selves, but except for the Pratyekabuddhayāna, which as shown above does so in part, does not affirm the lack of true existence and independent

^a Tib. sangye (Wylie, *sangs rgyas*); Ch. 佛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fó*; Wade-Giles, *fo*²).

^b Skt. *dharmā*; Pāli *dhamma*; Tib. chö (Wylie, *chos*); Ch. 法 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ*; Wade-Giles, *fa*²; Jap. *hō*).

^c Skt. *saṃgha*; Pāli: *saṅgha*; Tib. gendün (Wylie, *dge 'dun*); Ch. 僧伽 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sēngjiā*; Wade-Giles, *seng*¹-*chia*¹).

^d Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente (English 1999, pp. 183, 177). I have modified the terminology in order to make it agree with the one used throughout this book.

self-nature of phenomena that are not human beings.³³⁵ Failing to realize the emptiness of so many phenomena causes wisdom to be limited and hindered by the idea of something nonempty and obstructing—which is directly related to the fact that the Hīnayāna is said to lead to individual liberation, but not to the irreversible liberation and the unimpeded capacity to held others proper to Unsurpassable, Complete Awakening,^a in which an all-embracing, unimpeded wisdom is inherent that is the essence of what is rendered as “omniscience”^b and which is held to be exclusive to Buddhahood, final goal of the Mahāyāna and other higher vehicles. Conversely, the fact that the Mahāyāna is intended to lead to the so-called “omniscience” of Buddhahood is directly related to its realization of the nonexistence of a self-nature or substance *both* in human beings and in phenomena that are not human beings—this aim and this realization being indivisible from the Mahāyāna aspiration to Awaken with a view to helping all beings be definitively liberated from suffering.³³⁶ Finally, Tsongkhapa insisted that, according to Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka, so long as one took each of the five aggregates^c—which are phenomena that are not human beings—as being hypostatically / inherently existent, one cannot fully realize the human self to be empty of hypostatic / inherent existence, and hence realized beings of the Hīnayāna do not fully realize even the emptiness of human beings.

At any rate, as shown in a previous section, many Mahāyāna canonical sources and treatises assert all forms of Hīnayāna *nirvāṇa* to be, not the final resting place that represents definitive freedom from *saṃsāra*, but a provisional resting place from which one will have to be reborn in order to enter the Mahāyāna Path from its inception if one is ever to reach final release, which is only offered by the nonstatic *nirvāṇa* of the Mahāyāna. Elsewhere I wrote:^d

The *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* does note that *arhats* (both *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*) eliminate suffering through realizing the selflessness of human beings and purifying passional delusive obstructions^e and thus attain a *nirvāṇa* that consists in an absorption of cessation.^f However, as will be shown below, canonical sources that include the *Śrīmālādevīsīmaṇādasūtra* and commentaries on it such as the noted *Ratnagotravibhāga* or *Uttaratantraśāstra* make it clear that in *arhats* the potentialities for rebirth have not been exhausted, and that in order to proceed to Buddhahood and thus exhaust them *arhats* will have to enter the Mahāyāna Path *from the very beginning*. At any rate... the Mahāyāna [surpasses] this, for it realizes the selflessness of phenomena other than human individuals and removes not only passional delusive obstructions but cognitive delusion as well. Thus

^a Skt. *anuttarāsamyaksambodhi*; Tib. yangdakpar yongsu dzogpai changchub (Wylie, *yang dag par yongs su rdzogs pa'i byang chub*); Ch. 阿耨多罗三藐三菩提 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *ānòuduōluó sānmǎo sānpútí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-nou⁴-to¹-luo² san¹-miao³ san¹-p'u²-t'i²*).

^b Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch'ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^c Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandha*; Tib. phungpo (Wylie, *phung po*); Ch. 蘊 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yùn*; Wade-Giles, *yün⁴*).

^d Capriles (2014).

^e Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Tib. nyöndrib or nyönmongpai dribpa (Wylie, *nyon [mong pa'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 煩惱障 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎozhàng*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³-chang⁴*).

^f Skt. & Pāli *nirodhasamāpatti*; Tib. gogpai nyomjug (Wylie, *'gog pa'i snyoms 'jug*); Ch. 滅盡定 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *mièjìndìng*; Wade-Giles, *mie⁴-jing⁴-ding⁴*).

not only does it truly put a definitive end to transmigration, but it also leads to Buddha-omniscience^a and thus has the power of leading all beings to Awakening...

In fact, a variety of Mahāyāna sources and associated oral explanatory traditions negate that *nirodhasamāpatti*—or *arhatship* in general, for that matter—is a definitive, individual liberation from suffering. For example, the words of Śākyamuni Buddha (trans. from the Chinese, K. C. Oon; undated; the commentator introduced passages in brackets on the basis of oral tradition, and I myself introduced some short explanations so that the reader could make up the sense without reading the previous passages of the Sūtra) in the following excerpt from the *Vajrasamādhisūtra* of the Mahāyāna make it clear that according to the Ample Vehicle *nirodhasamāpatti* is a deviation from the Path of Awakening taking one to the highest of the realms of formlessness, which is the one involving neither perception nor lack of it^b and which is the peak of *samsāra*:^c

So it is. Followers of the two [dualistic, lesser] vehicles [which are the Śrāvakayāna and the Pratyekabuddhayaṇa] are attached to mental absorption (*samādhi*) [as a means] to gain the *samādhi*-body [through the trance of cessation,^d whereby they attain the samsaric formless absorption of neither perception nor non-perception]. As far as the Single-*bhūmi* [of Buddhahood] or the sea of [the Absolute] void is concerned, they are like alcoholics who are drunk and unable to sober up, [and hence] continuing through countless tests, they are unable to attain Awakening (...) until the liquor has dissipated off, [and so] they [can] finally wake up. They will then be able to cultivate the practices [spoken of in this Sūtra], eventually attaining the body^e of Buddhahood. When a person abandons the [status of] *icchantika* (which is that of a person blocked from attaining Awakening), he will be able to access the six practices. Along the path of practice, his mind is purified [by awareness of *tathatā*] and he definitely [comes to] Know. The power of his diamond-like wisdom renders him [not subject to spiritual retrogression]. He ferries sentient beings across to liberation with boundless mercy and compassion.

As a matter of fact, the different Buddhist vehicles and schools use the term *nirvāṇa* to refer to different conditions. In particular, the higher Buddhist vehicles contrast what the Hīnayāna refers to by that term with their own forms of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*^f—which, once delusion has been irreversibly eradicated together with its propensities, and Buddha-omniscience^g has irreversibly obtained, are called Unsurpassable, Complete Awakening.^h True enough, the authenticity of the *Vajrasamādhisūtra* (and by implication of associated

^a Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹'ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^b Skt. *naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana*; Pāli *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*; Tib. dushéme dushéme min kyemche (Wylie, 'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched); Ch. 非想非非想處 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *fēixiǎng fēifēixiǎng chù*; Wade-Giles, *fei¹-hsiang³ fei¹-fei¹-hsiang³ ch'u⁴*).

^c Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. sidtse (Wylie, *srid rtse*) or sidpai tsemo (Wylie, *srid pa'i rtse mo*); Ch. 有頂天 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*).

^d Skt. & Pāli *nirodhasamāpatti*; Tib. gogpai nyomjug (Wylie, 'gog pa'i snyoms 'jug); Ch. 滅盡定 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *mièjìndìng*; Wade-Giles, *mie⁴-jìng⁴-ding⁴*).

^e Skt. *kāya*; Tib. ku (Wylie, *sku*); Ch. 身 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *shēn*; Wade-Giles, *shen¹*).

^f Skt. *apratisthitanirvāṇa*; Tib. minepai myangen dé[pa] (Wyllie, *mi gnas pa'i mya ngan 'das [pa]*); Ch. 無住涅槃 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúzhù nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²*).

^g Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹'ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^h Skt. *anutarāsamyaksambodhi*; Tib. yangdagpar yongsu dzogpai changchub (Wyllie, *yang dag par yongsu rdzogs pa'i byang chub*); Ch. 阿耨多罗三藐三菩提 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *ānòuduōluó sānmǎo sānpútí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-nou⁴-to¹-luo² san¹-miao³ san¹-p'u²-t'i²*).

explanatory oral traditions) has been questioned,³³⁷ but other, unquestioned canonical sources are in full coincidence with it. For example, *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanādasūtra* III.5—a passage from a canonical source pertaining to the same Promulgation on which, however, no shadow of doubt has ever been casted by adherents of the Mahāyāna—reads:^a

Lord, not only the Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas have fear, but also, that being the case, both have a remainder of rebirth nature and are eventually reborn. They have a remainder of resort; they are not pure. They have not finished with *karma*; hence they have many needs. Besides, they have many natures to be eliminated; and because those are not eliminated, the Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas are far away from the Nirvāṇa realm.
Lord, what is called ‘Nirvāṇa’ is a means belonging to the Tathāgatas.

This *sūtra* proceeds to explain why only the Buddhas have attained *nirvāṇa*, noting (in III.11-12) that the Cessation of Suffering, the only one of the Four Noble Truths that is uncompounded / unconditioned / unproduced / uncontrived,^b “being beyond the object of perception of all sentient beings, is inconceivable and is not in the domain of knowledge of any *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*.”^c In fact (in III.5) this same canonical source states that only the victory of a Buddha gains the *dharmakāya*, which is superior to all the worlds and which cannot conceivably be witnessed by any sentient being,^d and then makes it clear that the *dharmakāya* is beyond the reach of *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*. And Maitreya and Asaṅga’s honored *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* or *Uttaratantraśāstra*^e VIII.7.206,³³⁸ which is based mainly on the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanādasūtra*, summarizes all that this canonical source says in this regard by stating that the *dharmakāya* may not be compared with ordinary phenomena because the latter are emotionally tainted, *and that it cannot be compared with the fruition of the Hīnayāna Path*^f—a form of which is *nirodhasamāpatti*.

In fact, in general all Mahāyāna philosophers and doxographers of Tibet have warned that *arhatship* (the highest Hīnayāna realization, a form of which is *nirodhasamāpatti*) is not final *nirvāṇa*. Ju Mipham, for example, writes:^g

Arhatship is not final Nirvāṇa *because the obscurations of the various patterns of existence have not yet been completely removed*; because the radiant light which is the very nature of mind [and which in the case of *arhats* has not shone forth] is what constitutes Buddhahood; because the obscurations are incidental; *because even if the activity of ideation may be stopped while the obscurations have not yet been removed, the cause for the arising of mind and [the whole of] existence is still there*; and because the two requisites [which are merit and wisdom] as the cause for final Awakening must be acquired.

In fact, *nirodhasamāpatti* is an instance of the neutral condition of the base-of-all,^h and as shown in various works of mine,ⁱ when subsequently to the occurrence of the base-of-all the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional

^a Wayman & Wayman (1990, pp. 80-1).

^b Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dūmache* (Wylie, ‘*dus ma byas*’); Ch. 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c *ibidem*, pp. 100-1.

^d *ibidem*, p. 90.

^e Tib. *Gyū Lama* (Wyllie, *rgyud bla ma*).

^f cf. e.g. Khenchen Thrangu [K. & K. Holmes, trans.] (1994, p.121).

^g In Guenther (1976, p. 29); the terminology was adapted to the one used in this book

^h Tib. *kunzhi lungmaten* (Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*).

ⁱ Capriles (2000a, 2003, 2007a Vol. II, 2013abc).

thought structure ... gives rise to the subject-object duality, the subject takes the ensuing pseudo-totally as object,³³⁹ giving rise to a samsaric formless absorption. Outside the Hīnayāna, the only Buddhist school that posits states of gnitive *nirodha* as unconditioned and uncompounded^a is the Cittamātra philosophical School of the Mahāyāna,³⁴⁰ which, however, does not deem any deep absorption^b excluding sense data to constitute realization, for it is based on Mahāyāna Sūtras (specifically, on those of the Third Promulgation), according to which Awakening involves a complete, panoramic, nondual awareness (of) the senses, as well as what is generally translated as “omniscience.”^c Moreover, in the Mahāyāna, Third Promulgation literature, in particular, places a special emphasis on the fact that dwelling in absorptions in which one is cut from the senses is a major pitfall to avoid: this is the reason why the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*^d repeatedly warns against dwelling in such conditions (one of these warnings being the episode in which various male bodhisattvas strive to awaken a young female *bodhisattva* from absorption, until finally a young, handsome though as yet inexperienced male *bodhisattva* succeeds in so doing), and why the *Samādhirājasūtra* repeatedly warns against dwelling in absorptions in general.

It is generally held that the term Hīnayāna or “Narrow vehicle” was coined due to the fact that in this vehicle we work primarily for our own liberation from suffering. Though this is correct and true, the “narrow” character of the Hīnayāna also lies in the fact that this vehicle is more strictly based on the principle of renunciation, which requires that a set of vows be adopted by virtue of which one commits oneself to avoiding many different actions—which has been compared to treading a narrow path between a cliff and a precipice, in which one has to place one’s feet exactly on the way drawn by one’s vows or fall down the abyss. For its part, the Mahāyāna’s “wider” character is not only due to the fact that one works primarily for the salvation of all beings, but also to the fact that it is more properly based on the principle of training, which implies the commitment to contravene any prohibition and go beyond one’s own limits if that is necessary to benefit others (and there is some guarantee that the effects of one’s course of action will be positive), and thus it is like a wide road in which one may freely change lane according to the requirements of circumstances—the first and the second point being indivisible, since as just noted one can contravene prohibitions only with the aim of benefiting beings and if one has the certitude that one’s action will actually do so. Likewise, while the principle of the Hīnayāna consists in withdrawing from the stimuli that activate the passions, which is achieved far more easily if one adopts the monastic lifestyle, the gradual Mahāyāna does not require practitioners to become monks or nuns—all the great male bodhisattvas in the Mahāyānasūtras are laymen, and female ones are laywomen—and places the emphasis on the application of *antidotes* in order to neutralize the passions that are *already* in the process of being activated.³⁴¹ (This is so because in the gradual Mahāyāna, the principle of training consists in trying to *produce* the qualities of Awakening through the application of antidotes to the vices or defects that are their opposites—which widely differs from the

^a Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. dūmache (Wylie, ’*dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^b Skt. *samādhi*; Tib. tinngedzin (Wylie, *ting nge ’dzin*); Ch. 三昧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānmèi*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mei⁴*).

^c Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. nampa thamche khyenpa (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹’ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^d Luk (1972).

principle of the sudden Mahāyāna, for the latter views the qualities of Awakening as arising spontaneously^a as a result of Awakening itself.)

For example, a Hīnayāna monk or nun avoids the arousing of desire by eluding people of the opposite sex, and tries to avert the manifestation of anger by keeping from engaging in worldly dealings. Contrariwise, a Mahāyāna layman^b or laywoman^c lives in the world; if “unlawful” lust and desire arises in their mind toward another human being, they will try to neutralize it by visualizing the other human being as though they could see through her or his body and perceive a heap of bones, muscles, fat, blood, mucus, mucosa, organs, excrement and so on; if they get angry at someone who wronged them, in order to neutralize the anger they will try to develop compassion by thinking that the person did so because he or she is possessed by *avidyā* and, as a result, is suffering in *saṃsāra*. The principle behind this is that a single mind cannot simultaneously entertain two different attitudes to an object, and thus that disgust puts an end to desire, just as compassion puts an end to anger, etc.

In fact, one can practice the *Bodhisattva* Path with considerable ease without radically having to change one’s way of life, as shown by the lifestyle of the great lay practitioner, the Licchavi Vimalakīrti, hero of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*:^{d342} all it requires is that one checks one’s intention before acting, and modifies one’s intention and action if one discovers that the motivation is selfish. This, of course, requires higher capacity than the practice of the Hīnayāna, since for acting in this way it is necessary to have the capacity to detect all attempts to deceive oneself by disguising a selfish motivation as an altruistic one.

Furthermore, since the goal of the Mahāyāna is the attainment of Buddhahood, this vehicle developed the doctrines concerning this final Fruit far beyond the scope they had in the Hīnayāna. In previous chapters and sections the terms *dharmakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, the two latter of which are utterly nonexistent in the Hīnayāna, recurred frequently. These are proper to the Mahāyāna, the Vajrayāna and Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, all of which distinguish these three (and often four or five) aspects and dimensions in the undivided continuum of Buddhahood. According to the Mahāyāna, in particular, and as suggested in the discussion of the term *individually realized primordial gnosis of rigpa*^e and other terms involving the Skt. prefix *prat* and the Tib. prefix *so so*, the *dharmakāya* or mental aspect of Buddhahood is the same for all Buddhas (and, it must be added, for all sentient beings as well, as held by both the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* and the Theravāda’s^f Dhammakāya movement in Thailand), while the other two—the *saṃbhogakāya* or energy aspect (symbolized by the voice) and the *nirmāṇakāya* or material aspect—which together conform the *rūpakāya* or “form aspect,” are what distinguish each Buddha (and also each sentient being) from the others.³⁴³ (As will be shown in a subsequent chapter, the Pith

^a Skt. *svayambhū*; Tib. rangjung (Wylie, *rang byung*).

^b Skt. and Pāli, *upāsaka*; Tib. genyen (Wylie, *dge bsnyen*); Ch. 優婆塞 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yōupósāi*; Wade-Giles, *yu¹-p¹’o²-sai¹*).

^c Skt. and Pāli, *upāsikā*; Tib. genyenma (Wylie, *dge bsnyen ma*); Ch. 優婆夷 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yōupóyí*; Wade-Giles, *yu¹-p¹’o²-i²*).

^d Luk, Charles (*upāsaka Lü Kuan Yu*) (translator, 1972).

^e Skt. *pratyaṭmavedanīyajñāna*; Tib. soso rangrigpai yeshe (Wylie, *so so rang rig pa’i ye shes*).

^f Skt. *Sthaviravāda*; Tib. neten depa (Wylie, *gnas brtan sde pa*); Ch. 上座部 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shàngzuòbù*; Wade-Giles, *shang⁴-tso⁴-pu⁴*).

instructions Series^a of Dzogchen teachings and in particular the Nyingthik^b teachings understand these *kāyas* in a distinctive way.)

As we have seen in previous chapters, the Mahāyāna is subdivided into the gradual Path of bodhisattvas or Bodhisattvayāna, and the sudden Mahāyāna.

Essence of the View of the Gradual Path of Bodhisattvas

According to the *Rigpa Rangshar Tantra*,^c in the *bodhisattva* vehicle the entrance consists in the two truths: the absolute and the relative. As Padmasambhava^d noted, on the level of absolute truth all phenomena of *samsāra* and metaphenomena of *nirvāṇa*³⁴⁴ lack self-existence or substance. Yet, at the relative level they manifest like a magical illusion, with their own distinct characteristics. Followers of this vehicle claim that by practicing the ten transcendences^e they progress through the ten levels^f and at the end reach supreme Awakening.

Rongzompa^g remarks that bodhisattvas are so called because they “aspire with great courage” (one of the meanings of *sattva*^h) to Awakening (i.e. *bodhi*ⁱ) and are stable in their intention, or because the objects of their interest are Awakening and sentient beings. Any being (which here is the meaning of *sattva*) having the mind-of-Awakening,^j defined as the union of discriminative wisdom^k and compassion,^l is a *bodhisattva*.

In the Mahāyāna, the gradual Path is based on the step-by-step development of the “mind-of-Awakening” by means of the practices of the *bodhicitta* of intention^m and the *bodhicitta* of actionⁿ—all of which are based on the *antidotic* principle characteristic of the vehicle in question, for both the four trainings of the *bodhicitta* of intention and the six or ten trainings of the *bodhicitta* of action are *antidotic* means for neutralizing ingrained samsaric propensities. Regarding these two *bodhicitta* trainings, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu writes (Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, p. 108):

^a Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or Menngagdyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*).

^b Wylie, *snying thig*.

^c Tibetan Text 5, p. 512, 5. Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 157).

^d Tibetan Text 6, p. 163.2. Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 155).

^e Skt. *pāramitā*; Tib. pharphyin (Wylie, *phar phyin*) or, in full, pha röltu phyinpa (Wylie, *pha rol tu phyin pa*; Ch. 波羅蜜 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-luo²-mi⁴*).

^f Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

^g Tibetan Text 4, pp. 199, 5 and 200, 2. Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 157).

^h Pāli *satta*; Tib. semchen (Wylie, *sems can*), Ch. 有情 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuqíng*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ch'ing²*) or 衆生 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhòngshēng*; Wade-Giles, *chung⁴-sheng¹*).

ⁱ Pāli, *bodhi*; Tib. changchub (Wylie, *byang chub*); Ch. 菩提 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *pútí*; Wade-Giles, *p'u²-t'i²*); Jap. *bodai*.

^j Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. changchub sem (Wylie, *byang chub sems*) or changchubkyi sem (Wylie, *byang chub kyi sems*); Ch. 菩提心, (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p'u²-t'i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodaishin*).

^k Skt. *prajñā*; Tib. sherab (Wylie, *shes rab*); Pāli *pañña*; Ch. 般若 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*).

^l Pāli and Skt. *karuṇā*; Tib. nyingje (Wylie, *snying rje*: *snying* means “heart,” while *rje* may be translated as “soft and noble”); Ch. 悲 (lit. “sadness” or “mercy,” Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*).

^m Skt. *prañidhicittotpāda*; Tib. mönpai semkye (Wylie, *smon pa'i sems bskyed*); Ch. 願菩提心 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yuàn pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *yüan⁴ p'u²-t'i²-hsin¹*).

ⁿ Skt. *prasthānacittotpāda*; Tib. jugpai semkye (Wylie, *'jug pa'i sems bskyed*); Ch. 行菩提心 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *hsing² p'u²-t'i²-hsin¹*). For the division between these two types of *bodhicitta*, cf. Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 108).

There are in fact two ways to enact *bodhicitta*, respectively of intention and in action (Note by A. Clemente: in Tibetan *smon pa sems bskyed* and *'jug pa sems bskyed* [respectively]). ‘*Bodhicitta* of intention’, linked to meditation on the Four Immeasurables, is based on an aspiration that is similar to that of a person who wants to travel in a certain country. ‘*Bodhicitta* in action,’ on the other hand, consists in actually developing the true conduct of a *bodhisattva* through [the] gradual training in the *pāramitās* or ‘perfections’ that will be explained below. Thus whoever cultivates this is comparable to a person who, after having planned a journey, finally sets off. By means of the two *bodhicittas*, of intention and in action, you should train with great zeal to enable pure *bodhicitta* to arise within you.

The principal elements of the *bodhicitta* of intention are those called the “four immeasurable catalysts of Awakening,”^a which, when listed in the order in which they are presented by a Nyingmapa tradition that at some point was recorded by Andzam Drugpa, are: (1) equanimity,^b (2) love or loving kindness,^c (3) compassion,^d and (4) sympathetic joy^e or rejoicing for the good actions, qualities and positive circumstances of others—each of which is an *antidote* to one of our deeply ingrained samsaric propensities. Note that this order in which the Immeasurables were listed here is different from the one taught by Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, because Nyingmapas insist that unless the first immeasurable that is developed is equanimity, love, compassion and rejoicing will fall into partiality and therefore will not be immeasurable.³⁴⁵ These four Immeasurables are *antidotes* to some of our most ingrained wayward mental attitudes.³⁴⁶

The *bodhicitta* of action consists of the six or ten *pāramitās*^f or “transcendences;” when six of them are enumerated, these are: (1) generosity,^g (2) discipline or virtuous conduct,^h (3) forbearance or patience,ⁱ (4) perseverance,^j (5) stable mental absorption,^k and (6) discriminating wisdom.^l When, in connection to the ten bodhisattva stages,^m ten

^a Skt. *apramāṇa*; Pāli *appamaññā*; Tib. (Wylie, *tshangs gnas bzhi*); also called by the Skt. *catvāri brahmavihārā*; Tib. *tseme zhi* (Wylie, *tshad med bzhi*); Ch. 四無量心 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sì wúliàng xīn*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-liang⁴ hsin¹*).

^b Pāli: *upekkhā*; Skt. *upekṣā*; Tib. *tangnyom* (Wylie, *btang snyoms*); Ch. 捨 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shě*; Wade-Giles, *she³*).

^c Pāli: *mettā*; Skt. *maitrī*; Tib. *jampa* (Wylie, *byams pa*); Ch. 慈 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *cí*; Wade-Giles, *tz' u²*).

^d Pāli and Skt. *karuṇā*; Tib. *nyingje* (Wylie, *snying rje*: *snying* means “heart,” while *rje* may be translated as “soft and noble”); Ch. 悲 (lit. “sadness” or “mercy;” Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*).

^e Pāli and Skt. *mudīta*; Tib. *ganwa* (Wylie, *dga' ba*), 喜 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xǐ*; Wade-Giles, *hsi³*).

^f Tib. *pharphyin* (Wylie, *phar phyin*) or, in full, *pha rölto phyinpa* (Wylie, *pha rol tu phyin pa*); Ch. 波羅蜜 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^g Skt. *dānapāramitā*; Tib. *jinpa pharpin* (Wylie, *sbyin pa phar phyin*); Ch. 布施 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùshī bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po⁴-shih¹ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^h Skt. *śīlapāramitā*; Tib. *tsültrim pharpin* (Wylie, *tshul khriims phar phyin*); Ch. 持戒 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chíjiè bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih²-chieh⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *kṣāntipāramitā*; Tib. *zōpa pharpin* (Wylie, *bzod pa phar phyin*); Ch. 忍辱 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rěnrǔ bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *jen³-ju³ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^j Skt. *vīryapāramitā*; Tib. *tsöndrū pharpin* (Wylie, *brtson 'grus phar phyin*); Ch. 精進 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngjìn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ching¹-chin⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^k Skt. *dhyānapāramitā*; Tib. *samten pharpin* (Wylie, *bsam gtan phar phyin*); Ch. 禪定 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chándìng bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ch'an²-ting⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^l Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*; Tib. *sherab pharpin* (Wylie, *shes rab phar phyin*); Ch. 般若 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^m Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. *sa* (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tì⁴*).

transcendences are enumerated, the following four are added: (7) method o skillful means,^a (8) aspiration,^b (9) power or strength,^c and (10) primordial gnosis.^{d347} It must be noted that when only six *pāramitās* are listed, the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth are subsumed under the sixth (so that discriminating wisdom includes primordial gnosis and so on). These six—or ten—elements of application are *antidotes* to our inveterate, wayward modes of conduct.³⁴⁸

It is well known that in the Mahāyāna and higher vehicles the Path and the Fruit are explained in terms of the inseparability of discriminating wisdom^e and skillful means / method,^f known in Sanskrit as *prajñōpāya*.^g The vehicle whereby one moves forward to Awakening may be compared to a plane—the traditional simile is a bird—and these two aspects may be compared to the two wings necessary for the plane to fly: one may have had an initial insight into or spark of *prajñā* wisdom, but if one lacks method, that insight is useless—and, moreover, it may be dangerous, for a partial glimpse of emptiness may make one conclude that there are no beings to be damaged by one’s actions and no karma to accumulate with one’s actions, and thus fall into nihilism, becoming like a drunken elephant who tramples on others (and if this happened, it would show one never had true wisdom). In fact, if there is no method this means there is no true *prajñā* wisdom, since from true *prajñā* wisdom skillful means arise spontaneously—and, conversely, if there is no wisdom there can be no method, as only true wisdom can know what can lead beings to Awakening and only from true wisdom can spontaneous activities^h effective in leading others to Awakening arise. It is significant that method or skillful means are a function of compassion, and that the Mahāyāna defines the mind of Awakeningⁱ as the inseparability of emptiness and compassion.

Moreover, the Mahāyāna, the Vajrayāna, and even quite a few Dzogchen texts, assert Awakening to be the result of the two accumulations or stores^j—that of merit^k and that of wise knowledge^l—which for their part are related to the six transcendences and the

^a Skt. *upāyapāramitā*; Tib. thab pharpin (Wylie, *thabs phar phyin*); Ch. 方便 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*).

^b Skt. *prañidhānapāramitā*; Tib. mönlam pharpin (Wylie, *smon lam phar phyin*); Ch. 願 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuàn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*).

^c Skt. *balapāramitā*; Tib. tob pharpin (Wylie, *stobs phar phyin*); Ch. 力 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lì bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *lì⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*).

^d Skt. *jñānapāramitā*; Tib. yeshe pharpin (Wylie, *ye shes phar phyin*); Ch. 智 (波羅蜜); Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*).

^e Skt. *prajñā*; Tib. sherab (Wylie, *shes rab*); Pāli *pañña*; Ch. 般若 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po⁻¹-je³*).

^f Skt. *upāya*; Tib. thab (Wylie, *thabs*); Ch. 方便 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*).

^g Ch. 般若方便 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *po⁻¹-je³ fang¹-pien⁴*).

^h Skt. *karman*, in the sense of *manaskarman* (Tib. thugkyi thinle [Wylie, *thugs kyi phrin las*]); Ch. 意業 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yìyè*; Wade-Giles, *i⁴-yeh⁴*) or *kāyakarman* (Tib. kuyi thinle [Wylie, *sku¹’i phrin las*]).

ⁱ Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. changchub sem (Wylie, *byang chub sems*) or changchubkyi sem (Wylie, *byang chub kyi sems*); Ch. 菩提心 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p¹’u²-t¹’i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodaishin*).

^j Skt. *divisaṃbhāra*; Tib. tsognyi (Wylie, *tshogs gnyis*); Ch. 二資糧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *èrzīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *erh⁴-tzu¹-liang²*).

^k Skt. *punyasambhāra*; Tib. sönamkyi tsog (Wylie, *bsod nams kyi tshogs*); Ch. [宿] 福德資糧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *[sù] fúdé zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *fu²-te² tzu¹-liang²*). The prefix 宿 *sù* means former and need not be used.

^l Skt. *jñānasambhāra*; Tib. yeshekyi tsog (Wylie, *ye shes kyi tshogs*); Ch. [宿] 智慧資糧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhìhuì zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴-hui⁴ tzu¹-liang²*). The prefix 宿 *sù* means former and need not be used. I

above discussed, indissoluble pair consisting of method and wisdom. In *The Precious Vase*^a Chögyal Namkhai Norbu draws these relations in a simplified way in which the first five transcendences correspond to method and result in the accumulation of merit, while the sixth, which is itself the counterpart of method—*prajñā* wisdom itself—results in the accumulation of wise knowledge. Nevertheless, in Maitreya’s *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* the relationship is a bit more complex:^b

[The transcendences of] generosity and disciplined virtuous conduct contribute to the store of merit,^c and [that of *prajñā*] wisdom contributes to the store of wise knowledge;^d the other three [contribute] to both. [However,] the [first] five can also belong to the store of wise knowledge.

In his *Sheja Kunkhyab*^e Jamgön Kongtrul explains the last line of the passage by Maitreya, all while coinciding with the view expressed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:^f

Thus it is said that [the six transcendences or *pāramitās* encompass] the two stores. One alternative explanation is that *when [the first five transcendences] are embraced by gnosis, they become the store of wise knowledge.* Another is that *since the first five [transcendences] are method and the sixth is wisdom, [all transcendences] are contained within [the pair of] method and wisdom.*

It must be emphasized, however, that—as the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* of the Third Promulgation rightly note—the *dharmakāya* does not arise as a result of the accumulation of wise knowledge,^g and the *rūpakāya* (*sambhogakāya* plus *nirmāṇakāya*) does not arise as a result of the accumulation of merits,^h for both accumulations are inherent in the

did not render *jñāna* as *primordial gnosis* because in this case the term refers to having knowledge and a correct, wise understanding of that knowledge.

^a Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (1999/2001).

^b In Kongtrul (2007, p. 169); the terminology was adapted to the one used in this book.

^c Skt. *puṇyasambhāra*; Skt. *sōnamkyi tsog* (Wylie, *bsod nams kyi tshogs*); Ch. 福德資糧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fúdé zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *fu²-te² tzu¹-liang²*).

^d Skt. *jñānasambhāra*; Tib. *yeshekyi tsog* (Wylie, *ye shes kyi tshogs*). Ch. 智慧資糧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhìhuì zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴-hui⁴ tzu¹-liang²*).

^e Wylie, *shes bya kun khyab: All-Embracing Encyclopedia, Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy* (Kongtrul, 2007, p. 169). *Shes bya kun khyab* is the name given by Jamyang Khyentse Wamgpo to the conglomerate of the encyclopedia written by Kongtrul and the auto-commentary. However, the name had already been given to the root text by Kongtrul’s root teacher, Lama Karne Ngedön.

^f In Kongtrul (2007, p. 169); the terminology was adapted to the one used in this book.

^g Skt. *jñānasambhāra*; Tib. *yeshekyi tsog* (Wylie, *ye shes kyi tshogs*); Ch. 智慧資糧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhìhuì zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴-hui⁴ tzu¹-liang²*). However, when this accumulation is practiced relatively, contrivedly, causally, or in a conditioning way or fabricating way (Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *’dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*]), that which is accumulated is wise knowledge rather than primordial gnosis.

^h Skt. *puṇyasambhāra*; Tib. *sōnamkyi tsog* (Wylie, *bsod nams kyi tshogs*); Ch. [宿] 福德資糧 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, [sù] *fúdé zīliáng*; Wade-Giles, *fu²-te² tzu¹-liang²*). The prefix 宿 *sù* means former and need not be used.

Buddha-nature^a qua Base as *dharmakāya* qua Base and *rūpakāya* qua Base, respectively. Longchen Rabjam writes:^b

The spontaneously accomplished *rūpakāya* and *dharmakāya*, appearances and emptiness, the twofold accumulation, skillful means and wisdom, Contemplation and post-Contemplation, the unfabricated and natural five *kāyas* and primordial gnoses, are spontaneously perfect in the state of rigpa, without grasping at perception or mind.

Another pair of complementary aspects emphasized by the Mahāyāna, as well as by the Vajrayāna and quite a few Dzogchen texts, is the one consisting of emptiness and compassion. This pair is intimately related to the one consisting of method and wisdom, for emptiness may be said to be somehow the content of *prajñā* wisdom, whereas method may be viewed as the function of compassion—so that compassion is the actual source of method. Finally, it must be remarked that *prajñā* wisdom (as different from primordial gnosis^c) may be either relative—in which case it would be properly called discriminating wisdom—or absolute—in which case the adjective discriminating may not be properly used in its regard, for (being) the nonconceptual and hence nondual realization of the true condition of both the individual and the whole universe, it simply does not discriminate. Likewise, compassion may be of the relative, referential type that is developed as one of the four Immeasurables and that has the misconception that truly existing sentient beings experience truly existing suffering, or nonreferential, in which case it cannot be produced through training, for it can only arise spontaneously from realization of absolute *prajñā* wisdom after the third Path / first level of the *bodhisattva* Path are reached (however, training in referential compassion may always work as a contributory condition for the uncaused, uncontrived, unconditioned^d manifestation of nonreferential compassion).³⁴⁹

Relative *prajñā* wisdom, which develops step by step on the gradual Path, is one of the fifty-one mental factors or mental events^e that, according to the teachings of the *Abhidharma*, manifest in the conditioned, delusory states of *samsāra*: it is the intelligence that allows for the correct comprehension of the teachings and that correct understanding itself. The relative mind-of-Awakening or *bodhicitta*, involving relative *prajñā* wisdom, referential compassion and the whole of the qualities that arise out of the practice of the methods of the *bodhicitta* of intention and the *bodhicitta* of action, lies basically in the *bodhisattva*'s aspiration to attain Buddhahood in order to truly benefit sentient beings, and its arising marks the practitioner's entrance into the *bodhisattva* Path. This modality of mind-of-Awakening is progressively developed from the very outset of the Path through an intentional, conditioned^f and conditioning practice of the four Immeasurables of the *bodhicitta* of intention and the six or ten transcendences of the *bodhicitta* of action.

^a Skt. *buddhatā* / *buddhadhātu* / *buddhatva*; Tib. sangyekyi kham (Wylie, *sangs rgyas kyi kham*); Ch. 佛性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxìng*; Wade-Giles *fo²-hsing⁴*). Alternative translation in Tulku Thöndup

^b *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngälsoi Drelwa Rangdröl* (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid rang grol*), signed as Drime Öser (Wylie, *dri med 'od zer*). Alternative translation in Tulku Thöndup (1996, pp. 320-321).

^c Skt. *jñāna*; Pāli *ñāṇa*; Tib. yeshe (Wylie, *ye shes*); Ch. 智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*).

^d Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. dumache (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^e Skt. *caitasika* (sometimes, *caitta*); Pāli *cetasika*; Tib. semjung (Wylie, *sems byung*); Ch. 心所 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnsuǒ*; Wade-Giles, *hsin¹-so³*).

^f Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

For its part, the absolute *prajñā* wisdom of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* is, as noted above, the unmade, unproduced, uncontrived, unconditioned^a nonconceptual and hence nondual gnosis that directly and nakedly reveals the absolute truth and by the same token demonstrates that there is no inherent, absolute or substantial existence either in entities that are human beings or in entities that are not human beings, dissolving (initially for a while) the delusion called *avidyā* or marigpa, *saṃsāra* and the idea of a “me” or an “us.” In the Bodhisattvayāna, it is said to arise in the context of the practices for developing the transcendence or *pāramitā* of discriminative *prajñā* wisdom and the related practices of insight meditation.^b

The above definition of absolute *prajñā* is the same as the standard definition of the primordial gnosis^c that is the tenth transcendence in the tenfold schema and that is also a recurrent concept in Third Promulgation *sūtras*. When we delve into this terminology, however, we find that, when the levels are associated with the ten transcendences, absolute *prajñā* wisdom is supposed to arise when the first level^d is attained, whereas primordial gnosis is held to be perfected on the tenth level only. In fact, primordial gnosis functions beyond the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle concept called threefold directional thought structure^e and involves an accurate awareness of the most subtle manifestations of delusion that makes the latter’s liberation possible. And yet the distinction between the two is not clear, for the above cited passage from Kongtrul the Great tells us that:^f

[For there to be] genuinely method / skillful means^g [our practice of all transcendences must] be embraced by the gnosis that is free from [reification of] the threefold directional thought-structure.

This is why the true cultivation of *bodhicitta* is that of ultimate *bodhicitta*, which a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa describes as follows:^h

As for cultivating *bodhicitta*, cultivate *ultimate bodhicitta* as follows: What we call mind is the narrow-minded, confining grasping at self that causes you to cling to pleasure, [reject] pain and [indulge in] indifference [to what is viewed as neutral], and to regard all objects as existing with their own characteristics. Desires and cravings arise in an unbroken stream from such a mind. So all appearances and mindsets involving grasping at appearances as truly existent are to be understood with *prajñā* wisdom, and concepts of self and the dualistic appearances [that

^a Skt. *asamskṛta*; Tib. dumache (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^b Pāli, *vipassana*; Skt. *vipaśyanā*; Tib. lhantong (Wylie, *lhag mthong*); Ch. 觀 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *guān*; Wade-Giles, *kuan¹*; Jap. *kan*).

^c Skt. *jñāna*; Tib. yeshe (Wylie, *ye shes*); 智; Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*.

^d Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); 地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

^e Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^f Kongtrul (2007, p. 170); terminology adapted to the one used in this book.

^g Skt. *upāya*; Tib. thab (Wylie, *thabs*); Ch. 方便 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*). “Genuinely method / skillful means” here renders the Tib. thab dampa (Wylie, *thabs dam pa*): supreme method.

^h *Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorjei nyingpo* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po*). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. III, p. 115).

arise from] reification are to be subjugated until they disappear. Then the actualization of identitylessness in the form of the consummation of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, free of activity and conceptual fabrication, is called the *cultivation of bodhicitta* by which you enter the womb of the true condition. This is the fruition of all ways of cultivating bodhicitta and is the most sublime of all *dharmas*.

First, to realize *bodhicitta*, the ascertainment with *prajñā* wisdom of the true condition of all of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is called *aspirational bodhicitta*. In the end, realizing the displays of the consummation of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is called *engaged bodhicitta*. Some people, when they speak of generating *bodhicitta*, fail to realize this key point and claim to accomplish its cause by aspiring for the fruitional *bodhicitta*. They speak of cultivating a mere aspiration—which [as such] is not bodhicitta—as an object of conceptualization. Such talk is like giving a boy’s name to a mere fetus [the sex of which is unknown] in a pregnant woman’s womb; they do not have even the faintest realization of *engaged bodhicitta*.

Taking as *cause* a relative and as such deluded (as the etymology of the Sanskrit and Tibetan terms for *relative* make clear, relative truth is always deluded [un]truth) and produced / contrived / compounded / conditioned^a framework, those who were berated by Dudjom Lingpa aspire at obtaining as *effect* the *absolute*, undeluded, unproduced / uncontrived / uncompounded / unconditioned^b true condition of all phenomena, and thus fail, for only apples may be fielded by an apple tree, and only produced / contrived / compounded / conditioned results can issue from whatever is produced / contrived / compounded / conditioned. However, so long as we have not realized *engaged, fruitional bodhicitta*, we engage in the practice of produced / contrived / compounded / conditioned aspirational *bodhicitta*. (However, when the text tells us that “concepts of self and the dualistic appearances [arising from] reification are to be subjugated until they disappear,” this should not be understood to mean that one should repress or obstruct those concepts and appearances; the principle of Dzogchen Ati is spontaneous liberation, and hence what we have to do is to discover the true condition of the energy of which thoughts are made, so that the thoughts instantly, spontaneously dissolve in the reGnition of the *dharmakāya*, leaving no traces.)

Below it will be shown that on each of the levels^c posited by the Bodhisattvayāna one of the transcendences is perfected, and since the above shows that for perfecting each of the transcendences the practices involved must be pervaded by the primordial gnosis that is utterly free from the reification of the threefold directional thought-structure, the gnosis in question must be functional from the very outset of the Path. Moreover, as noted above, when six transcendences are listed, primordial gnosis is subsumed under *prajñā* wisdom—which suggests that primordial gnosis could be seen as a specific kind of *prajñā* wisdom.

As we have seen, the gradual vehicles of the Sūtrayāna, which are the Śrāvakayāna and the Bodhisattvayāna, posit five paths.^d In the Bodhisattvayāna, these are explained as

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. düche (Wylie, ’*dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^b Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Skr. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. dümache (Wylie, ’*dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

^d Skt. *mārga*[h]; Pāli, *magga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); Ch. 道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles *tao⁴*).

follows: (1) The path of accumulation^a is entered upon generation of relative mind-of-Awakening;^b its essence lies in the accumulation of merits^c and wisdom,^d as well as in the thorough abandonings^e whereby four factors of virtue are developed through meditation and moral training.³⁵⁰ (2) The path of preparation or application^f is attained when the union of mental pacification and insight^g is achieved, and it involves going through four levels which culminate with overcoming the fear of emptiness that bars the way to the next path, and closing the doors to lower realms.³⁵¹ (3) The path of Vision,^h as suggested, is the entrance to the Path in a truer and more thorough sense than the one in which one is said to enter it when one decides to tread the bodhisattva Path and sets out to develop the relative mind-of-Awakening; in the Bodhisattvayāna, this is said to mean one has directly realized the ultimate truth and thus has begun Seeing through the conditioned, produced, made and compounded into its unconditioned, unproduced, unmade and un-compounded nature, which is the essence of the Path in the truest sense of the word (for it is this that allows one to effectively proceed toward Buddhahood); if all is auspicious, one will have had at least an initial glimpse of the absolute mind-of-Awakeningⁱ consisting, as already noted, in the indivisibility of emptiness and compassion.³⁵² (4) The path of Contemplation^j involves the development of the realization obtained in the previous path; in it, repeatedly Seeing through the conditioned and made contents of experience into the unconditioned and unmade nature, makes one gradually progress from the second to the tenth level,^k and gradually consolidate the mind-of-Awakening (5) Finally, the path of no more learning^l is

^a Skt. *sambhāramārga*; Tib. *tsoglam* (Wylie, *tshogs lam*); Ch. 資糧道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zīliáng dào*; Wade-Giles *tzu¹-liang² tao⁴*).

^b Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. *changchub sem* (Wylie, *byang chub sems*) or *changchubkyi sem* (Wylie, *byang chub kyī sems*); Ch. 菩提心 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p¹u²-t¹i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodai shin*).

^c Skt. *punya*; Tib. *sōnam* (Wylie, *bsod nams*); Ch. 福 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fú*; Wade-Giles, *fu²*).

^d In this context the traditional term is *jñāna* (Tib. *yeshe* [Wylie, *ye shes*]; Ch. 智 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*]), which in this context does not refer to the nonconceptual, nondual *primordial gnosis* whereby *rigpa* manifests, but to having knowledge and a correct, wise understanding of that knowledge—and hence it may roughly correspond to *prajñā* (Tib. *sherab* [Wylie, *shes rab*]; Ch. 般若 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*]).

^e Skt. *samyakprahāṇa*; Pāli *sammappadhāna*; Tib. *yangdak par pongwa* (Wylie, *yang dag par spong ba*); Ch. 四正勤 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sìzhèngqín*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴-cheng⁴-ch'in²*).

^f Skt. *prayogamārga*; Tib. *jorlam* (Wylie, *sbyor lam*); Ch. 加行道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiāxíng dào*; Wade-Giles *tzu¹-liang² tao⁴*).

^g Skt. *śamathavipaśyanāyuganaddha*; Tib. *zhine lhangtong zungjug* (Wylie, *zhi gnas lhag mthong zung 'jug*); Ch. 止觀雙運 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhǐguān shuāngyùn*; Wade-Giles, *chih³-kuan¹ shuang¹-yün⁴*).

^h Skt. *darśanamārga*; Tib. *thonglam* (Wylie, *mthong lam*); Ch. 見道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiàndào*; Wade-Giles *chien⁴-tao⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. *changchub[kyi] sem* (Wylie, *byang chub [kyi] sems*); Ch. 菩提心 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p¹u²-t¹i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodai shin*).

^j Skt. *bhāvanāmārga*; Tib. *gomlam* (Wylie, *sgom lam*) or *gompai lam* (Wylie, *sgom [pa'i] lam*); Ch. 修道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūdào*; Wade-Giles *hsiu¹-tao⁴*).

^k Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. *sa* (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *ti⁴*).

^l Skt. *asaikṣāmārga*; Tib. *milobpai lam* (Wylie, *mi slob pa'i lam*) or *tharphyinpai lam* (Wylie, *thar phyin pa'i lam*); Ch. 無學道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxuédào*; Wade-Giles *wu²-hsüueh² tao⁴*).

said to lie in the attainment of the final Fruit that is Complete, Irreversible Awakening,^a whereby one has the status of Fully Awake Buddha.^b

The last three of the above paths are for their part divided into ten or eleven levels^c according to whether or not Buddhahood is viewed as a level: (i) The manifestation of absolute *prajñā* marks the transition to the *path of Vision*,³⁵³ corresponding to the first level, known as *joyous*,^d in which one perfects the *transcendence of generosity*.^e (ii) Levels two to ten, which are divisions of the *path of Contemplation*, are: (2) *stainless*,^f in which one perfects the *transcendence of discipline or virtuous conduct*;^g (3) *illuminating*,^h in which one perfects the *transcendence of patience or forbearance*;ⁱ (4) *flaming*,^j in which one perfects the *transcendence of perseverance*;^k (5) *difficult to achieve*,^l in which one perfects the *transcendence of absorption or contemplative stability*;^m (6) *manifest or realized*,ⁿ in which one perfects the *transcendence of discriminative wisdom*;^o (7) *far gone*,^p in which one perfects the *transcendence of method or skillful means*;^q (8) *immovable*,^r in which one perfects the *transcendence of aspiration*;^a (9) *supreme*

^a Skt. *anuttarāsamyaksambodhi*; Tib. yandakpar yongsu dzogpai changchub (Wylie, *yang dag par yongs su rdzogs pa'i byang chub*); Ch. 阿耨多罗三藐三菩提 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *ānòuduōluó sānmǎo sānpútí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-nou⁴-to¹-luo² san¹-miaou³ san¹-p'u²-t'i²*; Jap. *anokutarasanmyakusanbodai*).

^b Skt. *anuttarā samyaksambuddha*; Tib. yangdakpar dzogpai sangye (Wylie, *yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas*); Ch. 正遍知 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngbiànzhī*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-pien⁴-chih¹*).

^c Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); 地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

^d Skt. *pramuditā*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. rabtu ganwa (Wylie, *rab tu dga' ba['i sa]*); Ch. 歡喜地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *huānxǐ [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *huan¹-hsi³ [tí⁴]*).

^e Skt. *dāna*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. jinpa [pharpin] (Wylie, *sbyin pa [phar phyin]*); Ch. 布施 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùshī bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po⁴-shih¹ po¹-luo²-mí⁴*).

^f Skt. *vimala*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. drima mepa (Wylie, *dri ma med pa['i sa]*); Ch. 離垢地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *lígòu [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *lí²-kou⁴ [tí⁴]*).

^g Skt. *śīla*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. tsültrim [pharpin] (Wylie, *tshul khriims [phar phyin]*); Ch. 持戒 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chíjiè bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih²-chieh⁴ po¹-luo²-mí⁴*).

^h Skt. *prabhākarī*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. öje (Wylie, *'od byed['i sa]*); Ch. 發光地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fāguāng [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *fa¹-kuang¹ [tí⁴]*).

ⁱ Skt. *kṣānti*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. zöpa [pharpin] (Wylie, *bzod pa [phar phyin]*); Ch. 忍辱 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *rěnrǔ bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *jen³-ju³ po¹-luo²-mí⁴*).

^j Skt. *arciṣmatī*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. ö trowa (Wylie, *'od 'phro ba['i sa]*); 焰慧地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yànhuì [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *yen⁴-hut⁴ [tí⁴]*).

^k Skt. *vīrya*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. tsöndrü [pharpin] (Wylie, *brtson 'grus [phar phyin]*); Ch. 精進 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngjìn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ching¹-chin⁴ po¹-luo²-mí⁴*).

^l Skt. *sudurjayā*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. jang kawa (Wylie, *sbyang dka' ba['i sa]*); Ch. 難勝地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *nánshèng [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *nan²-sheng⁴ [tí⁴]*).

^m Skt. *dhyāna*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. samten [pharpin] (Wylie, *bsam gtan [phar phyin]*); Ch. 禪定 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chándìng bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ch'an²-ting⁴ po¹-luo²-mí⁴*).

ⁿ Skt. *abhīmukhī*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. ngöndu jepa (Wylie, *mngon du byed pa['i sa]*); Ch. 現前地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiàncián [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *hsien⁴-ch'ien² [tí⁴]*).

^o Skt. *prajñā*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. sherab [pharpin] (Wylie, *shes rab [phar phyin]*); Ch. 般若 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³ po¹-luo²-mí⁴*).

^p Skt. *dūraṅgamā*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. ringdu songwa (Wylie, *ring du song ba['i sa]*); 遠行地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yuǎnxíng [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *yüan³-hsing² [tí⁴]*).

^q Skt. *upāya*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. thab [pharpin] (Wylie, *thabs [phar phyin]*); Ch. 方便 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴ po¹-luo²-mí⁴*).

^r Skt. *acalā*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. migyowa (Wylie, *mi gyo ba['i sa]*); Ch. 不動地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùdòng [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-tung⁴ [tí⁴]*).

intelligence,^b in which one perfects the *transcendence of power or strength*;^c and (10) *cloud of dharma*,^d in which one perfects the *transcendence of primordial gnosis*.^e (iii) Finally, the eleventh *bhūmi*, known as *all-pervading light*,^f in which all transcendences have been perfected, corresponds to the *path of No-more learning* and the attainment of Buddhahood. (Note that most canonical sources and commentaries list only ten levels, for the eleventh level is rightly viewed as the state beyond all levels.)

Thus, in a very general way, it may be said that in the Bodhisattvayāna access to the path of Vision and the corresponding first *bhūmi*—the “joyful”—occurs after relative *prajñā* has been successfully developed and then at some point absolute *prajñā* wisdom manifests, nonconceptually and hence nondually revealing the content of *prajñā*, which is emptiness^g—even though, as shown in the correspondences between the transcendences and the levels, the transcendence of wisdom *fully matures* on the sixth level. Emptiness is understood differently by the various philosophical schools of the Mahāyāna; the schools that Tibetans classify as Uma Rangtongpa^h (Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika) understand it as “absence of self-nature”ⁱ—which for its part may be defined as the insubstantiality of all of the phenomena that individuals possessed by the delusion called *avidyā* experience and wrongly consider to be substantial, which according to the original forms of these schools must be realized beyond interpretations and perceptions in terms of contents of thought.³⁵⁴ The teachings of the Nyingmapa agree that all phenomena lack self-nature and substance, yet often emphasize that the true condition of reality, which here I am calling emptiness, does not involve affirmation or negation, for the latter are conceptual interpretations, and Mādhyamaka has always stressed the fact that the condition in question is inconceivable,^j inexpressible,^k and can only be realized through the primordial gnosis^l that (is) utterly free

^a Skt. *prañidhāna*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. mönlam [pharpin] (Wylie, *smoṅ lam* [*phar phyin*]); Ch. 願 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yuàn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^b Skt. *sādhumatī*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. legpe lodrö (Wylie, *legs pa'i blo gros* [*i sa*]); 善慧地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shàn huì* [*dì*]; Wade-Giles, *shan⁴-hui⁴* [*tì⁴*]).

^c Skt. *bala*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. tob [pharpin] (Wylie, *stobs* [*phar phyin*]); Ch. 力 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *lì bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *lì⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^d Skt. *dharmameghā*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. chökyi drinpa (Wylie, *chos kyi sprin pa* [*i sa*]); Ch. 法雲地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fā yún* [*dì*]; Wade-Giles, *fa¹-yün²* [*tì⁴*]).

^e Skt. *jñāna*[*pāramitā*]; Tib. yeshe [pharpin] (Wylie, *ye shes* [*phar phyin*]); Ch. 智 [波羅蜜] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mì⁴*).

^f Skt. *samantaprabhā*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. kuntu ö (Wylie, *kun tu 'od* [*i sa*]) or *tathāgata*[*bhūmi*]; Ch. 如來地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *rúlái* [*dì*]; Wade-Giles, *ju²-lai²* [*tì⁴*]).

^g Skt. *śūnyatā*; Tib. tongpanyi (Wylie, *stong pa nyid*); Ch. 空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *kòng*; Wade-Giles, *k'ung⁴*; Jap. Kū).

^h Wylie, *dbu ma rang stong pa*; tentative Skt. rendering: Svabhāvaśūnyatā Mādhyamaka or Prakṛtiśūnyatā Mādhyamaka.

ⁱ Skt. *svabhāvaśūnyatā* or *prakṛtiśūnyatā*; Tib. ngowonyi tongpanyi (Wylie, *ngo bo nyid stong pa nyid*) or rangzhingyi tongpanyi (Wylie, *rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid*); Ch. 自性空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade-Giles, *tzü⁻¹-hsing⁴-k'ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^j Skt. *acintya*; Pāli: *acinteya*, *acintiya*; Tib. samye (Wylie, *bsam yas*) or samgyi mikhyabpa (Wylie, *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*); Ch. 佛學辭彙 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fó xué cí huì*; Wade-Giles, *fo²-hsüueh² tz'u²-hui⁴*).

^k Skt. *avācya*; Tib. marmepa (Wylie, *smrar med pa*); Ch. 不可說物 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō wù*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-k'e³-shuo¹ wu⁴*) / Skt. *anābhilāpya*; Tib. jöme (Wylie, *brjod med*) or jödu mepa (Wylie, *brjod du med pa*); Ch. 不可說 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-k'e³-shuo¹*).

^l Skt. *jñāna*; Pāli *ñāṇa*; Tib. yeshe (Wylie, *ye shes*); Ch. 智; Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*.

from conceptual fabrications.^a In fact, according to Nyingmapas, reducing emptiness to a mere absence would be an instance of nihilism; identifying absolute truth with such an absence would make this truth incapable of accounting for Awakening, or even for the manifestation of phenomena; and taking that absence as a path would make Awakening unattainable. In fact, the absolute truth consists in the reGnition, in the absence of mental constructs, of the insubstantial, essenceless true condition of both mind and its objects in which space and awareness are indivisible—which is properly expressed as indivisibility of emptiness and appearances, or of emptiness and awareness. (For a thorough discussion of the error that lies in identifying ultimate truth with an absence, cf. Chöphel & Capriles, in press.)

As noted above, according to the Bodhisattvayāna, on the first and second paths the *bodhisattva* who reaches the path of Vision and the corresponding first level^b must have developed relative, referential compassion and the other qualities that make up the conditioned aspects of the four Immeasurables and the six or ten *pāramitās*. However, it is upon the nonconceptual and therefore nondual discovery of emptiness that marks the transition to the path of Seeing and that represents the upsurge of absolute *prajñā*, that the absolute, nonreferential compassion that embraces all beings may spontaneously begin to manifest: this is the reason why emptiness and nonreferential compassion are said to be inseparable, and why absolute *bodhicitta*, which as noted lies in their inseparability, is said to first arise on the path of Vision and the corresponding “joyful” level. It may seem would be absurd that one will experience compassion while Seeing that ultimately there are no beings and there is no suffering; however, what is called nonreferential compassion is an all-embracing warmth, empathy and responsiveness that arise spontaneously from the direct realization of absolute truth by means of absolute *prajñā*, and hence absolute *prajñā* and nonreferential compassion may be said to be a single reality, comparable to the single moon that a squinting fool or drunkard perceives as two moons.³⁵⁵

Absolute truth was already, albeit briefly, discussed, and was said to consist in the bare, nonconceptual and hence nondual, patency of the true condition of ourselves and all other phenomena. All phenomena (including both the objects of the mind and the mind itself—which, contradicting common sense, is phenomenal, for it exists only insofar as it appears, even though it does so “indirectly and implicitly”³⁵⁶) result from the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the contents of thought. In fact, as noted repeatedly, both the mental subject that seems to be other than its objects and the false appearance that there is something objective that appears as object are produced by the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle, threefold directional thought-structure. And the appearance of entities, for its part, results from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the contents of subtle thoughts. Since hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the contents of thought does not work in the condition of absolute truth, in absolute truth no subject-object duality and no entities manifest: although the sensory basis of what ordinarily we

^a Skt. *niṣprapañca*; Tib. thödräl (Wylie, *spros bral*); Ch. 不戲論 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *pu²-hsi⁴-lun⁴*) or Skt. *aprapañca*; Tib. töme or töpa mepa (Wylie, *spros [pa] med [pa]*); Ch. 無戲論 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *wu-hsi-lun*). In properly Dzogchen terminology, Tib. la dawa (Wylie, *la bzla ba*).

^b Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

experience as phenomena continues to manifest, the segments that on being singled-out are normally grasped as this or that entity are not grasped as such.

In fact, as Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas acknowledge, entities are perceived only in relative truth, which (as all Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas, except for Je Tsongkhapa and his followers, acknowledge) is in all cases deluded pseudo-truth.³⁵⁷ As Gendün Chöphel put it:^a

Early translators rendered into Tibetan the Sanskrit term *saṃvṛti*, which [etymologically] means “obscuration to correctness” or “thoroughly confused,” as *kun rdzob*, which literally means “all-concealed” (and which is the term that Gelug translators render as “conventional” and non-Gelug translators render as “relative”). Since [the experience of relative truth is] deluded, we must understand *relative truth* as “mistaken truth.”

The point is that the relative realm, in which we perceive a myriad entities as existing and doing so hypostatically / inherently even though they are utterly insubstantial and have no existence whatsoever, is a function of *avidyā*, involving unawareness of the true condition of ourselves and all other phenomena and hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the contents of thought, which gives rise to the deluded perception of self-existent entities having inherent qualities and inherent (positive, negative or neutral) value where there are actually none and makes us take the empty as existent, the relative as absolute, the dependent as independent, the put as *given*, the impermanent as permanent, that which cannot provide satisfaction as being capable of providing it, the produced / contrived / compounded / conditioned^b as unproduced / uncontrived / uncompounded / unconditioned,^c etc.—this being the delusion that is the root of the gloomy-go-round called *saṃsāra*.

It is on the basis of the *bodhisattva*'s progress through the paths^d and levels^e that the classifications of the different types of “truth” that Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka philosophy posits—inverted relative truth, correct relative truth (these first two being actually pseudo-truth), provisional absolute truth and definitive absolute truth (properly called truth, since neither of them does involve delusion)—should be understood. In fact, inverted relative truth^f corresponds to the experience of those who have not yet reached the third path/first level of the *bodhisattva* career, for they are totally possessed by delusion and, unaware that they are deluded, they take their delusory perceptions and conceptual interpretations to be perfectly sound. Correct relative truth^g is all that appears in the post-Contemplation^{h358} state of the *superior bodhisattva* on the third and fourth paths (i.e., from the first to the tenth *bhūmi*); though in this condition entities are still perceived as existing absolutely and substantially, this false appearance is lighter or

^a Chöphel & Capriles (in press); Capriles (in press 1).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^c Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Skr. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^d Skt. *mārga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); Ch. 道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles *tao⁴*).

^e Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

^f Skt. *mithyāsaṃvṛtisatya*; Tib. logpai kunzob denpa (Wylie, *log pa'i kun rdzob bden pa*).

^g Skt. *tathyaṃvṛtisatya*; Tib. yangdak kunzob denpa (Wylie, *yang dag kun rdzob bden pa*).

^h Skt. *prṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. jethob (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*).

milder than in the normal individual, as there is some awareness of the apparitional nature of those entities, which becomes more and more pronounced as the *superior bodhisattva* advances through the levels.^a Provisional absolute truth—which should *not* be confused with what is called figurative, conceptual ultimate truth,^b which is no more than a delusive product of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought—corresponds to the Contemplation state^{c359} of the *superior bodhisattva* on the third and fourth paths, for in this state she or he has a bare, direct apprehension of the *dharmatā*—i.e. the true, unmade, unconditioned, uncompounded nature of the whole of reality. Finally, definitive absolute truth is characteristic of the Buddhas, who have become established on the fifth path / eleventh level. (For a far more lengthy discussion of this cf. the Introductory Study, in Chöphel & Capriles, in press.)

The *bodhisattva*'s development through the levels on the gradual Path may also be understood in terms of the overcoming of the two types of obstacles that keep beings in *samsāra* and prevent Awakening. The first obstacle is passional delusive obstructions,^{d360} and need not be explained, as it consists in the welling up of coarse passions upon the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the contents of thought in experiences proper to the realm of sensuality;³⁶¹ this obstacle is irreversibly eliminated on passing from the seventh to the eighth level.^c The second obstacle is cognitive delusive obstructions,^{f362} which may be exemplified by the case of an archer who, upon shooting, takes his own self as object and knows it as shooting, thereby giving rise to a slight jerk that deflects the arrow (which occurs because there is a conceptualization of self as shooting, which makes the mental subject *become* its object for an instant, which momentarily hinders the spontaneity of the Base's spontaneous perfection aspect), and which is irreversibly eliminated on passing from the tenth to the eleventh level.³⁶³ This latter obstacle underlies passional delusive obstructions so long as the latter is active, as shown by the fact that we ordinary beings constantly suffer to a lower or greater this kind of impediment as we act, and by the fact that also the traces of the delusion of passions after practice has removed the latter are deemed to be part of cognitive delusive obstruction. The latter is attested by the fact that, in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* or *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* IX 30-31, Śāntideva compared passional delusive obstructions to the desire spectators at a magic show feel for the illusory woman created by the magician, and likened cognitive delusion to the desire the magician himself feels towards that same illusory woman despite his being aware that it is not a “real woman.” Once the two types of obstacles have been totally overcome, the individual becomes established in what this vehicle views as the supreme realization of Buddhahood.³⁶⁴

^a Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^b Skt. *aparyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. namdrang mayinpaì dōndam (Wylie, *rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*). In contrast with this pseudo-absolute, true absolute truth is referred to by the Skt. term *paryāyaparamārtha* (Tib. nam drangpaì dōndam [Wylie, *rnam grangs pa'i don dam*]).

^c Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. nyamzhak (Wylie, *mnyam bz'bag*); Ch. 等引 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^d Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Tib. nyōndrib or nyōnmongpaì dribpa (Wyllie, *nyon [mong pa'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 煩惱障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fánnǎozhàng*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³-chang⁴*).

^e Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^f Skt. *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *ñeyyavāvaraṇa*; Tib. shedrib (Wyllie, *shes [bya'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 所知障 Hànyǔ Pīnyīn *suōzhīzhàng*; Wade-Giles *so³-chih¹-chang⁴*).

Although the concept of primordial purity is proper to the Dzogchen teachings and is not used in the Mahāyāna, from the standpoint of the Mahāyāna it is easy to understand the reason why the term is used in the Dzogchen teachings. In the context of the path of renunciation the passions are seen as impurities and as venoms that create causes for bad rebirths and that in this life create greater sufferings. As noted above, the passions well up in response to our perceptions of substantiality and self-existence in experiences proper to the realm of sensuality. This may be explained in terms of the above types of obstacles, and the example of the illusory woman created by the magician.

As already explained, in the Mahāyāna, after going through the first two of the five bodhisattva paths (the path of accumulation^a and then that of preparation^b) the Path of Seeing^c is reached as absolute truth is Seen in the initial occurrence of the Contemplation state^d of the higher bodhisattva. On this path and the corresponding bodhisattva level,^e which is the first, called the joyful,^f and on the first six levels of the next path, which is that of Contemplation^g (namely levels 2 through 7), experience in post-Contemplation^h is still conditioned by passional delusive obstructions and hence when one sees a given entity *one still believes firmly in it from the heart*, even though one's realization in the Contemplation state made it evident for us that this belief is mistaken, for there is simply no entity there. With the development of the practice this impression that there is a truly established entity gradually fades away, until passional delusive obstructionsⁱ are totally neutralized and hence the transition from the seventh to the eighth level on the path of Contemplation is said to have occurred. From this point onwards, when one sees a given entity, one still perceives it as that entity—and hence there is still delusion—but one no longer believes in it firmly from the heart as before.

Hence the two delusions, rather than being utterly different things, are degrees and qualities of the basic delusion that arises from hypostasizing / reifying / absolutizing / valorizing the supersubtle thought called threefold directional thought structure^j and subtle / intuitive thoughts (i.e., universal, abstract concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings^k)—and their neutralization is a gradual process. As I

^a Skt. *sambhāramārga*; Tib. tsoglam (Wylie, *tshogs lam*); Ch. 資糧道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zīliáng dào*; Wade-Giles *tzu¹-liang² tao⁴*).

^b Skt. *prayogamārga*; Tib. jorlam (Wylie, *sbyor lam*); 加行道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiāxíng dào*; Wade-Giles *tzu¹-liang² tao⁴*).

^c Skt. *darśanamārga*; Tib. thonglam (Wylie, *mthong lam*); Ch. 見道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiàndào*; Wade-Giles *chīen⁴-tao⁴*).

^d Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. nyamzhak (Wylie, *mnyam bzhaq*); Ch. 等引 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^e Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tī⁴*).

^f Skt. *pramuditā*[*bhūmi*]; Tib. rabtu ganwa (Wylie, *rab tu dga' ba*[*'i sa*]); Ch. 歡喜地 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *huānxǐ* [*dì*]; Wade-Giles, *huan¹-hsi³ [tī⁴]*).

^g Skt. *bhāvanāmārga*; Tib. gomlam (Wylie, *sgom lam*) or gompai lam (Wylie, *sgom pa'i lam*); Ch. 修道 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūdào*; Wade-Giles *hsiu¹-tao⁴*).

^h Skt. *pr̥ṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. jethob (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*).

ⁱ Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Tib. nyöndrib (Wyllie, *nyon sgrib*) or nyönmongpai dribpa (Wyllie, *nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa*); Ch. 煩惱障 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎozhàng*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³-chang⁴*).

^j Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^k Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. dönchi (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

showed elsewhere^a in terms of an explanation by Gorampa,^b cognitive delusive obstructions^c are so called because it lies in perceiving entities as being entities^d and as being what human conventions establish them to be:^e after the arising of the subject-object dichotomy by virtue of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought-structure, the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of intuitive / subtle thoughts (i.e., of universal, abstract concepts of entities resulting from mental syntheses) makes us perceive what we experience as the myriad entities as being those entities. It is when the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of an intuitive / subtle thought surpasses a threshold of intensity, charging it with a particularly strong illusion of truth, absoluteness and importance, that the firm belief from the heart that a given entity is that entity arises—and with it arises the firm belief from the heart that one thing is good and other bad, that one thing is beautiful and another ugly, that one thing is pleasant and another unpleasant, that one thing is good and another evil, that one is beneficial and another harmful, etc.—which takes us into the realm of sensuality^f and which elicits those particularly intense attitudes on the part of the dualistic consciousness that we designate as passions. In fact, unless repeated realization of emptiness has progressively neutralized our belief in the givenness, objectivity and truth of the subject-object duality and the myriad entities of our experience, and weakened in us the intensity of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought, we experience the subject-object duality as given and absolute, and experience entities as being the judgment, idea or concept in terms of which they are understood, in such a way that this experience *carries weight* and strongly conditions us. So long as this is so, under certain conditions the passions, or which is the same, highly charged attitudes of a subject toward an object perceived as being inherently positive or negative, will arise.

Since, as it follows from the above, those impurities which are the passions do not well up when emptiness is perfectly manifest, in the Dzogchen teachings the aspect of the Base corresponding to emptiness is called primordial purity,^g and since manifestation and the functionality of the manifest are spontaneous and unobstructed, the corresponding aspect of the Base is called spontaneous perfection.^h

However, the above does not mean that upon the transition to the eighth level a sudden turnabout occurs. Since the distinction between the two types of delusions is one

^a Cf. comment to ¶ 229 of Gendün Chöphel's *Ludrub Gonggyen (dbu ma'i zab gdad snying por dril ba'i legs bshad klu sgrub dgongs rgyan)*, in Capriles (in press 1).

^b The Sakya Master and philosopher Gorampa Sönam Sengge (Wylie, *go rams pa bsod nams seng ge*: 1429-89).

^c *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *ñeyyavāvaraṇa*; Tib. shedrib or shejai dribpa (Wylie, *shes [bya'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 所知障 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sūozhī zhàng*; Wade-Giles, *so³-chih¹ chang⁴*).

^d Roughly rendered into Third Promulgation categories, as “being dependent nature” (Skt. *paratantra*; Tib. *zhenwang* [Wylie, *gzhan dbang*]; Ch. 依他起性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yītā qǐxìng*; Wade-Giles, *i¹-ta¹ ch[']i³-hsing⁴*). However, contrarily to Mind-Only views, the dependent nature is delusive: delusion is not circumscribed to the imaginary imputational nature.

^e Roughly rendered into Third Promulgation categories, as “being imaginary imputational nature” (Skt. *parikalpita*; Tib. *kuntak* or *kuntu takpa* [Wylie, *kun {tu} brtags {pa}*]; Ch. 遍計所執性 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *biànjì suǒzhí xìng*; Wade-Giles, *pien⁴-chí⁴ so³-chih² hsing⁴*).

^f Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. *döpai kham* (Wylie, *dod pa'i kham*s); Ch. 欲界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yùjiè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*)

^g Tib. *katak* (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^h Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*; Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie, *lhun grub*).

of strength, the point at which the strength of the basic human delusion has weakened or been enfeebled to the point at which the delusion in question should be called cognitive delusion is not marked by any extraordinary occurrence that may be clearly perceived. Moreover, though a heterosexual man no longer believes firmly from the heart that the delicious dish is a delicious dish and the beautiful woman is a beautiful woman, still subtle craving or lust wells up in him: this is why Śāntideva compared cognitive delusion to the desire the magician himself feels towards that illusory woman he conjured, as different from the one the spectators, unaware that the image is a mere illusion, feel.

To sum up the essence of this section, the following are the “seven superiorities of the Bodhisattvayāna” (with regard to the two vehicles of the Hīnayāna):

- (1) Attention directed to Mahāyāna Scriptures
- (2) Practice for one’s realization and that of others
- (3) Wisdom of understanding twofold absence of self-nature
- (4) Perseverance in engagement
- (5) Skill in method
- (6) Perfection of the supreme qualities of the Buddhas
- (7) Spontaneous and uninterrupted spiritual activities^a

To conclude, it must be noted that, with regard to the Bodhisattvayāna, the *Kunje Gyälpo* reads (note that in the Dzogchen [Nature of] Mind series^b the term *bodhicitta* is a synonym of nature of mind / Base awareness^c):^d

In the *sūtras* of the Bodhisattvayāna,
with the intention [of attaining] the [eleventh] level of total light
through the concepts and analysis of the two truths,
it is asserted that the ultimate nature is emptiness like space.
[Conversely,] the great bliss of Atiyoga
is the *bodhicitta*^e free from concepts and analysis.
The [view with] concepts and analysis in Dzogpa Chenpo
is a diversion to the *sūtras*.

Lam-rim: The “Path by Stages”

No Tibetan tradition pertains to the Hīnayāna, and yet all Tibetan traditions teach and practice the Hīnayāna as a stage of what is called the *graded path* or *path by stages*,^f in which the practitioner goes successively through a Hīnayāna stage, a Mahāyāna stage, and a Vajrayāna stage, and is supposed to reach full realization as the practices of the

^a Tib. thinle (Wylie, *phrin las*); Skt. *karman*, in the sense of *manaskarman* (Tib. thugkyi thinle [Wylie, *thugs kyi phrin las*]; Ch. 意業 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yìyè*; Wade-Giles, *i⁴-yeh⁴*]) or *kāyakarman* (Tib. kuyi thinle [Wylie, *sku'i phrin las*]).

^b Tib. Semde (Wylie, *sems sde*); Skt. *Cittavarga*.

^c Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^d Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente (English 1999, p. 179); Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, pp. 295-296); Tulku Thöndup (1996, 1st ed. 1989, p. 95). I have synthesized these translations and modified the terminology in order to make it agree with the one used throughout this book.

^e Note that in the Dzogchen [Nature of] Mind series (Tib. Semde [Wylie, *sems sde*]; Skt. *Cittavarga*) the term *bodhicitta* is a synonym of nature of mind / Base awareness (Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*)).

^f Skt. *mārgakrama* or *pathakrama*; Tib. lamrim (Wylie, *lam rim*)—lit. path (by) steps.

Vajrayāna are brought to fruition. In each of the stages the practitioner engages in a set of practices corresponding to the vehicle being practiced; however, the tenets on which the graded path as a whole is based, as well as the aim it pursues, are based on the common ground the Mahāyāna shares with the Vajra vehicles.

The lamrim tradition was initiated when Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrijñāna, still in India, wrote the *Bodhipathapradīpa*^a—acclaimed by his peers at Vikramaśīla University. Then, in Tibet, it was emphasized by the original, true Kadampas, as well as by the Kagyūpas, for the founder of the latter tradition, Gampopa,^b who had been a Kadampa, produced the noted treatise called *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*.^c Later on, Je Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelugpa School, which claims to have given continuity to the Kadampa School founded by Atīśa’s disciples, gave rise to the variant of this tradition that he turned into the backbone of Buddhist practice in the Gelug school. (Note that although the Gelug school sees itself as the heir of the Kadampa tradition and as giving continuity to the latter’s teachings, Tsongkhapa’s radically reformed version of Prāsaṅgika diametrically contradicted Atīśa’s orthodox understanding of the philosophy of that school of tenets,^d and the founder of the Gelug School also incorporated many of the Tantric teachings and views that Marpa Lotsawa^e introduced in Tibet, as well as other teachings.)

Though the primordial revealer^f Garab Dorje,^g who introduced Buddhist Dzogchen into our world, did not introduce Dzogchen as the culmination of previous teachings, but directly, as a self-contained vehicle or path, and though in the first dissemination of the doctrine in Tibet the graded path had not even arisen in India, with the passing of time even the Nyingmapas incorporated it into their teachings, producing elaborate expositions of their own version of the graded Path—which with the passing of time have become the standard presentation of the Nyingma teachings, even though some outstanding Masters have continued to teach in the way proper to the original Nyingmapas.

Atīśa’s lamrim teachings were structured in terms of a set of mind trainings^h that comprised many points. Geshe Chekawa,ⁱ direct disciple of Geshe Potowa (the renowned direct disciple of Atīśa), put these mind trainings into writing, and then Chekawa’s main disciple, **Sechilphuwa Chökyi Gyaltzen**,^j arranged them into seven points, giving rise to what became known as the “seven mind trainings” or seven lojong.^k These were:

1. The preliminaries to mind training

^a Tib. Changchub lamgyi drönma (Wylie, *byang chub lam gyi sgron ma*).

^b sgam po pa: Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (Wylie, *sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen*: 1079-1153).

^c Tib. *Dakpo Targyen* (Wylie, *dwags po thar rgyan*) or *Damchö yizhin norbu rinpochei gyen* (Wylie, *dam chos yid bzhin nor bu rin po che'i rgyan*).

^d Capriles (in press 1).

^e Wylie, *mar pa lo tsa ba*: Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (Wylie, *mar pa chos kyi blo gros*: 1012-1097 or 1099).

^f Tönpa (Wylie, *ston pa*). The term “tönpa” literally means “Revealer;” however, the term does not refer to those who reveal termas (Wylie, *gter ma*) attributed to Padmasambhava, but to those who reveal a complete system of Awakening at a time when previous systems have disappeared. Therefore, it is properly rendered as “Primordial Revealer.”

^g Wylie, *dga' rab rdo rje*.

^h Tib. lojong (Wylie, *blo sbyong*).

ⁱ Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (Wylie, *'chad kha ba ye shes rdo rje*) (1101-1175).

^j Wylie, *se spyil du pa chos kyi rgyal mtshan* (1121-1189 CE).

^k Tib. lojong dün or lojong dön dünma (Wylie, *blo sbyong [don] bdun [ma]*).

2. The main practice of training the mind in the mind of Awakening^a
3. Transforming adversity into the Path of Awakening
4. Applying the practice throughout one's whole life
5. The measure or signs of proficiency in mind training
6. The commitments of mind training
7. The precepts of mind training

The essence of the Hīnayāna stage that, as noted above, is the first on the graded Path, is the taking of Refuge (which will be considered further on). This stage comprises the practice of the preliminaries to mind training above listed as (1), which are the famed “four reflections that cause the mind to turn away from *samsāra* and strive for *nirvāṇa*.” Among these reflections, the first two, which are interrelated, are: (a) reflection on the preciousness of the human existence and the great difficulty of obtaining it,³⁶⁵ and (b) reflection on the impermanence of all that is born or produced. The sequence of these two reflections is owing to the fact that the second would not have the desired effect if one were not already conscious of the opportunities a precious human existence offers and of how difficult it is to obtain a human birth: their combination is said to have the function of “spurring the horse of diligence with the riding crop of impermanence.” The next two are also interrelated—which is the reason why a Nyingmapa tradition compiled by the great Dzogchen Master Longchen Rabjampa^b reversed the order in which Atīśa taught them, placing as (c) the reflection on the unsatisfactory nature and suffering of *samsāra* and its different realms, and as (d) the reflection on the law of cause and effect: the latter will be truly effective only if and when one is already aware of the inherently unsatisfactory nature of *samsāra* and of the sufferings that characterize each and all of its realms.^c

Although these four reflections are essential elements in both the general ngöndro^d (course of preliminary practices) taught by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and in the Base level of the same Master's Santimahasaṃgha^e graded course of teachings and practices, in his regular teachings the Dzogchen Master in question insists that what is essential is not to be always reflecting on these four elements, but to keep a keen and constant awareness of them throughout one's everyday activities and life.

In all cycles of Dzogchen Nyingthik^{f366} teachings, there is a series of successive practices having the same aim as the four reflections—i.e. that of causing one's mind to become integrated with the meaning of the teaching³⁶⁷—that also received the name of the *seven mind trainings* or *lojongs*, but that incorporated into the seventh mind training a set of three practices pertaining to the most essential division of the most direct series of Dzogchen teachings that offer practitioners an opportunity to have a first glimpse of rigpa (though they incorporate elements proper to the Tantric Path of transformation, adapted to the Dzogchen mode of practicing³⁶⁸). Thus although these trainings fulfill the purpose of the Hīnayāna stage of the graded Path, they go far beyond this stage, reaching up to the

^a Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. changchub[kyi] sem (Wylie, *byang chub [kyi] sems*); Ch. 菩提心 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p'u²-t'i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodaishin*).

^b Wylie, klong chen rab 'byams pa.

^c For an exposition in English, see Longchenpa (trans. and annot. H. V. Guenther, 1975, vol. I).

^d Wylie, *snong 'gro*.

^e The diacritics for transliterations of Oḍḍiyāna language are unknown to me; Skt. Mahāsaṃdhisamgha; Tib. Dzogchen Gendün (Wylie, *rdzogs chen dge 'dun*).

^f Wylie, *rdzogs chen snying thig*.

Atiyoga. Regarding these trainings (which would be discussed in detail in Vol. III of this book, should I finally add that third tome to the present book) Chögyal Namkhai Norbu writes:^a

Among all the series of mind trainings used as basic practices in Ati Dzogpa Chenpo the ‘seven mind trainings’ belonging to the texts of *Dzogchen Nyingthik* are distinguished because they are easier for beginners to apply than those of other systems and at the same time are also more effective. These are:

1. Training the mind in the thought that everything compounded is impermanent.
2. Training the mind in the thought that all actions are the cause of suffering.
3. Training the mind in the thought of how we are beguiled by diverse secondary causes.
4. Training the mind in the thought that all worldly actions are meaningless.
5. Training the mind by reflecting on the Fruit of supreme liberation.
6. Training the mind by reflecting on the value of the teachings of one’s teacher.
7. Training the mind by means of meditative stability of the state beyond thought.

Whoever practices these seven trainings will easily succeed, first of all to enter the deep and swift Path of Atiyoga, then to put into practice without difficulty its fundamental points, and finally to integrate their mind with the teaching. Thanks to their qualities and special functions, all Atiyoga teachers in recent times are accustomed to usher beginners into the Ati teaching through the practice of these seven trainings.

The Hīnayāna stage of the graded path is followed by a Mahāyāna stage that may be said to correspond to the second point of the standard mind trainings as enumerated by Sechilphuwa Chökyi Gyaltzen—although also the following points pertain to that stage—for its emphasis is on training in the mind of Awakening: developing the intention proper to the latter, carrying out the above discussed practices of the four *Immeasurables* of the *bodhicitta of intention*, and applying in one’s everyday life the also discussed six or ten transcendences^b of the *bodhicitta of action*. These will not be considered here, as they were briefly outlined in the discussion of the Mahāyāna *qua* vehicle. At this point it suffices to emphasize the fact that, in order to incorporate the Bodhisattvayāna’s principle into a Dzogchen adept’s practice, whenever one is functioning in the relative condition and lacks the possibility to liberate the condition in question into rigpa, the key point is to check one’s intention each and every time one decides to act, so that if the intention is selfish, one abstains from acting on the basis of that intention and change the latter into an altruistic one. Therefore, this application of the Bodhisattvayāna’s principle may be said to be an application of *dualistic presence* (or *mindfulness*) of *sensible conscientiousness*.^c

In Tibet, with the passing of time, on the basis of the graded path there arose the set of preliminary practices known as ngöndro,^d which begins with a Hīnayāna stage, then comprises a Mahāyāna stage, continues with a Vajrayāna stage in which one initially does

^a Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 39-40). In point 4, the phrase “all the actions of this life” was replaced by “all worldly actions,” which I believed would convey the idea more precisely

^b Skt. *paramita*; Tib. pharphyin (Wylie, *phar phyin*) or, in full, pha rölto phyinpa (Wylie, *pha rol tu phyin pa*); Ch. 波羅蜜 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-luo²-mi⁴*).

^c Skt. *smrtisamprajanya*; Pāli *satisampajañña*; Tib. tenpa dang shezhin (Wylie, *dran pa dang shes bzhin*); Ch. 正念慧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngniànhuì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-nien⁴-hui⁴*).

^d Wylie, *sngon ’gro*; Skt. *pūrvaka* (note that the ngöndro in its current form was developed in Tibet; the Sanskrit term did not refer to a universally preestablished course of specific practices corresponding to the current ngöndro).

specific practices belonging to the outer or lower Tantras with the purpose of completing the accumulation of merits and wise knowledge, purifying obstacles and obscurations, and for receiving blessings. It is only after completing these practices, thereby accumulating merits, purifying *karma* and receiving blessings, that a practitioner is allowed to apply the teachings of the inner or higher Tantras. In particular, in Tibetan schools, most teachers require that their disciples complete at least one full course of the preparatory practices before for giving them initiations and teachings of inner or higher Tantra.

However, note that if one is to practice the ngöndro, one must receive teachings from one’s teacher on the specific ngöndro that corresponds to his or her teachings.

The Sudden Mahāyāna: The *Dùnmén*^a or Tönmun^b Tradition

The sudden or abrupt Mahāyāna^{c369} emphasizes the point that the true entrance to the Path occurs with a flash of Awakening^d that can only be attained suddenly and that it calls “full, immediate disclosure^e [of the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena]”—this being the reason why its approach is called sudden Awakening approach, even though the noted *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* clearly states that, rather than a sudden school, what there are, is *suddenist people*. As documented in The Blue Cliff Record,^f in ancient China, Chán monks, after the initial events of Sudden Awakening,^g would go into retreat in the wilderness in the company of a less advanced monk, who would attend to them and by the same token learn from them. This is the tradition that was given continuity in Korea by Master Jinul,^h who insisted that Sudden Awakening was quite easy to reach, but that thereon practice had to be continued in order to eradicate the lingering effect of habit energies, and who called this tradition Sudden Awakening and Gradual Cultivation (in Korea a rather nihilistic, rival school, which referred to its own approach as Sudden Awakening and Sudden Cultivation, opposed this approach on the false grounds that, after completing the struggle to reach the difficult stage of Awakening, cultivation was no longer necessary).ⁱ In Japan, in Rinzai Zen the aspirant has to “solve” a series of *kōans*^j—the “solution” involving in each case a *satori*. Would delusion not manifest again after the initial *satori*, further *kōans* would be superfluous—yet as a rule this is not the case. (This does not mean that *nirvāṇa*, which is beyond time, is transient. If we represented our true, timeless condition with the sun, and the fleeting obscurations that give rise to the delusive experience that involves time, with clouds that cover the sun, we could say that, when the clouds disperse, there is a timeless realization of our timeless true condition. However, when they cover the sun again, the experience of time is reactivated—and hence from the standpoint of time we may contradictorily, improperly

^a This is the Chinese name: Ch. 頓門 (simplified: 顿门; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dùnmén*; Wade-Giles, *tun⁴-men²*).

^b This is the Tibetan name (Wylie, *ston mun*).

^c Ch. 頓門 (simplified: 顿门; *dùnmén*; Wade-Giles, *tun⁴-men²*); Tib. tönmun (*ston mun*).

^d Ch. 頓悟 (simplified: 顿悟; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dùnwù*; Wade-Giles, *tun⁴-wu⁴*).

^e Ch. 頓教 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dùnjiào*; Wade-Giles, *tun⁴-chiao⁴*).

^f Cleary & Cleary (1977).

^g Chin. 悟; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn: *wù*; Wade-Giles, *wu⁴*; Jap. *satori*.

^h 1158-1210 AD.

ⁱ Cf. Ven. Jikwan (Pub.), & Ven. Hyechong (Ed.) (2007).

^j Chin. 公案; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *gōng’àn*; Wade-Giles *kung¹-an⁴*.

speak of “the period during which we were beyond time” (the phrase is defective because at the time there is no illusory I, and because the concept of period implies that of time).

According to the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, both the approach and the tradition of Chán go back to the “Silent Sermon” in which, instead of preaching to his audience as usual, Śākyamuni held a flower in his hand and kept silent, gazing toward his disciples in the state that makes the Fruit of Buddhahood evident. It is said that although no one else understood what was going on, the bright Mahākāśyapa^a instantly “entered” the Buddha’s state—thus receiving the latter’s “transmission of [the essence of] mind”—and smiled. This was the outset of what Chán^b calls “a transmission parallel to that of the scriptures, yet independent from it.” Tradition ascribes the following poem to patriarch Bodhidharma, though contemporary scholars believe originated in the Táng Dynasty:^c

教外別傳	jiào wài bié zhuàn	A special [separate] transmission outside the teachings,
不立文字	bú lì wén zì	[that] does not depend on written words,
直指人心	zhí zhǐ rén xīn	directly points to the nature of mind,
見性成佛	jiàn xìng chéng fó	[for] Seeing one’s nature and [thus] becoming Buddha.

Despite its claim of being a living transmission beyond doctrinal sources, Chán dearly cherishes dearly those *sūtras* of the Second and Third Promulgations that, while being among the canonical sources of the Indian gradual Mahāyāna, nonetheless contain many elements that lend themselves to a “sudden” interpretation, for the Chinese Sudden School regards them as evidence that its teachings and transmission go back to Buddha Śākyamuni. They include Second Promulgation *sūtras*: the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra* (Essence of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* or Essential *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*) is recited daily in Chán^d / Zen monasteries, and according to the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*,^e the Sixth Patriarch, Wei-lang,^f had his initial flash or Awakening^g upon listening to a passage of the *Vajracchedikā*—which is so appreciated by this school that when its most important text, which is the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, was initially published in English translation, the *Vajracchedikā* was included in the same volume.^{h370} And they include Third Promulgation *sūtras* as well: the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, an extremely essential source, provides an explanation of the mental events supposed to be behind instantaneous Awakening. The *Śūraṅgamasūtra* among other things lists the methods whereby the great bodhisattvas attained Awakening; some of the methods described, and in particular that of Avalokiteśvara, are extremely effective for Introducing the absolute condition in an

^a Pāli, Mahākassapa; Tib. Örung Chenpo (Wylie, *od srung chen po*); Ch. 摩訶迦葉 (Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, Móhējiāyè; Wade-Giles, Mo³-he¹ Chia¹-yeh⁴).

^b 禪; Wade-Giles, Ch’an; Skt. Dhyāna; Jap. ぜん (Hiragana) / Zen (Romaji); Korean, 선 (Seon); Viet. Thi ền.

^c 唐朝; Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, Táng Cháo; Wade-Giles: T’ang² Ch’ao². The verse was taken from Piya Tan (2009) and modified according to my own understanding.

^d 禪; Wade-Giles, Ch’an; Skt. Dhyāna; Jap. ぜん (hiragana) / Zen (romaji); Korean, 선 (Seon); Viet. Thi ền.

^e Ch. 壇經 (Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, Tánjīng; Wade-Giles, T’an²-ching¹), 六祖壇經 (Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, Liùzǔtánjīng; Wade-Giles, Liu⁴-tsu³ T’an²-ching¹), which abbreviate 六祖大師法寶壇經 (Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, Liùzǔdàshī fábǎotánjīng; Wade-Giles, Liu⁴-tsu³-ta⁴-shih¹ Fa²-pao³-t’an²-ching¹); full title: 南宗頓教最上乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經.

^f His name was 惠能, which in Cantonese is Wai⁶-nang⁴; however, in the West that Cantonese name is best known as Wei-lang (Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, Huìnéng; Wade-Giles, Hui⁴-neng²; Jap. Enō).

^g Ch. 頓悟 (simplified 顿悟; Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, dùnwù; Wade-Giles, tun⁴-wu⁴).

^h Wong Mou-Lam & A. F. Price (transl. 1969).

instantaneous way. As emphasized in a previous section, the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* refers to an instantaneous method by means of which disciples of the greatest capacity can grasp in an immediate way the true condition of themselves and everything that exists, and also the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and the *Nirvāṇa* contain sudden elements—which led the Chinese schools based on them to posit and teach both a gradual Path and an instantaneous one. Chán and its offsprings outside China also hold in great esteem the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, which emphasized non-action.^{a371} These, however, are not the only *sūtras* to provide a doctrinal basis to sudden Awakening. Nubchen Sangye Yeshe’s *Samten Migdrön*^b (57-29a, 2) reads:

From the very beginning, without alternation one engages directly in attaining the absolute unborn state. The *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* states: “From the very beginning, the moment one generates *bodhicitta*, one must aim for total omniscience.” And, further: “As soon as they have generated *bodhicitta*, beginners must engage assiduously in training themselves [to apprehend] all dharmas nonconceptually.”

Furthermore, the *Peak Sūtra*^c reads: “If from the beginning one cultivates [the direct, nonconceptual] understanding [of the state] that transcends birth and cessation, in the end one obtains the Fruit that transcends birth and cessation.”

The above assertion that, in spite of being a transmission independent of canonical texts, Chán in some way relies on the *sūtras*, is confirmed by the following passage from the *Samten Migdrön*^d (118-59b, 4), which also provides a brief explanation of the view of the Northern version of the so-called sudden Mahāyāna tradition:

The understanding of the view [is explained] by the example of someone who, having reached the top of a very high mountain, enjoys a global panorama. In fact it is deemed that from the beginning both the objects of analysis and the analyzing [mind] are the reality of the ultimate and unborn nature of phenomena, and that this reality cannot be [the result] of a quest. This understanding is comparable to reaching the summit of Mount Meru, king of mountains, whence one can see all the smaller mountains even without expressly looking at them. But this does not mean that one does not rely on a Master and on the fundamental *sūtras*: it is precisely on the basis of their [teachings] that one explains [the view] through reasoning and scriptural quotations.

This understanding of the view is defined in three points:

- 1) Recognizing that the state beyond action has no limits [is the] essence of the View.
- 2) Recognizing that in the absolute condition of nonduality everything is equal [is the] essence of the absolute [truth].
- 3) Recognizing that, since everything is already present in this state, there is no [sense] in hoping for the Fruit, [is the essence] of Awakening.

^a Thurman (1976); Luk (1972).

^b Wylie, *bsam gtan mig sgron*.

^c Tib. *Tsug Torgyi Do* (Wylie, *gtsug gtor gyi mdo*). This could well be the *Uṣṇīṣavijayadhāraṇīsūtra* (Ch. 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *Fó dǐng zūnshèng tuólúóní jīng*; Wade-Giles, *Fo²-ting³ tsun¹-sheng t’o²-lo²-ni² ching¹*), from which the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* allegedly developed—a *maṇḍala* of which was widely used in Dūnhuáng (敦煌; Wade-Giles, *Tun⁴-huang²*; also known as 燉煌).

^d Wylie, *bsam gtan mig sgron*. This passage is 118-59b, 4, as cited in a restricted circulation book by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that I abstain from mentioning (with slight adaptations in this version).

This view is elucidated through logical reasoning and scriptures. [We find a fine example of logical reasoning] in the *Instructions on Mind (Semlön^a)*: “First of all one must properly understand that (the mind) can arise only with dependence on an object and that [analogously] an object can only arise with dependence on the mind [that perceives it]: the knowable and the knower are thus interdependent. Therefore that which appears and seems to exist without interruption is a manifestation of method,^b while the true condition of everything, devoid of an own-nature, is *prajñā* wisdom.^c

The above passage also confirms that, in Chán, practitioners rely on a Master. In fact, also this distinguishes the Sudden School from the Gradual Mahāyāna: in the former, purportedly until our time, each generation has received the transmission of the Awake state from the preceding one in a line going back to Śākyamuni himself. According to the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, from Mahākāśyapa that transmission was passed down in India for quite a few generations, counting among its links some of the most decisive teachers of the gradual Mahāyāna, such as Aśvaghōṣa, Nāgārjuna (founder of the Mādhyamaka School), Āryadeva³⁷² (Nāgārjuna’s disciple and associate, in the *Sūtra* referred to as Kānadeva),³⁷³ and Vasubandhu (who, in collaboration with his brother, Asaṅga, and his brother’s teacher, Maitreya, founders of the Yogācāra School, helped develop this system). Then at some point the transmission reached Bodhidharma, who traveled to China, where he communicated it to his Chinese disciple, Dàzǔ Huìkě,^d thus creating the conditions for it to continue to be passed down among Chinese Masters. The patriarchate came to an end with Wei-lang,^e for he had more than one realized disciple to carry the transmission of [the essence of] mind to future generations. Later on, Masters from Tibet, Korea, Japan and Vietnam brought that transmission to their own countries, where they passed it down to their disciples (in Tibet, however, under the pretext that its representative had lost the purported debate of Samye and as a consequence the School had been declared heretical, this school was banished—even though the earliest sources discussing it agree that the King proclaimed the Chán Master winner of the debate). Finally, in the twentieth century this transmission of [the essence of] mind would have begun to be received by Westerners as well.

The fact that some of the most important Masters of the gradual Mahāyāna were links in the transmission lineage of the Sudden School suggests that Chán or Zen was the inner practice, or one of the inner practices, of many Indian Masters who officially taught the Gradual System.³⁷⁴ Similarly, in Tibet, among early Nyingmapas, Namkhai Nyingpo was a Master of both Chán and Dzogchen, and Aro Yeshe Jungne^f was the seventh link in both the Tibetan Chán and Dzogchen lineages. Likewise, in China some of the most renowned Chán Masters were at the same time patriarchs or important Masters in the Jìngtǔzōng^g (Pure Land School), the Huáyánzōng or the Tiāntáizōng.

^a Wylie, (*Byang chub*) *sems lon*.

^b Skt. *upāya*; Tib. thab (Wylie, *thabs*); Ch. 方便 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*).

^c Tib. sherab (Wylie, *shes rab*); Ch. 般若 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*).

^d 大祖慧可 (487–593); Wade-Giles, Ta⁴-tsu³ Hui⁴-k[’]e³; Japanese: Taiso Eka. Dàzǔ (大祖) is a title meaning Great Forefather; his proper name was 慧可 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Huìkě; Wade-Giles: Hui⁴-k[’]e³).

^e As stated in a previous footnote, His name was 惠能, which in Cantonese is Wai⁶-nang⁴; however, in the West that Cantonese name is best known as Wei-lang (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Huìnéng; Wade-Giles, Hui⁴-neng²; Jap. Enō).

^f Wylie, a ro ye shes ’byung gnas.

^g 淨土宗; Wade-Giles, Ching-t’u-tsung; Jap. Jōdo-shū or Jōdo bukkyō.

As we have seen, two of the characteristics of the *gradual* Mahāyāna are:

(1) Through the practices of the *bodhicitta* of intention and the *bodhicitta* of action one trains to gradually *produce* the qualities of relative *bodhicitta*, which signifies that initially these are fabricated, contrived, conditioned and made.^a However, in training in the *bodhicitta* of action the most essential practice is that of analysis aimed at realizing emptiness through the absolute *prajñā* that Sees through the conditioned and fabricated into the unconditioned and unborn:^b it is in this way that in this vehicle practitioners are supposed to initially have access to the state of Contemplation^c and that absolute *bodhicitta* is supposed to arise, establishing the “cause” for the subsequent manifestation of the *dharmakāya*.

(2) In superior bodhisattvas,^d the state of Contemplation in which absolute truth is evident is said to alternate with that of post-Contemplation,^e wherein relative truth and delusion manifest anew, but in which, insofar as Contemplation has reduced the power of delusion and the appositional character of relative truth has become to some extent evident, this truth is said to be “correct” rather than “inverted.” In this condition one must continue to work on the relative plane in order to develop the qualities of the bodhisattvas and accumulate the merits that, according to this system, when the time comes, will give rise to the *rūpakāya* (the sum of *sambhogakāya* and *nirmānakāya*), and hence one will attain full Buddhahood for the benefit of others.

Contrariwise, two basic characteristics of the Sudden system are:

(1) Initially one has an instantaneous flash of the unborn / nonfabricated / uncontrived / unconditioned^f Awake state and from repeated realization of this realization progressive familiarity with it develops, while the qualities proper to Awakening arise and develop spontaneously rather than having to be developed by means of conditioning practices that produce fabricated / conditioned / contrived^g results. In fact, in this system, even though one is exhorted to work for the benefit of others, on the grounds that *action* can only give rise to the fabricated and conditioned, and therefore to the spurious, one is not made to work on the intentional development of the virtues associated with relative *bodhicitta* so as to proceed gradually through the five paths and eleven levels. On the contrary, these virtues (including the four Immeasurables of the *bodhicitta* of intention and the six or ten transcendences of the *bodhicitta* of action) should arise spontaneously as a result of the

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²).

^b Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²).

^c Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* (Wylie, *mnyam bzhaq*); Ch. 等引 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, děngyǐn; Wade-Giles, teng³-yin³).

^d Skt. *āryabodhisattva*; Tib. *changphak* (Wylie, *byang 'phags*) or *changchub sempa phagpa* (Wylie, *byang chub sems dpa' 'phags pa*): one who has attained or surpassed the Path of Seeing (Skt. *darśanamārga*; Tib. *thonglam* [Wylie, *mtshong lam*]; Ch. 見道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jiàndào; Wade-Giles *chien⁴-tao⁴*; J. *kendō*) or the equivalent first level, called the Joyous (Skt. *pramuditābhūmi*; Tib. *rabtu ganwai sa* [Wylie, *rab tu dga' ba'i sa*]; Ch. 歡喜地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, huānxǐ [dì]; Wade-Giles, huan¹-hsi³ [tí⁴]).

^e Skt. *prṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. *jethob* (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, hòudé; Wade-Giles, hou⁴-te²).

^f Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²).

^g Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²).

repeated arising of absolute *prajñā* and the ensuing familiarization with the uncontrived, nonfabricated and unconditioned condition. Consequently, this tradition is based almost exclusively on the means that favor the sudden manifestation of what occasionally Chán Buddhists have called the “great body of *prajñā*”³⁷⁵—namely the *dharmakāya*—and the means that help make this *prajñā* stable. Once absolute *prajñā* has become stable, the “great use of *prajñā*” may manifest in the form of the spontaneous skillful means^a typical of Chán or Zen (apparently untimely actions, unexpected answers and so on).³⁷⁶

(2) As remarked in the first of the above two quotations from the *Samten Migdrön*, in one’s practice there should be no alternation of the two truths—even though in practice this can hardly happen. What this means that, as noted above, one engages completely in the practices that lead to discovering the absolute condition, and then in stabilizing the absolute unborn state, *without alternating* with the practices of the relative *bodhicitta*, for one must recognize the unborn state in the very moment of standing up after a session of sitting Contemplation, and thereafter awareness should not be allowed to wander into the relative: the state of Contemplation must not alternate with a post-Contemplation state of so-called “correct relative truth.”

In China, Chán split into the Southern School of the Cantonese Wei-lang,^b—whose name is pronounced Huìnéng in the language of the Hàn, official language of China, and who was the official successor to the Fifth Patriarch, Hóngrěn^c—and the Northern School of the formerly utmost scholar and meditation leader of Hóngrěn’s monastery, Shénxiù,^d which originated as Shénxiù and many noblemen and scholars refused to recognize the barbarian and illiterate Wei-lang as the Sixth Patriarch. The Southern School accuses the Northern School of falling into the deviation of quietism as a result of Shénxiù having been unable to gain insight into the great body of *prajñā*. However, the alleged difference between the Northern and the Southern School of Chinese Chán Buddhism, if it exists at all, may well be somewhat similar to the one that exists in present-day Japan between the Rinzai and the Sōtō Schools.³⁷⁷

The first approach—that of the Southern School and in particular of the Línjìzōng^e and its Japanese heir, the Rinzai-shū (which seems to be the only one that maintains this approach in Japan)—lies in causing the basic contradiction inherent in the dualistic state to turn into extreme conflict, impeding the functioning of this state, while at the same time creating conditions that facilitate a spontaneous, sudden collapse of dualism and delusion in an instant disclosure of the Awake state. If this occurs, it clearly distinguishes *samsāra* from *nirvāṇa* all while endowing the yogin with a capacity for sudden liberation of intense samsaric experiences. In present-day Japan this approach, based on the spontaneous unfolding of self-rectifying loops inbuilt in the inborn human system,³⁷⁸ and in which Awakening itself is not attained through the principle of renunciation (even though the whole Path is applied in the context of the Path of Renunciation), emphasizes

^a Skt. *upāya*; Tib. *thab* (Wylie, *thabs*); Ch. 方便 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*).

^b As stated in previous footnotes, Wei-lang is the way his name in Cantonese *is best known in the West*. His name was 惠能 (Cantonese, *Wai⁶-nang⁴*; Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Huìnéng; Wade-Giles, Hui⁴-neng²; Jap. Enō).

^c 弘忍; Wade-Giles, Hun²-jen³ (with honorific title, 大滿弘忍; Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Dàmǎn Hóngrěn; Wade-Giles, Ta⁴-men³ Hung²-jen³; Japanese: Daiman Gunin or Daiman Konin—where Dàmǎn [大滿] is the honorific title, which may signify great complete one, totally satisfied one, etc.).

^d 神秀; Wade-Giles, Shen²-hsiu⁴; Jap. Jinshū.

^e 臨濟宗; Wade-Giles, Lin²-chi⁴ Tsung¹.

kōan^a riddles and *dokusan*.^{b379} The second approach—that of the Sōtō School—is the one that the Japanese call *mokusho* Zen,^c which rather than being centered on seeking such a sudden breakthrough, has as its core the practice named *shikantaza*,^{d380} which lies in dwelling in the absorptions that this type of Zen asserts to be the very state of Buddhahood—just like according to Shénxiù’s^e Northern School in China and Tibet the wisdom that must manifest in the sessions of sitting Contemplation and that must keep its continuity after the end of the session is the *dharmakāya* itself rather than the cause for the subsequent discovery of the *dharmakāya*. In fact, in Chán as a whole the *rūpakāya* is held to arise spontaneously out of realization and stabilization of the *dharmakāya*, rather than to be the outcome of the accumulation of merits in the relative condition—and, at any rate, Śākyamuni stated in a *sūtra* that staying in Contemplation for the time an ant takes to walk from the tip of the nose to the forefront creates far more merits than countless aeons of good deeds.

With regard to the second approach, however, it must be noted that since the state meditators dwell in was not attained by means of an instant breakthrough resulting in a clear contrast of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, they do not have an absolute guarantee that the state they are dwelling in is in fact the absolute truth of the Mahāyāna: with that approach, it is just too easy to take absorptions wherein neither *saṃsāra* nor *nirvāṇa* are manifest, such as the ones that pertain to what the Dzogchen teachings call the neutral base-of-all,^f or even samsaric states such as the grasping at the base-of-all and the ensuing absorptions of the formless sphere,^g for Buddhahood itself—hence the superiority of the first method, which as Suzuki Roshi (a Master of Sōtō Zen who settled and passed away in California) noted, in Japan—where the younger brother is held to be brighter / of keener intelligence than the elder one—is called the Path of the younger brother, whereas the Sōtō method is called the Path of the elder brother.^h Many Masters of both the Rinzai and Sōtō schools, however, combine the two methods, and apply skillful means such as the dialogues that, on being recorded, are referred to by the Chinese name *wèndá*ⁱ and the Japanese *mondō*, meaning *questions and answers*, as well as those seemingly strange acts that as skillful means^j have the function of pulling the carpet from under their interlocutors’ feet, giving them an opportunity to have instantaneous access to the Awake state—which so often was the occasion for the sudden Awakening of their disciples.³⁸¹

Among the above dialogues, some involve a radical interpretation of reality from the standpoint of emptiness as a means to “pull the carpet” in the way explained above.

^a 公案; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *gōng’àn*; Wade-Giles *kung¹-an⁴*.

^b 獨參; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dúcān*; Wade-Giles, *tú²-ts’an¹*.

^c Ch. 默照禪; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *mòzhào chán*; Wade-Giles, *mò⁴-chao⁴ ch’an²*.

^d 只管打坐; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhǐguǎndǎzuò*; Wade-Giles, *chih³-kuan³ ta³-tso⁴*.

^e 神秀; Wade-Giles, *Shen²-hsiu⁴*; Jap. Jinshū.

^f Tib. *kunzhi lungmaten* (Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*).

^g I.e. one of the four realms of the formless sphere (Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. *zugmepai kham* [Wylie, *gzugs med pa’i kham*]; Ch. 無色界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*]).

^h Suzuki (Ed. T. Dixon, 1980).

ⁱ 問答; Wade-Giles, *wen⁴-ta²*.

^j Skt. *upāya*; Tib. *thab* (Wylie, Skt. *upāya*; Tib. *thab* (Wylie, *thabs*); Ch. 方便 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*]).

For example, upon meeting Bodhidharma, emperor Wǔ of Liáng^a asked him: “I have built temples and ordained monks; what merit is in this?” The patriarch replied “no merit.”³⁸² Such statements have led Tibetan teachers, particularly in the Gelug School, to accuse the Chán or Zen tradition of nihilism on the grounds that it teaches good and evil to be equal, disregards the accumulation of merits, and so on. However, such statements by Chán and Zen Masters are other-directed assertions,³⁸³ which they pronounce as skillful means by virtue of their *great use of prajñā*, and which should lead the interlocutor beyond views and into the Awake state, rather than being meant as dogmas to uphold.³⁸⁴ In fact, the records and writings of Chán and Zen make it crystal clear that it is in the state of absolute truth that there are no good and evil and nor merits to accumulate, and thus enjoin those who are possessed by delusion and dualism to carefully observe the law of cause and effect. As a sample, consider the following passages of the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (some terms were replaced by the ones used in this book).^{b385}

“Learned audience, please follow me and repeat together what I say:

“May we, disciples and so on, be always free from the taints of ignorance and delusion. We repent of all our faults and evil deeds committed under delusion or in ignorance. May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

“May we be always free from the taints of arrogance and dishonesty (*asatya*). We repent of all our arrogant behavior and dishonest dealings in the past. May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

“May we be always free from the taints of envy and jealousy. We repent of all our sins and evil deeds committed in an envious or jealous spirit. May they be expiated at once and may they never arise again.

“Learned audience, this is what we call ‘formless *chànhuǐ*’^c (‘formless repentance’). Now what is the meaning of *chàn*? *Chàn* refers to the repentance of past sins. To repent of all our past sins and evil deeds committed under delusion, ignorance, arrogance, dishonesty, jealousy, or envy, etc. so as to put an end to all of them is called *chàn*. *Huǐ* refers to that part of repentance concerning our future conduct. Having realized the nature of our transgression [we make a vow] that hereafter we will put an end to all kinds of evil committed under delusion, ignorance, arrogance, dishonesty, jealousy, or envy, and that we shall never sin again. This is *huǐ*.

“On account of ignorance and delusion, common people do not realize that in repentance they have not only to feel sorrow for their past nonvirtuous actions, but also to refrain from committing them in the future. Since they take no heed of their future conduct they commit new nonvirtuous actions before the past ones are expiated. How can we call this ‘repentance’?”

The misgivings of many Tibetan teachers (especially among the Sarmapas^d—i.e., the members of the Schools established in Tibet in the second millennium CE) regarding Chán are not only due to their making statements from the absolute standpoint as skillful means, but are also to a great extent a consequence of the purported ninth century debate

^a Ch. 梁武帝 (464–549); Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Liángwǔdì; Wade-Giles, Liang²-wu³-ti⁴ (personal name 蕭衍 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Xiāoyǎn; Wade-Giles, Hsiao¹-yan³], courtesy name 叔達 [Shūdá; Wade-Giles, Shu¹-ta²], nickname 練兒 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Liàn’ér; Wade-Giles, Lien⁴-erh²]).

^b Wong Mou-Lam and A. F. Price (trans. 1969, sixth chapter, “On Repentance,” pp. 50-51).

^c Ch. 懺悔 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chànhuǐ; Wade-Giles, ch’an⁴-hui³).

^d Wylie, *gsar ma pa*.

of Samye, which is reputed to have pitted Kamalaśīla, the disciple of Śāntarakṣita who represented the Indian gradual Mahāyāna (and in particular one of the two streams of what modern Tibetans call the Mādhyamaka-Svātantrika-Yogācāra School), against a Chinese teacher referred to in the texts as Hwashan Mahāyāna, representing the Sudden Mahāyāna of Shénxiù's^a Northern School.³⁸⁶ The Sarmapas regularly attributed victory to Kamalaśīla; however, among the Nyingmapas^b or Ancient Ones that attribution is far from universal. In fact, the most ancient text dealing with the debate, which is the *Lopön Thangyig*,^c written shortly after the time of the event and then concealed as a terma^d or “treasure teaching,” like the texts dealing with the event that remained buried in Dūnhuáng^e for over a millennium and then were taken to light by the expeditions led by Aurel Stein, Paul Pelliot and others at the outset of the twentieth century CE, decidedly assert the King to have declared the Chinese Chán Master as the victor in his debate with Kamalaśīla. On the other hand, the earliest of the texts that have Kamalaśīla as the victor—namely Butön's^f *History of the Dharma*^g—was written several centuries after the supposed event and, given the author's persuasion, may have based his judgment on an ideologically and / or politically biased tradition.

Likewise, Namkhai Nyingpo's *Kathang Denga*,^h written during the First Diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet, shortly after the debate, and Nubchen Sangye Yeshe's *Samten Migdrön*,ⁱ written not long after the former, tell us that provided that the practitioner has an adequate capacity, the sudden Path of the Mahāyāna (consisting in Chán Buddhism) is swifter and more effective than the gradual one.³⁸⁷ Moreover, as José Ignacio Cabezón (2007) has reminded us, the *Khatang Denga* states that following the debate the King opted for “the Mādhyamaka,” which the text equates with the Chán suddenist view, and portrays Kamalaśīla's doctrinal / philosophical position as the inferior one. The *Samten Migdrön*, for its part, does exactly the same thing. Cabezón (2007, pp. 20-21) writes (note that his translation has “simultaneist” instead of “suddenist”):

While it is true that most of our sources concerning the dispute between the gradualist and suddenist camps at Bsam yas are historical rather than polemical, there *do* exist several early texts (or portions of texts) that deal with the doctrinal issues of the debate. Taken together, these works give us a broad picture of the controversy. Representative of the gradualist side, there is Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama* (Stages of Meditation). Written in Sanskrit, and in three parts, it was translated into Tibetan. It is especially the third of these *Bhāvanākramas* that, although it never mentions Hwa Shang by name, takes up (...) the position of Hwa Shang's school with the goal of refuting it. From the Chinese side, one might mention a Chinese text recovered at Dūnhuáng, Wang Hsi's^j *Ratification of the True*

^a 神秀; Wade-Giles, Shen²-hsiu⁴; Jap. Jinshū.

^b Wylie, *rnying ma pa*.

^c Wylie, *blo pon thang yig*.

^d Wylie, *gter ma*.

^e 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun⁴-huang² [also 燉煌]; simplified, 炖煌.

^f Wylie, *bu ston*.

^g Tib. *Chöjung* (Wylie, *chos 'byung*). Cf. Obermiller, E. (1999).

^h Wylie, *bka' thang sde lnga: The Narrative of the Five Groups*.

ⁱ Wylie, *bsam gtan mig sgron: The Eye-Lamp of Contemplation*.

^j 王錫 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, Wángxí; Wade-Giles, Wang²-hsi²).

Principles of the Great Vehicle of Sudden Awakening (*Tun wu ta cheng cheng li chueh*^a), a work that delineates and defends the views of Hwa shang and declares him the victor in the debate. Also representative of the simultaneist position are the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the *Bka' thang sDe lnga* (The narrative of the five groups), a treasure text (*gter ma*) that, while not compiled/discovered until the fourteenth century, appears to be derived from early traditions, so that one must agree with Tucci that the work “preserves many old fragments pieced together.” An exposition and defense of the suddenist position, it states that the king opted for “the Mādhyamaka,” but then goes on to equate that Mādhyamaka with the [Chinese] suddenist view. The text clearly portrays Kamalaśīla as having the inferior philosophical/doctrinal position. This and other works like the *Eye-Lamp of Dhyāna* (*Bsam gtan mig sgron*), allow us to piece together the controversy from various viewpoints.

The *Kathang Denga* was hidden as a terma^b and revealed in the fourteenth century by the great Revealer Orgyen Lingpa^c of Yarjé,^d but critics arose that objected that the book was a forgery. However, the *Samten Migdrön*, which contains very long quotations from the *Kathang Denga*, remained buried in Dūnhuáng—a major hub of nonsectarian exchanges between practitioners of the gradual Mahāyāna, Chán, Buddhist Tantra and Dzogchen—from the tenth century CE, and was not discovered until Western expeditions excavated the place in the early twentieth century, so that by no means could it have been meddled with before it was made public. And when the passages from the *Kathang Denga* cited in the long-buried text were confronted with those in the book revealed by Orgyen Lingpa, they were found to match them exactly. It seems thus hardly possible that the text may have been compiled in the fourteenth century by Orgyen Lingpa, as J. I. Cabezón—perhaps under the influence of those who, intent on preserving what now appears to be the myth of Kamalaśīla’s victory—seems to suggest.^e

Nyang Nyima Özer,^f for his part, did not offer value judgments on the debate, nor did he compare the two schools. However, in his *Chöjung Metog Nyingpo*^g he stated that in his time the practitioners of Chán were increasing, and offered an account of what, according to the Suddenists, were the main points of the sudden approach, in such a way as to give a clear impression that he vouched for the effectivity of their system.^a At any rate, the two most highly reputed Nyingma Masters of the last six hundred years defended the Hwashan, explicitly or implicitly ascribing victory to him. In fact, the great Dzogchen Master Longchen Rabjampa wrote:^h

^a 頓悟大乘正理決 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Dūnwù dàchéng zhènglǐ jué; Wade-Giles, *Tun⁴-wu⁴ ta⁴-cheng² cheng⁴-li³ chueh²*): Wángxí’s memoir.

^b Wylie, *gter ma*.

^c Wylie, o rgyan gling pa.

^d Wylie, *yar rje*.

^e Cabezón uses Pinyin for Dūnhuáng and approximate Wade-Giles for Wángxí (王錫) and his *Dūnwù dàchéng zhènglǐ jué* (頓悟大聖正理決).

^f Wylie, Nyang Nyi ma ’od zer: twelfth century.

^g Wylie, *chos ’byung me tog snying po*.

^h In *Desum nyingpoi döndrel nelug rinpochei dzö chejawai dreipa* (Wylie, *sde gsum snying po’i don ’grel gnas lugs rin po che’i mdzod ces ’bya ’ba’i grel pa*), folio 31a; quoted in Guenther (1977, p. 140, note 2).

Although it did not enter the minds of those with an inferior kind of intelligence, what the great teacher Hva-shan said at the time (of the alleged Samye debate)^a was a factual statement.

Herbert Guenther^a (1977, p. 140, note 2) tells us that, for his part, the great Dzogchen Master Jigme Lingpa:^b

... openly defends the Hva-shan and declares that what is alleged to be the defect of the Hva-shan's teaching is actually the quintessence of the *Prajñāpāramitā* works. As they are the words of the Buddha, only the Buddha himself can decide if Hva-shan understood them correctly or not.

However, when Jigme Lingpa compares Chán with Dzogchen, he does not sound so supportive of the Hwashan's view and method:^c

Hashang is without the essential points that differentiate between the objectifying mind and the directly penetrating, non objectifying gnosis. Because of this, since all memory, thought, and perception are stopped in an indeterminate state of awareness that does not differentiate between the phases of mind and gnosis, he falls at once into the extreme of ignorance that is like unconsciousness or a heavy sleep.

In the Great Perfection ([Dzogchen]), because we do not astray from analyzing conceptual, objectifying mind with nonobjectifying gnosis, [uncontrived] awareness [(of) nonconceptual, nondual] self-awareness neutralizes conceptual imputations in a state that is like a polished crystal ball. Then, without emptying or filling up, or any change, one resides in the realized awareness [(of)] the vast, spacious expanse,^d free from limitations. So there is nothing similar between these two.

This statement does not contradict the preceding one, for it refers to the way Chán from the Northern School and Dzogchen compare, rather than referring to the way the Sudden and Gradual approaches within the Mahāyāna compare, and it fully agrees with

^a Guenther (1977, p. 140, note 2). Jigme Lingpa said so in *Kunkhyen zhallung dütsi thikpa* (Wylie, *kun mkhyen zhal lung bdud rtsi'i thigs pa*) (for the full title see footnote after next)—a commentary to the *Nelug dorje tsignkang* (Wylie, *Gnas lugs rdo rje'i tshig rkang*)—folio 6b.

^b Wylie, 'jigs med gling pa.

^c *Rigdzin khandro gyepai sangtam/ Yichö drubtha jigpai tholuma/ Nyingchung lagthil dranpai menngag/ Sangdak garab pawoi thollu/ Kunkhyen zhallung dütsii thikpa* (Wylie, *rig 'dzin mkha' 'gro dgyes pa'i gsang gtam/ yid dpyod grub mtha' 'jig pa'i tho lu mal snying phyung lag mthil bkram pa'i man ngag/ gsang bdag dga' rab dpa' bo'i thol glul kun mkhyen zhal lung bdud brtsi'i thigs pa*). In (1985) *The collected works of Jigme Lingpa*, Derge edition, 9 vols. Gangtok: Pema Thinley for Dodrub Chen Rinpoché, vol. 8, pp. 663-80. Cited in van Schaik (2004, p. 212). I tried to follow van Schaik's translation, but had to partly adapt the terminology to the one used in this book and add explicative additions, or conventions proper to this book, which were all inserted within brackets.

^d In this book the term *expanse* renders the Skt. *dharmadhātu*, the Tib. *chöying* (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); the Ch. 法界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*), etc.—except when it designates the subtle object of the formless absorptions (Skt. *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *zugme na chöpai samten* [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dīng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]). However, the term *expanse* will not always be used alone: I will often use *expanse of the true condition of phenomena*; *expanse of phenomena*; *total, empty expanse where all "physical" and "mental" phenomena manifest*; *total, intrinsically empty expanse of the dharmadhātu*; *total empty expanse of the dharmadhātu*; *empty expanse*; etc.

the criticisms of the Sudden Mahāyāna by comparison with Dzogchen in all books that consider the Sudden Mahāyāna superior to the Gradual Mahāyāna—including both the *Kathang Denga* and the *Samten Migdrön*. And, even more interestingly, it is similar to the implicit criticism of the quietism of the Northern School of Chán in the main text of the Southern School of Chán, which is the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (some terms were replaced by the ones used in this book):^a

People under delusion believe obstinately in *dharmalakṣaṇa* (phenomena / sensory patterns / configurations / collections of characteristics) and so they are stubborn in having their own way of interpreting the “*samādhi* of specific mode,” which they define as “sitting quietly and continuously without letting any idea arise in the mind.” Such an interpretation would rank us with inanimate objects, and is a stumbling block to the right Path, which must be kept open. Should we free our mind from attachment to all “things,” the Path [would] become clear; otherwise, we put ourselves under restraint. If that interpretation, “sitting quietly and continuously, etc.” were correct, [what would be the reason] why [as told in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*] on one occasion Śāripūtra was reprimanded by *Vimalakīrti* for sitting quietly in the woods?

Learned audience, some teachers of meditation instruct their disciples to keep a watch on their mind for tranquility, so that it will cease from activity. Henceforth the disciples give up all exertion of mind. Ignorant persons become insane from having too much confidence in such instruction. Such cases are not rare, and it is a great mistake to teach others to do this...

To keep our mind free from defilement under all circumstances is called *wúniàn* (non-conceptuality). Our mind should stand aloof from circumstances, and on no account should we allow them to influence the function of our mind. But it is a great mistake to suppress our mind from all thinking; for even if we succeed in getting rid of all thoughts, and die immediately thereafter, still we shall be reincarnated elsewhere. Mark this, treaders of the Path. It is bad enough for a man to commit blunders from not knowing the meaning of the *dharmā*, but how much worse would it be to encourage others to follow suit? Being deluded, he sees not, and in addition he blasphemes the Buddhist Canon. Therefore we take *wúniàn* (non-conceptuality) as our object.

Even though the above text might be at least partly addressed to Shénxiù^b and/or his Northern School disciples, the Northern School might have shed its initial quietist deviation, for copies of the above text turned up in the Dùnhuáng library, and at any rate in order to judge one must refer to extant transcriptions of the debate.^c As to the opinions traditional Tibetans and contemporary Western scholars have on Chán and the purported Samye debate, ponder on the following passage by John Reynolds:^d

With the discovery of the Tun Huang library in [the twentieth] century, our view of this debate changed radically. At Tun Huang a number of Chinese and Tibetan texts turned up which presented the Chinese side of this famous debate. These texts have been translated and studied by Paul Demiéville (1952), and it appears that many modern Western readers prefer the presentation by the Hwashan of his side of the debate to that represented by

^a Wong-Mou-Lam, 1969, pp. 43-45; note that the translator rendered *wúniàn* (無念; Wade-Giles *wu²-nien⁴*) as idea-less-ness rather than non-conceptuality.

^b 神秀; Wade-Giles, Shen²-hsiu⁴; Jap. Jinshū.

^c cf. Demiéville (1952).

^d Reynolds (1996, pp. 222-223).

Kamalaśīla in his *Bhāvanākrama* (in Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, parts 1 and 2). The doctrinal issues involved in this supposed debate between Indian Mādhyamika and Chinese Chan have greatly interested Western scholars, but now it seems doubtful that a debate ever took place in the sense of a direct face-to-face confrontation between Kamalaśīla and the Hvashan. Rather, it appears that King Tisong Detsan, himself a rather literate and learned man, wrote to various authorities and solicited their views on the Dharma. To judge from the Tun Huang finds, the king seemed to have been quite satisfied with the Hvashan's replies. The exclusion of Chan from Tibet seemed to have more to do with politics than with doctrine, such as fear at the court of Chinese political influence or the defeat of some pro-Chinese party among the ministers of the king.

The attitudes of the Tibetan Lamas from the eleventh century until today toward Chan have been, by and large, exceedingly negative, except for certain Nyingmapas like Longchenpa and Urgyan Lingpa... What accurate knowledge Tibetan Lama-scholars do have of Chan is largely drawn from Nubchen Sangye Yeshe's *bSan-gtan mig-sgron* (ninth century CE), and the description reflects a type of Northern Chan prevalent in Central Asia only in the eighth and ninth centuries.

As to the relationship between Chán / sudden Mahāyāna and the Bodhisattvayāna / gradual Mahāyāna, the main written source of Chán^a lists various eminent Masters of the latter—and, among the earlier links, also of the Hīnayāna—as links in the transmission of the former, which as noted repeatedly according to the book in question originated when, in the *silent sermon*, Mahākāśyapa received the *transmission of Mind* from Śākyamuni. Among the most famous of such links are included the Mādhyamikas of the Model Texts, Nāgārjuna (listed as 14th Patriarch) and Āryadeva (called Kānadeva in the text and listed as 15th Patriarch); Aśvaghōṣa (according to some, he belonged to the Hīnayāna, but according to others, he was the author of the noted proto-Yogācāra treatise, *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*^a); and co-founder of the Yogācāra, Vasubandhu. On this basis, one could go so far as to speculate that the Hwashan's method may have been the basis of the personal practice of these teachers at the level of the Mahāyāna. (Note that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente [1999] make the point that the ancient traditions of the Nyingmapas codified in texts such as Yudra Nyingpo's noted *Bairo Dradak*,^b the *Menngag Shethab*^c of the *Bairo Gyu Bum*,^d and other texts that include the *Semde Chogyékyi Gongpa Rigdzin*^e and so on, cite Nāgārjuna as a link in the transmission of Dzogchen Ati—which, like Chán, is not a gradual system (even though in it nongradual and gradual approaches coexist). For its part, Pawo Tsuglag Threngwa's *Chöjung Khepai Gatön*^f cites not only Nāgārjuna, but also his disciple Āryadeva, as a link in that transmission.)^g At any rate, Carmen Meinert offers several sources for each of us to carry out her or his own analysis of the subject:^h

^a Skt. *Mahāyānaśraddhotpādaśāstra*; Ch. 大乘起信論 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *Dàshèng qǐxìn lùn*; Wade-Giles, *Ta²-sheng² ch'i³-hsin⁴ lun⁴*).

^b Wylie, *rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bai ro tsa na'i rnam tar 'dra 'bag chen mo*, by Yudra Nyingpo (Wylie, g.yu sgra snying po).

^c Wylie, *man ngag bshad thabs*, in *Bairo Gyu Bum*, vol. Ka, pp. 134-172.

^d Hundred Thousand Tantras of Bairotsana: Wylie, *bai ro rgyud 'bum*.

^e Wylie, *sems sde bco brgyad kyi dgongs pa rig 'dzin rnam kyis rdo rje'i glur bzhengs pa*. En el *Ngagyur Kama* (Wylie, *snga 'gyur bka' ma*), vol. Tsa (Sichuan).

^f Wylie, *chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, p. 568.

^g Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1988, pp. 26-27.)

^h Meinert (2003, pp. 179-180, n. 13).

A lot of recent research has been done concerning the reliability of historical material about the great debate of bSam yas and thus concerning the question whether the debate can be regarded as an actual historical event at all. D. Seyfort Ruegg also provides a comprehensive bibliography in this field in his footnotes (cf. *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989[b]). For earlier research concerning the debate cf. also Paul Demiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa*, reprint, 1st edition 1952, Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1987; Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts II*, Rome, Is.M.E.O., 1958; Ueyama, Daishun, “The Study of Tibetan Ch’an Manuscripts Recovered from Tun Huang: A Review of the Field and its Prospects,” in: L. Lancaster/W. Lai (ed.) *Early Chán in China and Tibet*, Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1983, 327-350 and L. Gómez, “The Direct and Gradual Approaches of Zen Master Mahāyāna: Fragments of the Teaching of Mo-ho-yet,” in: M. Gimello/P. N. Gregory (ed.), *Studies in Ch’an and Hua-yen*, Studies in East Asian Buddhism No. 1, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983[a], 69-168. Despite the uncertainties surrounding the question of whether the debate ever actually took place, a symbolic meaning was attached to it in the course of Tibetan history that gave rise to discussions up to the present. Concerning the arguments of Heshang Moheyan and of Kamalasila cf. *Dunwu dacheng zhenglijue* 顿悟大乘正理决^a [*Ratification of the True Principle of the Mahāyāna Teachings of Sudden Awakening*], P. chin. 4646 (copy edited by Rao Zongyi (Jao Tsung-I) 饒宗頤^b in: “Wangxi Dunwu dacheng zhengli jue xushuo bing jiaoji 王喜顿悟大乘正理决叙说丙胶机^c [*Preface and Notes to Wang Xi’s Dunwu dacheng zhengli jue dacheng zhengli jue (Ratification of the True principle of the Mahayana Teachings of Sudden Awakening)*],” in Chongji xuebao 冲击学报^d Chung Chi Journal] 9/2 (1970), 127-148) and “sGom pa’i rim pa [Stages of Meditation (Third Bhāvanākrama)]”, by Kamalāsīla, translated by Prajñāvarma and Yeshe sde, in: TT. 102, no; 5312; 60b.8-74b.4.”

It must also be noted that though the sudden Mahāyāna is a vehicle of the Path of Renunciation, and though, as we have seen, according to the most essential text of Chán it originated directly from the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni, the monastic precepts and lineage of ordination of Chán and Zen monks and nuns is not that of the *Vinaya*: this is why there is no impediment to their tilling land in order to be self-sustaining rather than depending on the labor of others, and also why it is so common in modern Japan to find Zen Masters who, despite being monks, have taken a spouse. In fact, as we have also seen, in Chán the *bodhisattva* Vimalakīrti, hero of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*,^e who was a layman and who had more than one consort, often is held up as the model of ideal conduct.

The presentation of each of the vehicles in Part One of this book concludes with a quotation from the *Kunje Gyälpo*, root Tantra of the Dzogchen Semde, in which the main drawback of the vehicle being dealt with is denounced. Since this Tantra does not refer to the sudden Mahāyāna, this section will use instead the comments that Namkhai Nyingpo—a consummate practitioner of the gradual Mahāyāna, Chán, the inner Tantras

^a Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Dùn wù dà chéng zhèng lǐ jué*; Wade-Giles, *Tun⁴-wu⁴ ta⁴-ch’eng² cheng⁴-li³ chüeh²*).

^b Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Ráo zōng yí*; Wade-Giles, *Jao²-tsung¹-i²*).

^c Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Wáng xǐ dùn wù dà chéng zhèng lǐ jué xù shuō bǐng jiāo jī*; Wade-Giles, *Wang²-hsi³ Tun⁴-wu⁴ ta⁴-ch’eng² cheng⁴-li³ chüeh² hsi⁴-shuo¹ ping³ chiao¹ chi¹*).

^d Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Chōng jí xué bào*; Wade-Giles, *Ch’ung¹-chi² hsiüeh²-pao⁴*).

^e Thurman, Robert (1976); Luk, Charles (Upāsaka Lü Kuan Yu) (trans. 1972).

of the Path of Transformation, and Dzogchen Atiyoga—made while comparing Chán with Dzogchen Ati. In his *Kathang Dennga*, this renowned Master—who had mastered the Contemplation that, according to the sudden Mahāyāna, is the very state of Buddhahood corresponding to the final realization of the gradual Mahāyāna—asserted Chán or Zen Contemplation to be somewhat partial towards emptiness, which implied that it involved a certain degree of directionality, and therefore was not at all the same as the condition of Total Space-Time-Awareness in which the *Vajra* nature becomes perfectly evident, which is the condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection called Dzogchen.

Namkhai Nyingpo illustrated this with two examples. The first is that of a hen pecking at grain; though it may seem that the hen is looking at the ground, it is actually looking at the grains. The second is that of a person threading a needle; though it may seem that the person is looking at the sky, he or she is actually looking at the eye of the needle. The similes are not exact because the ground and the sky are objects of the mind, yet they are being used to illustrate the condition beyond the subject-object duality called Dzogchen, characterized by Total Space-Time-Awareness and by the absence of any directionality of consciousness. Though it may seem that the practitioner of Chán or Zen finds him or her self in this condition, the truth is that there is still a certain degree of directionality, a partiality towards emptiness that veils the indivisibility of the two aspects of the Base—namely primordial purity^a (which is emptiness) and spontaneous perfection^b (the side of appearances and movement).

However, it is hard to imagine that when there is a genuine *satori*^c in the context of, say, Rinzai^d practice, or an authentic *wù*^e in the context of practices such as the ones taught by the incomparable nineteenth-twentieth century Chán Master Xūyún Dàshī^f (who used to advise that, in places of great turmoil, practitioners would stop and look at the mind, and who made meditators run like mad and suddenly stop and look at the mind, and so on—and who visited Tibet in two occasions and met Dzogchen Masters),^g the ensuing realization may involve a marked partiality toward emptiness. And yet this does not mean that Chán and Zen can lead to the same result as Dzogchen: I cannot tell to what degree Chán or Zen can make the realization that arises in *satori* or *wù* stable or whether or not it can make it uninterrupted,³⁸⁸ for that system does not have methods for catalyzing the spontaneous liberation of delusion so that it occurs each and every time it manifests, such as those of Tekchö^h, and even less so does it have the methods of Thögel,ⁱ which are based on the principle of spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification^j and have the function of activating the propensities for aversion^{k389} (and therefore for delusion), in a

^a Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^b Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^c 悟 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wù*; Wade-Giles *wu*⁴; Jap. *satori*).

^d 臨濟; Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *Línjì*; Wade-Giles, *Lin*²-*chi*⁴.

^e 悟 (Wade-Giles *wu*⁴; Jap. *satori*).

^f 虛雲大師; Wade-Giles: Hsu¹-yun² Ta⁴-shih¹; English, Empty Cloud (1840–1959), for Dàshī (大師) is a honorific title meaning great or high Master.

^g Cf. Chang (1970).

^h Wylie, *khregs chod*.

ⁱ Wylie, *thod rgal*.

^j Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*).

^k Tib. zhedang (Wylie, *zhe sdang*); Skt. *dveṣa*; Pāli *dosa*; Ch. 瞋 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chēn*; Wade-Giles *ch'en*¹).

context in which the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^a is extremely high and in which, in those with a sufficient capacity of spontaneous liberation, aversion (and delusion in general, of which aversion is a variety) is forced to liberate itself immediately and spontaneously, so that the wrathful dynamics of the *dharmatā* may rapidly burn out *saṃsāra*.³⁹⁰ At any rate, it is well known to all that so far no Chán Master has manifested any of the realizations of the Atiyoga that involve dissolution of the physical body when the selfless activities characteristic of fully Awake Ones have been completed.

YOGA

No reference has been made so far to the practice of physical *yoga*. This is due to the fact that such a practice is not part of any of the vehicles of the Path of Renunciation. Though the name of the Yogācāra school of Mahāyāna Buddhism means “Conduct of *yoga*,”^b the *yoga* to which the name refers does not involve physical exercises.

CONCLUSION

To end this brief consideration of the Path of Renunciation, it may be observed that, in vehicles in which the explicit objective is to overcome dualism, as is the case with the Mahāyāna, a method that starts from the prejudice according to which one must avoid a series of entities, activities and psychological states, does not appear to be the most direct and effective, for the idea of something to avoid might sustain and reinforce the illusion of a substantial dualism between the one who avoids and what is avoided, between good and bad, etc., and might cause one’s own self to be implicitly taken to be substantial and absolutely important—which would reinforce the self-preoccupation and the illusion of substantiality that all of the Buddhist Mahāyāna and all vehicles must lead practitioners to overcome. In the Instantaneous / Sudden Mahāyāna, which here has been presented as the supreme form of the Sūtrayāna, the emphasis placed on renunciation seems to be lesser than in the Hīnayāna and the gradual Mahāyāna; in fact, several texts of Chán or Zen entreat us to apprehend the primordial purity of every thing and of every state that may manifest in our experience.³⁹¹

However, the above objections do not imply that this Path is not effective; if it were not, the Buddha would not have taught it as a *mārga* or Path to Awakening. As we have seen, in this Path realization is not attained through renunciation, which is only the precondition for a practitioner on this path to be able to correctly apply the methods that will result in the uncontrived, unproduced, unconditioned^c manifestation of the unconditioned and unmade.^d It has been through the latter that practitioners usually

^a Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*), which renders the Skt. *bindu* but in this context has a sense somewhat akin to that of the Skt. *kuṇḍalinī*.

^b Tib. naljor chöpa wa (Wylie, *nal ’byor spyod pa ba*); Ch. 瑜伽行派 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yúqíxíng pài*; Wade-Giles, *yü²-ch’ieh²-hsing² p’ai⁴*).

^c Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. dümache (Wylie, *du ma byas*); Ch. 無為 *asaṃskṛta* (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^d Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. dümache (Wylie, *du ma byas*); Ch. 無為 *asaṃskṛta* (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

attained the Fruit of the vehicle they were applying—just as it was through a spontaneous liberation^a rather than through the principle of renunciation that the Buddha Śākyamuni attained Awakening. Therefore, the Path of Renunciation is very effective and, in the case of individuals who possess the capacity that corresponds to the practice of one of the vehicles or schools contained in it, but not the capacity necessary for the practice of the vehicles of the Paths of Transformation and Spontaneous Liberation, the vehicle or school of the Path of Renunciation corresponding to her or his capacity can be “superior” to the latter, in the sense of being swifter and more effective for the purpose of reaching a given degree of spiritual realization.

^a Tib. rangdröl (Wylie, *rang grol*); Skt. *svamukti*.

THE PATH OF TRANSFORMATION OR “TANTRIC VEHICLE”³⁹²

In a broad sense, the Path of Transformation consists of the various vehicles^a that make up the Vajra vehicle (Vajrayāna^b),³⁹³ Tantric vehicle (Tantrayāna^c), or Secret Mantra vehicle (Guhyamantrayāna^d).

The Etymology and Meaning of “Tantra”

Although the Sanskrit term Tantra has the acceptance of *weft* or *woof* (i.e. of woven fabric), its meaning in this context is closely connected with that of the Sanskrit word *prabandha*, which means both *continuity* and *luminosity*.^e This is reflected by the Tibetan word used to translate both the Sanskrit term Tantra and the Sanskrit term *prabandha*,^f which is *gyü*:^g a term that in everyday language means “thread,” but which in the context of the Tantric and Dzogchen teachings has the twofold sense of “continuity” and “luminosity.” Jamgön Kongtrul the Great wrote:^h

^a Skt. *yāna*; Tib. *the kpa* (Wylie, *the g pa*); Ch. 乘 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng*⁴) or 衍 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǎn*; Wade-Giles, *yen*³).

^b Tib. Dorjei *the kpa* (Wylie, *rdo rje'i the g pa*); Ch. 金剛乘 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāng shèng*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹ sheng⁴*).

^c Tib. Gyükyi *the kpa* (Wylie, *rgyud kyi the g pa*).

^d Tib. Sangngagkyi *the kpa* (Wylie, *gsang sngags kyi the g pa*).

^e The terms “luminous” and “luminosity” (Pāli *pabhassara*; Skt. *prabhāsvara*; Tib. *ösel* [Wylie, *'od gsal*]; Ch. 光明 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *guāngmíng*; Wade-Giles, *kuang¹-ming²*]) are visual metaphors for the Base’s Gnitiveness and the latter’s capacity to manifest *sensa* through all the six senses. The visual metaphor is used because awareness may manifest as pure luminosity, and because in Buddhism vision is deemed to be the first and foremost of the senses. Other Skt. terms for “luminosity” are *prabhāsvaratā*, *prabhāsvaratva*, *bhāsvaratva*, *bhāsvarā*, *ābhāsvara*. In Buddhism the earliest reference to the mind as luminous might be the one in the *Aṅguttaranikāya* of the Pāli Canon.

^f The term *gyü* (Wylie, *rgyud*) also renders the Sanskrit terms *saṃtāna* (“mental stream;” usually translated as *gyün* [Wylie, *rgyun*] or as *semgyü* [Wylie, *sems rgyud*]; Ch. 相續 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*]), *saṃtati* (similar to *saṃtāna*), *jāti* (normally rendered as *kyewa* [Wylie, *skye ba*]; birth) and *anvaya* (directly, following, connection, male descendant, lineage, family, succession, inheritance, drift, tenor, negative implication [in logic; e.g. “when there is no (longer a) pot, there is clay”]).

^g Wylie, *rgyud*. For its part, the best-known Chinese is 目次 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *mùcì*; Wade-Giles, *mu⁴-tz⁴'u⁴*); according to the Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (López & Buswell, 2014), 檀特羅 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tántèluó*; Wade-Giles, *t'an²-t'e⁴-luo²*).

^h Tibetan Text 11, A: vol. 2, p. 613, 2. Quoted in Namkhai Norbu (1999, 2001, p. 161).

The word *gyü* (Tantra) refers precisely to *bodhicitta*-Samantabhadra that has no beginning or end and that shines with luminous natural clarity. It ‘continues’ because from beginningless time until the attainment of Awakening it is always present without any interruption whatsoever.

In this context, the term *bodhicitta* has the meaning given it in the inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa, as well as in the Nature of Mind^a series of Dzogchen teachings, rather than the one discussed in the consideration of the Mahāyāna: it refers to the awareness inherent in the Base and true condition of all reality. For his part, Samantabhadra is the primordial Buddha, the nondual Awake awareness that is the true condition or nature of mind,^b the self-reGnizing nature of which is what the Dzogchen teachings call nondual Awake awareness or *rigpa*,^c which in the base-of-all *qua* neutral condition^d (which as noted above pertains to *samsāra* but in which the latter is not active) and also throughout active *samsāra*, is veiled by what is usually called *a contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction*,^e whereas in *nirvāṇa* it is self-reGnized,^f so that its “own face” (so to speak) becomes patent. The etymological sense of Samantabhadra is “all good,” which has the connotation of “all is viable:” both in the Tantric Path of Transformation and in the Ati Path of Spontaneous Liberation none of what manifests in *samsāra* is considered useless, or rejected or repressed on the grounds that it is impossible to incorporate into the Path; on the contrary, that which manifests in *samsāra* is viewed as viable in that it can be turned into the Path.

Therefore, *Bodhicitta*-Samantabhadra is the single, true condition of both what we call “ourselves” and the whole of reality.³⁹⁴ From the temporal standpoint, the luminous^g continuity of the manifestation of this true condition is compared to a rosary in which the beads (which represent experiences) and the empty spaces between beads in which there is only thread (which represent the spaces between one experience and the next) constantly succeed each other. Tantrism emphasizes the continuity of luminosity because in it one works with this succession of beads (our different experiences) and spaces between beads: one must neither negate nor repress the beads in order to affirm the empty, blank or unformed spaces between beads, nor disclaims the spaces in order to affirm the beads. In fact, even though all experiences are essentially empty (because they lack self-existence or substance), experiences never stop arising; what we have to do is to discover their primordial nature, which is empty but at the same time “luminous” in the sense of “experience-manifesting.” This is one of the reasons why Anuyoga and Atiyoga Tantras explain our true condition in terms of the two indivisible aspects which are *primordial*

^a Tib. Semde (Wylie, *sems sde*); Skt. Cittavarga.

^b Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^c Wylie, *rig pa*.

^d Tib. kunzhi lungmaten (Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*).

^e Tib. mongcha (Wylie, *rmongs cha*).

^f Tib. ranggo shepa (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^g As stated in a previous footnote, the term “luminous” (Tib. ösel [Wylie, *'od gsal*]) is employed as a visual metaphor for the Base’s capacity to manifest *sensa* through all of the six senses; in terms of the Dzogchen explanation of three aspects of the Base, it is the rangzhin (Wylie, *rang bzhin*) aspect—a term that renders one of the various meanings of the Skt. term *svabhāva* (Ch. 自性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*]).

purity,^a lying in emptiness,³⁹⁵ and *spontaneous perfection*,^b consisting in the perfect, unhindered functionality, as well as in the spontaneous manifestation of visions^c and the wrathful self-rectifying dynamics^d of rölpa energy.

However, the reason for associating the Path of Transformation with continuity is not only the above. An equally important reason for this is that in the Tantras a continuity of the Base, the Path and the Fruit is posited: the Base is the Buddha-nature, the Path is the disclosure of the Buddha-nature, and the Fruit is attained when the Buddha-nature is no longer concealed at any moment of one's life. In other words, this Path is Fruit-based^e rather than cause-based.^f

With regard to the terms Vajrayāna or Immutable / Indestructible Vehicle and Vehicle of Secret Mantra, a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa reads:^g

Because it is the great secret of all the jinas (Buddhas) it is *secret*, and because it is the pinnacle of all the *yānas* it is called *mantra*. It is called *vajra* because rigpa, the womb of Buddhahood (*sugatagarbha*), is endowed with the seven *vajra* qualities.

As to the sense of the particle *vajra*^h in the compounded term Vajrayāna, in general Sanskrit *vajra* means both *diamond* and *thunderbolt* (the purported shaft or bolt that in Āryan mythology was believed to be the agent of destruction in a flash of lightening accompanied by thunder). In the term Vajrayāna the particle has the sense of immutability and indestructibility—thus symbolizing the true condition of reality and, particularly, the Buddha-nature as viewed and explained in the Tantras, thus coinciding with one of the acceptations of the particle Tantra in Tantrayāna. In particular, as stated in the Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa, the particle refers to the fact that the womb of Buddhahood (*sugatagarbha*), is endowed with the seven *vajra* qualities,ⁱ which are: invulnerability or uncuttability,^j indestructibility,^k true

^a Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^b Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^c Tib. rangnang (Wylie, *rang snang*).

^d Tib. thinle drakpo (Wylie, *phrin las drag po*), which is the wrathful (Tib. trowo [Wylie, *khro bo*]) dynamics of the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo [Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*]; Ch. 法性中有 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*]).

^e Skt. *phalayāna*; Tib. drebui thekpa (Wylie, *'bras bu'i theg pa*).

^f Skt. *hetuyāna*; Tib. gyui tegpa (Wylie, *rgyu'i theg pa*).

^g *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. Katak *zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjung/ sanggyél kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyengyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhag ger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan bryud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 178. The translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book.

^h Tib. dorje (Wylie, *rdo rje*); Ch. 金剛 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāng*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹*).

ⁱ Tib. dorjei chödün (Wylie, *rdo rje'i chos bdun*).

^j Tib. michöpa (Wylie, *mi chod pa*).

^k Tib. mishikpa (Wylie, *mi shigs pa*).

establishment (which as shown in the footnote does *not* imply true existence),^a incorruptibility,^b stability,^c unobstructibility^d and invincibility.^e

In the Vajrayāna, *vajra* also refers to a ritual utensil that is held in the right hand and that symbolizes the true *vajra*—in terms of which the principle of Transformation of this Path will be explained below—which pairs with a belt that is held in the left hand and played with it. In the latter sense, the *vajra* stands for *prajñā* and the bell for method or skillful means.

And as to the sense of the term *secret mantra*^f in Vehicle of Secret Mantra,^g it refers to the fact, referred to in a previous section, that Tantric transmissions arose through the *sambhogakāya*—the voice or energy aspect of Buddhahood—and works mainly on that level—the repetition of *mantras* being an essential element of the practice. In fact, whereas the Path of Renunciation arose through the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni, who taught it in his physical body, and works mainly at the level of the body—this being the reason why in it certain objects are to be avoided, and why the vows (in the Hīnayāna) or the duty of training (in the Mahāyāna) are lost at death and suspended during sleep—the Path of Transformation arose through the level of energy or voice, which does not end with death, and hence the related commitments (which will be discussed in a subsequent section) do not dissolve at death and are not suspended during sleep. The way in which the Path of Transformation arose through the *sambhogakāya* or visionary and energetic level of Buddhahood may be explained as follows: According to the Nyingmapa, a great yogin realized the state of rigpa in concomitance with a vision of himself as a deity—which is what on the Path of Transformation is called an experience of clarity—in coincidence with an experience of total pleasure arisen in connection with union with a consort or with a spontaneously arisen way of breathing—which is what on the Path in question is called an experience of sensation—and with an experience of emptiness—thus becoming a greatly realized adept,^h who then taught to his disciples ways to obtain the same three experiences and, on their basis, question their experience (e.g. trying to find the mental subject that experiences them as object, or the Gnitiv capacity or power by means of which and in which they manifest, etc.) so as to create the conditions for the self-disclosure of rigpa. Alternatively, as stated in the stories of some of the Tantras of the Sarmapas, Śākyamuni manifested as a *sambhogakāya* deity in order to communicate the teaching.

^a Tib. denpa (Wylie, *bden pa*). This *vajra* quality does not imply an assertion of true existence, for the vajra condition is beyond the four extremes of existence, nonexistence, both and neither—and if is cannot be asserted to be existent far less could it be asserted to be truly existent. Hence the term “true establishment” means that what the term *vajra* refers to is not deluded relative truth, but the true condition of all phenomena, including ourselves.

^b Tib. sawa (Wylie, *sra ba*).

^c Tib. tenpa (Wylie, *brtan pa*).

^d Tib. thokpa mepa (Wylie, *thogs pa med pa*).

^e Tib. miphampa (Wylie, *mi pham pa*).

^f Skt. *guhyanmantra*; Tib. sangngak (Wylie, *gsang sngags*).

^g Skt. *Guhyamantrayāna*; Tib. sangngakki thekpa (Wylie, *gsang sngags kyi theg pa*).

^h Skt. *mahāsiddha*; Tib. drubchen (Wylie, *sgrub chen*); Ch. 大聖 (simplified, 大圣) (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dàshèng*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-sheng⁴*): great adept, adept with great power(s).

The Principle of Tantra

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu follows the tradition of illustrating the principle of the Path of Transformation with a five-pointed ritual Vajra—a metallic ritual object in the center of which there is a sphere from which five points spread to each of its two sides, as bidimensionally diagrammed below:



The sphere at the center is a thigle,^a which stands for the *dharmakāya*—*mind* aspect or dimension of Buddhahood. Since the Buddha-nature^b is the true, absolute nature or condition of ourselves and the whole of reality, it represents the nature or condition in question—which as such may be understood *qua* Base, *qua* Path or *qua* Fruit. *Qua*-Base it is the true, absolute nature or condition of the totality of reality, which does not exclude anything; the symbol is used because a sphere has no angles or corners, which represent limits and, by implication, contents of thought. As put in a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa:^c

^a Wylie, *thig le*; Skt. *bindu* (also Skt. *tilaka*).

^b Skt. *tathāgatagarbha* or *sugatagarbha*; Tib. *desheg nyingpo* or *dezhin shegpai nyingpo* (Wylie, *de [bzhin] gshegs [pa'i] snying po*); Chin. 如來藏 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúláizàng*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-lai²-tsang⁴*) / Skt. *buddhatā*, *buddhadhātu* or *buddhatva*; Tib. *sangyekyi kham* (Wylie, *sangs rgyas kyi kham*); Ch. 佛性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxìng*; Wade-Giles *fó²-hsing⁴*).

^c *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjung/ sanggyél kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyenyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhag ger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan brgyud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in *Dūdjom Lingpa*, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 179.

It is called *sphere*,^a for it roundly encompasses all things, while transcending all the edges and corners of the intellect, mentation, and thought; and it is called *sole* or *single* because it is none other than the essential nature of all of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

For his part, Dūdjom Lingpa’s disciple, Pema Tashi put it the following way in his *Commentary*^b to the Tantra *Sherig dorje nōnpoi gyü*^c—another of the Tantras revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa:

...the single (or sole) sphere^d is called sphere because it transcends the edges and corners of concepts, and it is called single (or sole) because it (is) the one taste of the whole of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

In fact, *all* contents of thought are limits (edges and corners), because they all have a *differentia specifica* (i.e., they are defined in contrast with something that they exclude) and a *genus proximum* (i.e., the second element in their definition lies in determining in which ampler genus they are included)—the classical example of this being the elementary school definition of human beings as “rational animals:” animal is the *genus proximum* because human beings are a class within this genus; rational is the *differentiam specificam* because rationality is supposed to be what distinguishes human beings from other animals. Since the true condition of reality has no limits, it cannot have either *differentia specifica* or *genus proximum*—and therefore it simply cannot be contained in any thought. In terms of Pramāṇavāda philosophy, concepts are defined by exclusion / elimination^e or, more precisely, by the mental exclusion / elimination of other;^f to explain this simply, they are what is left when all that is not themselves is excluded or set apart. Since the true condition of reality has no limits, it does not exclude anything and hence may not be defined or understood in terms of contents of thought.

And if *qua* Base the Buddha-nature and the *dharmakāya* cannot be properly understood in terms of concepts or explained in terms of words, then *Qua*-Path and *qua*-Fruit Buddha-nature and *dharmakāya* are obviously a direct, nonconceptual and hence nondual, inexpressible realization: a condition in which the illusory limits introduced by concepts have dissolved.

At any rate, in the symbolism of the *vajra*:

(1) The sphere at the center stands for the *dharmakāya* that in this context (is) the

^a Skt. *bindu*; Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^b The *Commentary* is Pema Tashi’s (Wylie, pad ma bkra shis) *Shesrig dorje nōnpoi gyükyi drelchung dönsel nyīngpo* (Wylie, *shes rig rdo rje rnon po’i rgyud kyi ’grel chung don gsal snying po*). In Dūdjom Lingpa (2015), pp. 39-138. The passage is in p. 88; my rendering of the passage differs from the one found in the book in question.

^c Wylie, *shes rig rdo rje rnon po’i rgyud*. The Tib. gyü (Wylie, *rgyud*) renders the Skt. Tantra. For its part, the best-known Chinese is 目次 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *mùcì*; Wade-Giles, *mu⁴-tʂ’u⁴*); according to the Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (López & Buswell, 2014), 檀特羅 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *tántèluó*; Wade-Giles, *t’an²-t’e⁴-luo²*).

^d Tib. thigle nyakchik (Wylie, *thig le nyag gcig*).

^e Skt. *apoha*; Tib. selwa (Wylie, *sel ba*); 除 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *chú*; Wade-Giles, *ch’u²*) or 遮除 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēchú*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-ch’u²*)

^f Skt. *anyāpoha* (Tib. zhensel [Wylie, *gzhan sel*]; Ch. seems to be 他感排除 [Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *tā gǎn páichú*; Wade-Giles, *t’a¹-kan³ p’ai²-ch’u²*]).

true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality.

(2) The *five upper points* stand for the *saṃbhogakāya*, which *in this context* is a visionary reality made of pure light of the five colors that represent the essences of the five elements, without the slightest trace of materiality or substantiality—the pure vision into which, on the Path of Transformation, our impure vision of reality as material and substantial is to be transformed—as well as for the five facets of primordial gnosis into which the five coarse passions are to be transformed on this Path, as will be shown below.

(3) The five lower points stand for the *nirmāṇakāya* that *in this context* represents our impure vision of the five elements as coarse and material and the whole of reality as material and substantial, as well as the five basic passions that on this path must be transformed into the corresponding facets of primordial gnosis. (However, these meanings of the three *kāyas* are circumscribed to the context of this explanation of the Path of Transformation; in elucidating the Path of Spontaneous Liberation it will be shown that on the Upadeśavarga series of that Path the term *nirmāṇakāya* may have a very different meaning and refer to the highest level of realization possible; the term *saṃbhogakāya* may refer to an intermediate realization on the Path, and though it also refers to a visionary reality made of pure light, without the slightest trace of materiality or substantiality, rather than this visionary reality appearing as the result of contrivedly transforming one's vision, it is the one that spontaneously^a manifests in the intermediate state of the true condition of reality and that is made to manifest in Thögel^b practice as the means par excellence for rapidly exhausting *samsāra*; and the term *dharmakāya* indicates the true condition of all that is mental, as it manifests in the practice of Tekchö—thus being the initial level of realization.)

The vehicles^c of this Path are classified, on the basis of the principles on which they are based, under two different headings:

(1) One that in the Nyingmapa or Ancient School is *outer Tantras* and in the New or Sarmapa schools is *lower Tantras*, which refer to what is widely known as Path of Purification, and which comprise (a) the Kriyātantra,^d (b) the Ubhayatantra^e (called Cāryatantra^f in the New / Sarmapa schools), and (c) the Yogatantra,^g and

(2) Another one that in the Old or Nyingmapa School is *inner Tantras* and that in the New or Sarmapa schools is *higher Tantras*, which refer to what is known as Path of Transformation properly speaking, and which in the Nyingma tradition consist of three Tantric vehicles (of which in this section only the two lower ones

^a Tib. rangnang (Wylie, *rang snang*).

^b Wylie, *thod rgal*, which in Tibetan refers to going over a mountain pass to the other side of the mountain, and which gives its name to this practice because through it one can go very swiftly from one way of experiencing—namely that proper to *samsāra*—to a wholly different one—namely that of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*.

^c Skt. *yāna*; Tib. thekpa (Wylie, *theg pa*); Ch. 乘 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng*⁴) or 衍 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǎn*; Wade-Giles, *yen*³).

^d Tib. chagyü (Wylie, *bya rgyud*).

^e Tib. upai gyükyi thekpa (Wylie, *u pa'i rgyud*).

^f Tib. chöpgyü (Wylie, *spyod rgyud*)

^g Tib. naljor gyü (Wylie, *rnal 'byor rgyud*).

will be discussed, as the third, the Atiyogatantra, will be studied in the discussion of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation)—whereas in the Sarmapa schools it consists in the Anuttarayogatantra (subdivided into father, mother and neutral Tantras). (Some treatises list Yogatantra as pertaining to the Path of Transformation; however, it actually combines elements of the Path of Purification with elements of that of Transformation, and as shown below, though this vehicle may be said to apply the method of transformation, it does not do so directly, like the Anuttarayogatantra of the Sarmapa or the Mahāyogatantra and Anuyogatantra or the Nyingmapa.^a)

Well, the principle of the Path of Transformation in general—including the Path of Purification and that of Transformation properly speaking—may be said to lie in transforming our impure vision of the five elements as material and substantial into the essence of the five elements, which is colored light, so as to experience the universe as an immaterial palace, *maṇḍala* or Buddha-field, and the beings in it as male and female Buddhas. For its part, that of the Path of Transformation properly speaking (i.e., that of the higher vehicles of this Path) includes the same principle, yet is not circumscribed to it, for beside requiring that impure vision be transformed into pure vision, requires that the five coarse passions be transformed into the five facets of primordial gnosis.

In fact, on the Path of Purification, a basic principle at work is that if we perceive beings as male and female Buddhas and the whole of the environment as a Buddha-field, this pure perception will avert the welling up of the passions: the latter well up in response to our perception of beings and things as material and substantial, and therefore if we perceive all beings and things as immaterial and insubstantial the coarse passions will not well up so easily or powerfully. Moreover, whatever a male or female Buddha does is known to be skillful means arising out of primordial gnosis with the function of leading beings to Awakening, and hence if we perceive those we relate to as Buddhas, we cannot react to their actions with anger. Etc.

On the Path of Transformation properly speaking (the paradigmatic instance of which is the Path of method^b of the inner Tantras), the transformation of the poison of the passions into the corresponding facets of primordial gnosis in order to attain the most precious aim a human being can seek, which is Buddhahood, is compared to the alchemic use of poisons in the elaboration of medicines (in particular, to the use of the *māḥṣika* mercury [or other toxic^c metals^d and pyrites] in the preparation of *rāsayana*^e medicines)—which, as the teachings in question warn, always involves some risk.³⁹⁶ In the West, this simile has been replaced for that of the homeopathic use of the agents that induce the different syndromes for curing those syndromes, and that of manufacturing anti-snake serum out of snake venom—the latter one being more precise, as extracting snake venom involves a considerable risk.

^a Personal communication by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. (Email sent on Sunday, April 6, 2003.)

^b Skt. *upāyamārga*; Tib. thablam (Wylie, *thabs lam*).

^c Skt. *visa*; Tib. duk (Wylie, *dug*).

^d Skt. *dhātu*.

^e Tib. chükyi len (Wylie, *bcud kyi len*); Ch. 取味 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *qǔwèi*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ü³-wei⁴*).

Another traditional, most relevant simile for the principle of this Path is that of firewood and fire: the passions are compared to firewood and primordial gnoses are compared to fire—and it is noted that the greater the amount of firewood, the greater the fire will be. In fact, the more the passions arise, the more energy and raw material one has for applying the method of transformation, and hence the faster will one obtain the Fruit.

South and Central Asian lore involves the belief that if a male peacock eats poisons, rather than suffering harm, its plumage will become brighter. Therefore, those with a successful practice of the path of transformation are also compared to male peacocks, while the passions are likened to poisons, and the development of the corresponding facets of primordial gnosis is represented as the brightening of a peacock's plumage—for the more the passions arise and well up, provided that they are successfully transformed into the corresponding facets of primordial gnosis, the more the latter will develop. (The poisons may also represent alcohol, for on this path the latter, if properly used rather than abused, may help catalyze the development of primordial gnosis.)

The principle that makes this path possible is that, as shown in terms of the example of the *vajra*, according to the Tantras the true nature of each of them is a facet of primordial gnosis, into which it should be transformed. These natures are described, from the standpoint of Dzogchen Atiyoga, in a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa:^a

Oh son of the family, this very Base (is) said to be of the five facets of primordial gnosis. It is like this: The primordial gnosis of the absolute space of phenomena^b is so called because all phenomena are naturally present in all-pervasive absolute space, the essential nature of which is primordially empty. Mirror-like primordial gnosis^c is so called because the absolute nature is self-illuminated and free of obscuring veils. The primordial gnosis of equality^d is so called because all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is equal in

^a *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjungsi sanggyél kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyenyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhas ger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan brgyud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in Dūdjom Lingpa, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 177. The terminology was adapted to the one used in this book.

^b The term “primordial gnosis of the absolute space of phenomena” refers to the “Primordial gnosis of the *dharmadhātu*.” *dharmadhātu*[svabhāva]jñāna, *dharmadhātu*[prakṛti]jñāna, or simply *dharmadhātu*jñāna; Tib. chöying yeshe or chöknyi yingkyi yeshe (Wylie, *chos [kyi] dbyings [kyi] ye shes*); Ch. 法界體性智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè tǐxìngzhì*; Wade-Giles, *fǎ³ chieh⁴ t'í³ hsing⁴ chih⁴*). (Also *tathatājñāna*, meaning primordial gnosis of thatness / thusness, where thatness / thusness renders the Skt. *tathatā*, the Tib. *dezhinnyi* (Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*) and the Ch. 眞如 [性] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú* [xìng]; Wade-Giles, *chen¹-ju² [hsing⁴]*). It is the non-conceptual and hence nondual primordial gnosis that is the universal substrate of the other four gnoses.

^c Skt. *ādarśajñāna* or *mahādarśajñāna*; Tib. *melong tawui yeshe* (Wylie, *me long lta bu'i ye shes*); Ch. 大圓鏡智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dàyuánjìng zhì*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-yüan²-ching⁴ chih⁴*).

^d Skt. *samatājñāna*; Tib. *nyamnyi yeshe* or *nyampa nyikyi yeshe* (Wylie, *mnyan [pa] nyid [kyi] ye shes*); Ch. 平等性智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *píngděng xìng zhì*; Wade-Giles, *p'ing²-teng³ hsing⁴ chih⁴*).

the great purity and equality of the absolute space of phenomena. Discerning primordial gnosis^a is so called because unimpeded total primordial gnosis is fully aware of the inner glow. All-accomplishing primordial gnosis^b refers to the thorough accomplishment of self-emergent purity and freedom. These are not established as being separate. Rather, they (are) merely conventional names attributed to total, profound, luminous primordial gnosis that is manifest in the nature of the primordial Base,^c the sugatagarbha.^d They are not separate of different.

The empty aspect of the Base's absolute space is indigo; its stainless aspect is white; its majestic, sublime qualities are yellow; its freedom from contamination by faults is red; and its perfect spontaneous rectification is merely named green.

And also:^e

There are five obscurations that veil the inner glow of primordial gnosis: the unawareness [inherent in] the base-of-all veils the *dharmakāya*. The obscuration of afflictive mentation veils the inner glow of self-perfection's [spontaneous rectification]. The obscuration of mentation veils wisdom. The obscuration of consciousness veils primordial gnosis. The obscuration of dualistic grasping veils the authentic Path.

Due to the veiling effects of these obscurations, the five radiances that obscure primordial gnosis ... appear as the indigo radiance of the [primordial gnosis of the] absolute space of phenomena,^f the white radiance of mirror-like primordial gnosis, the yellow radiance of the primordial gnosis of equality, the red radiance of the discerning primordial gnosis, and the green radiance of the all-accomplishing primordial gnosis.

primordial gnosis of sameness, which apprehends the common substratum of all phenomena (Skt. *dharmas*; Tib. *chö* [Wylie, *chos*]; Ch. 法 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³; Jap. *hō*).

^a Skt. *pratyavekṣaṇajñāna*; Tib. sortok yeshe or sosor tokpai yeshe (Wylie, *so sor* [*rtog pa'i*] *ye shes*); Ch. 妙觀察智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *miào guānchá zhì*; Wade-Giles, *miao*⁴ *kuan*¹-*ch'a*² *chih*⁴): discriminating primordial gnosis revealing the specificity / uniqueness of each *phenomenon* (i.e. of each *dharma*: Tib. *chö* [Wylie, *chos*]; Ch. 法 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³; Jap. *hō*).

^b *kṛtyanuṣṭhānajñāna*; Tib. chadrub yeshe or chawa drubpai yeshe (Wylie, *bya* [*ba*] *grub* [*pa'i*] *ye shes*); Ch. 成所作智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chéng suǒzuò zhì*; Wade-Giles, *ch'eng*² *so*³-*tso*⁴ *chih*⁴): primordial gnosis accomplishing activities, which “spontaneously and unobstructedly carries out all that has to be done for the welfare of beings, by manifesting in all directions.”

^c Tib. *yezhi* (Wylie, *ye gzhi*).

^d A synonym of *tathāgatagarbha*: Tib. *dezhin shegpai nyingpo* or *desheg nyingpo* (Wylie, *de* [*bzhin*] *gshegs* [*pa'i*] *snying po*); Chin. 如來藏 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *rúláizàng*; Wade-Giles, *ju*²-*lai*²-*tsang*⁴).

^e *The Awake Vision of Samantabhadra* (etc.). Tib. *Katak zogpa chenpoi longdzö zabmo/ machö zogden ranjungu sanggyél kuntu zangpoi gongpa lagpai thildu dramne lhagger tenpa/ gongda nyengyü chikdzogkyi menngag kangyama* (Wylie, *ka dag rdzogs pa chen po'i klong mdzod zab mo/ ma bcos rdzogs ldan rang byung gi sangs rgyas/ kun tu bzang po'i dgongs pa lag pa'i mthil du brkam nas lhag ger bstan pa/ dgongs brda snyan bryud chig rdzogs kyi man ngag bka' rgya ma*). In Vol. 17 of *Collected works of the emanated great treasures, the secret, profound treasures of Dūdjom Lingpa* (Thinpu, Bhutan: Kuenzang Wangdue). Translation in *Dūdjom Lingpa*, Vol. I (2015); passage in p. 185. The terminology was adapted to the one used in this book.

^f The term “primordial gnosis of the absolute space of phenomena” refers to the “Primordial gnosis of the *dharmadhātu*.” *dharmadhātu*[*svabhāva*]jñāna, *dharmadhātu*[*prakṛti*]jñāna, or simply *dharmadhātu*jñāna; Tib. *chöying yeshe* or *chökyi yingkyi yeshe* (Wylie, *chos* [*kyi*] *dbyings* [*kyi*] *ye shes*); Ch. 法界體性智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè tǐxìngzhì*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³ *chieh*⁴ *t'i*³ *hsing*⁴ *chih*⁴). (Also *tathatājñāna*, meaning primordial gnosis of thatness / thusness, where thatness / thusness renders the Skt. *tathatā*, the Tib. *dezhinnyi* (Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*), and the Ch. 眞如 [性] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú* [*xìng*]; Wade-Giles, *chen*¹-*ju*² [*hsing*⁴]). It is the non-conceptual and hence nondual primordial gnosis that is the universal substrate of the other four gnoses.

The creative expression of the first is apparitional-imputational delusion;^a of the second, is aversion [and hatred]; of the third is pride; of the fourth, attachment; and of the fifth is envy.

The above relationship between facets of primordial gnosis and colors is the same as the Tantric system of *Guhyasamājatantra*, according to which the true nature of unawareness, ignorance and dullness is the primordial gnosis of the absolute space of phenomena or all-encompassing primordial gnosis;^{b397} that of anger or ire is the mirror-like primordial gnosis;^c that of pride is the primordial gnosis of equality;^d that of desire is discerning primordial gnosis;^e and that of jealousy and envy is all-accomplishing primordial gnosis^{f398}—an equivalence between passions, gnoses and colors that, it is important to remark, is far from being universal, for some other Tantras and many terma systems have different systems of equivalences.

^a Skt. *bhrānti*; Tib. tulpa (Wylie, 'khrul pa); Ch. 亂 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, luàn; Wade-Giles, luan⁴): erroneous cognition. In Dharmakīrti the term refers to error (of taking an abstracted general pattern for a hypostatic particular). In Āryadeva it designates the error inherent in *avidyā*. In Dzogchen it refers to the fact that perceiving our own manifestations as separate from and other than ourselves is a delusion (Tib. rangi nangwa zhendu zungne tulpa yöre [Wylie, rang gi snang ba gzhan du bsungs nas 'khrul pa yod red]): the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of subtle thoughts / universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] (Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. dönchi [Wylie, don spyi]; Ch. 總義 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zōngyì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-i⁴]), in combination with the previously manifested reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the super-subtle directional thought structure (Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum [Wylie, 'khor gsum]; Ch. 三輪 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, sānlún; Wade-Giles, san¹-lun⁴], manifests as the illusion of there being a self-existent self and self-existent phenomena other than the self. Then one is under the power of the three types of delusion (Tib. marigpa sum [Wylie, ma rig pa gsum]).

^b The term “primordial gnosis of the absolute space of phenomena” refers to the “Primordial gnosis of the *dharmadhātu*.” *dharmadhātu*[*svabhāva*]jñāna, *dharmadhātu*[*prakṛti*]jñāna, or simply *dharmadhātu*jñāna; Tib. chöying yeshe or chökyi yingkyi yeshe (Wylie, chos [kyi] dbyings [kyi] ye shes); Ch. 法界體性智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, fǎjiè tǐxìngzhì; Wade-Giles, fa³ chieh⁴ t' i³ hsing⁴ chih⁴). (Also *tathatājñāna*, meaning primordial gnosis of thatness / thusness, where thatness / thusness renders the Skt. *tathatā*, the Tib. dezhinnyi (Wylie, de bzhin nyid) and the Ch. 眞如 [性] (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zhēnrú [xìng]; Wade-Giles, chen¹-ju² [hsing⁴]). It is the non-conceptual and hence nondual primordial gnosis that is the universal substrate of the other four gnoses.

^c Skt. *ādarśajñāna* or *mahādarśajñāna*; Tib. melong tawui yeshe (Wylie, me long lta bu'i ye shes); Ch. 大圓鏡智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, dàyuánjìng zhì; Wade-Giles, ta⁴-yüan²-ching⁴ chih⁴).

^d Skt. *samatājñāna*; Tib. nyamnyi yeshe or nyampa nyikyī yeshe (Wylie, mnyan [pa] nyid [kyi] ye shes); Ch. 平等性智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, píngděng xìng zhì; Wade-Giles, p'ing²-teng³ hsing⁴ chih⁴): primordial gnosis of sameness, which apprehends the common substratum of all phenomena (Skt. *dharmas*; Tib. chö [Wylie, chos]; Ch. 法 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, fǎ; Wade-Giles, fa³; Jap. hō).

^e Skt. *pratavekṣaṇajñāna*; Tib. sortok yeshe or soror tokpai yeshe (Wylie, so sor [rtog pa'i] ye shes); Ch. 妙觀察智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, miào guānchá zhì; Wade-Giles, miao⁴ kuan¹-ch'a² chih⁴): discriminating primordial gnosis revealing the specificity / uniqueness of each phenomenon (i.e. of each *dharma*: Tib. chö [Wylie, chos]; Ch. 法 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, fǎ; Wade-Giles, fa³; Jap. hō).

^f *krtyanuṣṭhānajñāna*; Tib. chadrub yeshe or chawa drubpai yeshe (Wylie, bya [ba] grub [pa'i] ye shes); Ch. 成所作智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chéng suǒzuò zhì; Wade-Giles, ch'eng² so³-tso⁴ chih⁴): primordial gnosis accomplishing activities, which “spontaneously and unobstructedly carries out all that has to be done for the welfare of beings, by manifesting in all directions.”

At any rate, according to this system, it is because one feels vulnerable or *panics*^a before the panoramic space of awareness that one concentrates on a small section of totality while ignoring the rest, like a pig running toward food. It is due to feeling separate from the luminosity of the Base that one feels hurt by its shining forth and reacts to it with aversion, like a baby snake when approached in its nest or burrow. The subject-object duality implies acceptance and rejection, which for their part imply *higher* (as acceptance makes one ascend) and *lower* (as rejection makes one descend), and thus a drive to occupy a high position in order to derive a good feeling from it—which makes one disregard and ignore primordial equality in order to feel superior to what at that point one perceives as other. It is because of discrimination that one feels attraction, cupidity and lust toward an individual one find attractive but not toward the hosepipe, the grass or the grasshoppers in the yard. And when others occupy a high position and we occupy a low one, or when one fails to successfully, masterfully deal with life situations and communications, etc., one feels envy of those who do so and may be willing to resort to conspiracy and intrigue in order to take their place. Therefore on the Tantric path of transformation we transform the passions into that which they originally were and against which one reacted due to the dualistic belief in subject and object, self and other-than-self, and the associated experience (whereas in Dzogchen Atiyoga, as will be shown in the respective section of this book, one simply reGnizes the original condition that one had fled into the corresponding passion).

The above is possible because each and every passion has two moments: the initial one, in which it is “pure,” and a later one in which it becomes “impure.” Let us take as an example being abused with words or deeds and the anger this triggers. In the moment immediately following the aggression, the energy aroused manifests as a greater clarity that dissolves all thoughts. Then the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure and of subtle / intuitive thoughts makes us perceive the situation as external to us and as threatening, but still whichever discursive thoughts had been distracting us before the event have dissolved and hence we apprehend the situation with greater precision—and, if needed, better defend ourselves—while no new discursive thoughts arise. In the following moments, however, discursive thoughts arise once more, at this point expressing indignation against the aggressor, ideas of revenge and so on, which are charged with and supported by the energy aroused by the abuse—distracting us, obfuscating us and possibly driving us to strike back. By instantaneously visualizing ourselves (in the manner of the Anuyoga, which will be discussed below) as a wrathful deity the size of the whole universe, so that there is nothing external with regard to it, we can revert the passion to its first, “pure” moment, so that the energy released by what otherwise might have led us to harm others and ourselves, may be used to keep the visualization present and thus obtain a powerful experience of *clarity*. Since this is a powerful experience, which will be accompanied by a strong experience of *sensation* and an experience of *emptiness*—the latter because one has a clear awareness that the deity and the whole of the experience is empty—in terms of the simile of the mirror for the nature of mind and

^a *Pan-ic*: “irrational” dread of totality (*πάν*, symbolized by the god Pan [Πάν]), for totality implies the insubstantiality of all potential parts.

of reflections in the mirror for the experiences we face, we must use these powerful reflections in order to discover the nature of the mirror, which cannot be known directly, as it is not a form that may appear as object, yet can be discovered through the reflections that appear in it: rather than directing one’s attention to the reflections, we look into that in which and whereby they appear. Or we simply look into what appears to be a separate, independent experiencer of the experience: the mental subject that arises by virtue of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold thought-structure, and which always appears indirectly and implicitly, as it cannot appear directly and explicitly (which is how *objects* appear to the subject). Because of this impossibility, the attempt to know the mental subject as object is likely to short-circuit dualism, making it impossible for the latter to sustain itself and hence for the passion to well up (for all passions are attitudes of a subject toward an object and therefore without the subject-object duality they cannot exist) and becoming an opportunity for a spontaneous, uncaused reGnition of the nondual Awake awareness that is the nature of mind—which, would it occur, would endow us with certitude both as to the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena and as to the method whereby this initial realization occurred, and by the same token would neutralize delusory propensities to a very small extent. Then, a moment afterwards, dualism would manifest again, but rather than having accumulated hellish *karma*, through our practice we would have neutralized to some extent our karmic propensities for hellish experiences—or, if the nature of mind was not reGnized (for it this reGnition simply cannot be produced or contrived), at least no hellish *karma* would have been accumulated.

However, the paradigmatic instance of this method is the usage of erotic arousal and pleasure—often including sexual union—as a skillful means or method^a in the perfection or completion stage^b for reaching the primordial gnosis of total pleasure and emptiness. In the Anuyoga, pleasure is aroused through two alternative trainings, which are: (a) the one which works with the “upper doors,” in which great bliss or total pleasure is obtained by means of tummo^c practice: while maintaining a visualization (created through an *instantaneous* development stage^d), one inhales in a specific way and injects the air in the central channel, pressing the air in the “vase retention”^e and retaining it for as long as it is comfortable while visualizing that this vase works as a bellows, with the female energy igniting a fire in the navel *cakra* that generates actual heat that ascends through the “central channel”^f and “melts” the ambrosia^g visualized in the form of a male syllable at the crown of the head, so

^a Skt. *upāya*; Tib. thab (Wylie, *thabs*); Ch. 方便 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*).

^b Skt. *sampannakrama*, *niṣpannakrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. dzogrim (Wylie, *rdzogs rim*); Ch. 圓滿次第 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *yuān²-man³ tz’u⁴-tì⁴*).

^c Wylie, *gtum mo*; Skt. *caṇḍālī*; Ch. 旃陀利 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhāntuólì*; Wade-Giles, *chan¹-t’o²-lì⁴*).

^d Skt. *utpattikrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. kyerim (Wylie, *bskyed rim*); Ch. 生起次第 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngqǐ cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ch’i³ tz’u⁴-tì⁴*).

^e Tib. lung bumchen (Wylie, *rlung bum can*); Skt. *kumbhaka*.

^f Skt. *avadhūtī*; Tib. [tsa] uma (Wylie, [tsa] *dbu ma*); Ch. 中脉 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngmài*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-mai⁴*).

^g Skt. *amṛta*; Pāli *amata*; Tib. dütsi (Wylie, *bdud rtsi*) (also chime [Wylie, *’chi med*]); Ch. 甘露 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *gānlòu*; Wade-Giles, *kan¹-lou⁴*). In the Tib. dütsi (Wylie, *bdud rtsi*), dü (*bdud*) refers to disease that harms or threatens life and strength, while tsi (*rtsi*) in medical usage means antidote.

that the molten ambrosia descends successively through the *cakras* and channels, giving rise to progressive degrees of pleasure (a method that in most people will only work if they have mastered the Four Profound Applications^a of *yantra yoga*, having developed a great capacity of breath retention by means of the *prāṇāyāma* designated as rhythmic breathing, and, in most cases, if they have also mastered the five *yantras*);^b and (b) the one that makes use of the “lower entrances,” in which both the heat and ensuing total pleasure arise spontaneously as a result of erotic-mystic union with a suitable Tantric consort in practitioners that retain the seed-essence^c and happen to spontaneously receive the blessings that make this possible (which, by the way, happens in the same way as in the upper doors method: as a result of the heat, the ambrosia melts and descends successively through the *cakras* and channels, giving rise to progressive degrees of pleasure). In Dzogchen there is also a third practice, which for this vehicle is a secondary one,^d in which these two methods are combined, but this will not be discussed here.

Just like anger, erotic desire has successive moments: a first one, which is one of pure sensation, that is, one in which the sensation has not yet been perceived in terms of a concept, but that in a sense may be said to be based on discrimination because it is aroused by certain objects and not by others. At this point there is no craving and no grasping.^e The next moment the sensation will be perceived in terms of subtle thoughts, as pleasurable and as external to the mental subject, and grasping will strongly arise. As soon as one gets used to the degree of sensation and thus the latter becomes neutral, the energy aroused by the experience will be diverted to support thoughts craving for ever increasing pleasure that would intensify itself toward a peak at which one intuits one could dissolve into total pleasure—yet this dissolution ordinarily cannot be achieved, for one feels compelled to maintain oneself as a seemingly separate mental subject in order to consciously enjoy the pleasure. If the proper methods of transformation are applied, however, one can have powerful experiences of *clarity* (which lies in a vivid presence of the visualization), *sensation* (which, whether obtained through the upper or lower doors method, depends on heat and develops in successive degrees of pleasure as the latter reaches successive lower *cakras*—which even in the initial degree is far more intense and prolonged than any pleasure ordinary people experience—and therefore in this case the experience of sensation is incomparably more intense than in the transformation of anger into mirror-like primordial gnosis) and *emptiness* (which in this case is not merely the result of the awareness that the deity and the whole of the experience is empty that must pervade visualization practice, for it may have been greatly enhanced by the panoramic scope of awareness ensuing from the increase of

^a Tib. Zabmo Jorwa Zhiden (Wylie, *zab mo 'byor ba bzhi ldan*).

^b Cf. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (2008, pp. 139-188). This is, at least, the method applied in the Dzogchen Community, which does not pertain to the Path of Transformation, for it pertains to the *yantra yoga* of the translator Bairotsana, which is a secondary or auxiliary practice of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation.

^c Skt. *bindu*; Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*)—which in this case is the sexual *bindu* or *thig le*.

^d It is a method for gaining access to the state of rigpa and thus being able to apply the main practice of Dzogchen Ati, which is that of remaining in rigpa.

^e Skt. *udgrahana*; Tib. dzinpa (Wylie, *'dzin pa*); Ch. 執持 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhí chí*; Wade-Giles, *chih²-ch'ih²*).

the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^a—or, in Hindu Tantric terms, of *kunḍalinī*—as this panoramic scope makes it impossible for the practitioner to single out figures for cognition while leaving the rest of the sensory field in a kind of penumbra of attention—as required for experiencing the singled out figure as in itself separate from the ground, and thus experience it as existing substantially, independently, and in itself separate from the rest of the field).^b The coincident manifestation of these three powerful and prolonged experiences may be employed in the way explained in the discussion of the transformation of anger—in this case with greater possibilities of obtaining the intended result, as the experiences of pleasure and emptiness are likely to be far more powerful and prolonged.

THE OUTER OR LOWER TANTRAS

The outer or lower Tantras are practiced equally in all the schools transmitted in Tibet and its zone of cultural influence (in the Old or Nyingmapa School as much as in the New or Sarmapa schools); they (or practices with an analogous principle) are also applied in the Chinese *Mizōng*^c School and in its Japanese offshoot, which, as shown above, is the Shingon School (and in Japan Saichō included the practices of this tradition in the *Tendai* School,^d which originally was not Tantric). As remarked above, the three Tantras called *outer* in the Nyingma School or *lower* in the Sarma Schools—the first two of which constitute the Path of purification, and the last of which combines the Path of Purification with the Path of Transformation—are Kriyātantra,^e Ubhayatantra^f (called Cāryatantra^g in the New / Sarmapa schools), and Yogatantra.^h

The basis of the Path of Purification is the realization that phenomena that appear on the relative level such as the five aggregatesⁱ (material form, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness), the twelve sense bases^j (the six outer constituents, which are the fields of the six sense objects wherein objects are singled out, and the six inner constituents, corresponding to the six sense organs),

^a Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^b I have explained this in detail in Capriles (2013abcd).

^c 密宗; Wade-Giles, Mi-tsung; cf. the section on the schools of China and the Far East.

^d Ch. and Kanji 天台宗 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Tiāntái Zōng; Wade-Giles, T'ien¹-t'ai² Tsung¹; Jap. Romaji, Tendai-shū).

^e Tib. chagyü (Wylie, *bya rgyud*); Kriyātantrayāna: Tib. chagyüi thekpa (Wylie, *bya ba'i rgyud kyi theg pa*).

^f Tib. upai gyü (Wylie, *u pa'i rgyud*); Ubhayatantrayāna: upai gyükyi thekpa (*u pa'i rgyud kyi theg pa*).

^g Tib. chögyü (Wylie, *spyod rgyud*); Cāryatantrayāna: chö gyükyi thekpa (Wylie, *spyod rgyud kyi theg pa*).

^h Tib. naljor gyü (Wylie, *rnal 'byor rgyud*); Yogatantrayāna: naljor gyüki thekpa (Wylie, *rnal 'byor rgyud kyi theg pa*).

ⁱ Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandha*; Tib. phungpo (Wylie, *phung po*); Ch. 蘊 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yùn; Wade-Giles, yün⁴).

^j Skt. *āyatana*; Tib. kye mched (Wylie, *skye mched*); Ch. 處 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chǔ; Wade-Giles, ch'u³). Twelve sense bases: Skt. *dvādaśāyatana*; Tib. kyenche chunyi (Wylie, *skye mched bcu gnyis*); Ch. 十二處 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, shíèr chǔ; Wade-Giles, shih²-erh⁴ ch'u³).

and the eighteen sense constituents^a (the just enumerated twelve sense bases, plus the six modes of sensory consciousness or “six consciousnesses”),³⁹⁹ are subject to being purified, and that the ultimate sphere, consisting in the naturally pure nature of mind, is the basis of the purification aimed at.^b One manifests an outwardly pure livelihood and applies as the Path the meditation on the thatness^c or suchness^d of deities, with whom one relates in one way or another according to the level of outer Tantra one is practicing.

The superiority of the outer Tantras with regard to all forms of the Sūtrayāna Path of Renunciation, including the sudden Mahāyāna, is said to lie mainly in two facts:

1) The outer Tantras make very clearly the point that our true condition is what they call the *Vajra*-nature, which comprises the three *kāyas* of Buddhahood and that has always been actual. In the Mahāyāna we also find the principle of a Buddha-nature in *Tathāgatagarbhasūtras* such as the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanādasūtra* and treatises such as Maitreya’s *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* or *Uttaratantra*,^e which is based on the just mentioned *sūtra* and on the *Dhāraṇīrajāsūtra*. However, not all the examples used to illustrate it in Maitreya’s treatise suggest that it is fully actual: whereas one of the examples is that of the sun that is always shining (is always actual), even though sometimes it is covered by the clouds (which represent the hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized contents of thought that in *samsāra* conceal the Buddha-nature)—so that the Buddha-nature does not arise and does not dissolve, rather than being created by causes and conditions—others of the examples, like the one of the seed and the tree, imply the Buddha-nature not to be actual Buddhahood, and imply the latter to arise from causes and conditions. Thus the conception of the Vajra-nature, which is not illustrated with causal, potency-act examples, is superior even to that of the Buddha-nature in the Mahāyāna sources under consideration.

2) In the outer Tantras the deity is the manifestation, on the relative plane, of the absolute nature of the *dharmakāya* beyond birth and cessation, and so the relative is the manifestation of the unconditioned nature and the very basis of the Path, rather than being merely an impure, conditioned vision to be overcome. Practice is thus based on the clarity aspect of nondual Awake awareness (i.e. on what the Dzogchen teachings and the inner Tantras in general call the spontaneous perfection^f aspect of the Base), which is not employed in the Sūtrayāna (in which clarity is something that may be or not be bestowed by the Buddhas in form of rays of light that Awaken the bodhisattva from an absorption, offering him or her the possibility to attain Buddhahood). Thus it is stated that by means of the ordinary *siddhis* you do not

^a Skt. *dhātu*; Tib kham (Wylie, *kham*s); Ch. 界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiè*; Wade-Giles, *chieh*⁴). Eighteen *dhātus*: Skt. *aṣṭadaśadhātu*; Tib. (Wylie, *kham*s *bcu brgyad*); Ch. 十八界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shíbā jiè*; Wade-Giles, *shih*²-*pa*¹ *chieh*⁴).

^b See Tibetan Text 22, f. 60, p. 34b 4. Quoted in Tulku Thöndup (1996 [1st ed. 1989], p. 15).

^c Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. *dezhinnyi* (Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*); Chin. 眞如 [性] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú* [xìng]; Wade-Giles, *chen*¹-*ju*² [*hsing*⁴]).

^d A more frequent rendering of the same term: Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. *dezhinnyi* (Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*); Chin. 眞如 [性] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú* [xìng]; Wade-Giles, *chen*¹-*ju*² [*hsing*⁴]).

^e Tib. *Gyü Lama* (Wylie, *rgyud bla ma*).

^f Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

renounce the relative, and that by means of the supreme *siddhi* you realize that the absolute is not something to achieve.^a

Essence of the View of Kriyātantra^b

In the absolute there is neither birth nor cessation. Recognizing this absolute in the form of the deity, on the relative plane practitioners meditate on it; therefore, as noted above, the relative is valuable rather than being viewed as an impure vision to overcome. Practitioners of this system assert that in its realization is achieved mainly by means of the combined power of ritual objects and requisites, together with primary and secondary factors of realization: the image of the deity, the symbol of the state of Awakened Mind, recitation of the *mantra*, the norms of cleanliness, observance of the astrological calendar, propitious days and constellations, etc.

Thus it is said that the entrance gate is the three purities (purity of deity and *maṇḍala*, purity of ritual objects and substances, and purity of mantras and concentration), the ablutions and the norms of cleanliness; that the *samaya* involves reciting the *mantra*, not drinking the same water as those who break the *samaya*, and always behaving without distraction; that the ritual action consists in engaging in the three purities; that the view is based on the relationship between deity and practitioner as being respectively lord and subject; that the things to renounce are meat, fish, garlic and other specific vegetables that are used mainly as seasoning and that the Sāṃkhya and other Hindu systems regard as tamasic,⁴⁰⁰ and alcoholic beverages; and that there is attachment to the standard practice of concentration on the deity.

There are two types of Kriyā: Kriyā that mainly applies purity, and Kriyā that mainly applies concentration.

Kriyā that Mainly Applies Purity

Starting with the performance of ritual ablutions three times a day and other norms of cleanliness, and consuming the three white substances^c and three sweet substances,^d practitioners meditate on their own body as the form of the deity. The superiority of this system over the lower vehicles lies in the fact that everything that appears on the relative plane, without being deemed true, is brought into the Path by means of the three concentrations, which are:

^a This 3d point reproduces a quotation of Tibetan Text 12 cited in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, p. 165.

^b This section is a summary of the corresponding section in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 163-166), which contains quotations from Tibetan Text 6, p. 19, 6; from Tibetan Text 5, p. 515, 5; and from Tibetan Text 12, p. 130, 5. In general, material has been taken from all these texts in the elaboration of this section.

^c Tib. *karsum* (Wylie, *dkar gsum*): yoghurt, milk and butter. Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, note 139).

^d Tib. *ngarsum* (Wylie, *mngar gsum*): sugar, molasses and honey. Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, note 140).

(a) Concentration on the state of Body as the form of deity: All phenomena of form are recognized as the deity of form: without renouncing form, practitioners no longer remain within the conceptual consideration of the limits of unity and multiplicity.

(b) Concentration on the state of Voice as seed syllable: All audible phenomena are recognized as the deity of sound, and so all sounds become the recitation of *mantra*. No longer within conceptual limits of arising and ceasing, each and every sound is heard as the sound of the deity.

(c) Concentration on the state of Mind as symbolic attribute: All thinking and all thoughts are recognized as being the meditation deity, and hence thoughts do not deviate from meditative stability, and it is said that nonetheless the practitioner does not remain within the limits of the dependently arisen, ordinary relative condition, for nothing arisen or originated (and thus conditioned and made) exists even in the relative sphere.

Regarding the yidam wisdom deity^a as lord with awareness that it is the manifestation of the absolute plane, and the practitioner as servant in the form of the promise deity,^b it is said that interruptions abate and siddhis are obtained. The ordinary siddhis imply that the practitioner does not renounce the relative, and the supreme *siddhi* consists in understanding that the absolute is not something to achieve

Kriyā that Mainly Relies on Concentration

By means of the stage of creation^c and the subtle stage of completion,^d the practitioner meditates on the deity visualizing the radiation and reabsorption^e of light rays. Thus he or she comes to concentrate on forms, sounds and thoughts as the Body, Voice and Mind of the deity.

The Dzogchen View of Kriyā

With regard to the Kriyātantrayāna, the *Kunje Gyälpo* reads:^f

Followers of Kriyātantra, intending to attain the state of Vajradhāra,
enter through the doors of the three purities, and
remain with the consideration of a pure subject and a pure object.

^a Skt. *jñānasattva*; Tib. yeshepa (Wylie, *ye shes pa*) or yeshe sempa (Wylie, *ye shes sems dpa'*); Ch. 智慧薩埵 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *zhīhuì sàduǒ*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴-hui⁴ sa⁴-to³*).

^b Skt. *samayāsattva*; Tib. damtsikpa (Wylie, *dam tshig pa*) or damtsik sempa (Wylie, *dam tshig sems dpa'*); Ch. 三昧耶薩埵 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sānmèiyé sàduǒ*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mei⁴-yeh² sa⁴-to³*).

^c Skt. *utpattikrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. kyerim (Wylie, *bskyed rim*); Ch. 生起次第 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *shēngqǐ cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ch³ 'i³ tz⁴'u⁴-tī⁴*).

^d Skt. *sampannakrama*, *niṣpannakrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. dzogrim (Wylie, *rdzogs rim*); Ch. 圓滿次第 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *yuánmǎn cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ tz⁴'u⁴-tī⁴*).

^e Tib. tondu (Wylie, *'phro 'du*); also tondü (Wylie, *'phro 'dus*) and todü (Wylie, *'phro bsdus*).

^f Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, p. 179). See also Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, p. 296); Tulku Thöndup (1996, 1st ed. 1989, pp. 95-96). I have modified the terminology in order to make it agree with the one used throughout this book.

[Conversely,] the total bliss of Atiyoga
is the pure and total Awake awareness
free from [the duality of] apprehended and apprehender.
That which transcends subject and object is hindered by Kriyā:
conceiving total completeness / plenitude and perfection in terms of subject and object
amounts to falling into the misleading deviation of Kriyā practitioners.

Essence of the View of Ubhaya / Cārya Tantra^a

In the absolute there is neither birth nor cessation. Recognizing this absolute in the form of the deity, on the relative plane practitioners meditate on it, and so the relative has value and is recognized to be the unconditioned^b itself rather than being an impure vision to overcome. Practitioners of this system assert that in this way realization is achieved by virtue, both of the concentration based on the “four characteristic conditions,” and of the conjoined power of the ritual objects and requisites together with primary and secondary factors of realization (as explained in the section on Kriyā) and so on.

Because the Ubhaya or “vehicle of the Tantra of both (Kriyā and Yoga)” applies the behavior of Kriyā and has the same view as Yogatantra, it is called “the neutral vehicle.” While practitioners of Kriyā see the relationship between deity and practitioner as being like the one that obtains between lord and subject, and practitioners of Yoga must recognize the deity as being (the nature of) their own mind, practitioners of Ubhaya see the deity as an elder brother or an elder *dharma* friend. After having purified body, voice and mind by means of ablutions and the norms of cleanliness, by visualizing the five factors of realization and so on its adherents practice the *sādhana* of the Supreme Maṇḍala,⁴⁰¹ etc.

In conclusion, the means of realization in Ubhaya are: (a) The five factors of realization that will be explained in the section on Yogatantra. (b) The concentration that has four characteristic conditions, which are: visualizing oneself in the form of the deity; the deity in front of oneself; the syllables of the *mantra* residing in one’s heart and in the deity’s heart symbolizing inseparability; and recitation of the *mantra*. (c) The ritual objects and requisites and the power of the primary and secondary factors. Practitioners of this system assert that all of this enables realization of the absolute state beyond birth and cessation.

The Dzogchen View of Ubhaya

With regard to the Ubhayatantrayāna, the *Kunje Gyälpo* reads:^c

^a This section is a summary of the corresponding section in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 166-167). The section contains quotations from Tibetan Text 6, p. 19, 7; from Tibetan Text 5, p. 516, 4; and from Tibetan Text 12, p. 132, 4. Material has been taken from all these texts in the preparation of this section.

^b Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṅskṛta*; Tib. *dūmache* (Wylie, *'dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^c Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, p. 179). See also Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, pp. 296); Tulku Thöndup (1996, 1st ed. 1989, p. 96). I have modified the terminology in order to make it agree with the one used throughout this book.

Followers of Ubhaya[tantra] base their conduct on the principle of Kriyā
 and their view and practice on the principle of Yoga[tantra];
 [since this prevents them from] integrating view and behavior,
 they cannot grasp the meaning of nonduality.
 The total bliss of Atiyoga is pure and total nondual awareness.
 That which is nondual is hindered by Ubhaya:
 conceiving total completeness / plenitude and perfection in dualistic terms
 amounts to falling into the misleading deviation of the followers of Ubhaya.

Essence of the View of Yogatantra^a

According to this highest outer Tantric vehicle of the view and conduct of self-control (as distinct from the inner Tantric vehicles of the view of method),⁴⁰² without ascribing fundamental importance to external ritual exercises, practitioners meditate on the male and female deities that represent the absolute, unconditioned state beyond birth and cessation, and practice concentration aimed at making their own state as totally pure as that of the deities. In fact, the name of this vehicle, which in Tibetan is *Naljor*,^b as stated in a previous section with regard to Atiyoga, is to be understood in terms of the etymology of the Tibetan term, which is “[direct realization of our] original, unmodified condition.”^c This is so because this vehicle’s aim is to discover that one’s own mind is the deity—or, in other words, that one’s own mind is in truth the unconditioned and utterly pure nondual Awake awareness called nature-of-mind,^d which (is) the absolute condition and which in the practices of this vehicle manifests as the deity. In fact, this is the sense of *vajra* in the term *Vajrayāna*,^e as applied when it refers to the Paths of purification and transformation.

Practitioners of this system assert that realization is thus achieved mainly through the *yoga* in which one meditates on the four mudras of the forms of the realized ones. The entrance gate consists in the five factors of realization; the View involves the initial view of the deity and oneself as being like friends or brothers and the final recognition that one’s own mind is the deity; the *samaya* to observe includes the three objects concerning which one must not fail (not failing the Yidam,^f not failing one’s teacher and spiritual companions, and not failing one’s own mind); and the conduct is supposed to transcend acceptance and rejection (however, in the practices of this vehicle one does not at all engage physically in

^a This section is a summary of the corresponding section in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 166-167). The section contains quotations from Tibetan Text 6, p. 20, 1; from Tibetan Text 5, p. 516, 6; and from Tibetan Text 12, p. 133,1. Material has been taken from all these texts in the elaboration of this section.

^b Wylie, *rnal ’byor*.

^c *Nalma* (Wylie, *rnal ma*) means original, unmodified condition (of something), whereas *yorwa* (Wylie, *’byor ba*) means “to possess.”

^d Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^e This reference to the meaning of the term *vajra* as used on the Paths in question was incorporated from a personal communication by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (email received on April 6, 2003).

^f Wylie *yid dam* (probably a contraction of *yid kyi dam tshig*; *samaya* of mind or non-Jungian archetypal forms [with which] *samaya* [is kept]); Skt. *devatā* or, more precisely, *iṣṭadevatā* (where *iṣṭa* means “cherished” or “revered”).

behaviors that the Path of Renunciation regards as “impure”). Since conduct is supposed to transcend acceptance and rejection, and since objects of visualization include deities in *yab-yum* that arouse passion and at the same time provide means for transforming it, this vehicle is not circumscribed to the Path of purification, but contains elements of the Path of Transformation as well (however, as shown by the fact that *yab-yum* is visualized rather than applied physically, this vehicle does not apply the methods of transformation directly).

This system can be subdivided into: the system that mainly applies action, and the system that mainly applies meditation.

The System that Mainly Applies Action

Here one performs the ritual actions (1) of Supreme Action or (2) of the Supreme Maṇḍala.⁴⁰³ (1) Is subdivided into: (a) minor action, in which realization is sought by means of one of the ritual practices and which thus involves assiduous worship through offerings, tormas, fire rites, recitation of the essential *mantra* and so on; and (b) supreme action, in which these rituals are practiced as secondary factors for realization of the *maṇḍala* (e.g. performing torma and fire rites five or six times is deemed to enable obtainment of the realization sought). (2) Practitioners of the Supreme *Maṇḍala* maintain that by means of rituals from the earth consecration rite as the base of the *maṇḍala*, up to receiving the initiation, the individual can attain Awakening.

The System that Mainly Applies Concentration

Here, after having carried out the initial meditation of preparation and then the meditation of total purity, whether one meditates on a deity or a *maṇḍala*, it is necessary to develop the visualization by means of the five factors of realization, which are: (1) The factor of realization of method and *prajñā* by means of the sun and moon seat that derives from meditation on the sun and moon one on the top of the other on a lotus seat; (2) the factor of realization of the purity of the sense bases by means of the form of the Body complete with ornaments; (3) the factor of realization of the sounds, words and names by means of the *cakra* of vowels and consonants^a of the Voice; (4) the factor of realization in the dimension of one’s specific Buddha family by means of the symbolic attributes of the mind such as the *vajra*, the wheel, the jewel and so on; (5) the factor of realization of the purity of the ultimate nature of phenomena by means of the pure deity of primordial gnosis or *jñānasattva*.⁴⁰⁴

Practitioners of this system claim that by meditating on the above five, on the outer level the five aggregates and five elements are purified, on the inner level *karma* and the five emotions are purified, and on the secret level the five objects and five senses are purified—and that thereby one realizes the state of Awakening of the five Families.

^a Skt. *āli-kāli*.

Meditating on the Yidam and oneself as two siblings or friends and having as the aim of the practice the recognition that one's own mind is the deity, one learns not to expect anything from the deity because the siddhis issue from oneself, and not to expect anything bad from oneself as one's own mind possesses the nature of the deity and the capacity for the manifestation of the latter's illusory body. Acknowledging the nonduality between the deity to visualize and oneself, not even the names of relative and absolute any longer exist. These are the reasons for the superiority of this system over the lower vehicles.

Engaging in these practices and in the meditation on the four symbols,^a which are the commitment symbol,^b the *dharma* symbol,^c the action symbol,^d and the total symbol,^e it is possible, according to the view of this system, to achieve the supreme state of the absolute beyond birth and cessation. Concerning the four *mudras*, it must be noted that the aspect of the Body is the *total symbol*, the aspect of the Voice is the *dharma* symbol, the aspect of the Mind is the *commitment symbol*, and the accomplishment of the actions of radiation and reabsorption etc. is the action symbol. By means of these, the true, unconditioned nature of one's own three doors (body, speech and mind) is supposed to be realized as these are meditated on as the essence of the deity's Body, Voice, Mind and Activities. (With regard to the *mahāmudrā*, Rongzompa remarks that it is the characteristic symbol of the Body and that it is called “great” because it serves greatly as the cause for remembering the deity and having its presence, and says that according to others it is called “great” because it represents the base of the other *mudrās*.^f)

A Dzogchen Note Concerning Yogatantra

^a Skt. *catu[h]mudra*; Tib. chyagya zhi (Wylie, *phyag rgya bzhi*) of Yogatantra and the inner tantras (as different from the *caturmudra* (Wylie, *phyag rgya bzhi*) of general Buddhism, which are the “four distinctive signs of the Buddhist teachings.”

^b Skt. *samayamudrā*; Tib. damtsikgi chyagya (Wylie, *dam tshig gi phyag rgya*); Ch. 三摩耶印 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānmóyé yìn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mo²-yeh² yin⁴*). Note that the Chinese translation renders the Tib. *phyag rgya* and Skt. *mudra* as *seal* rather than *symbol*, which according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is the correct sense of the Tibetan term.

^c Skt. *dharmamudrā*; Tib. chökyi chyagya (Wylie, *chos kyi phyag rgya*); Ch. 法印 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎyìn*; Wade-Giles, *fǎ³-yin⁴*). Note that the Chinese translation renders the Tib. *phyag rgya* and Skt. *mudra* as *seal* rather than *symbol*, which according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is the correct sense of the Tibetan term.

^d Skt. *karmamudrā*; Tib. lekyi chyagya (Wylie, *las kyi phyag rgya*); Ch. 事業手印 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shìyèshǒu yìn*; Wade-Giles, *shih⁴-yeh⁴-shou³ yin⁴*). Note that the Chinese translation renders the Tib. *phyag rgya* and Skt. *mudra* as *seal* rather than *symbol*, which according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is the correct sense of the Tibetan term.

^e Skt. *mahāmudrā*; Tib. chyagya chenpo (Wylie, *phyag rgya chen po*); Ch. 大印 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dà yìn*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-yin⁴*) / 大手印 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dàshǒu yìn*; Wade-Giles *ta⁴-shou³ yin⁴*). Lit. great symbol, in the context of the inner Tantras Chögyal Namkhai Norbu renders it as total symbol because it is a condition wherein all is symbol, for there is no real, discrete, or self-existent referent. Even though here we are dealing with an outer Tantra, I kept Ch.N.N.'s terminology in order to avoid confusion. Note that the Chinese translation renders the Tib. *phyag rgya* and Skt. *mudra* as *seal* rather than *symbol*, which according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is the correct sense of the Tibetan term.

^f Tibetan Text 4, p. 239, 6; cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 170).

With regard to the Yogatantrayāna, the *Kunje Gyälpo* reads:^a

Followers of Yoga[tantra], aspiring to the Beautifully Arrayed [pure land],
And having undertaken [the trainings] with and without characteristics
mainly practice [in terms of] the four mudras.
[Consequently] they cannot apply the principle “beyond acceptance and rejection.”
[Conversely,] the total bliss of Atiyoga
is pure and total Awake awareness beyond acceptance and rejection.
The state [that becomes evident when one is] beyond acceptance and rejection
is hindered by Yoga[tantra]:
acceptance and rejection with regard to total completeness / plenitude and perfection
amounts to falling into the misleading deviation of the followers of Yoga[tantra].

THE INNER OR HIGHER TANTRAS

Finally, the Nyingmapas refer to two the highest categories of Tantras of the Path of Transformation in a broad sense, which make up the Path of Transformation in the narrow, proper sense of the term, by the label “inner Tantras,” whereas the Sarmapas call them “higher Tantras.”⁴⁰⁵ After their eradication from what nowadays are Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and the Hindustan as a whole (India and Pakistan, including Oḍḍiyāna)—a process that in India culminated in the early second millennium CE—the Tantras of this category continued to be transmitted solely within the schools established in Tibet and its zone of cultural influence: they are supposed *not* to be part of the lore of the Mīzōng^b (i.e. the Chinese Mī School) and/or its Japanese offshoot, the Shingon School.^c

It is in this category that the differences between the new or Sarmapa system and the old or Nyingmapa system are most significant. To begin with, the Sarmapas have a single category of what they call higher Tantra, which is Anuttarayogatantra, whereas the Nyingmapas have three categories of what they call inner Tantra, the lower two of which, which are the Mahāyogatantra and the Anuyogatantra, make up the Nyingma Path of Transformation properly speaking. Of these, only Mahāyoga may be said to *somewhat and somehow* correspond to the Anuttarayoga—the terms *somewhat and somehow* being used to emphasize the fact that this correspondence is loose and far from being complete.

The Anuyogatantra is decidedly “higher” than both the Mahāyogatantras and the Anuttarayogatantras, because it is more thoroughly based on the principle of spontaneous perfection (for example, the transformation practiced in this vehicle is instantaneous rather than gradual) and because it emphasizes the stage of completion / perfection,^d which is the one that in these vehicles may lead to realization.

^a Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, p. 179). See also Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, p. 296); Tulku Thöndup (1996, 1st ed. 1989, p. 96). I have modified the terminology in order to make it agree with the one used throughout this book.

^b 密宗; Wade-Giles, Mī⁴-tsung¹.

^c 真言宗: Shingon-shū. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Zhēnyánzōng; Wade-Giles, Chen¹-yan² Tsung¹.

^d Skt. *sampannakrama*, *niṣpannakrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. dzogrim (Wylie, *rdzogs rim*); Ch. 圓滿次第 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ tz'u⁴-tí⁴*).

Finally, the Atiyogatantra is not based on the principle of transformation and therefore our sources do not classify it as belonging to the Path of Transformation of the Vajrayāna, but as constituting the Path of Spontaneous Liberation that will be considered in the next chapter (and, more thoroughly, in the second tome of this book, and the third should I finally compile it and publish it)—which is the Path that makes the most skillful and thorough use possible of the spontaneous perfection / self-rectification aspect of the Base.

The Higher Tantra of the Sarmapa: Anuttarayogatantra^a

Among others, the Anuttarayogatantra of the Sarmapa and Mahāyogatantra of the Nyingmapa share the following characteristics: (1) in both vehicles, there is a “Path of liberation”^{b406} and a “Path of method,”^{c407} the latter of which comprises (a) a creation or generation stage^d in which one generates the visualization of oneself as the deity and of one’s dimension as the *maṇḍala* of the deity, training to perceive the totality of phenomenal existence as the *maṇḍala* in question, and (b) a perfection / completion stage^e in which one contemplates total bliss indivisible from emptiness; and (2) in both vehicles, the transformation whereby, on the Path of method, one visualizes oneself as a deity, is practiced in a gradual manner and dissolved at the end of the practice.

In the generation stage, after *inducing* a state of undifferentiated, artificial emptiness on pronouncing the *svabhāvamantra*, from that emptiness one gradually builds up the visualization, and as one works with the latter the emphasis is on the inseparability of clarity (which in these vehicles consists in the visualization) and emptiness (the deity and the rest of the elements of the transformation are to be visualized as being intangible, like a rainbow, and as lacking an independent self-nature).⁴⁰⁸

According to the practitioners of this system, in the perfection / completion stage, by means of specific practices one gains access to the primordial gnosis of total pleasure or primordial gnosis of absolute bliss indivisible from emptiness. This is achieved by means of two alternative trainings, which are: (a) the one that works with the “upper doors,” in which total bliss indivisible from emptiness is obtained by means of practices of tsa-lung-thigle^f associated with *yantra yoga*^g that generate

^a Though in this section I expound the Anuttarayogatantras in my own way, in it I have included a considerable amount of material from both the section on the Anuttarayogatantras and the section on the difference between the three classes of Anuttarayogatantras in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 171-174).

^b In Mahāyoga, *dröl lam* (Wylie, *grol lam*); in Anuttarayoga, *tharlam* (Wylie, *thar lam*): I use the same English words because *drölwa* (Wylie, *grol ba*) and *tharpa* (Wylie, *thar pa*) are synonyms.

^c Tib. *thablam* (Wylie, *thabs lam*); the term is used equally in Mahāyoga and Anuttarayoga.

^d Skt. *utpattikrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. *kyerim* (Wylie, *bskyed rim*); Ch. 生起次第 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngqǐ cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ch¹’i³ tz’u⁴-tī⁴*).

^e Skt. *sampannakrama*, *niṣpannakrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. *dzogrim* (Wylie, *rdzogs rim*); Ch. 圓滿次第 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ tz’u⁴-tī⁴*).

^f Wylie, *rtsa / rlung / thig le*: “structural pathways,” “circulating energy” and “energy potential” (also meaning in this context “energetic volume determining the scope of awareness”).

^g Tib. *thulthor* (Wylie, *’khrul ’khor*), which literally corresponds to the Skt. *adhisāra* and refers to something that is set in motion—like, for example, an engine.

heat in the navel *cakra*, which ascends through the “central channel” and “melts” the *amrita* or ambrosia that is visualized at the crown of the head, so that the molten *amrita* may descend successively through the *cakras* and channels, giving rise to progressive degrees of pleasure, and (b) the one that makes use of the “lower entrances,” in which heat and the ensuing total bliss arise spontaneously as a result of erotic-mystic union with the Tantric consort. In both cases, however, total bliss or pleasure is achieved depending on the generation of heat, and will not occur without the latter.

The practices of the completion / perfection stage significantly heighten the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^a / awaken the *kunḍalinī*.^b For its part, this makes the focus of attention widen, becoming more panoramic and permeable—which facilitates an experiential albeit conceptual and therefore relative realization of the emptiness and insubstantiality of all entities. As noted above, the practices of this stage induce, in one of the two ways discussed in the preceding paragraph, a powerful experience of pleasure that is therefore indivisible from the experience of emptiness. And since in the creation / generation stage one obtained an experience of clarity by visualizing oneself as a deity and the universe as the deity’s dimension, and the visualization in question is maintained while applying practices of the completion / perfection stage, and hence the experience of clarity continues to be manifest, those three experiences manifest coincidentally and thus can be skillfully used as powerful reflections in a mirror for discovering the latter’s true condition. Moreover, since the flow of total pleasure / bliss is experienced from the perspective of panoramic, permeable awareness, so that the flow in question becomes space-like, it becomes difficult to confine it into limits and therefore to localize it and objectify it—which reputedly makes it possible for one to realize the true meaning of the absence of characteristics equal to space, and thus to achieve the final goal of this vehicle.^c In fact, the ungrasp ability of the flow of bliss in a panoramic perspective and with a permeable focus of attention, together with the prescribed questioning of this and the other powerful experiences obtained in this stage, makes it possible for the delusion called *avidyā*, with its inherent illusion of self-existence / substantiality, to spontaneously dissolve in the nondual primordial gnosis that reveals the true, unconditioned and unmade condition of our selves and of the entire universe. Moreover, according to followers of this vehicle, total pleasure will assuage the vibratory activity at the root of the hypostatization / absolutization / reification / valorization of the contents of thought that gives rise to the illusion of hypostatic / inherent existence and to craving, thereby assuaging the latter as well.^d

^a Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^b The concept expressed by the Sanskrit *kunḍalinī* is intimately related to that expressed by the Tibetan term thigle (Wylie, *thig le*)—yet this Tibetan term, rather than rendering the Skt. *kunḍalinī*, renders the Skt. *bindu*.

^c These lines on the flow of bliss combine short extracts from various quotations incorporated to Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 210-212), with oral teachings the same Master has offered in retreats, and elements of my own experience.

^d Pāli, *taṇhā*; Skt. *trṣṇā*; Tib. *sepa* (Wylie, *sred pa*); Ch. 愛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *nài*; Wade-Giles, *nai*⁴).

In the inner or higher Tantras in general there is even more emphasis than in the Mahāyāna, on the key role that the indivisibility of (1) method or skillful means^a and (2) *prajñā*^b plays on the Path. However, in this context the term *prajñā* has a wider sense than in the Mahāyāna, as it also has the implied meaning of “energy.” The pair consisting of method and *prajñā* is the basis of a most essential taxonomy of the Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa schools: the one that divides them into father Tantras,^c mother Tantras^d and nondual Tantras.^e In fact, the Nyingma criterion for telling whether we are dealing with a father Tantra or a mother Tantra is whether method or *prajñā* are predominant in it, and that for telling whether the Tantra is nondual is that method and *prajñā* are balanced: if method preponderates, we are dealing with a father Tantra; if *prajñā* has the upper hand, we are dealing with a mother Tantra; if neither preponderates, we are dealing with a nondual Tantra. In *Summary of the Wish-fulfilling Treasury* Ju Mipham states:^f

As antidote to the poisons of the three emotions and in conformity with the capacities of individuals etc. the Tantras are subdivided into father, mother and nondual.

The father Tantras of [*Anuttarā*]yoga are those Tantras which [place a greater] emphasis [on] the creation stage or kyerim [than on the completion stage or dzogrim, stressing] the sundry ritual actions linked to it in connection with secondary practices; [which teach the practice of] the Illusory Wisdom Body in relation to [the aspects of] vision [and] method;⁴⁰⁹ [which teach that] the completion stage or dzogrim [is to be practiced] in relation to *prāṇa*,^g and [which teach] ‘direct action’⁴¹⁰ [as the specific action]. They have been transmitted mainly for individuals of irascible character and who love elaborate external activities (i.e. for individuals of lower capacity [among those with the capacity to practice higher Tantra]).

The mother Tantras of [*Anuttarā*]yoga are those Tantras which place greater emphasis on the dzogrim [or completion] stage than on the kyerim [or generation stage]; [which favor] the aspect of *prajñā* and of emptiness [over] that of method; [which teach] the *yoga* of the Clear Light⁴¹¹ as the means of realization; [which] regarding the Path of Method⁴¹² [stress the] experiences of pleasure [to be obtained] by means of [the secret instructions on] melting and reabsorbing the seed-essence; and [which teach] ‘conquest’⁴¹³ as the specific action. These have been transmitted mainly for those [individuals] of a passionate nature who are able to practice the specific methods [that are to be] applied within their own bodies—that is, [for] individuals of medium capacity.

Finally, the nondual Tantras are those Tantras in which there is balance between the aspects of method and *prajñā*, as well as between the kyerim and dzogrim stages, and which mainly consider that our [own natural] state of *rigpa-bodhicitta*,⁴¹⁴ the single sphere of total wisdom of purity and equality, is the ultimate nature of all phenomena. They are intended for individuals dominated by ignorance and endowed with the higher capacity to apply the principle of freedom from effort.

^a Skt. *upāya*; Tib. thab (Wylie, *thabs*); Ch. 方便 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*).

^b Tib. sherab (Wylie, *shes rab*); Ch. 般若 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*).

^c Tib. pagyü (Wylie, *pha rgyud*).

^d Tib. magyü (Wylie, *ma rgyud*).

^e Tib. nyimekyi gyü (Wylie, *gnyis med kyi rgyud*).

^f Tibetan text 20, p. 992, 2. Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 172-173).

^g Or *prāṇavāyu*; Pāli, *pāṇa*; Tib. lung (Wylie, *rlung*).

Thus in father Tantras the generation or creation stage predominates over the stage of completion, and correspondingly clarity is emphasized over pleasure, so that no details of the visualization must be neglected; in the completion stage—some key practices of which are said to be impracticable for women—practice is mainly concerned with *prāṇa*, and in addition the *yoga* of the illusory body is applied, which consists in imagining that one’s own body is intangible, like a ghost or a reflection. Conversely, in mother Tantras the completion stage preponderates and there is no need to emphasize the details of the visualization to the same degree as in the father Tantras, for in that stage the experiences of sensation / feeling are more central than those of clarity, and this does not only apply to the pleasure that must arise in this stage, but also to the visualization, in which the feeling of being the deity is more important than the details of the visualization; in these Tantras, the completion stage is mainly concerned with the seed-essence^a and *kuṇḍalinī*^b—which naturally go together, for retention of the seed-essence may help raise the *kuṇḍalinī* and the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness (the latter’s name in Tibetan being the same as that of the seed-essence⁴¹⁵—the masculine manifestation of which, in the form of *bindu*, is to be melted and reabsorbed in order to obtain the experiences of pleasure), and in addition one must apply the practice of clear light, which consists in remaining in limitless and formless luminosity.

While the method aspect predominates in father Tantras and the wisdom aspect does so in mother Tantras, in nondual Tantras these two aspects are balanced. As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu points out,^c in the *Kālacakratantra* and the realization ensuing from its practice, there is no preponderance of either the method aspect or the *prajñā* aspect, and therefore this realization is called “the level of realization of the neutral condition of Vajrasattva,” and the Tantra in question is praised as the king of all the different kinds of Anuttarayogatantra. The same Master-scholar also points out that the teaching of nondual Tantras contemplates the practice of method and *prajñā* and the development and completion stages in the equanimity of the pure dimension, “the total wisdom of the unequalled thigle or single sphere (own natural state of *rigpa-bodhicitta*), the primordial state that is the foundation of all phenomena of existence.” Furthermore, whereas in other Anuttarayogatantras the wisdom state of the fourth initiation is barely mentioned in a veiled manner, in a nondual Tantra such as the *Kālacakra*, it is shown openly and clearly. (Note that Je Tsongkhapa negated the existence of the category of nondual Tantra, which apart from the *Kālacakra* includes the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*—which among the Sarma Tantras is roughly as highly regarded as the *Kālacakra*.)

In spite of the coincidences between the Anuttarayogatantra of the New or Sarmapa schools and the Mahāyogatantra of the Old or Nyingmapa School listed at the beginning of this section, and of the fact that both classes of Tantra share some root texts, including the *Guhyasamājatantra*,^d which for the Sarmapas is a father

^a Skt. *bindu*; Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^b The meaning of this term is intimately related to that of the Tibetan term *thig le*.

^c Namkhai Norbu (1988).

^d Tib. *Sangwa Dīpa Gyü* or *Pel Sangwa Dīpa Gyü* (Wylie, [*dpal*] *gsang ba ’dus pa rgyud*). English translation: *Assembly of Secrets*.

Tantra, and the *Śrīcandraguhyatilakanāmamahātantrarāja*,^a those two systems are far from identical. To begin with, the Mahāyogatantras are not classified into father and mother Tantras; furthermore, as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has noted,^b the basic principle of the archetypal Mahāyogatantra of the Nyingmapa—the *Guhyagarbha*,^c which summarizes the contents of all Mahāyogatantras—does not at all correspond to that of the Father Anuttarayogatantras or that of the Mother Anuttarayogatantras. In fact, the only one it resembles is that of nondual Anuttarayogatantras: in the section on Mahāyoga it will be easy to corroborate that most features of nondual Tantras outlined in the above quotation from Ju Mipham apply to the paradigmatic Mahāyogatantras, in which “there is balance between the aspects of method and *prajñā* and between the stages of development and completion or perfection,” and which “mainly consider that one’s state of *rigpa-bodhicitta*,⁴¹⁶ the single sphere^d of the total primordial gnosis of purity and equality, is the absolute, true condition of all phenomena.” However, such similarities are established by emphasizing what the two systems have in common, rather than what distinguishes them as a whole. In particular, in Mahāyoga there exists the view that the true *maṇḍala* is spontaneously perfect^e and self-actualizing^f [of the true condition], being no other than the true condition itself in which cause and fruit are indivisible and in which all sentient beings have always been Awake—of which the sand *maṇḍala* used in the initiation is a mere symbolic image. Furthermore, in Mahāyoga the Path is structured on a *model* of death, intermediate state^g between death and rebirth, and then rebirth, that somehow *mimics* the structure and function of the top spontaneous deconditioning episodes that result from the unleashing of positive feedback loops inherent in the human system, as corresponds to the highest sense *qua* Path of the term spontaneous perfection^h / spontaneous rectificationⁱ in the context of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo—which is a key element of the superiority of Mahāyoga over the Anuttarayoga. These are some of the main reasons why some Masters, including Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoché^j and Tarthang Tulku,^{k417} have been so radical as to claim that *the Anuttarayogatantras are midway between the outer Tantras and the inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa*.

^a Tib. *Dasang Thigle Gyü* (Wylie, *zla gsang thig le rgyud*); in full, *Pel Dasang Thigle Tsawe Gyü* (Wylie, *dpal zla gsang thig le rtsa ba'i rgyud*). English translation: *Root Tantra of the Essence of the Secret Moon*.

^b *Ibidem*.

^c Tib. *Sangwa Nyingpo Gyü* (Wylie, *gsang ba snying po rgyud*); English translation: *Essence of Secrets*. This Tantra is also called *Net of the Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva* (Tib. *Dorje Sempa Gyutruḥ Trawa* [Wylie, *rdo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul draw ba*]).

^d Tib. *thig le nyakchik* (Wylie, *thig le nyag gcig*). Keep in mind that the term *sphere* (*thig le*) refers to the true condition of all phenomena, which cannot be comprised by any concept.

^e Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^f Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^g Skt. *antarābhava*; Tib. *bardo* (Wylie, *bar do*); 中有 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yu³*) / 中陰 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyīn*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yin¹*).

^h Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

ⁱ Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^j Trungpa (1981, p. 125; cf. also p. 92).

^k Tarthang Tulku (1977b, pp. 172-173); also in Tarthang Tulku (1991, p. 165).

The Inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa

1. Mahāyogatantra^a

In the first paragraph on the Anuttarayogatantra, some of the characteristics common to that class of Sarmapa Tantras and to the Nyingma Mahāyogatantras were outlined—including (1) that the “Path of method”^b comprises (a) a creation / generation stage^c in which one “spreads emptiness everywhere”^d (i.e. a concept of emptiness is superimposed on what is taken to be a substantial reality, thus adding an extra layer to the onion of delusion)⁴¹⁸ while reciting the *svabhāvamantra* and in which from this emptiness one transforms into the deity in a gradual manner, and (b) a perfection / completion stage^e at the end of which the visualization must be dissolved, and (2) that in the perfection / completion stage one gains access to the primordial gnosis of total pleasure or absolute bliss indivisible from emptiness by means of two alternative trainings: that of the “upper doors” and that of the “lower entrances” (cf. the three first paragraphs of the section on the Anuttarayogatantra).

Then in the passage on the father, mother and nondual Anuttarayogatantras, some of the differences between the principles of Mahāyoga and Anuttarayoga were outlined: Mahāyogatantras are not classified into father and mother Tantras; their principle is similar to that of the nondual Tantras, although in Mahāyoga there exists the view that the true *maṇḍala* is spontaneously perfect^f and self-actualizing^g [of the true condition], being no other than the true condition itself in which cause and fruit are indivisible and in which all sentient beings have always been Awake—of which the sand *maṇḍala* used in the initiation is a mere symbolic image. It was also noted that in Mahāyoga the Path is structured on a *model* of death, intermediate state^h and rebirth that is supposed to purify these (not so that they become smoother or lighter but in order to free the yogins from them and the suffering they involve) and that to some extent *imitates* the structure and function of the spontaneous deconditioning experiences that occur once access is gained to the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomenaⁱ while the “physical body” is alive, in which loops inherent in the human system are unleashed that are the supreme manifestation of the highest

^a Though in this section I expound the Mahāyogatantras my own way, it includes a considerable amount of material from the Mahāyogatantra section in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, Part II, section 2.8.10.4, “The Four branches of Approach and Attainment,” pp. 208-213).

^b Tib. thablam (Wylie, *thabs lam*); the term is used equally in Mahāyoga and Anuttarayoga.

^c Skt. *utpattikrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. kyerim (Wylie, *bskyed rim*); Ch. 生起次第 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngqǐ cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ch¹’i³ tz’u⁴-tī⁴*).

^d Nonliteral translation for the Tib. tongnyi gyedeb sushorwa (Wylie, *stong nyid rgyas ’debs su shor ba*) and the Tib. tongte gyedeb (Wylie, *stong ltas rgyas ’debs*).

^e Skt. *saṃpannakrama*, *niṣpannakrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. dzogrim (Wylie, *rdzogs rim*); Ch. 圓滿次第 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ tz’u⁴-tī⁴*).

^f Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. lhundrub (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^g Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. lhundrub (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^h Skt. *antarābhava*; Tib. bardo (Wylie, *bar do*); Ch. 中有 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yu³*) / 中陰 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyīn*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yin¹*).

ⁱ Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fǎ³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

sense of the term spontaneous perfection^a / spontaneous rectification^b in the context of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo. Although the Anuttarayogatantras are structured in a similar way, they are not connected to practices based on the principle of spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification such as the one just referred to.^c

Further differences between these two vehicles are that in Mahāyoga, but not so in Anuttarayoga, two sections or series of teachings exist, which are the Series of the *Sādhanas* or Drubde^d and the Series of the Tantras or Gyüde^e. The first, which has come to us through two different lineages—that of the long linear transmission or kama^f and that of the short transmission through treasure-teachings or terma^g—is circumscribed to the Path of method, whereas the second is divided into Path of method and Path of liberation, just like the whole of the Anuttarayogatantras.⁴¹⁹ Finally, as will be shown below, in the Mahāyogatantras (among which, as noted in the preceding section, two are also counted among the Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa: the *Guhyasamāja*^h and the *Śrīcandraguhyatilakanāmamahātantrarāja*ⁱ), the Fruit is called Dzogchen, and the Vajra nature is explained in terms of properly Dzogchen concepts—such as primordial purity, spontaneous perfection, and so on—that the Anuttarayogatantras in general (including the Sarmapa of New version of the two Tantras that Sarma Anuttarayoga shares with Nyingma Mahāyoga) fail to offer.

With regard to the method of “creation,” after having applied gradually the three Contemplations, in these Tantras one mentally creates the *maṇḍala* step by step and one is said to attain self-realization by means of this meditation. The three Contemplations are: (1) Concentration on the essential nature; (2) Contemplation of total vision; and (3) Contemplation of the cause.

(1) The concentration on the essential nature consists in abiding in a state of equanimous Contemplation free of thoughts, in a pure and limpid condition that is all pervading, like space.

(2) The contemplation of total vision corresponds to the arising of an impartial compassion, which is like a magical illusion, towards all beings that fail to understand the essential nature (who nonetheless are realized to be equally illusory); then we stay clearly and undistractedly in this state of Contemplation.

(3) The contemplation of the cause, which depends on the two preceding ones, consists in visualizing a syllable (for example, the letter HUM) as the essence of the wisdom of the state of rigpa, like a fish jumping out of clear water. Here we meditate on the three divine manifestations (*sattva*) that emanate from the syllable HUM, one within the other.⁴²⁰

^a Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. lhundrub (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^b Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. lhundrub (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

^c An exception to this might be the practice of the Intermediate State in the Six Yogas of Nāropā and the Six Yogas of Niguma, which are related to Sarma Anuttarayogatantra.

^d Wylie, *sgrub sde*.

^e Wylie, *rgyud sde*.

^f Wylie, *bka' ma*.

^g Wylie, *gter ma*. These two forms of transmission—kama and terma—will be explained later on.

^h Tib. *Sangwa Dīpa* (Wylie, *gsang ba 'dus pa*).

ⁱ Tib. *Dasang Thigle Gyü* (Wylie, *zla gsang thig le rgyud*).

Thus it is usually said that in the Mahāyoga the entrance door is the three Contemplations; that understanding the view means recognizing whatever appears as the male and female deities; that the basic *samayas* to keep concern the body, speech and mind; and that the Fruit is the state of method and *prajñā* beyond union and separation (as method and *prajñā* are not two different things that may unite or separate).

We have seen that, despite the fact that both in Mahāyoga and Anuttarayoga the training in contemplation involves building the *maṇḍala* in a gradual manner, Mahāyoga is often held to be utterly beyond Anuttarayoga, in which case the latter is held to lie between the outer Tantras and the inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa. We have also seen that one of the reasons for this is that in Mahāyoga there exists the view that the true *maṇḍala* is spontaneously perfect / self-actualizing / self-rectifying^a and consists in the true nature in which cause and fruit are inseparable and wherein all beings have always been Awake—of which the *maṇḍala* of sand used in the initiation is a mere symbolic image. The fact that all beings have always been Awake is called Awakening in nature, in which there are three stages: the paternal and maternal causes for the existence of a being, consisting of the sperm, the ovum and consciousness; the *physical* and *mental* elements that produce the body structure; and the body-mind system as support for the *maṇḍala* of deities. Then there is Awakening in understanding, which refers to the levels of the *vidyādhara*s, when one really understands the original condition and therefore the fact that all beings have always been Awake. Finally, there is Awakening in realization, which is the actual realization of the Awake condition beyond all interpretations in terms of concepts and therefore beyond the subject-object duality. (The last type of Awakening is, according to the Mahāyogatantrayāna, the manifestation of absolute truth *qua* Fruit. This vehicle, like the Yogācāra and Mahāmādhyaṃyaka schools of the Mahāyāna and like the Chinese Tiāntáizōng^b or Tiāntái^c school, posits three truths. However, the comparison of the three truths of the Mahāyoga with those of the three schools just mentioned is beyond the scope of this book.)

The Mahāyogatantra involves thirteen levels^d rather than eleven, which, as noted in a previous section, is their number in the Mahāyāna according to the classification that is widely taught in Tibetan Buddhism. In this inner Tantric vehicle it is asserted that, although all phenomena and all beings are already Awake, in order to effectively realize this, one has to train one's mind for the three levels of Awakening proper to Mahāyoga, which are the eleventh, the twelfth and the thirteenth. To train for the level of total light (the eleventh, which in the Mahāyāna is the last and that is said to correspond to *anuttarā samyaksambodhi*), rather than undertaking the progressive Sutric training that allows one to proceed through the first four paths and the first ten levels, one directly practices the nonconceptual Contemplation of the essential nature. To become familiar with the level of the

^a Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^b 華嚴宗; Wade-Giles, *T'ien¹-t'ai²-tsung¹*.

^c 華嚴 (simplified: 天台); Wade-Giles, *T'ien¹-t'ai²*.

^d Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*).

lotus^a—the twelfth—one meditates on the inseparability of *prajñā* and compassion through the Contemplation of total vision. Finally, to become familiar with the level of the Level of the Great Accumulation of the *Cakra* of Letters^b or, more precisely, of the Level of the Great Accumulation of the Immutable *maṇḍala*⁴²¹—the last, which is the thirteenth—one meditates on the seed-syllable of the Contemplation of the cause in order to then gradually create the *maṇḍala* and become familiar with it.

One could legitimately wonder how it is possible to arrive at the unveiling of the unconditioned and unmade by means of methods that involve the *creation* or a new reality that, being the result of *creation*, is necessarily *made*—and thus come to question the alleged superiority of Mahāyoga even over the Hīnayāna, which, as we have seen, taught the “tearing-down one”^c as an essential meditation. The reply of a practitioner of Mahāyoga would be that according to this vehicle the true condition of all forms is the deity, the true condition of all sounds is *mantra*, and the true condition of mind is the *samādhi* of thatness,^d and that therefore the reality one creates is merely a way of acknowledging our original condition, so that one is not superimposing anything on it. Furthermore, a practitioner of this vehicle would note that by consciously constructing the visualization of the deity in the *maṇḍala* one becomes familiar with the mechanisms whereby one had always built up ordinary reality, and thus gains some control of the process involved. More important, such a practitioner would note that by means of the completion stage one gains direct insight into the unconditioned and unmade, for the essence of the completion stage lies precisely in Seeing through the reality one has created into the unborn nature. Moreover, it is an incontrovertible fact that the practices of the completion stage can increase the *kuṇḍalinī* and the related energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^e—which, as will be shown in Vol. II of this book, may allow the unmade / unconditioned / uncontrived / uncompounded to unveil more easily and then to be more clearly evident, and at the same time can make the process of neutralization or eradication of the karmic propensities at the root of *samsāra* far more powerful and effective. This is directly related to the fact, mentioned in the preceding section and discussed in a note,⁴²² that in Mahāyoga the Path is structured on a *model* of death, intermediate state^f and rebirth that somehow *mimics* the structure and function of the supreme, spontaneous deconditioning experiences that result from the unleashing of systemic loops inherent in the human reality, as corresponds to the highest sense of the term spontaneous perfection / self-rectification^g in Atiyogatantra (hence the use of the term in Mahāyoga and the latter’s superiority over the Anuttarayoga). All this shows incontrovertibly that the power of this vehicle to unveil the unconditioned and uncompounded, as well as to neutralize samsaric conditionings, is much greater than that of all “lower” vehicles. (For a far

^a Tib. machak pema chengyi sa (Wylie, *ma chags pad ma can gyi sa*).

^b Tib. yige khorlo tsog chengyi sa (Wylie, *yi ge 'khor lo tshogs chen gyi sa*).

^c Pāli, *apacayagāmi*.

^d Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. dezhinnyi (Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*); Chin. 真如 [性] (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú* [xìng]; Wade-Giles, *chen¹-ju²* [*hsing⁴*]).

^e Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^f Skt. *antarābhava*; Tib. bardo (Wylie, *bar do*); Ch. 中有 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yu³*) / 中陰 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyīn*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yin¹*).

^g Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

more thorough explanation of Mahāyoga, the reader is directed to Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. 1, pp. 276-283.)

Nevertheless, the *Kunje Gyälpo*, root Tantra of the Nature of Mind series of Dzogchen teachings,^a outlines the essential drawback of Mahāyogatantra (which is also the essential drawback of the Anuttarayogatantra of the Sarmapas) as follows:^b

Followers of Mahāyoga aspire to [the realization] of *Vajradhāra*:
having entered the Path of method and *prajñā*
they practice the four [branches] of approach and attainment⁴²³
in the *maṇḍala* of the purity of their own mind.

The total bliss of Atiyoga
is pure and total Awake awareness beyond effort.
[The state that is evident] when there is no striving is hindered by Mahāyoga.
Applying effort to attain total completeness / plenitude and perfection
amounts to falling into the misleading deviation of followers of Mahāyoga.

2. Anuyogatantra^c

As we have seen, in the Ancient or Nyingmapa School, Mahāyoga is not the sole inner Tantric vehicle belonging to the Path of Transformation. In addition to it, there is the Anuyogatantra, which has no rough equivalent among the New^d schools, and that is considered to be “superior,” *both* to the Sarma Anuttarayogatantra, *and* to the Nyingma Mahāyogatantra. However, just like the Anuttarayogatantra and the Mahāyogatantra, the Anuyogatantra contains two Paths, which are that of method and that of liberation.⁴²⁴

On the Anuyogatantra Path of method, just like on Anuttarayogatantra’s and Mahāyogatantra’s, there is a generation / creation stage and a completion / perfection stage. However, in both Anuttarayogatantra and Mahāyogatantra the transformation corresponding to the generation or creation stage is gradual—i.e. the visualization is built up step by step. In the discussion of Anuttarayogatantra it was noted that in the father Tantras, once the visualization is generated, it is essential to keep awareness of all of its details, which implies that in these Tantras the emphasis is placed on clarity, but that the mother Tantras place greater emphasis on the sensation of being the deity than on the details of the visualization. However, all *three* kinds of Anuttarayogatantras, and Mahāyogatantras as well, place great emphasis on the details of the visualization than Anuyogatantra, for in the latter it is enough to *feel like the deity, as though one were that deity*, without having to have more than a

^a Skt. Cittavarga; Tib. Semde (Wylie, *sems sde*). In this particular case the terms *citta* and *sems* are short for the Skt. *bodhicitta* and the Tib. changchubsem (Wylie, *byang chub sems*)—both of them in the Dzogchen sense—or the Skt. *cittatā / citta eva* and the Tib. semnyi (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^b Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 214). See also Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente (English 1999, p. 179); Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, pp. 296-297); Tulku Thöndup (1996, 1st ed. 1989, p. 96).

^c Though in this section I expound the Anuyogatantras in my own way, in it I have included a considerable amount of material from the section on Anuyogatantra in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 186-191 [also pp. 179-180]).

^d Sarmapa (Wylie, *gsar ma pa*).

general idea of the deity's traits in one's visualization—which means that *feeling* is far more essential than clarity.

Likewise, in all Anuttarayogatantras and Mahāyogatantras the visualization must be dissolved at the end of the practice in order to avoid solidifying the reality visualized, for otherwise, rather than freedom from the illusion of substantiality and, by familiarizing oneself with the mechanisms whereby false realities are built up, realizing the constructed character of ordinary reality or impure vision, one would add still another layer to the onion of delusion that will further conceal its empty core, which is what the Dzogchen teachings call the Base. For the same reason, during the practice one must keep a forceful awareness of the rainbow-like, illusion-like character of the visualization. Contrariwise, in Anuyogatantra—which is more directly based on the Dzogchen principle of spontaneous perfection^a and in which transformation is instantaneous and what is essential is to maintain the *sensation of being the deity*—at the end of the practice the practitioner must not dissolve the visualization, but “remain indivisible from the deity.” This is possible because the practitioner of Anuyoga must already have a conviction of the empty character of all phenomena, including the deity that is visualized—so powerful as not to be in danger of solidifying the visualization if it is not dissolved. Likewise, he or she does not have to keep a forceful awareness of the rainbow-like, illusion-like character of the visualization, for her or his feeling of emptiness is naturally so strong that there is no danger of adding a further, outer layer to the onion of false, delusive reality.

It is in daily life that the passions spontaneously arise with greatest strength, and therefore it is in daily life that the Path of Transformation, which as we have seen depends on the passions to the same degree that fire depends on fuel, for they are the material to be transformed into the corresponding facets of primordial gnosis, could prove most valuable. If, in order to transform the passions, yogins had to enter a meditative absorption characterized by emptiness, then develop the visualization of themselves as the deity step by step, then maintain consciousness of all details of the visualization, and finally dissolve this visualization and remain in a state of emptiness free from characteristics, it would be simply impossible to apply the Path of Transformation when passions manifest in everyday experience. Contrariwise, if whenever passions arise in their daily life yogins instantly visualize themselves as *heruka*⁴²⁵ deities and use the energy of the passion for sustaining the transformation, they will be able to effectively employ the passions on the Path of Transformation as the raw material of realization. Therefore, only Anuyogatantra can allow yogins to effectively apply the Path of Transformation in daily life.

In this vehicle it is said that on the absolute plane one never separates from the unborn and uninterrupted manifestation of the male and female deities, or from the total, intrinsically empty expanse of the *dharmadhātu*^b—that is, from the space

^a Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^b In this book the term *expanse* renders the Skt. *dharmadhātu*, the Tib. chöying (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); the Ch. 法界 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*), etc.—except when it designates the subtle object of the formless absorptions (Skt. *ārūpyasamāpatti*; Tib. zugmepai nymjug [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *wú-sè-jiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*], or Skt. *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. **zugmé na chöpai samten** [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]). However, the term *expanse* will not always be used alone: I will often

in which all so-called “physical” and “mental” phenomena manifest, which cannot be grasped in terms of conceptual extremes, and that can only be realized by means of a nonconceptual gnosis. This implies that the deities manifest in the state of rigpa and the yogin remains in this state. Likewise, it is said that in the relative plane one clearly visualizes the dimension of form of the realized ones by meditating in an equanimous but distinct way. Since one is supposed to apply the practice in rigpa, this means that there must be a coincidence of the two truths—which according to Je Tsongkhapa only manifest in fully Awake Buddhas, but which according to all other teachers and teachings is something that simply cannot occur. At any rate, those who practice this system claim that in this way one attains realization.

Thus it is clear that in the Anuyoga one neither constructs the visualization of the deities step by step nor dissolves the visualization at the end of a session of practice. At the beginning of a session, one is supposed to instantly visualize oneself as the deity while remaining *in the state of rigpa*—the panoramic awareness that (is) indivisible from the total empty expanse of the *dharmadhātu*—with the certitude that the deities never ceased being there and thus that one is not creating anything. Then, upon ending the session, one does not formally dissolve the deities into a blank emptiness, but is supposed to continue in the state of rigpa while maintaining nondual panoramic awareness (of) the *dharmadhātu*, with the certitude of the fact that the deities continue to be the embodiment of the true nature of all reality. This is easy to say but most hard to actually implement. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu quotes from Rongzompa’s Commentary to Padmasambhava’s *Garland of Visions*, from the *Rigpa Rangshar Tantra* (pertaining to the Dzogchen Series of Instructions),^a and from Longchenpa’s *Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle*:^b

Rongzompa’s commentary states (Tibetan text 4: p. 243, 4):

This [method] has been transmitted for those who have the capacity to remain clearly and wholly in the single instantaneous [nondual] Presence [called] rigpa⁴²⁶ [that makes patent] the nature of *bodhicitta*,^c [and in that state carry out] all the aspects of meditation and practice [established in] the texts of *Yogatantra*. This means that one meditates on the nonconceptual state of the ultimate nature, on the illusory *maṇḍala* of the deity,⁴²⁷ on the *maṇḍala* of higher contemplation or on the *maṇḍalas* of nature, of contemplation, of the images and so on;⁴²⁸ [however, in Anuyoga] all these aspects that are explained separately are clearly perfected in the same instant, just as a person endowed with miraculous powers can perform simultaneously and without incompatibility the four habitual activities.⁴²⁹ To summarize [this point, it is said that] without separating from the two [aspects] there is the clarity of the one; indivisible as one, [this clarity] is clearly distinct in three [points]. Thus the

use *expanse of the true condition of phenomena; expanse of phenomena; total, empty expanse where all “physical” and “mental” phenomena manifest; total, intrinsically empty expanse of the dharmadhātu; total empty expanse of the dharmadhātu; empty expanse; etc.*

^a Tib. Memngag[gyi]de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^b Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 187-191). The three works cited are: (1) Tibetan Text 4; (2) Tibetan Text 5; (3) Tibetan Text 12.

^c Note that in the Dzogchen [Nature of] Mind series (Tib. Semde [Wylie, *sems sde*]; Skt. Cittavarga) the term *bodhicitta* is a synonym of nature of mind / Base awareness (Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*)).

perfection of the instantaneous presence of rigpa is called the ‘method of completion’.

“Without separating from the two [aspects]” refers to:

- Not separating from the sense that all animate and inanimate phenomena are the state of spontaneous perfection of Awakening in the spontaneously perfect *maṇḍala* of the images, [which embodies] the [true] nature of the absolute [condition] beyond birth and cessation.

- Not separating from the state [in which] the [true] condition of the [primordial expanse containing all] phenomena,^a [which is] free from extremes⁴³⁰ [and therefore from all concepts, has unveiled]...

Without separating [from these two], one meditates clearly on the aggregates, constituents and sense bases in the *maṇḍala* of higher contemplation: this is called the ‘single clarity’.

“[Abiding] indivisibly as one” means understanding that whatever appears [and whatever] one meditates on, is indivisible in the [empty] dimension of *bodhicitta* beyond birth and cessation, the ultimate nature [of phenomena].

“[The] three clearly distinct [points]” are: (1) even though one meditates on the *maṇḍala* in which everything is spontaneously perfect, [the specific meditation] is clearly distinct from other contemplations; (2) even though the colors and attributes etc. [of the deity] manifest clearly in the *maṇḍala* of higher contemplation, they are clearly distinct from those of other [deities]; (3) the manifestations of the central deity, consort and surrounding retinue must be clearly distinct. These are the three clearly distinct points.

If one is able to engage in this contemplation effortlessly on the basis of the principle of spontaneous perfection, integrating space and time in the [total] condition of absolute equality, then [this practice] is not different from the method of Dzogpa Chenpo. However here one does not really have this capacity, because effort is applied in directing the Presence of rigpa in a certain direction, and [because attempting to make] the instantaneous [timeless] state [be contained] within a period of time... entails fragmentariness. Thus one engages [in the practice] in this manner in order to perfect all aims in the single instantaneous Presence [that is called] rigpa.

The essence of Anuyoga is concisely expressed in the Tantra *Self-arising State of Rigpa* (Tibetan text 5: p. 520, 2):

“The great lung⁴³¹ [tradition] of the Anuyoga vehicle
speaks of the *vajra* of the state of inseparability
of the ultimate dimension and primordial gnosis.
Entry can be direct or gradual.

The understanding of the view is the state beyond union and separation.

^a In this book the term *expanse* renders the Skt. *dharmadhātu*, the Tib. *chöying* (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); the Ch. 法界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*), etc.—except when it designates the subtle object of the formless absorptions (Skt. *ārūpyasamāpatti*; Tib. *zugmepai nymjug* [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wú-sè-jìè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*], or Skt. *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *zugmé na chöpai samten* [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjìè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]). However, the term *expanse* will not always be used alone: I will often use *expanse of the true condition of phenomena*; *expanse of phenomena*; *total, empty expanse where all “physical” and “mental” phenomena manifest*; *total, intrinsically empty expanse of the dharmadhātu*; *total empty expanse of the dharmadhātu*; *empty expanse*; etc.

In direct entry the deities, without needing to be visualized gradually,
are perfected by remembering the essence.
In gradual entry, one enters progressively into the ultimate dimension and into
primordial gnosis
and finally attains the Fruit of the level of Vajradhāra.”⁴³²

Concerning the principle of the ultimate dimension^a and of primordial gnosis,^b there is a clear and comprehensive explanation in *Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* by Longchenpa (Tibetan text 12: p. 142, 4):

“Regarding the [indivisibility of] the limitless empty expanse and primordial gnosis as the Base of liberation, the limitless expanse is emptiness that transcends thought inasmuch as it is devoid of any created [and conditioned] phenomenon, effort or change. When self-arising gnosis, which is like its substance, arises in it, one understands that all phenomena are total spontaneous liberation in the condition of the Base: this is called ‘the [indivisibility of] primordial gnosis and the limitless empty expanse of effortless spontaneous liberation.’^c

“Regarding the [indivisibility of] the limitless empty expanse and primordial gnosis of the Path that is the variety of appearances, when everything that manifests in [that] variety arises as the unlimited manifestation of energy, all of [it] liberates itself spontaneously without interruption. Thus in the limitless empty expanse [that contains] the single manifestation of the phenomena of spontaneous perfection there arises the primordial gnosis of pure magical illusion that transcends all limits. Thereby one understands that all phenomena are beyond acceptance and rejection, beyond affirmation and refutation and [hence one goes] beyond all craving: this is called ‘the [indivisibility of] the limitless empty expanse and the primordial gnosis of the completeness of the state of spontaneous perfection.’^d

“Regarding the [indivisibility of] the limitless empty expanse and the primordial gnosis of the Fruit that is total spontaneous liberation beyond action, the limitless empty expanse, which does not abide in *saṃsāra* or in *nirvāṇa*, is single, indefinable and beyond striving. When empty primordial gnosis arises in it, beyond the limits of view and contemplation, one understands the sameness of all phenomena of happiness and of suffering: this is called ‘the [indivisibility of] the limitless empty expanse and primordial gnosis of the *dharmatā* beyond action.’^e

“By applying [the principle of] primordial gnosis in the limitless empty expanse in a gradual way, one understands the [fundamental] union of the calm state, emptiness and bliss: this is called the [state of] union in which there is nothing to accept or to reject.

“By applying [the principle of] primordial gnosis in the limitless empty expanse in a direct way, [one] understands that the self-arising *dharmatā* transcends any point

^a Skt. *dhātu*; Tib. ying (Wylie, *dbyings*); Ch. 界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiè*; Wade-Giles, *chieh*⁴) or 法界 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*) according to the case.

^b Skt. *jñāna*; Pāli *ñāṇa*; Tib. yeshe (Wylie, *ye shes*); Ch. 智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih*⁴; Jap. *chi*).

^c Tib. beme rangdrölgyi yingdang yeshe (Wylie, ‘*bad med rang grol gyi dbyings dang ye shes*).

^d Tib. lhundrub dzogtsülgyi yingdang yeshe (Wylie, *lhun grub rdzogs tshul gyi dbyings dang ye shes*).

^e Tib. chönyi chawa lendepai yingdang yeshe (Wylie, *chos nyid bya ba las ’das pa’i dbyings dang ye shes*).

of view and thus all phenomena dissolve: this is called the direct [entry] in which there is nothing to liberate.

“By applying [the principle] in a progressing way, [one] understands that in all that exists there is nothing true and thus this is called the ‘progressing way’ in which there is nothing to abandon and nothing to acquire.

“By applying [this principle] in an instantaneous way, one undergoes spontaneous liberation simultaneously with visible appearances and thus there occurs liberation without any need for action or effort: this is called ‘the Anuyoga in which the vision of *dharmatā* arises instantly’.

“Moreover, since the limitless empty expanse and primordial gnosis are not separate, this is the view of equality and nonduality. Since in the [indivisibility of] the limitless empty expanse and primordial gnosis there is no coming and going, this is the view of what never changes from its own position. Since the [indivisibility of] the limitless empty expanse and primordial gnosis is free from limitations and partiality, this is the view of what [has been] manifest from the beginning. Since apart from words that are only used as symbols, there is nothing that depends on something else, this is the view of that which is beyond any dependence.

“In actuality, since the limitless empty expanse is the Base and primordial gnosis is the Path, practitioners who engage with diligence obtain liberation. Since the limitless empty expanse is the cause and primordial gnosis is the Fruit, those of sharp capacities liberate themselves without depending on the external law of cause and effect: therefore [Anuyoga] is superior to the lower [vehicles].”

Despite the Atiyoga elements in the above description,⁴³³ the last paragraph shows quite clearly that the Anuyoga is causally biased. Nonetheless, it is said that, at the beginning of a session, we instantly visualize the deities, and that this should be done in the state of instant, nondual Presence or *rigpa*,^a and therefore without losing sight of the *dharmadhātu* or empty expanse. Furthermore, it should be done with an implicit awareness that the deities never ceased to be there and thus that we are not creating anything. As noted above, this implies that, according to practitioners of this system, its practice starts in the manifest awareness of the unconditioned and unmade nature, and that the generation stage does *not* involve creation of anything, which by definition would *produce* a reality that would be conditioned and made—which would only be possible if the visualization did not veil the unconditioned and unmade. And it is a fact that it is for this reason that they claim that realization of the unconditioned and unmade does not result from practices applied subsequently to the stage of generation / creation—i.e. in the completion or perfection stage—but should be manifest from the very outset of the practice. Finally, and as noted above, upon ending the session^b there is no need to formally dissolve the deities into a blank emptiness, for we should be able to continue to maintain awareness of the unconditioned and unmade^c true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality. In

^a Tib. *kechik rigpa* or *kechik mayi rigpa* (Wylie, *skad cig [ma yi] rig pa*) / *rigpa kechikma* (Wylie, *rig pa skad chig ma*). As stated explained in endnote 473, here “instant” (Tib. *kechikma* [Wylie, *skad chig ma*]) means that, since there is no subject-object duality, the Now is not interrupted by the present defined as a the appearance of being before the Now rather than in the Now.

^b Tib. *tun* (Wylie, *thun*); Skt. *upaveśa[h]*.

^c Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

fact, as also noted, the reason why in vehicles of the Path of Transformation other than Anuyoga the visualization has to be dissolved into emptiness at the end of the practice is that the visualization cannot coexist with awareness of the unconditioned and unmade, and hence if it is not dissolved it may be solidified into the illusion of a hypostatically, inherently existing pure, powerful reality superimposed on the pre-existing illusion of hypostatic, inherent existence of the ordinary, powerless reality that the teachings deem to be impure, adding another layer to the onion of delusion. In the Anuyoga the dissolution of the visualization at the end of the session is not deemed necessary because it is assumed that during the session the visualization was not concealing the unconditioned and unmade, and that, therefore, even if the visualization is not dissolved it is impossible that it will solidify in the way just described. However, this could only be actually the case if, during the session, *in reality* the visualization had at no point concealed the unconditioned and unmade true condition.

The problem is that we have also seen that here one does not really have the capacity to carry out the practice in the state of rigpa. In fact, since contrivance and even effort are applied in order to direct the Awake, nondual awareness called rigpa in a certain direction, and contrivance and action are what ordinarily conceals the pure spontaneity of lhundrub,^a it would be really extraordinary if one's vision were not contrived, conditioned and made,^b and did not veil the uncontrived, unmade and unconditioned^c true nature of ourselves and the whole of reality. To put it another way, rigpa is by definition beyond the subject-object duality and the directionality of mind; therefore, trying to direct it in a certain direction would reintroduce the subject-object duality, as well as the duality of mind^d and mental factors / mental events,^e both of which belong to the fragmentary structure of delusion that conceals the unconditioned, uncontrived and undivided state of rigpa. Or to put it yet another way, attempting to contain the timeless state of total completeness / plenitude and perfection that is the undisrupted Now within a period of time introduces an illusory division into it, giving rise to the fragmentariness that conceals the unconditioned and undivided state of rigpa, and causing us to wrongly identify the state of rigpa with a phenomenon that is limited in time, that can be recognized, and that as such is partial and limited, rather than simply resting in the all-liberating single gnosis in which all recognition and in general all that is partial and limited liberates itself spontaneously.⁴³⁴ If one effectively had the capacity to carry out the practice in the state of rigpa, one would be practicing Ati Dzogpa Chenpo rather than Anuyoga.⁴³⁵

^a Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*: spontaneous perfection, spontaneity, spontaneous rectification, spontaneous accomplishment, uncontrived systemic loops, all-achieving unhindered actionless action, etc. (according to context).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^c Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^d Skt. *citta*; Tib. *sem* (Wylie, *sems*); Ch. 心 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīn*; Wade-Giles, *hsin¹*). Note, however, that this Chinese term also renders the Skt. *cittata* and *citta eva* and the Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^e Skt. *caitta* or *caisatika*; Tib. *semjung* (Wylie, *sems byung*); Ch. 心所 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnsuǒ*; Wade-Giles, *hsin¹-so³*).

And, at any rate, if one had that capacity, one would profit far more from practicing Dzogchen Atiyoga than from practicing Anuyoga—which it would make sense to practice only whenever Dzogchen Ati were not working in one’s experience.

Furthermore, it follows from the above that although it is claimed that the Anuyoga is based on the properly Dzogchen principle of spontaneous perfection, the truth is that it is based on an intentional, conscious reproduction of the principle in question. Firstly, in Anuyoga spontaneous perfection is reduced to the capacity for instantaneous (rather than gradual) visualization, which is an abyss away from the sense of the concept in higher practices of the Dzogchen Series of Instructions,^a in which it refers to: (a) the self-manifestation of the self-luminous visions^b of the form of manifestation of energy called *rölpa*,^c which in Anuyoga are *imitated by contrivedly reproducing them in the form of manifestation of energy called dang*^d (these forms of manifestation of energy will be discussed in the section on Atiyoga and in greater detail in Vol. II of this book); and (b) the self-rectifying positive feedback loops in the human system that transform delusion into conflict, cause conflict and delusion to spontaneously increase exponentially, and then result in conflict and delusion’s spontaneous liberation—often upon reaching a threshold level. Secondly, though it is true that both of the inner Nyingma Tantras of the Path of Transformation involve in one way or another the symbolic reproduction of this typically Dzogchen process, symbolic reproductions are an abyss away from the spontaneous dynamics they reproduce.

Even though it is a fact that the methods of Anuyoga raise the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^e far more swiftly—and perhaps even to a greater degree—than those of Mahāyoga, it is also a fact that everything that all that was stated in the above two paragraphs is part of the reason why the *Kunje Gyälpo*, root Tantra of the [Nature of] Mind series of Atiyoga, states:^{f436}

Followers of Anuyoga aspire to the level of ‘Indivisible’ realization:
Having entered the Path of the empty expanse and primordial gnosis
they consider the primordially pure empty expanse where all phenomena manifest
to be the cause and the *maṇḍala* of primordial gnosis to be the effect.
The total bliss of Atiyoga
is pure and total Awake awareness beyond cause and effect:
[The state] beyond cause and effect is hindered by Anuyoga:
conceiving total completeness / plenitude and perfection in terms of cause and effect
amounts to falling into the misleading deviation of followers of Anuyoga.

^a Menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^b Tib. rangnang (Wylie, *rang snang*).

^c Wylie, *rol pa*, which literally means “play” and in other contexts renders the Skt. *līlā*.

^d Wylie, *gdangs*.

^e Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^f Namkhai Norbu (1999/2000, pp. 214-215.) See also Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, pp. 179-180); Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, pp. 295-297); Tulku Thöndup (1996, 1st ed. 1989, p. 96); etc. I have modified the terminology in order to make it agree with the one used throughout this book.

The primordially pure empty expanse where all phenomena manifest or, in Sanskrit, the *dharmadhātu*,^a in the Anuyoga (is) Samantabhadri, the feminine aspect of primordial Buddhahood that is the *maṇḍala* of primordially pure^b space. For its part, primordial gnosis or, in Sanskrit, *jñāna*, which as explained in a discussion of various of the terms used in this book refers to events of nondual Awake awareness^c or nondual Awake self-Awareness,^d which may also correspond to the *dharmakāya* that is the Mind aspect of Buddhahood, in the Anuyoga (is) Samantabhadra, the masculine aspect of primordial Awakening. The indivisibility of the two is no other than the *maṇḍala* of spontaneous perfection⁴³⁷ that gives rise to all phenomena and in which all phenomena are indivisible—even though so long as we are deluded by the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle threefold directional thought structure we perceive those two aspects as inherently separate from each other. Finally, total pleasure is the “child” that, in symbolic terms, is said to be born as a result of the “union” of the two above aspects (which, however, are acknowledged *not* to be two separate elements from the union of which pleasure may originate, but the primordial purity and spontaneous perfection aspects that the intellect artificially discriminates within the indivisible, nondual true condition of ourselves and all phenomena)—and which corresponds to the *maṇḍala* of original *bodhicitta*.

This is the view of Anuyoga because in this vehicle the “primordially pure empty expanse where all phenomena manifest” is associated with the female sexual organ and, as such, from the standpoint of the male it is seen as the cause of the flow of bliss that may arise out of sexual union. Since according to this vehicle, nondual Awake self-Awareness unveils upon the realization of the inapprehensible character of this flow of bliss, Anuyoga views the empty expanse^e as a cause and nondual Awake self-Awareness^f as an effect (which corresponds to the explanation of the twelve links or *nidāna*^g of interdependent origination, according to which *sparśa* or contact^h is the cause of *vedanā*ⁱ or sensation). And, indeed, the same thing occurs in the explanation of the four nyendrub^j or “four stages of approach and attainment” of Mahāyoga.⁴³⁸

Contrariwise (as will be seen in Part Two of this book in the context of the discussion of Direct Introduction with the syllable PHAT, and as shown in Capriles, electronic publication 2004), in Dzogchen Atiyoga the *dharmadhātu* is not seen as

^a Tib. chöying (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); Chin. 法界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*).

^b Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^c Tib. rigpa (Wylie, *rig pa*); Skt. *vidyā*.

^d Skt. *svaśamvedana*; Tib. rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*); Ch. 自證 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-cheng⁴*) / 自覺 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-chüeh²*).

^e Skt. *dharmadhātu*; Tib. chöying (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); Chin. 法界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*).

^f Skt. *svaśamvedana*; Tib. rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*); Ch. 自證 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-cheng⁴*) / 自覺 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-chüeh²*).

^g Pāli and Skt. *nidāna*; Tib. drel (*'brel*); Ch. 尼陀那 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *nítuónà*; Wade-Giles, *nī²-t'ō²-nā⁴*).

^h Pāli *phassa*; Skt. *sparśa*; Tib. regpa (Wylie, *reg pa*); Ch. 觸 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chù*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ū⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. and Pāli *vedanā*; Tib. tsorwa (Wylie, *tshor ba*); 受 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou⁴*).

^j Wylie, *bsnyen sgrub bzhi*.

cause and nonconceptual, nondual Awake self-Awareness—i.e., *rang rig*^a—is not seen as effect, for in the practice of this vehicle it is perfectly evident that the arising of *rang rig* is not the effect of any cause: indeed, as implied by the particle *rang*, this arising is a spontaneous occurrence beyond the cause-effect relation.⁴³⁹

3. Atiyogatantra

Even though the Atiyogatantra—the vehicle indicated by the term *Dzogchen* on the title of this book—is also classed as one of the inner Nyingma Tantras, the vehicle in question, rather than being part of the Path of Transformation, constitutes the Path of Spontaneous Liberation. However, the terms Atiyogatantra and Dzogchen are synonyms only partially, for the second also refers to the Fruit of the other inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa: Atiyogatantra is a synonym of Dzogchen only when the latter term is used to refer to a vehicle—which as such must have the three aspects that are the Base (in this case, Dzogchen *qua* Base), the Path (in this case, Dzogchen *qua* Path) and the Fruit (in this case, Dzogchen *qua* Fruit), for in Buddhism these three aspects are indispensable for there being an autonomous, independent vehicle.

Like the Anuyoga, this vehicle has no equivalent or near equivalent in the higher Tantra of the Sarmapas; the only Sarma teaching that partially corresponds to it is the current Mahāmudrā tradition of the Kagyü School, which to a great extent corresponds to the Kham^b transmission of the Dzogchen series of teachings of the [Nature of] Mind^c (although it is completely different from the other two series of Dzogchen teachings and even from other Semde traditions). Nonetheless, as time passed, century after century more and more Sarmapa Masters, yogins and monks received Dzogchen teachings from Nyingma (or some times Bönpo) Masters and adopted this vehicle as their principal practice—and, moreover, a high number of treasure-Revealers^d of Ati and other Nyingma teachings were born in the various Sarmapa schools.⁴⁴⁰ Moreover, since these Masters and Revealers transmitted the teachings of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo and other Nyingma teachings within the schools to which they belonged, nowadays Sarmapa Masters who teach this vehicle, often in conjunction with the Anuyogatantra and/or the Mahāyogatantra, are quite common. In our time, one Sarma teacher who practices and teaches Dzogchen, having written books about it and having publicly stated that it is the teaching for our age,^e is H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

In this book I have been following the custom of the ancient texts that use the term *Tantrayāna* to refer to the Path of Transformation, and hence I have been classifying the Dzogchen Atiyoga, which is definitely not based on the principle of transformation, as being beyond the *Tantrayāna*—and, as noted above, as making up

^a Skt. *svasaṃvedana* or *svasaṃvitti*[h]; Ch. 自證 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tz'u⁴-cheng⁴*) / 自覺 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tz'u⁴-chüeh²*).

^b Wylie, *kham*: an ample region of Eastern Tibet.

^c Tib. Semde (Wylie, *sems sde*); Skt. *Cittavarga*.

^d Tib. *tertön* (Wylie, *gter ston*): Revealer of treasures or terma (Wylie, *gter ma*), which may be teachings, sacred objects, substances, etc.

^e Sogyal Rinpoche's Rigpa organization quoted H.H. as asserting this on the posters of the Dzogchen teachings H.H. offered in London in the 1980s.

the Path of Spontaneous Liberation. However, the root texts of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo are called Tantras. This is so because, as we have seen, the principal and most universal meaning of the Tibetan word *gyü*,^a meaning Tantra, is “continuity”—and, as we will see in the next chapter, the continuity of Base, Path and Fruit that the word Tantra refers to is far more perfect in this vehicle than in any other Tantric vehicle.

It is because this chapter has been devoted to the Path of Transformation, that the Dzogchen Atiyoga will be considered in the following chapter and in Vol. II of this book, which all both devoted to the Path of Spontaneous Liberation. The *Kunje Gyälpo*, root Tantra of the Semde series of Atiyoga, states:^b

The “secret creation” [of Mahāyoga] consists in secretly generating the three phases of absorption that it is believed one does not [already] possess.

In the “secret completion” [of Anuyoga], *prajñā* is not the product or result of the three contemplations: all the phenomena of existence are the ultimate essence of *prajñā* that arises from inner contemplation... Since beginningless time one’s pure mind has been the deity, one deems that all the sense faculties of the *vajra* body are already the totality of one’s state, beyond the separation of view and behavior, of accepting and rejection. This is secret inner perfection.

In the “secret total completeness / plenitude and perfection” [of Atiyoga] the phenomena that appear through perception are not [to be] transformed into [primordially] pure and total awareness by means of the three contemplations. They are not [to be] perfected by reciting the seed syllable of the deity. I, the [primordial awareness / *bodhicitta* that is the] source, am total completeness / plenitude and perfection because there is nothing in me that is not complete and perfect. [The] three [aspects of my nature]^c are the three aspects of the pure and total awareness [that as such is our] total completeness / plenitude and perfection. This is secret total completeness / plenitude and perfection...

Sections of the Inner Tantric Vehicles of the Nyingmapa

Each of the three inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa has three sections, all of which are based on the view and essential approach and general methods of the corresponding inner Tantra, but each of which uses specific methods proper to one of the three inner Tantras. So Mahāyoga has three sections that are based on the view and essential approach and general methods of Mahāyoga, but which use, respectively, specific methods belonging to Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga: Mahā-maha, Mahā-anu and Mahā-ati; Anuyoga has three sections that are based on the view and essential approach and general methods of Anuyoga, but which use,

^a Wylie, *rgyud*. For its part, the best-known Chinese is 目次 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *mùcì*; Wade-Giles, *mu⁴-tz’u⁴*); according to the Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (López & Buswell, 2014), 檀特羅 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *tántèluó*; Wade-Giles, *t’an²-t’e⁴-luo²*).

^b Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, p. 148). Terminology was adapted to the one used in this book.

^c Namely essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, *ngo bo*]; Skt. *svabhāva*), nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, *rang bzhin*], Skt. *svabhāva*), and energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, *thugs rje*]; Skt. *karuṇā*: compassion). They will be explained in the following chapter. The Skt. *svabhāva*, rendered by both ngowo and rangzhin, is rendered into Chinese as 自性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tsu⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*).

respectively, specific methods belonging to Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga: Anu-mahā, Anu-anu and Anu-ati; and Atiyoga has three sections that are based on the view and essential approach and general methods of Atiyoga, but which use, respectively, specific methods belonging to Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga: Ati-mahā, Ati-anu and Ati-ati.

The Seeming Contradiction Between Atiyoga Root Texts and the Teaching of Gradual, Lower Vehicles in Treasure Series

It has been shown that the Tantras of Atiyoga negate the effectiveness of the lower vehicles, one by one up to the Anuyoga. And yet, as Sam van Schaik notes in his book on the subject,^a all of the most important series of treasure-teachings^b that he assessed feature teachings of all vehicles—and in particular of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga—side by side with those that specifically belong to Dzogchen Atiyoga. (Interestingly, in the treasure collections that he assessed, he classed all treasure texts and pure vision texts as suddenist [“simultaneist”], and concluded that the gradualist texts were always authorial treatises—i.e., texts authored by the Revealer, rather than revealed texts or pure vision texts—included in the collection.) How can we understand this seeming contradiction?

The answer is that there is no true contradiction, for the teachings of realized Ones are what true Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas call *other-directed assertions*,^c rather than what they call *self-directed assertions*.^d they are *reasons acknowledged by the opponent only*,^e that are put forward as *others’ view*^f or, which is the same, without *own view*.^g What does this mean? It means that realized Ones are free from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought, and hence they do not have a view of their own. Therefore, what their teachings to is to offer those in need of training conceptual positions to uphold for a while, as this is needed for them to tread the Path and advance on the latter—until the point at which the trainees themselves find freedom from the reification / hypostatization / valorization of thought and thus are freed from *own view*.

In fact, the principle in offering those teachings is the one that at the level of the Mahāyāna Śākyamuni illustrated in Chapter 3 of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* with the example of the toys employed to lure children out of a house in flames. Their father shouted at his children ordering them to flee, but the latter were so absorbed in their games that they remained impervious to his calls. In despair, the

^a Van Schaik, Sam (2004).

^b Tib. *termas* (Wylie, *gter ma*).

^c Tib. *zhenngo khelen* (Wylie, *gzhan ngo khas len*): assertions propounding reasonings based on what others and only others take as established (Skt. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. *zhendrakkyi jesu pagpa* [Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*]).

^d Tib. *rangyüdu khelen* (Wylie, *rang rgyud du khas len*): assertions based on reasonings that express what the proponent him or herself takes as established (Skt. *svaprasiddha*).

^e Skt. *praprasiddhānumāna*; Tib. *zhendrakkyi jesu pagpa* (Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*) / *zhenla drakpai jepag* (Wylie, *gzhan la grags pa’i rjes dpag*): reasonings based on what the opponent takes as established (Skt. *svaprasiddha*)—which clearly the proponent does *not* take as established.

^f Skt. *paramata*; Tib. *zhenlug* (Wylie, *gzhan lugs*).

^g Skt. *svamata*; Tib. *ranglug* (Wylie, *rang lugs*).

father devised a ruse and told them that at the gate stood the chariots they had always wanted—one pulled by goats for the youngest, one pulled by deer for the middle one, and one pulled by oxen for the eldest.^a However, when the children came out, they found something much better than what their father had offered them: a coach draped with precious stones and pulled by white bullocks. In the parable, the chariot pulled by goats represents the Śrāvakayāna, the chariot pulled by deer stands for the Pratyekabuddhayāna, the oxen-pulled chariot symbolizes the Bodhisattvayāna—and the coach pulled by white bullock stands for the Buddha-vehicle, called Eyayāna or “Sole [True] Vehicle,” which adherents of the Mahāyāna schools based on this *sūtra* hold to be the vehicle taught in the *sūtra* in question. However, the *sūtra* does not teach any specific method or specific view that may be held to be radically different from those taught in the other *sūtras* of the Mahāyāna. Therefore, modifying the parable, we can use it to our purposes and make the coach pulled by white bullocks stand for the Atiyogatantrayāna, and the other chariots to represent all lower vehicles, which in the modified parable must be used by those who are incapable of instantly gaining Direct Introduction—an initial nonconceptual and hence nondual realization of our true condition obtained through an event of primordial gnosis that reveals the state of rigpa—through characteristic Ati methods based on the principle of spontaneous liberation, to progressively advance toward the condition of Direct Introduction that marks the entrance to the Single Path of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, “primordial ancestor of all vehicles” (as Namkhai Nyingpo and Nubchen Sangye Yeshe called it).

However, the treasure texts and pure vision texts of the most important cycles of treasure teachings of the last centuries, and also the Tantras of the three series of Dzogchen teachings, describe the Path of Dzogchen Ati as being utterly free from progress and evolution, and reduce the Path to a single level. Sam van Schaik quotes from Jigme Lingpa^b (the terminology was adapted to the one used in this book):

“On the stage that is without progressive purification of rigpa, there is no need to train on the ten levels of the bodhisattvas, not on the paths and levels achieved by accomplishing the exertions of development and completion / perfection in the outer and inner Mantrayāna. This is because they are all combined in the single essence of primordial gnosis.”⁴⁴¹

Here Jigme Lingpa places the paths and levels in the context of the system of the *tantras* (the Vajrayāna). In *rGyab brten pad ma dkar po*, Jigme Lingpa quotes a passage from the *Künje Gyalpo*^c that rejects the structure of the paths and levels:

“No view and meditation, no maintaining of vows,
No ascending through levels, no travelling of paths.”

^a At this point I modified the parable, which simply spoke of chariots pulled by goats, chariots pulled by deer and chariots pulled by oxen (in plural), without specifying which was the object of yearning of which child.

^b The first passage is from *Trikyig yeshe lama* (Wylie, *khriḡ yig ye shes bla ma*) and the second is a cite from the *Künje gyalpo* (Wylie, *kun byed rgyal po*) in *Gyabten pema karmo* (Wylie, *rgyab brten pad ma dkar po*).

^c Wylie, *kun byed rgyal po*: the root Tantra of the Series of [the Nature of] Mind.

Vol. III of my *The Beyond Mind Papers* reads:^a

We have seen that it is Dzogchen Ati—the Path Tönpa Garab Dorje bequeathed us, which is neither gradual nor sudden—that embodies most perfectly the principle of the Path as *Seeing through* all conditioned phenomena and states manifesting in our experience, into the unconditioned Dzogchen-*qua*-Base (Capriles, 1977, 1986, 1989, 1994a, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2003, work in progress 1). The fact that in the vehicle in question Awakening does not depend on a process of maturation whereby we would develop successive [stages of evolution], is evidenced by the [following] passage of *The Heart Mirror of Vajrasattva*—a Dzogchen Tantra pertaining to the [Series of Instructions]...^b (corresponding translation... in Cornu, translator and commentator, 1995, p. 135):

“Kye! Friends! The Fruit of authentic, perfect Buddhahood does not depend on maturity or immaturity.”

Furthermore... the late Khyabje Düdjom Rinpoché, [Jigdräl] Yeshe Dorje, made it clear that in the vehicle in question there is no clear sequence of stages of realization, as realization may arise by stages, without involving a particular order of stages, or utterly beyond stages (corresponding yet not identical translation available in Düdjom Rinpoché, 1979, p. 28 and 2005, p. 53):

“(In the practice of the Dzogchen Series of Instructions) the stages of experience and realization may appear either progressively, or without any particular order, or all at once, according to the capacities of the different individuals. However, at the time of the Fruit there are no differences.”

This explains why, though the Dzogchen teachings, in order to make the point that they lead beyond the realizations of other vehicles and show exactly the way and the sense in which they do so, occasionally posit a sequence of sixteen levels,^c what is characteristic of Dzogchen Atiyoga is the presentation of the Path as a single level^d and hence as having neither bottom nor summit. In fact, as previously noted, both Dzogchen and Chán... stress the fact that realization does not involve an ascending progression, for it lies in the instant disclosure of the original, unconditioned state of absolute equality that has no high or low, no up or down, that the Dzogchen teachings call Dzogchen-*qua*-Base. The Dzogchen Path is symbolized by the *garuḍa* bird that breaks out of the egg fully developed and capable of flying, for the simple reason that Dzogchen-*qua*-Path is not basically different from Dzogchen-*qua*-Fruit, as both of them consist in the disclosure of Dzogchen-*qua*-Base—the crucial difference between them being that the duration of occurrences of the former is limited because the propensities for *avidyā* to arise have not yet been purged, and hence at some point delusion will again conceal Dzogchen-*qua*-Base and distort the *given*.^e

^a Capriles (2013c, p. 164).

^b Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngag[gyi]de (*man ngag [gyi] sde*).

^c Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^d Skt. *ekabhūmi*; Tib. sa chik (Wylie, *sa gcig*).

^e Cf. endnote 67.

Although on the Path of the Series [of Instructions]^a of Dzogchen... realization follows a clear sequence that begins with the *dharmakāya*, continues with the *saṃbhogakāya*, and concludes with the *nirmāṇakāya*, these successive *kāyas*, rather than being progressively higher rungs in a ladder, floors in a building or peaks in a mountain range, consist in the correct apprehension of different forms of manifestation of the energy or *thukje*^b aspect of the unproduced, unconditioned, unborn *trikāya-qua-Base* that is a condition of absolute equality and that as such does not fit into hierarchies or [gradualist presentations of the Path]—each successive *kāya* further expanding and consolidating the direct realization of the *trikāya*.⁴⁴² When finally the *nirmāṇakāya* consolidates, Dzogchen-*qua*-Fruit has been attained and the full patency of the *trikāya-qua-Base* is never interrupted again.

In fact, in Dzogchen realization does *not* involve an ascending progression, for the Path begins with the disclosure of Dzogchen-*qua*-Base in the condition of *rigpa* that is both the Path and Fruit of Dzogchen. This is why in these teachings it is said that all five paths^c of the gradual Path of Renunciation and all ten or eleven levels^d that succeed each other in the gradual Mahāyāna are complete and perfect in one single *rigpa*.^e However, as already noted, this approach is emphasized the most in the *treasure texts* and *pure vision texts* of the Nyingthik^f series of treasures and other teachings of the Series of Instructions, as well as of the original form of the teachings of both the Series of Space and the Series of [the Nature of] Mind. In the Series of Pith Instructions and the Series of Space the stages on the Path to full Awakening are the four visions^g proper to these Series, which are degrees of integration of phenomena *in the rigpa that manifested at the very outset of the Path*, which both in Thögel and in the Series of Space involve the successive integration of each of the three modes of manifestation of the energy aspect of the Base, and which do not manifest in the Series of [the Nature of] Mind.

However, the Series of [the Nature of] Mind *of the tradition of Kham* (which as will be noted below may have absorbed influences from the Northern School of Chán, which the Southern School deems gradualist, and perhaps of the gradual Mahāyāna as well) and the Kagyü Mahāmudrā^h teachings structured by Gampopa^a

^a Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or Menngaggyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*).

^b The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “*thukje*” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei*¹—lit. *sadness or mercy*]), usually rendered as compassion. The reason why this term is used is explained in a footnote to the Introduction.

^c Skt. *mārga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); Ch. 道 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles *tao*⁴).

^d Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^e Tib. *rigpa chikdzog* (Wylie, *rig pa gcig rdzogs*). A similar sense is expressed by the Tib. *rigpa chik drölyi ngowo* (Wylie, *rig pa gcig grol gyi ngo bo*): [in the] essence of the liberated, single *rigpa*.

^f Wylie, *snying thig*.

^g Tib. *nangwa zhi* (Wylie, *snang ba bzhi*). Some of these will be mentioned below in the regular text of this volume, and all of them will be discussed in some detail in Vol. II of this book.

^h Tib. Chaggya Chenpo (Wylie, *phyag rgya chen po*); Ch. 大印 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dà yìn*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-yin⁴*) / 大手印 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dà shǒu yìn*; Wade-Giles *ta⁴-shou³ yin⁴*). Note that the Chinese translation renders the Tib. *phyag rgya* and Skt. *mudra* as *seal* rather than *symbol*, which according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is the real sense of the term.

on the basis of graded Series of [the nature of] Mind of the tradition of Kham (and further developed by Treasure revealer^b Ranjung Dorje,^c the Third Karmapa), may be said to be somehow gradual. This is so because in it practice progresses through four stages of development, but this progress does not begin with the realization of rigpa, and hence the stages are not levels of integration of phenomena and / or modes of manifestation of energy into rigpa (as, on the contrary, is the case in the progression *dharmakāya-sambhogakāya-nirmāṇakāya*) in which four stages may be clearly discerned (as it occurs in the practice of Thögel,^d in the Series of Space, and in Nyingthik Tekchö^e). In fact, both the graded Series of [the nature of] Mind of the tradition of Kham, and the Kagyu teachings of Mahāmudrā after Gampopa and / or Ranjung Dorje, rather than beginning with a clear-cut, effective Direct Introduction whereby the fully developed garuḍa of rigpa manifests, begin with a mere practice of concentration that is a function of mind and mental events, which then must produce states that are to be used as the basis for reGnizing rigpa.

At any rate, the above described *dharmakāya-sambhogakāya-nirmāṇakāya* sequence of realization, and the sequence of the four visions taught in Nyingthik texts (as well as in other Series of Instructions texts and in some Space Series texts) shows that even the most suddenist Atiyoga teachings are neither totally suddenist nor gradualist: Direct Introduction occurs suddenly, but as a rule it does not burn out all *karmas*, and, at any rate, in most people doubts concerning the true condition of reality and the nature of the event itself tend to arise subsequently to the event, so that one has to return to the state again and again until doubts no longer arise—and only then can one totally devote oneself to the actual practice of Dzogchen Ati. This is the reason why the spiritual testament of Garab Dorje—the Primordial Revealer^f who introduced Buddhist Dzogchen into our world—consists in the following three phrases: “Direct Introduction [to the state of rigpa];” “Not to Remain in Doubt [with regard to the true condition of reality and the fact that the event in which it was realized was a Direct Introduction],” and “Continue in the State [of rigpa];” this is the original, standard sequence of Dzogchen practice.

Physical Yoga

In connection with the completion stage of the Anuttarayoga, the Mahāyoga and the Anuyoga, it is necessary to stress the role of physical yoga, which in that

^a Wylie, *sgam po pa*: Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (Wylie, *sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen*: 1079-1153). Source: Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (E. Capriles, Ed. unpublished).

^b Tib. Tertön (Wylie, *gter ston*): this is the title given to those who reveal the treasure-teachings and other spiritual treasures (Tib. *terma* [Wylie, *gter ma*]) of the Nyingma and/or Bönpo Schools.

^c Wylie, *rang byung rdo rje*, the IIIrd Karmapa (1284-1339). Source: Trungpa & Fremantle (1975, p. 59).

^d Wylie, *thod rgal*.

^e Wylie, *snying thig khregs chod*.

^f Tib. *tönpa* (Wylie, *ston pa*): those who reintroduce complete systems of teachings when there is no longer a line of transmission, and who as such are different from Treasure Revealers (tertöns [Wylie, *gter ston*]), who, while there is still a living transmission, introduce specific teachings that had been lost or that were not suitable for previous times but are required at the time of their revelation.

case is of the kind known by the Tibetan term *thulkhor*^a and the Sanskrit *yantra yoga* or *yoga of movement*. This type of yoga directly acts on what may be rendered as structural pathways^b and on the circulation of energy,^c harmonizing the latter and giving rise to a greater integration of body and mind through the link between them, which is energy. Tibetans often use the terms *tsalung* and *tsa-lung-thigle* to refer to the yogic exercises of this category applied on the Path of Transformation properly speaking (Anuttarayogatantras, especially those of the mother and nondual classes, Mahāyogatantras and Anuyogatantras) to raise what I am calling energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^d (related to *kuṇḍalinī*) and to have effects on the seed-essence^e that trigger experiences of total pleasure.⁴⁴³ In fact, in practices activating inseparable pleasure and emptiness, always *prāṇāyāma* (yogic breathing), *bandhas* (specific muscular contractions and movements), visualization and other elements proper to this type of yoga are applied: in practices that do not involve a physical consort, the experiences sought depend on the combined application of physical *yoga* (including the just listed elements), visualization and so on, whereas in those that involve a physical consort, the elements just mentioned are often the key to conserving the seed-essence,^f which for its part is a necessary condition for heat to arise and possibly catalyze experiences of total pleasure,^g and also for the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^h to possibly increase to the required levels. In Part Three of this book, an Atiyoga variety of *yantra yoga* (which in Ati Dzogpa Chenpo is an important secondary practice) will be described succinctly, though no instructions for practice will be provided. And should a third volume of this book be finally published (which as noted in the Introduction at this point is uncertain) very succinct directions for the three kinds or varieties of the last of the seven mind trainings,ⁱ which involve some of the elements discussed here, will be offered.

The Father, Mother and Nondual Anuttarayogatantras and the Three Series of Inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa

We saw that the Anuttarayogatantras of the New or Sarmapa schools are classified into father Tantras, mother Tantras and nondual Tantras, and that among

^a Wylie, *'khrul 'khor*; Skt. *adhisāra*. This term refers to setting something in motion, as when turning an engine on.

^b Skt. *nāḍī*; Tib. *tsa* (Wylie, *rtsa*). As will be explained later on, these are not preconfigured, physically existing channels, for they may be visualized in different configurations in order to produce different yogic effects (this point was stressed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's root teacher, rigdzin Changchub Dorje).

^c Skt. *prāṇavāyu*; Tib. *lung* (Wylie, *rlung*).

^d Tib. *thigle* (Wylie, *thig le*).

^e Skt. *bindu*; Tib. *thigle* (Wylie, *thig le*). That the same word is used should not surprise us, for *thigle qua* energetic volume to a great extent depends on *thigle qua* seed-essence.

^f Skt. *bindu*; Tib. *thigle* (Wylie, *thig le*).

^g Tib. *dechen* or *dewa chenpo* (Wylie, *bde [ba] chen [po]*); Skt. *mahāsukha*; Ch. 大樂 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dàlè*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-le⁴*).

^h Tib. *thigle* (Wylie, *thig le*).

ⁱ Tib. *lojong* (Wylie, *blo sbyong*). I am referring to the seven lojonges of the Dzogchen Menngagde (Wylie, *rdzogs chen man ngag sde*); not to those that Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna introduced in Tibet.

these three, among Nyingma vehicles the principle of the nondual Tantras is closest to that of Mahāyogatantra. However, Ju Mipham,^a among others, affirmed that the Mahāyoga of the Old or Nyingmapa School was the same as the father Tantras of the New or Sarmapa schools; that the Anuyoga of the Nyingmapa corresponded to the mother Tantras of the Sarmapa; and that the Atiyoga of the Nyingma School corresponded to the nondual Tantras of the New or Sarmapa schools. Mipham was one of the greatest Master-scholars in the Nyingma School, who brought Nyingma Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka to unprecedented heights and who never committed errors in his explanations of the *dharma*. Moreover, one of his teachers, Jamgön Kongtrül,^b had made it clear that the correspondences between Higher Sarma Tantras and Inner Nyingma Tantras were as stated below. It is therefore obvious that Mipham posited those correspondences between the three types of Anuttarayogatantras and the three inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa as skillful means.⁴⁴⁴

No doubt, in father Anuttarayogatantras method preponderates over *prajñā* in the senses and for the reasons discussed in the section on Anuttarayoga, and they place a greater emphasis on clarity than on sensation, for they require that the deity and *maṇḍala* be visualized in great detail—whereas the realization that they lead to emphasizes the inseparability of clarity and emptiness. Conversely, it is clear that in the Mother Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa *prajñā* preponderates over method in the senses and for the reasons discussed in the section on Anuttarayoga, and that they place more emphasis on sensation than the Father Tantras, in two senses: in that there is no need to pay so much attention to the details of the visualization, for it is more important to have the *feeling of being the deity* in his or her *maṇḍala*, and in that they place a greater emphasis on the practices of the stage of completion aimed at the manifestation of total pleasure—while in the ensuing realization there is a greater emphasis on the inseparability of pleasure and emptiness. An analogous relation exists between the Nyingmapas' Mahāyogatantra and Anuyogatantra, for *when compared with the Anuyogatantras*, Mahāyogatantras place a greater emphasis on method than they do on *prajñā*, and they place a greater emphasis on clarity than they do on feeling; in fact, they require that both deity and *maṇḍala* be visualized in much greater detail, and in the ensuing realization the inseparability of clarity and emptiness is paramount. Likewise, the Anuyogatantras place a far greater emphasis on *prajñā than the Mahāyogatantras*, and they also place a far greater emphasis on feeling *than the Mahāyogatantras*, in the same twofold sense in which the mother Anuttaratantras emphasize feeling to a greater extent than the father Anuttaratantras: firstly, in that there is no need to pay attention to the details of the visualization to the same extent as in Mahāyogatantra, for it is most important to have the *sensation of being the deity* in his or her *maṇḍala*; secondly, in that they place a far greater emphasis on the practices of the stage of completion aimed at the manifestation of total pleasure and the realization of the inseparability of pleasure and emptiness.

However, the degree to which *prajñā* prevails over method in the Anuyoga *is far greater than in the mother Tantras of the Sarmapa*, and the same applies to the degree to which the sensation of being the deity prevails over the details of the visualization, to the degree to which emphasis is placed on the practices of the stage

^a Ju Mipham Jamyang Namgyäl (Wylie, 'ju mi pham 'jam dbyangs nam rgyal), 1846-1912.

^b Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye (Wylie, 'jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas) (1813–1899).

of completion that should give rise to the experiences of total pleasure, and to the degree to which in the practice pleasure prevails over clarity. In the same way, in Anuyogatantra the generation stage *is far briefer, simpler and less emphasized than in the mother Tantras of the Sarmapa*: as we have seen, in it the transformation is instantaneous rather than gradual and is not to be dissolved at the end of the session of practice—these being the two most important differences between Anuyogatantra and all other Tantric vehicles—and almost the whole of the practice is devoted to the completion stage. Finally, and in connection with everything that has been said in this paragraph, the swiftness with which both the experiences of total pleasure and the realization of the inseparability of pleasure and emptiness may be attained in Anuyoga is much greater than in any of the Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa.

Similarly, paradigmatic Mahāyogatantras (such as the *Guhyagarbha*) place a far lesser emphasis on method, on the generation / creation stage, on the details of the visualization, and on the inseparability of clarity and emptiness than father Anuttarayogatantras, for, as we have repeatedly seen, the principle of paradigmatic Mahāyogatantras is much closer to the one at play in nondual Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa, than to those of the other two classes of Anuttarayogatantras. In fact, *when we compare paradigmatic Tantras of Mahāyoga with the father and mother Anuttarayogatantras*, we find that in the former there is no preponderance of either the aspect of method or the aspect of *prajñā*, and that the Mahāyogatantras contemplate the practice of method and *prajñā* and the development and completion stages in the equanimity of the pure dimension, the total primordial gnosis of the single sphere that is our own natural state of *rigpa-bodhicitta*, the primordial state that is the Base of all phenomena. Furthermore, whereas in the father and mother Anuttaratrantras the wisdom state of the fourth initiation is barely mentioned, and is mentioned in a veiled manner, in Mahāyogatantra it is shown openly and clearly. Therefore, there can be no doubt that Mahāyoga is utterly different from the father Anuttarayogatantras.

We have also seen that Mahāyoga views the true *maṇḍala* as spontaneously perfect^a and as being no other than the true condition in which cause and fruit are inseparable and wherein all beings have always been Awake—of which the sand *maṇḍala* used in the initiation is a mere symbolic image. Since this principle is absent in all classes of Anuttarayogatantras, this is a further reason why it would not be legitimate to equate the Mahāyogatantras with the father Anuttarayogatantras. Finally, although the Anuttarayogatantras, just like Mahāyogatantras, are structured on a *model* of death, intermediate state^b and rebirth that is supposed to purify these (not so that they become smoother or lighter but in order to free the yogins from them and the suffering they involve), Sarmapas lack a vehicle like the Atiyogatantra with a practice based on the principle of spontaneous rectification^c like that of Thögel, in which yogins gain access to the intermediate state of the true condition of

^a lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^b Skt. *antarābhava*; Tib. bardo (Wylie, *bar do*); Ch. 中有 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yu³*) / 中陰 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyīn*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yin¹*).

^c Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. lhundrub (Wylie: *lhun grub*).

phenomena^a while the physical body is alive so that the structure and function of that intermediate state unleashes the self-rectifying positive feedback loops inherent in the human system that are at the root of the most effective and supreme spontaneous deconditioning experiences and as a result of this may achieve the highest attainable realization in the shortest time possible. Therefore, it would be wrong to claim that the structure and function of the Anuttarayogatantras either imitate this principle or may be a preparation for such practices.^b How could then the Mahāyogatantras be said to correspond to the father Tantras of the Sarmapa?

In fact, a series of Masters including Kongtrul Lodrö Taye^c and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,^d among others, have rightly noted that, even though it is true that Mahāyoga places a greater emphasis on method, on the stage of creation and on clarity, whereas Anuyoga puts it on *prajñā*, on the stage of completion and on sensation, the principal difference between Mahāyoga and Anuyoga is that in the former transformation is gradual and is dissolved at the end of the session, whereas in the latter it is instantaneous and based on the principle of spontaneous perfection, and is not dissolved at the end of the session. Since the principle of instantaneous transformation is absent in *all* three classes of Anuttarayogatantras—father, mother, or nondual—and the principle of spontaneous perfection has so little relevance in all of them, which do not even use the term, no matter how useful the identification of Mahāyoga with the father Anuttarayogatantras and of Anuyoga with the mother Anuttarayogatantras may be in order to lure members of Sarmapa traditions into the Dzogchen teachings or to further good relations between the different schools, it is illegitimate to posit a correspondence between the father Tantras and Mahāyoga, and between the mother Tantras and Anuyoga. In fact, as suggested in a previous section, the Nyingma Tantras that are also Sarma Anuttarayogatantras are classified by the Nyingmapas as pertaining to Mahāyogatantra (or, by certain Masters, as lying between the outer Tantras and the inner Tantras).

Nonetheless, it would be incomparably more unreasonable and illegitimate to posit a correspondence between the nondual Anuttarayogatantras of the New or Sarmapa schools and the Atiyogatantra of the Ancient or Nyingmapa School. While the functional principle of all of the Anuttarayogatantras, independently of whether they are father Tantras, mother Tantras or nondual Tantras, is transformation, it has been repeatedly noted that the Atiyogatantra of the Nyingmapa is not based on the principle of transformation, but on that of spontaneous liberation, which is radically different from the principles behind all types of Tantric transformation practice—being clearly “superior” to all of these.

Differences Between the Nyingma and Sarma Translations In the Tantras that are Common to Anuttarayoga and Mahāyoga

^a Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. *chönyi bardo* (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

^b As cautioned in a previous note, an exception to this might be the practice of the Intermediate State in the Six Yogas of Nāropā and Six Yogas of Niguma, related to Sarma Anuttarayogatantra.

^c Wylie, *kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas*; Tibetan Text 11.

^d Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 178-180).

In the case of those Mahāyogatantras of the Nyingmapa that also exist in the Anuttarayogatantra of the Sarmapa, such as for example the *Guhyasamājatantra*^a and the *Śrīcandraguhyatilakanāmamahātantrarājatantra*,^b the Nyingma translations differ significantly from those of the Sarmapa—and the same applies to Nyingma translations of commentaries to Sarma canonical texts. In fact, while the former favor the meaning over the letter, the latter are literal. This often causes the meaning of the two renderings to differ, and when this happens, as a rule the meaning is more profound and faithful to the text’s intent in the Nyingma translations. For example, as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu remarked, in Rinchen Zangpo’s Sarma translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*,^c the famed verse “the supreme, totally pure *akṣara*” was translated as “the supreme, totally pure letter,” for the line was rendered attending to the literal meaning of the term *akṣara*; contrariwise, in the Nyingma translation of *Drime Ö*,^d a commentary to the *Kālacakratantra*, the term *akṣara* was understood in its figurate sense, which is “immutable,” and hence the same verse was rendered as “the supreme, *immutable* and totally pure [condition]”—which seems to correctly render the meaning the word *akṣara* had in the original text.^e

Moreover, Nyingma translations often *improve* on the original; for example, the Sanskrit term “yoga” means “union,” which does not make sense in the higher Buddhist vehicles, as Buddhism does not posit a soul that would be separate and different from an ultimate reality—or, far less, a deity—that would be external to it and with which it should unite, and uses the term solely to refer to the practice that facilitates the spontaneous dissolution of the hypostatization / absolutization / reification / valorization of the contents of thought and hence of the ensuing illusion of separateness and delusion general, and the concomitant self-disclosure of the true condition of ourselves and the whole universe, and to refer to the state ensuing from this practice. This roughly responds to the etymology of the Tibetan term “naljor,” which is the Nyingma translation of the Sanskrit “yoga,” even though later on the Tibetan term in question was used also by the Sarmapa: “nalma^f” means “unaltered condition of something,” and “jorwa^g” means “to contract,” “to take” or “to adhere to;” therefore, the combination of the two terms has the meaning of “acquiring (our own) unaltered condition and adhering to it,” but since one cannot acquire what one has always (been), it is used in the sense of, “discovering our original unaltered condition and not becoming distracted with regard to it,” or of, “nondual awareness (of) our original unaltered condition, which is also the original unaltered condition of all other phenomena.”⁴⁴⁵

^a Tib. *Sangwa Düpa Gyü* (Wylie, *gsang ba ’dus pa rgyud*) or *Pel Sangwa Düpa Gyü* (Wylie, *dpal gsang ba ’dus pa rgyud*). English translation: *Assembly of Secrets*.

^b Tib. *Dasang Thigle Gyü* (Wylie, *zla gsang thig le rgyud*); in full, *Pel Dasang Thigle Tsawe Gyü* (Wylie, *dpal zla gsang thig le rtsa ba’i rgyud*). Lit. *Root Tantra of the Essence of the Secret Moon*

^c Tib. *Tsenjö* (Wylie, *mtshan brjod*): Pagpa Jampalgyi tsenyang dakpar jöpa (Wylie, ’Phags pa ’Jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa), in fourteen chapters, translated by Rinchen Zangpo (Wylie, rin cen bzang po).

^d Wylie, *dri med ’od*.

^e Namkhai Norbu (1993, 1999/2001).

^f Wylie, *rnal ma*.

^g Wylie, *’byor ba*.

The Fruit in the Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa and in the Inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa

In the Anuttarayogatantra of the New or Sarmapa schools, the final Fruit of the practice is known as Mahāmudrā.^a Although many Western translators have rendered this term as “great seal,” Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has pointed out that its correct translation is “total symbol.”^b At the root of the mistake incurred by so many renowned translators is an incorrect reading of the Tibetan word “chaggya^c”: the “gya” in this word is written *rgya*, and thus it is different from the one that appears in triplicate in the phrase “*samaya gya gya gya*” printed at the end of Nyingma terma teachings, which means “sealed” and is used to indicate that the teaching is very secret and should not be talked about. For their part, the Sanskrit *mahā* and the Tibetan chenpo in general mean “big” or “great,” which denotes a relative measure, for whatever is great can be even greater; however, these Sanskrit and Tibetan terms can also denote an absolute measure, in which case it would be more precise to render them as “total.” The practice of Tantrism begins and ends with symbols—the very manifestation of divinities being itself a symbol rather than the presence of a given being. Mahāmudrā is complete integration with that symbol and complete realization in it: there is nothing but the symbol, which hence has no referent other than itself and which is the total symbol referred to by the words Mahāmudrā and Chagchen.

For their part, the Anuyogatantras and Mahāyogatantras of the Nyingmapa (and among the latter, also the Nyingma version of Tantras that exist also among the Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa, such as the above-mentioned *Guhyasamāja* and *Śrīcandraguhyatilakanāmamahātantrarāja*^d),⁴⁴⁶ the Fruit is called Dzogchen,^e which is a contraction of Dzogpa Chenpo.^f “Dzogpa” may mean “full,” “complete” or “perfect;” for example, a glass *full* of water to the brim is “dzogpa;” however, the same applies to an act that is *perfectly* carried out. Thus if we allow ourselves some license we could go as far as to say that in the term dzogpa the connotation of *full* refers to the primordial purity^g aspect of Awakening, which is emptiness, and since emptiness implies an absolute absence of divisions, in this sense render the word as *plenitude* or *completeness*; and that same term’s acceptance of *perfect* refers to the spontaneous perfection^h aspect, and in that sense translate it as “perfect.” Since in an absolute sense “chenpo” means “total,” on the basis of the preceding interpretation, allowing myself the due license, I decided to translate the noun Dzogchen as “total

^a Tib. Chaggya Chenpo (Wylie, *phyag rgya chen po*); Ch. 大印 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dà yìn*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-yin⁴*) / 大手印 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dà shǒu yìn*; Wade-Giles *ta⁴-shou³ yin⁴*). Note that the Chinese translation renders the Tib. *phyag rgya* and Skt. *mudra* as *seal* rather than *symbol*, which according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is the correct sense of the term.

^b Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, Ed., unpublished).

^c Wylie, *phyag rgya*.

^d Tib. *Dasang Thigle* (Wylie, *zla gsang thig le*). In full, *Pel Dasang Thigle Tsawe Gyü* (Wylie, *dpal zla gsang thig le rtsa ba'i rgyud*); English, *Root Tantra of the Essence of the Secret Moon*.

^e Language of Odḍiyāna, *santimaha* (diacritics omitted); Skt. *mahāsāndhi*.

^f Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po*.

^g Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^h Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

completeness / plenitude and perfection” —not only when the term Dzogchen refers to the Fruit of the Anuyogatantras and Mahāyogatantras of the Nyingmapa, but also, and most important, when the term designates the Base, the Path and the Fruit of Atiyogatantra. (To most people this may sound most strange, for as noted repeatedly the *primordial purity*^a aspect of our true condition of Dzogchen *qua* Base, *qua* Path and *qua* Fruit refers to emptiness, and common sense tends to conceive emptiness as nothingness, which it views as the opposite of fullness or plenitude; nevertheless, emptiness also corresponds to the *dharmadhātu*: the undivided expanse where all phenomena manifest and which is pervaded by a panoramic nondual awareness that is indivisible from it—as it becomes evident when rigpa makes our true condition evident. Since this indivisibility of undivided expanse and awareness is a continuum with no empty spaces, it is an absolute plenitude, and hence whoever is in the state of Dzogchen *qua* Path or *qua* Fruit and hence does not feel separate from it, is in a state of absolute plenitude.⁴⁴⁷ And it is when we feel separate from it that we feel a lack that we wrongly believe could be filled with possessions, pleasures and so on, and therefore that we attribute value to possessions, pleasures, to the extent that we wrongly imagine they will fill the lack.)

Mahāmudrā, the final state of Anuttarayogatantra, is not in any way different from the condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection indicated by the term Dzogchen that is the arrival point of both the Mahāyoga and the Anuyoga of the Old or Nyingmapa School. However, the fact that the Fruit of the higher Tantra of the Sarmapas and of the inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa is the same does not mean that all these vehicles have the potential to achieve exactly the same degree of consolidation of that state. This is why the final level^b that may be achieved, is not the same in the Anuttarayogatantra, the Mahāyogatantra and the Anuyogatantra.

As implied in a previous section, even the final Fruit of realization of the Bodhisattvayāna, which corresponds to the fifth bodhisattva path,^c called the path of no more learning,^d and which in Tibet as a rule is identified as the eleventh level,^e called Universal Radiance,^f might involve a perceptible partiality towards emptiness (which would imply some degree of directionality of attention and, as shown in the consideration of Anuyoga, would entail fragmentation and therefore would forestall the manifestation of the limitless, Total Space-Time-Awareness that (is) beyond the duality center-periphery), rather than revealing the fullness of the Vajra nature with its two indivisible aspects—namely primordial purity^g and spontaneous perfection.^h This is illustrated with the examples of the hen picking grain and of threading a needle with which Namkhai Nyingpo illustrated one of the flaws of the Sudden

^a Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^b Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^c Skt. *mārga*[h]; Pāli, *magga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); Ch. 道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles, *tao*⁴).

^d Skt. *asaikṣamārga*[h]; Tib. milobpai lam (Wylie, *mi slob pa'i lam*); Ch. 無學道 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxuédào*; Wade-Giles *wu²-hsüueh² tao⁴*).

^e Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^f Skt. *samantaprabhā*; Tib. kuntu ö (Wylie, *kun tu 'od*); Ch. 如來地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúlái [dì]*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-lai² [tí⁴]*).

^g Tib. katak (Wylie, *ka dag*); hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*.

^h Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

Mahāyāna, as shown toward the end of the section on the Sudden Mahāyāna of the Chapter on the Path of Renunciation.

The Path of Transformation reaches beyond the eleventh level, which is supposed to correspond both to the final arrival point of the gradual Mahāyāna (or Bodhisattvayāna) *and* to the definitive stabilization of the instantaneous Awakening proper to the sudden Mahāyāna. For example, Anuttarayogatantra systems such as that of the *Kālacakratantra* and that of the *Vajrahṛdayalaṃkāranāma*,^a claim that the practitioner may go beyond the eleventh level and attain a twelfth level, which in the *Kālacakra* is called Totally Liberated Level,^b and which seems to be differently called in the *Vajrahṛdayalaṃkāra*⁴⁴⁸ (other Anuttarayogatantras list other different numbers of levels; however, some of these lists are intended to make the levels correspond to sets of *dharma* items such as the four aspects of each of the four pleasures, the sixteen emptinesses, the sacred places and so on).

It has been noted that the Fruit of the three inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa is the state of Dzogchen; however, as stated above, this does not mean that all of them achieve the same degree of consolidation of this state. In the Mahāyogatantra the practitioner may go beyond the final level of the Mahāyāna and also beyond the twelfth level, which in this system is called level of the Lotus of Non-Attachment,^c and attain as the Fruit a thirteenth level, called “Level of the Great Accumulation of the *Cakra* of Letters”^d or, more precisely, of the Level of the Great Accumulation of the Immutable *maṇḍala*.” Likewise, in Anuyogatantra, in which the levels are not the result of a gradual, progressive training, it is possible to go beyond the final level of Mahāyoga and attain the fourteenth level, which is known as the “Level of Total Pleasure.”^e the state of Dzogchen has been consolidated to a greater degree than in Mahāyoga. As will be seen in the following chapter, through the gradual / nongradual Path of the Atiyoga it is possible to consolidate the state of Dzogchen even further, and attain up to the sixteenth level^f—and it is even possible to attain one of the modes of death characteristic of Atiyoga, which are unknown in other vehicles.⁴⁴⁹

^a English, *Ornament of the vajra-nucleus Tantra*; Tib. *Dorje nyingpo gyengyi gyü* [Wylie, *rdo rje snying po rgyan gyi rgyud*] [Toh. 451].

^b Tib. *nampar drölwa sa* (Wylie, *rnam par grol ba'i sa*).

^c Or “immaculate nonattachment.” Tib. *machak pema chen* (Wylie, *ma chags padma can*).

^d Or Level of the Great Accumulation of the Immutable *Cakra*. Tib. *yige khorlo tsokchen* (Wylie, *yi ge 'khor lo tshogs chen*).

^e Or “Level of Total Bliss.” Tib. *dewa chenpoi sa* (Wylie, *bde ba chen po'i sa*).

^f The fifteenth is the Level of the Vajra Holder (Tib. *dorje dzingyi sa* [Wylie, *rdo rje 'dzin gyi sa*]), of certitude of spontaneous perfection, and the sixteenth is the Level of Master of Primordial Gnosis (Tib. *yeshe lamai sa* [Wylie, *ye shes bla ma'i sa*]), the highest possible realization in any vehicle, achievable only through Ati Dzogpa Chenpo.

THE PATH OF SPONTANEOUS LIBERATION

The Path of Spontaneous Liberation is the only Path that consists of a single vehicle—namely the one referred to in the language of Oḍḍiyāna by the terms Ati^a (primordial), Atiyoga (primordial *yoga*), Atiyogatantra (Tantra of primordial *yoga*) or, when given in full, Atiyogatantrayāna^b (vehicle of the Tantra of primordial *yoga*)—the referent of which is the same as that of the term Dzogchen when the latter is used to refer to a vehicle with its three aspects, which are Base, Path and Fruit (i.e., as distinct from Dzogchen *qua* the Fruit of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga). For its part, the term “Dzogchen,” no matter the sense in which it is used, has many synonyms, including mind of Awakening (i.e. *bodhicitta*^c), total sphere,^d single sphere,^e total I-ness,^f and so on.⁴⁵⁰

As shown upon considering the Path of Transformation, the term Tantra and its Tibetan equivalent have the twofold sense of continuity and luminosity. Since all books and teachers that have employed the ancient classification of Buddhist vehicles into Path of Renunciation, Path of Transformation and Path of Spontaneous Liberation (including the book the reader has in his or her hands) have used the terms Tantra and Tantrayāna as a synonym of “Path of Transformation,” many people take them to refer exclusively to this Path. However, Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, based on a functional principle that, as clearly shown, is not that of transformation, but that of spontaneous liberation, is also a Tantric Path, and its root texts are most appropriately called Tantras.^g The reason for this is that this vehicle is also based on the continuity of empty, primordial luminosity—where *empty* refers to the primordial purity aspect of the Base, Path and Fruit, which is emptiness, and *primordial luminosity* to the spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification aspect, which is luminosity—which it makes use of far more skillfully than Mahāyoga and Anuyoga, which are the two vehicles of the Path of Transformation in the narrow sense of the term, and the only two vehicles apart from Atiyogatantra that, in the undivided true

^a Skt. *ādi*; Tib. *döma* (Wylie, *gdod ma*).

^b This term belongs to the language of Oḍḍiyāna; Skt. *ādiyogatantrayāna*; Tib. *shintu naljorgyi thekpa* (Wylie, *shin tu rnal 'byor gyi theg pa*).

^c Tib. *changchubsem* (Wylie, *byang chub sems*); Ch. 菩提心 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *pútíxīn*; Wade-Giles, *p'u²-t'i²-hsin¹*; Jap. *bodaishin*).

^d Tib. *thigle chenpo* (Wylie, *thig le chen po*).

^e Tib. *thigle nyakchik* (Wylie, *thig le nyag gcig*).

^f Tib. *dagnyi chenpo* (Wylie, *bdag nyid chen po*): [true condition of] ourselves with regard to which there is nothing external, [for it is the true condition of all phenomena].

^g Tib. *gyü* (Wylie, *rgyud*). For its part, the best-known Chinese is 目次 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *mùcì*; Wade-Giles, *mu⁴-tz'u⁴*); according to the Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (López & Buswell, 2014), 檀特羅 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *tántèluó*; Wade-Giles, *t'an²-t'e⁴-luo²*).

condition of ourselves and all phenomena, distinguish a primordial purity and a spontaneous perfection aspect.

The requisite for there being a Buddhist vehicle or a Buddhist Path is that it must comprise three indispensable aspects, which are Base, Path and Fruit. The continuity that is designated by the term Tantra also applies to these three aspects, each of which must have the same nature as the preceding one, for as shown repeatedly and as reiterated in the preceding paragraph, the Tantric vehicles that make up the Path of Transformation are rooted in the conception that the Base is the Vajra-nature that contains the three *kāyas*—the *dharmakāya*, which may be said to correspond to primordial purity, and the other two *kāyas* (*sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*), which make up the *rūpakāya* that may be said to correspond to spontaneous perfection—and the whole of the qualities and aspects of the Fruit, and that the Path is the spontaneous and therefore uncontrived / unconditioned^a disclosure and rectification of the Vajra-nature rather than the creation of a new reality—which amounts to saying that, as shown above, they pertain to the “Fruit-based vehicle” or Phalayāna.⁴⁵¹

However, this continuity of Base, Path and Fruit is most perfect in the Atiyoga:⁴⁵² Dzogchen *qua* Base is the primordial condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection that corresponds to the all-liberating single gnosis that manifests its all-liberating nature when it unveils and so long as it remains unconcealed in *nirvāṇa*, but not so when it is veiled in *saṃsāra*; Dzogchen *qua* Path is the repeated self-unveiling of the condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection that is Dzogchen *qua* Base, corresponding to the all-liberating single gnosis, and the continuity of this unconcealed plenitude and fully functional all-liberating perfection, during which all that arises to conceal this condition spontaneously liberates itself and all functions occur masterfully; and Dzogchen *qua* Fruit is the definitive uncovering of that condition, so that our lives become total completeness / plenitude and unhindered perfection. It is because in the Atiyoga the three aspects of Base, Path and Fruit are Dzogchen, that this vehicle *qua* vehicle is also called Dzogchen. (As we have seen, in Anuyoga and Mahāyoga the Fruit is Dzogchen, but since the Base and the Path, in spite of the explanation of the Base in terms of the two aspects which are primordial purity and spontaneous perfection, are not the inherently all-liberating single gnosis, these vehicles are not called Dzogchen. The fact that in spite of this the name Dzogchen is also used in Anuyoga and Mahāyoga to refer to the Fruit instantly brings to my mind the *Samten Migdrön*’s categorization of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo as *the universal ancestor of all vehicles*.)

In the higher vehicles of the Path of Transformation there is a generation stage in which a new reality must be created that was not originally manifest as part of the Base (even though, as opportunely shown, according to these vehicles the reality one creates is merely a way of acknowledging our original condition, in which the true condition of all forms is deity, the true condition of all sounds is *mantra*, and the true condition of mind is the *samādhi* of thatness,^b and therefore one would not be superimposing anything on the original condition, still the generation stage actually involves modifying our vision^c in

^a Skt. *asamskṛta*; Pāli, *asankhata*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, *du ma byas*); Ch. 無為 *asamskṛta* (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^b Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. *dezhinnyi* (Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*); Chin. 眞如 [性] (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú [xìng]*; Wade-Giles, *chen¹-ju² [hsing⁴]*).

^c Tib. *ngawa* (Wylie, *snang ba*); Skt. *ābhāsa*; Ch. 現 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiàn*; Wade-Giles, *hsien⁴*).

order to produce a wholly new way of perceiving ourselves and our dimension). However, as stated in the preceding chapter, one must be aware of the insubstantial, illusion-like nature of the transformation and later on, on the completion stage, one is supposed to be enabled to See through that reality in a nonconceptual and hence nondual way into the uncreated and unconditioned^a true condition of the Base.⁴⁵³

This does not occur in pure Ati Dzogpa Chenpo (i.e. in *ati ati*), and in particular in the Series of Instructions^b and the essence of this series condensed in the Nyingthik^c teachings, which teach the four chogzhag^d or “in its own natural condition,” one of which is the nangwa chogzhag,^e one of the senses of which is that vision is to be left as it is rather than transformed. In fact, in the primordial vehicle the Path, rather than involving the creation of a new, pure reality by means of visualization, consists in uncontrivedly Seeing through all conditioned experiences into their primordially pure and spontaneously perfect true condition, which is the unconditioned, uncreated Base of both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. This proves that in Ati Dzogpa Chenpo the continuity of Base, Path and Fruit is perfect, and that this is not the case in the higher vehicles of the Path of Transformation: rather than having to *create* a pure vision of reality, the practitioner of Ati has a direct unveiling of the Base that had always been there, and since the whole of the Base is primordially pure and spontaneously perfect, upon this unveiling all phenomena are realized to be primordially pure and spontaneously perfect. This is why Guru Chöwang^f replied to the question “what is Dzogchen?” with the renowned sentence “not to visualize.”⁴⁵⁴ Furthermore, in Atiyoga there is no need to contrivedly *create* the qualities of Awakening, as is done in the causal vehicles of the Sūtrayāna, for the spontaneous realization of the indivisible, single Base where the teachings artificially distinguish the aspect of primordial purity and the aspect of spontaneous perfection results in the self-manifestation of our original true condition, in which these two qualities are indivisible.

To conclude, even though the Path of Transformation is based on the idea that the Base and the Path have the same nature as the Fruit, and that the Fruit is no other than the stable, full realization of the Base, as noted in the preceding chapter, in it the Path is based on the principle of causality (which the *Kunje Gyälpo* asserts to be the shortcoming of Anuyoga). The primordial vehicle of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo does not belong either to the Hetuyāna or to the Phalayāna precisely because its Path is not based on causality, but on the principle of pure spontaneity that is referred to by the Tibetan term lhundrub.^g In fact, another way of explaining why the continuity of Base, Path and Fruit is more perfect in this vehicle than in those pertaining to the Path of Transformation, could consist in noting that causes being necessarily different and separate from their effects, *causality* involves a breach of continuity. Furthermore, as we have seen repeatedly, causality affirms and sustains the doer of action, as well as the cause-effect relation; since all of these pertain to the realm of delusion, it is clear that causal practices sustain delusion.

^a Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. dūmache (Wylie, *du ma byas*); Ch. 無為 *asaṃskṛta* (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^b Skt. *Upadeśavarga*; Tib. Menngagde or Menngagyide (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*).

^c Wylie, *snying thig*.

^d Wylie, *cog bzhag*.

^e Tib. nangwa chogzhag (Wylie, *snang ba cog bzhag*).

^f gu ru chos dbang (1212-1270), whose full name was Guru Chökyi Wangchuk (Wylie, *chos kyi dbang phyug*).

^g Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

The Base

In the indivisible undividedness of our original condition of *total plentitude and perfection* (Dzogchen), which in Ati Dzogpa Chenpo is the Base, the Dzogchen teachings distinguish different numbers of aspects, of which at this point we are concerned with the division into three aspects, which is one of the two most common ones:⁴⁵⁵

(1) Essence,^a which (is) an utterly timeless aspect that may be said to consist in emptiness understood as: (a) the fact that the Base has no fixed form or color and therefore (through its nature or rangzhin and its energy or thukje aspect) it can contain and manifest any form or color, just as a mirror can reflect any form—or, to adapt the example to our times, just as a LCD screen can show any image—precisely because its surface has no fixed form or color; (b) the fact that there is nothing external to or other than the single Base that here is represented with the mirror or LCD screen;^b (c) the fact that both the Base all that manifests by virtue of the Base is empty of self-existence and lacking substance—the latter (being) no more than a momentarily manifesting, empty configuration of light / sound / tactile sensation / taste / odor / mind-stuff), utterly nonexistent even as an empty appearance.^{c456}

(2) Nature,^d also an utterly timeless aspect that is said to be clarity, and which is compared to the brightness and reflectiveness of a mirror, thanks to which it can reflect forms and colors—or, adapting the example to our times, to the luminosity of a LCD screen, thanks to which it can show forms and colors.

(3) Energy,^{e457} which (is): (a) the unobstructedness^f that allows the Base to manifest all kinds of phenomena and these to change uninterruptedly; (b) the unobstructed^g disposition to all-pervasively,^h uninterruptedlyⁱ manifest all kinds of phenomena; and (c) the process of manifestation itself—including the phenomena manifested, for these phenomena, being manifestations of emptiness that do not block the manifestation of subsequent reflections and that depend on the mirror and on all other reflections,⁴⁵⁸ are utterly nonexistent, and hence they do in no way alter this aspect of the Base by their arising or disappearance,

^a Tib. ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*), which is one of the Tibetan rendering of the Skt. *svabhāva* (Ch. 自性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*]).

^b This understanding of emptiness is no other than the one that what Uma Zhentongpas (Wylie, *dbu ma gzhan stong pa*; tentative Skt. trans. Para[bhāva]śūnyatāvāda Mādhyamaka) call “emptiness of extraneous substances” (Tib. zhengyi ngöpo tongpanyi [Wylie, *gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid*, abbreviated as *gzhan stong* and rendered into Sanskrit as *paraśūnyatā* or *parabhāvaśūnyatā*).

^c This understanding of emptiness is the one upheld by Uma Rangtongpas (Wylie, *dbu ma rang stong pa*; constructed Skt. trans. Svabhāvaśūnyatāvāda Mādhyamaka or Prakṛtiśūnyatāvāda Mādhyamaka), called *svabhāvaśūnyatā* or *prakṛtiśūnyatā* (Tib. rangzhingyi tongpanyi [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid*]; Ch. 自性空 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-hsing⁴-k’ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*]).

^d Tib. rangzhin (Wylie, *rang bzhin*), which is one of the Tibetan renderings of the Skt. *svabhāva* (Ch. 自性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tzū⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*]).

^e The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness or mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*.

^f Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

^g Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

^h Wylie, *kun khyab*.

ⁱ Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

and the neutral moments of nonmanifestation. This aspect is illustrated with a mirror's uninterrupted,^a unobstructed^b and all-pervasive manifestation of reflections—or, adapting the example to our times, it may be illustrated with the uninterrupted and unimpeded^c manifestation of images in the LCD screen of a TV set that is always on;⁴⁵⁹ because it gives rise to this succession, this aspect may be regarded as the basis for temporality—which is its samsaric manifestation.

The simile of a mirror has a drawback, because mirrors reflect the appearances of phenomena that exist externally to itself, which is not the case with the Base, as sense (b) of the emptiness that is the Base's essence aspect evinces. The simile of the LCD screen does not have this drawback, yet has the major shortcoming of implying that the process of manifestation is regulated by a cybernetic system and program. Both examples are equally good, however, for illustrating the fact that, in order to manifest, phenomena depend on the three aspects of the Base—and hence that they are all empty of self-being.^d (For a discussion of the three types of emptiness briefly described in the discussion of the essence aspect of the Base, cf. Chöphel & Capriles, 2014, and the upcoming definitive edition of Capriles, electronic publication 2004.)

To conclude this brief discussion of the three aspects of the Base, it must be noted that, from the standpoint of temporality, the energy aspect of the Base is exemplified by the simile of a Buddhist *mala* or rosary that is often used to illustrate the meaning of the term Tantra and its Tibetan equivalent, Gyü:^e the string represents the uninterrupted^f flow of manifestation of the Base's empty essence and luminous, clear nature, and the beads and the spaces between them represent the unceasing experiences and spaces between experiences. Since inside each bead there is only emptiness and string—the continuity of the manifestation of essence-emptiness—all experiences are in essence empty. However, although the essence of all our experiences is emptiness, the nature of the Base is to continuously give rise to these experiences: what the string represents is no other than the continuity of luminosity. Thus the example of the *mala* illustrates the fact that there is a perfect continuity also between the three aspects of the Base of Atiyoga.

For their part, the three functional possibilities of the Base are the ones that were already discussed:

(1) *Nirvāṇa*, in which the Base' true condition is unveiled and its spontaneously perfect functionality is unhindered;

(2) The base-of-all, *which pertains to saṃsāra* and hence is not *nirvāṇa* (which means that actually there are the two possibilities, which are *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*, rather

^a Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *'gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma 'gags*).

^b Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *'gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma 'gags*).

^c Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *'gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma 'gags*).

^d Skt. *svabhāvasunya* or *prakṛtiśūnya*; Tib. rangtong (Wylie, *rang stong*)—which abbreviates the adjective rangzhinggyi tongpa (Wylie, *rang bzhing gyis stong pa*). The corresponding noun is rangzhinggyi tongpanyi (Wylie, *rang bzhing gyis stong pa nyid*); Ch. 自性空 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade-Giles, *tz'u⁴-hsing⁴-k'ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*).

^e Wylie, *rgyud*. For its part, the best-known Chinese is 目次 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *mùcì*; Wade-Giles, *mu⁴-tz'u⁴*); according to the Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism (López & Buswell, 2014), 檀特羅 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tántèluó*; Wade-Giles, *t'an²-t'e⁴-luo²*).

^f Wylie, *rgyun*, and also magagpa (Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *'gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma 'gags*).

than three),⁴⁶⁰ though in it *saṃsāra* is not active (it is in order to maintain the threefold character of the classifications, and because from the base-of-all either *nirvāṇa* or active *saṃsāra* can manifest, that here I place it between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*); and

(3) Active *saṃsāra*, in which the true condition of the Base is utterly concealed and its spontaneously perfect functionality is impaired.

When the last of these three possibilities manifests, the delusion called *avidyā* or *marigpa* gives rise to the illusory sundering of the three aspects of the Base considered above. It has been shown that two of the sources of this delusion are, (1) the vibratory activity that seems to emanate from, or to be concentrated in, the center of the chest at the level of the heart, which “charges” the contents of thought with an illusion of value, truth, substantiality, objectivity and importance, thus hypostasizing / reifying / absolutizing / valorizing those baseless, empty contents, and (2) the fragmentary, limited and rather hermetic focus of consciousness that is the core of what *Gestaltphilosophie* and then Gestalt psychology called “figure-ground minds” and that, on apprehending a segment of the continuum of the “energy” aspect of the Base, plunges the rest of this continuum in what I often refer to as a “penumbra of awareness.”

As already noted, the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle thought structure known as the threefold directional thought structure^a begets the delusive subject-object duality, whereas the hypostatization / absolutization / reification / valorization of subtle thoughts^b (sometimes with the help of the absolutization / hypostatization / reification / valorization of coarse thoughts^c) allows us to ascertain which segment of the totality appearing as object is to be singled out—and, after it has been singled out, to know it as being in itself / inherently / hypostatically this or that entity. For its part, the fragmentary, limited and rather hermetic focus of conscious attention makes it possible for us to single out the segment chosen for perception.

In brief, the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure gives rise to the illusory subject-object duality, and the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of subtle thoughts in combination with the fragmentary, limited and rather hermetic focus of consciousness single out segments of the totality of sense data appearing as object, and by the same token give rise to the illusion that the singled out segments are inherently separate from the rest of the continuum of the energy aspect of the Base, and that they are in themselves / inherently / hypostatically this or that entity.

The reason why it was stated that the above produces an illusory sundering of the three aspects of the Base is that while perceiving the singled out segments in question as explained, the subject is incapable of apprehending the Base’s inherently empty essence, and therefore each phenomenon of energy seems *not* to be a manifestation of the single essence that is the Base’s emptiness arising by virtue of the Base’s nature (its luminosity / clarity) and the Base’s energy (its unobstructedness^d and uninterruptedness^a together with

^a Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlún*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^b Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. dōnchi (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zōngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

^c Skt. *śabdasāmānya*; Tib. drachi (Wylie, *sgra spyi*); Ch. 論聲總 (simplified 论声总) (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzōng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*).

^d Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *'gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma 'gags*).

its uninterrupted^b / unobstructed^c flow of manifestation—a flow that, moreover, instead of being realized as being the display of our true condition and hence as the inexpressible true Meaning of life, is experienced as something imposed on oneself that one has to suffer or enjoy according to the qualities it displays at any given moment).

Furthermore, according to the Dzogchen teachings, the continuum that the energy aspect of the Base is, manifests itself in three different ways, which are: (1) the dang^d mode of manifestation of energy, (2) the rölpa^e mode of manifestation of energy, and (3) the tsel^f mode of manifestation of energy—which will be discussed in greater detail in Part Two of this book. However, in brief:

(3) The third, the one referred to as tsel, is illustrated with a rock crystal, which on being struck by sunlight projects the spectrum outside itself, and in our time could be illustrated with the images projected by a movie projector or a video beam—for it gives rise to phenomena that clearly appear to lie in what the Dzogchen teachings call the “external dimension,”^g the paradigmatic expression of which is the reality we call “physical.”⁴⁶¹

(1) The first, the one called dang, is illustrated with the simile of a crystal ball that is pure, clear and limpid, in which there is nothing in particular and which is beyond the cleavage into an internal and an external dimension; however, once tsel energy has manifested, all that may manifest in this form of energy seems to lie in an “internal dimension or ying,^h” just as happens with the reflections of external phenomena appearing within a crystal ball.

(2) Finally, the second, which is the one called rölpa, is illustrated with the simile of a mirror that manifests appearances that do not seem to be either in a dimension internal to the mirror—for the latter is flat rather than tridimensional—or in a dimension external to it: it is evident that they manifest through the mirror’s reflectiveness and (are) not external to it, though they (are) neither the latter nor something other than the latter—in this sense being nondual with it.⁴⁶² This aspect of the *continuum* of the Base’s energy, which links the other two, features phenomena that defy the dimensionality of the physical world (i.e. of tsel energy) and rectify all dualistic attempts to place them in a dimension internal or external to the mirror. Its paradigmatic manifestations are such immaterial, self-luminous visions as those that arise in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena,ⁱ and which manifest in practices such as those of Thögel^j and the Yangthik^k (the second and final stage of practice in the Series of Instructions^l of Dzogchen teachings).⁴⁶³ The point is that the illusory duality of subject and object, and of an internal dimension^m and

^a Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

^b Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

^c Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

^d Wylie, *gdangs*.

^e Wylie, *rol pa*.

^f Wylie, *rtsal*.

^g Tib. chiyng (Wylie, *phyi dbyings*); hypothesized Skt. *bāhyadhātu* (or *bahirdhādhatu*?).

^h Tib. nangying (Wylie, *nang dbyings*); hypothesized Skt. *ādhyātmikadhātu*?

ⁱ The second of the intermediate states between death and rebirth. Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxing zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

^j Wylie, *thod rgal*.

^k Wylie, *yang thig*.

^l Tib. Menngagde (Wylie, *man ngag sde*) or Menngaggyide (Wylie, *man ngag gyi sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^m Tib. nangying (Wylie, *nang dbyings*); hypothesized Skt. *ādhyātmikadhātu* (?).

an external one,^a imply the illusory rupture of the continuum of energy; once these dualities manifest, the mental subject, which appears to lie in the internal dimension, and which is no more than an aspect of the super-subtle thought-structure known as the “threefold directional thought structure,” seems to be an unbreachable abyss apart from the “material” world, which seems to be a substance of a wholly other nature located in the external dimension. Once this has occurred, only a spontaneously rectifying^b practice utterly free from action with the rölpa mode of manifestation of energy applied in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena^c such as Thögel can definitively put an end to the illusory rupture of the continuum of energy, totally uprooting delusion.

Some of the greatest Dzogchen teachers of the last centuries have asserted the recognition of the energy^d aspect of the Base to be achieved by noticing and observing the unobstructedness^e that immediately precedes manifestation and makes the latter possible. And in fact, at that point the unobstructedness that makes manifestation possible and that together with the latter constitutes the energy aspect of the Base can be easily recognized. However, this does not mean that the energy aspect of the Base is *circumscribed* to the unobstructedness that immediately precedes manifestation and excludes the uninterrupted process of manifestation and the phenomena that are thus manifested (unless the reason to affirm that it excludes them is that neither the process nor the phenomena in question have any true existence). In fact, there is actually no contradiction between what may seem to be two mutually exclusive interpretations of the energy aspect of the Base, for the Tibetan terms that are rendered as “unobstructed” are the same ones that are rendered as “uninterrupted”^f—which, by the way, is precisely the source of the seeming contradiction, which stems from interpreting different acceptations of the same terms as being mutually exclusive.

If the Base’s energy were the unobstructedness that makes manifestation possible and the disposition to manifest *at the exclusion of* the phenomena manifested, since the Base has only three aspects, since these three aspects are indivisible, and since whatever (is) ultimately the Base manifests by means of these three aspects and (is) not something apart from these three aspects, the myriad subjects and objects would *not* (be) empty manifestations of the Base’s energy aspect, and hence they would have to be substances hypostatically / inherently different and separate from the Base’s essence aspect and as such would have to have self-being, substantiality, and hypostatic / inherent existence. In that case, there would be a hypostatic / inherent, self-existent and substantial plurality, and the three modes of manifestation of energy would *not* be the three dimensions^g of

^a Tib. chiyang (Wylie, *phyi dbyings*); hypothesized Skt. *bāhyadhātu* or *bahirdhādātu* (?).

^b Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^c Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fǎ³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*). This bardo normally manifests between death and rebirth, but in practices such as Thögel or the Yangthik it is made to manifest while the organism is alive and well.

^d The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness* or *mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*. The reason why this term is used is explained in a footnote to the Introduction.

^e Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

^f Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma ’gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *’gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma ’gags*).

^g Skt. *kāya*; Tib. ku (Wylie, *sku*); Ch. 身 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēn*; Wade-Giles, *shen¹*).

Buddhahood, as the Dzogchen teachings establish them to be—an establishment that will be discussed in Part II of this book. Therefore, dualism and self-being would be the true condition of reality, and the practice realizations of Dzogchen would be impossible.

That the myriad phenomena that appear as object, the myriad sentient beings and the myriad streams of consciousness of sentient beings are not something apart from the Base with its three aspects, but are manifestations of the Base that (are) no other than the Base and hence partake of the Base's true condition, is evinced by the following passage of a Dzogchen Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa:^a

The reflections of the planets and stars in the ocean are none other than the ocean. The physical world and its sentient inhabitants are none other than space. *Samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are none other than displays of the absolutely true condition, (...) [which] (is) the all pervasive and all-encompassing unifying principle [thus symbolized]. Understand [the true sense of] these metaphors and what they exemplify. Thus you will become a yogin who embraces *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

If one believed the myriad phenomena that appear as object, the myriad sentient beings and the myriad streams of consciousness of sentient beings to be something apart from the Base with its three aspects, believing them not to be manifestations of the Base that (are) no other than the Base and therefore partake of the Base's true condition, one would be like those who believe that the term *individually realized primordial gnosis of rigpa*^b signifies that each sentient being and each Buddha have a separate, individual rigpa and therefore would remain in *samsāra*. This is why the same Tantra cited above tells us that if one believed there is a multiplicity of Buddhas, rather than Buddhas they would be a multiplicity of sentient beings.^c

However, the above expressions are no more than antidotes against the prevailing misconceptions of the deluded who have not entered the door of *dharmā*, being stated in a for-others^d way, as *reasons acknowledged by the opponent only*:^e they are made without taking them to be true, or, which is the same, are made as *other-directed assertions*.^f In fact, they do not mean that the Base—source and true condition of all phenomena—fits into the concept of oneness, or that the thesis that the phenomena that are compared to reflections are the Base that is compared to the mirror perfectly fits the true condition of reality, for as Dūdjom Lingpa stated elsewhere:^g

^a Dūdjom Lingpa, *Buddhahood without meditation (Rangzhin dzogpa chenpoi rangzhäl ngöndu jepai dampa magom sangye* [Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i rang zhal mngon du byed pa'i gdams pa ma bsgom sangs rgyas*]). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. 2, p. 25).

^b Skt. *pratyātmavedanīyajñāna*; Tib. *soso rangrigpai yeshe* (Wylie, *so so rang rig pa'i ye shes*).

^c Dūdjom Lingpa, *Buddhahood without meditation (Rangzhin dzogpa chenpoi rangzhäl ngöndu jepai dampa magom sangye* [Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i rang zhal mngon du byed pa'i gdams pa ma bsgom sangs rgyas*]). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. 2, p. 23).

^d Skt. *paramata*; Tib. *zhenlug* (Wylie, *gzhan lugs*).

^e Skt. *praprasiddhānumāna*; Tib. *zhendragkyi jesu pagpa / zhenla dragpai jepak* (Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa / gzhan la grags pa'i rjes dpag*).

^f Tib. *zhengno khelen* (Wylie, *gzhan ngo khas len*): these are assertions propounding reasonings based on what others and only others take as established (Skt. *paraprasiddha*; Tib. *zhendragkyi jesu pagpa* (Wylie, *gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa*), etc.

^g Dūdjom Lingpa, *Buddhahood without meditation (Rangzhin dzogpa chenpoi rangzhäl ngöndu jepai dampa magom sangye* [Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i rang zhal mngon du byed pa'i gdams pa ma bsgom sangs rgyas*]). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. 2, p. 30).

In the expanse of the *sugatagarbha qua* Base, all phenomena of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* appear distinctly and individually; like [reflections of] planets and stars in the ocean, they are free from the extreme of unity. However the modes of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* arise, they (are) of one taste in the *sugatagarbha qua* Base; just as the planets and stars reflected in the ocean (are) not other than the ocean, [phenomena] (are) free from the extreme of diversity. Since [reality] does not fall into any of the eight extremes of conceptual fabrication, its uniform pervasiveness (is) unsullied by blemishes.

And also:^{a464}

Some people hold apparent phenomena to be mind. They might think that all external apparent phenomena are actually [hypostasized / reified] thoughts and therefore [that they are] their own minds, but such is not the case. This is demonstrated by the fact that while apparent phenomena change from the very moment they manifest, ceasing and passing away in a succession of later moments following former ones, ordinary mind does not take on the nature of these passing phenomena, [for if it did so it would] become itself nonexistent *qua* mind [the very moment it took on the nature of these phenomena].

Through the usual progression of apparent phenomena manifesting in this manner to the eight aggregates of consciousness, cyclic existence emerges in its entirety. *By tracing the process back to consciousness as the ground of all ordinary experience, one is still left stranded at the peak of experience,^b [pinnacle of conditioned existence (samsāra)].*

Thus the world of all possible appearances, the whole of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, is none other than [Dzogchen-qua-]Base and is of one taste with this Base. To give an example, although myriad reflections of the planets and stars appear in the ocean, in actuality they are of one taste with the water itself. Understand that things are like this. This demonstration that all apparent phenomena are [mere] self-manifesting appearances is the direct transmission instruction of Vajradhāra.

Since, as the above passage remarks, phenomena are the Base and are of one taste with the Base, it is clear that the energy aspect of the Base, which constantly manifests phenomena through its three forms of manifestation of energy, could not be circumscribed to the unimpededness that may be perceived in the moment previous to manifestation at the exclusion of the phenomena manifested (unless the reason to assert this be that these phenomena are utterly nonexistent). The passage makes the same point as the one by Longchenpa that was cited above:^c

...all apparent phenomena that seem to exist in their own right, (are) appearances manifesting to the mind and are nothing other than manifestations appearing to the mind; though they appear to be other than the mind, like dreams, illusions and so forth, they are by nature empty, and, being inconceivable and ineffable, they have never been anything other than

^a Dūdjom Lingpa, *Buddhahood without meditation (Rangzhin dzogpa chenpoi rangzhäl ngöndu jepai dampa magom sangye [Wylie, rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i rang zhal mngon du byed pa'i gdams pa ma bsgom sangs rgyas])*. Alternative translations in Dūdjom Lingpa (1994, p. 103) and Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, pp. 28-9).

^b Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. sidtse (Wylie, *srid rtse*) or sidpai tsemo (Wylie, *srid pa'i rtse mo*); Ch. 有頂天 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*): the highest of the four formless realms.

^c Longchen Rabjam (1998, p. 84).

mind, nor have they ever been mind either: they are empty and yet clearly apparent, groundless, and timelessly pure.

In fact, as both Longchenpa and Dūdjom Lingpa noted, phenomena have never been anything other than mind, nor have they ever been mind either: they could not be either one thing or the other because they are utterly empty, nonexistent, groundless, and therefore timelessly pure—even though they are clearly apparent. It was because relative truth consists in the experience of utterly empty, nonexistent and groundless phenomena as in themselves existent or nonexistent and as in themselves being this or that entity, that in the *Madhyamakāvātāra* Candrakīrti declares relative truth to be utter delusion. This is why a translation of a verse of Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvātāra* can go so far as to state, "There are not two truths but a single one, because, as the Buddha said, 'Monks, this is the single, unique absolute truth—namely, *nirvāṇa*, which is nondeceptive.'"^{a465} This is a Mahāyāna refutation of one key axiom of Mahāyāna Buddhism—namely that there are two truths, which are the absolute and the relative. Since the Dzogchen teachings take the standpoint of full realization, and in full agreement with Candrakīrti and most non-Gelug Tibetan Masters, they do not posit two truths: all there (is), (is) the Single Truth that lies in the direct, nonconceptual and hence nondual realization of the primordial state in which vision^b and emptiness^c are utterly indivisible^d—i.e., nonstatic *nirvāṇa*.

The Path

It is when we are confined to *samsāra* that it is necessary for us to travel a Path that may allow us to reach the Fruit of irreversible nonstatic *nirvāṇa*—i.e. Buddhahood.⁴⁶⁶ The three aspects of the Path in all Buddhist vehicles are those referred to by the Tibetan terms *tawa*^e, *gompa*^f and *chöpa*.^g However, as explained below, in Dzogchen Ati these terms have meanings that are radically different from the ones they have in *all* the other Buddhist paths, vehicles and schools.

(1) In standard Buddhist paths, vehicles and schools the term *tawa* is usually rendered as *theoretical view*, for it designates the *conception* a given path, vehicle or school has of *the true condition of reality and of absolute truth*—i.e. *of the realization of the true condition in question*—as well as of relative truth, of the nature and workings of unawareness and delusion, of the Path leading to freedom from unawareness and delusion in the condition identified as absolute truth, etc. In the Dzogchen teachings we find a striking exception to this rule: since they emphasize the direct access to the nonconceptual and hence nondual awareness (of) the Base—i.e., (of) the inconceivable^h and inexpressibleⁱ true condition of

^a Candrakīrti (1970), as cited in Candrakīrti (2003, p. 219, n. 16).

^b Tib. nangwa (Wylie, *snang ba*); Skt. *ābhāsa*; Ch. 現 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiàn*; Wade-Giles, *hsien*⁴).

^c Tib. tongpa[nyī] (Wylie, *stong pa [nyid]*); Skt. *śūnya*[tā].

^d Wylie, *snang stong dbyer med*.

^e Wylie, *lta ba*; Skt. *dṛṣṭi* (also *darśana*; especially when referring to nonBuddhist systems); Ch. 見 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiàn*; Wade-Giles, *chien*⁴).

^f Wylie, *sgom pa*; Skt. *bhāvanā*; Ch. 修習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūxí*; Wade-Giles, *hsiu¹-hsi²*).

^g Wylie, *spyod pa*; Skt. *caryā*; Pāli and Skt. *carita*; Ch. 行 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng*; Wade-Giles, *hsing*²).

^h Skt. *acintya*; Pāli: *acinteya*, *acintiya*; Tib. *samye* (Wylie, *bsam yas*) or *samgyi mikhyabpa* (Wylie, *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*); Ch. 佛學辭彙 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxué cíhuì*; Wade-Giles, *fo²-hsüueh² tz'u²-hui⁴*).

ⁱ Skt. *avācya*; Tib. *marmepa* (Wylie, *smrar med pa*); Ch. 不可说物 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō wù*; Wade-

reality—that the Dzogchen teachings call rigpa, which evinces the incontrovertible fact that concepts, words, or chains of concepts or words, no matter how sophisticated and thoughtful they may be, could never correspond precisely to either the true condition of the Base or the nonconceptual and thus nondual awareness (of) that condition. Therefore *in the teachings* of Ati the term, rather than designating a *theoretical view*, refers to the awareness in question (and often refers in particular to the initial events of manifestation of that awareness). This is the reason why in the context of those teachings I render the term tawa as Vision, which I capitalize in order to make it clear that, rather than referring to the vision of this or that object through the sense of sight, it designates the initial events of the direct, nonconceptual, nondual, undistorted awareness (of) the true condition of the Base that is our own true condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection—or, which is the same, the initial occurrences of the primordial gnosis whereby rigpa displays itself, which (is) what the Dzogchen teachings call the single level state of liberation.^a (Note that the usage of the same term for referring to the *theoretical view* of a path, vehicle or school, *and* to the initial events of nonconceptual and hence nondual awareness [of] the true condition of reality, is also found in Mahāyāna Sanskrit terminology, for the term rendered by the Tibetan word tawa is *dr̥ṣṭi*, but also *darśana*,^b the latter of which does not only designate the theoretical views in question, for it also has the acceptance of *presence* and refers to the *nonconceptual and hence nondual Presence* [term that I capitalize in order to indicate that rather than being used in Greek etymological sense of *presence* emphasized by Plato, it is used to refer to a sublime event that defies the sense in question⁴⁶⁷] [of] the true condition of reality: this is the acceptance the term has in the name of the third bodhisattva path,^c which is the one attained when this nonconceptual and hence nondual Presence manifests for the first time: *darśanamārga* or *path of Presence*. However, in this case the term *darśana* is not rendered into Tibetan as tawa, for the Tibetan name of this path is tonglam^d—where lam means path and tong is the Tibetan for *seeing*, which I capitalize and render as Vision for the same reasons why I render tawa as Vision, and also in order to emphasize that the English term chosen refers to [different degrees of] the same event in the Mahāyāna and in the Atiyogatantrayāna.)

The Vision in question need not last long: it may be a short-lived glimpse, but at any rate it must make the true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality perfectly patent. The great Dzogchen Masters usually leave their *dharma* heir or heirs a spiritual testament, which, as it is well-known and as it was noted in a previous chapter, in the case of Garab Dorje—the “Primordial Revealer”^e who introduced Buddhist Dzogchen into our world—was, “(i) Direct Introduction [to the state of rigpa]; (ii) Not to Remain in Doubt [with regard to the true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality that revealed itself in the event of Direct Introduction and the nature and significance of that event]; and (iii)

Gilles, pu⁴-k'e³-shuo¹ wu⁴) / Skt. *anabhilāpya*; Tib. jöme (Wylie, *brjod med*) or jödu mepa (Wylie, *brjod du med pa*); Ch. 不可說 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō*; Wade-Gilles, pu⁴-k'e³-shuo¹).

^a Wylie, *grol sa gcig po yin par ngo shes*.

^b Mainly when referring to nonBuddhist systems.

^c Skt. *mārga*[h]; Pāli, *magga*; Tib. lam (Wylie, *lam*); Ch. 道 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dào*; Wade-Giles, *tao*⁴).

^d Wylie, *mthong lam*; Ch. 見道 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiàndào*; Wade-Giles *chien*⁴-*tao*⁴).

^e Tib. *tönpa* (Wylie, *ston pa*): those who reintroduce the *dharma* when the *dharma* in its totality has been lost, and who as such are different from the Treasure Revealers or tertöns (Wylie, *gter ston*)—who, while there is still a living transmission of the teachings, introduce specific teachings that had been lost or that were not suitable for previous times but are required at the time of their revelation.

Continue in the State [of rigpa].” As also noted in the same chapter, this is the original, standard sequence of Dzogchen practice. Well, the *Direct introduction* referred to in the first of the three phrases Garab Dorje bequeathed us is no other than the initial event of Vision, which marks the entrance to the Path: an initial, sudden, total disclosure of our original, uncompounded / unconditioned / uncontrived / nonfabricated,^a unborn^b condition of *total completeness / plenitude and perfection*—i.e. Dzogchen—by means of the Awake Awareness / absolute Presence / instant Presence^c referred to by the Tibetan term rigpa.⁴⁶⁸ And it is by returning to the Vision in question again and again that we come to no longer remain in doubt. On the other hand, continuing in the state of rigpa is achieved by means of gompa and chöpa, which will be discussed below.

By combining the two principal threefold classifications of *avidyā* existent in the Dzogchen teachings, in a previous chapter I expounded a fourfold classification of the referent of the term in question. The first type of *avidyā*, which lies in the unawareness of the true condition of both ourselves and all other phenomena, was said to consist in the beclouding of the self-reGnition^d of the true condition of the Base by the above-mentioned element of stupefaction named mongcha^e that has always been flowing with the mental continuum of sentient beings who have never realized the true condition in question—and that, when unaccompanied by the other types or aspects of *avidyā*, induces the condition of the neutral base-of-all that, since it involves *avidyā*, pertains to *samsāra*, but in which the latter is not active, for we are not yet at any point of the revolving wheel,^f for it is not actively giving rise to the illusions of dualism, substantiality, inherent qualities and so on that cause us to go up or down according to both *karma* and circumstances. The second type or aspect of *avidyā*, produced by the reification / hypostatization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure, was said to give rise to the illusory subject-object duality that is the first element of active *samsāra*. The third type or aspect, engendered by the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of subtle / intuitive thoughts, was said to produce the perception of entities. Therefore, the passions that alternate in our experience as we revolve in the wheel are produced by the combination of the second and third types of *avidyā*, in collaboration with the various mental functions and energetic events that give rise to the narrowly focused consciousness that seems to be a function of the baseless, illusory mental subject that is produced by the reification / hypostatization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure, and that is unaware of the Base

^a Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṅskṛta*; Tib. *dūmache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²).

^b Pāli and Skt. *ajāta*; Tib. *makyé[pa]* (Wylie, *ma skyes [pa]*) or *kyeme* (Wylie, *skyes med*); Ch. 無生 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúshēng; Wade-Giles, wu²-sheng¹). The most common terms are *anutpāda* and *anutpatti* (Tib. and Ch. same as just expressed), which Nāgārjuna preferred to *ajāta*.

^c Tib. *kechik rigpa* or *kechik mayi rigpa* (Wylie, *skad cig [ma yi] rig pa*) / *rigpa kechikma* (Wylie, *rig pa skad chig ma*). As stated explained in endnote 473, here “instant” (Tib. *kechikma* [Wylie, *skad chig ma*]) means that awareness is free from the division of the temporal continuum into past, present and future that arises when the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought-structure sunders the uninterrupted Base into subject and object, and thereby into space, time and knowledge as different dimensions.

^d Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*. Concerning the reason for coining the neologisms reGnition, reGnize and so on, see the endnote the reference mark for which is next to the reference mark to this footnote.

^e Wylie, *rmongs cha*.

^f Skt. *samsāra*; Tib. *khorma* (Wylie, 'khor ba); Ch. 輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, lúnhuí; Wade-Giles, lun²-hui²) or 生死輪迴 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, shēngsǐ lúnhuí; Wade-Giles, sheng¹-ssu³ lun²-hui²).

that (is) the primordial, true condition of ourselves and all other phenomena, and aware of delusive contents only. Finally, the fourth type of *avidyā* was said to consist in being unaware of the fact that the experience conditioned^a by the combination of the other three types of *avidyā* involves both unawareness (of the true conditions of ourselves and all phenomena) and delusion, and, contrariwise, taking it to be faithful to the true condition of reality.

It is when the above elements are interacting, that we need *Direct introduction*^b [to our own face or true condition^c]—i.e., an initial nondual, nonconceptual self-recognition^{d469} of the Awake, nonpositional,^e nonthetic,^f nonreflexive^g self-awareness^h that makes patent this nondual awareness' own face, whereby both the unawareness of the true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality that is the first type of *avidyā* and whichever thoughts of any of the three types may have been hypostasized / reified / valorized spontaneously dissolve, so that the true condition of the Base is uncovered in the manifestation of *rigpa-qua-Path*. As just noted, the term “spontaneous liberation” is used because this liberation takes place spontaneously rather than being the result of an action, and hence it does not *produce* a state that as such would be fabricated, contrived, conditioned, made, and/or compounded;ⁱ contrariwise, the term refers to the dissolution of the fabricated, contrived, conditioned, made and/or compounded experiences that in *samsāra* conceal our unborn,^j nonfabricated, unconditioned, uncontrived, uncompounded,^k primordial nature. Thereafter one will have to apply again and again the instructions that facilitate the spontaneous, uncontrived and uncaused manifestation of the Vision,^l until the point is reached at which the subsequent arising of delusion no longer causes doubts to arise in us regarding the fact that the true nature of reality is the single, undivided, nonconceptual condition that was revealed in the state of Vision—which is what is referred to by the second of the three

^a Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²).

^b Wylie, *thog tu ngo sprad pa*.

^c Wylie, *rang ngo*.

^d Tib. rangngo shepa (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^e For it does not *posit* any thesis,

^f For it is not a *consciousness of position*—which would necessarily involve subject and object—and does not involve *representation*.

^g Since it is *nondual* it *cannot involve reflexivity*—which implies a separate subject that reflects on him or herself. This is why it is a major blunder to render as *reflexive consciousness*, *reflexive awareness* or *apperception* the term *rang rig* when used in a Dzogchen context or in senses (i) or (ii) of those it has in the Pramāṇavāda (as explained in the section Awakening Vs. Transpersonal, Holotropic and Nearly Holistic Counterfeits).

^h Tib. rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*); Skt. *svasamvedana*; Ch. 自證 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìzhèng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-cheng⁴) / 自覺 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìjué; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-chüeh²). Since the particle *rig* refers to *rig pa*, combining English with Tibetan the term could be rendered as self-rigpa.

ⁱ Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, 'dus byas); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²).

^j Pāli and Skt. *ajāta*; Tib. makyé[pa] (Wylie, *ma skyes [pa]*) or kyeme (Wylie, *skyes med*); Ch. 無生 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúshēng; Wade-Giles, wu²-sheng¹). The most common terms are *anutpāda* and *anutpatti* (Tib. and Ch. same as just expressed), which Nāgārjuna preferred to *ajāta*.

^k Pāli *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²).

^l Tib. tawa (Wylie, *lta ba*); Skt. *dr̥ṣṭi* (also *darśana*; especially when referring to nonBuddhist systems); Ch. 見 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jiàn; Wade-Giles, chien⁴).

phrases of the testament of the primordial revealer Garab Dorje: to dispel doubts through the repeated occurrence of the most clear, direct, firsthand, indubitable disclosure of the Base's true condition, so as to *ascertain it so decisively*^a in a nonconceptual way that does not at all involve a decision, as to make our natural certainty^b consolidate^c and thus *Not to remain in doubt*.^{d470}

(2) For its part, the term gompa,^e in standard Buddhist paths, vehicles and schools signifies *meditation, concentration, absorption or contemplation*, for it refers to practices contrivedly applied by the mind that do no more than sustain and condition the dualistic mind and hence functions of delusion that do no more than confirm and sustain delusion. The exception to this rule is the Dzogchen teachings, in which the main practice does not involve any form of contrived practice that may condition the mind or confirm and sustain delusion. In fact, in these teachings the term gompa refers to the continuity of the Vision during a session^f of practice. Although in this context I render the term as Contemplation, I capitalize it in order to make it clear that it does not refer to the contemplation of an object by a subject, but, as just noted, to the continuity of Vision without reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of thought and hence without the subject-object duality. Since the Base is not circumscribed to the aspect of primordial purity—i.e., emptiness—but also comprises that of spontaneous perfection, involving manifestation (it is subdivided into nature and energy, and the aspect of energy naturally manifests all sorts of phenomena) thoughts will naturally arise during a session of practice. However, since Contemplation (is) the continuity of Vision and Vision is the patency of the all-liberating single gnosis, so long as we remain in the state of Contemplation all that arises and that otherwise would conceal the Base liberates itself spontaneously, gradually neutralizing the propensities for the manifestation of delusion and by the same token increasing our capacity to remain in Contemplation. Of course, initially arising thoughts will be reified / hypostasized / valorized, thus begetting delusion, and discursive thoughts will form chains of thought. However, if rather than following what the thoughts express one reGnizes the stuff and true condition of these thoughts, they will liberate themselves spontaneously and therefore the Vision will be maintained. It is only while the Vision is maintained that the Dzogchen teachings refer to our practice as gompa and that here I call it Contemplation. Therefore, not necessarily the entire sessions of sitting practice^g will be Contemplation, for in them we can certainly alternate between Contemplation and delusion. At any rate, the third of the phrases of the testament of Garab Dorje is *Directly continue confidently in*

^a Tib. thakchepa (Wylie, *thag bcad pa*).

^b Tib. ngeshe (Wylie, *nges shes*).

^c One should not be confused by phrases such as rangrigpai ngowo yarthak chöshe (Wylie, *rang rig pa'i ngo bo yar thag chod shes*), for the words rendered as “decisively realize” do not imply that we must make a decision; what they mean is that the realization in question is definite and indubitable.

^d Tib. thakche thoktu chik (Wylie, *thag bcad thog tu gcig*): not to remain in doubt through directly discovering the single [true condition].

^e Wylie, *sgom pa*; Skt. *bhāvanā*; Ch. 修習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūxí*; Wade-Giles, *hsiu¹-hsi²*).

^f Tib. tun (Wylie, *thun*); Skt. *upaveśa[h]*.

^g Tib. tun (Wylie, *thun*); Skt. *upaveśa[h]*.

liberation^a—which is only possible once one no longer remains in doubt, and which initially consists in Contemplation,^b but at a later stage must include Behavior.^c

(3) Finally, in standard Buddhist paths, vehicles and schools the Tibetan term *chöpa*^d designates *regulated, conditioning, contrived, predetermined modes of behavior* applied by the mind, which are functions of delusion that confirm and sustain delusion. The exception to this rule is the Dzogchen teachings, in which the main practice does not involve any form of contrived behavior that sustains and conditions the mind or confirms and sustains delusion. In fact, even though in the context of Dzogchen Atiyoga I still render the term *chöpa* as Behavior, I capitalize it in order to make it clear that it does *not* refer to regulating one’s behavior with reference to a set of rules (like in the Hīnayāna) or to ample general principles (like in the Mahāyāna),⁴⁷¹ but to the prolongation of gompa or Contemplation beyond sessions of practice and throughout all of one’s daily activities—which necessarily implies absolute spontaneity beyond adherence to rules or principles. Thus it is clear that the principle of *chöpa* implies that Dzogchen practitioners must go beyond the split of life into a Contemplation state^e and a post-Contemplation state; even though we may have sessions of Contemplation, from the very outset of the practice we must carry the state of *rigpa* or manifest, unhindered nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake Awareness beyond the sessions of Contemplation and into the twenty-four hours of the day and night (i.e. throughout daily activities and during sleep).⁴⁷² Properly speaking, the term *chöpa* applies *only so long as we keep in the state of rigpa while we are outside the sessions of practice in Tibetan referred to as thun*^f—which for its part involves what is referred to as carrying the six gatherings on the Path (where, as already noted, the “gatherings” are the object, sense and consciousness of each of the six senses that Buddhism acknowledges: the five that present “outer” phenomena of *tsel* energy—namely the ones universally acknowledged in the West—and the one that presents “inner” phenomena of *dang* energy or, which is the same, “mental phenomena”)—and therefore spontaneously manifest the behavior of Samantabhadra. This name is that of the primordial Buddha that stands for our own true, Awake condition (the male aspect standing for the *dharmakāya*, and the female aspect for the *dharmadhātu*, which in this context has the term *sugatagarbha* as a synonym), and it means “All Good.” On the one hand it refers to the fact that in the state of *rigpa* there is no sense of self or ego and hence no selfishness or egotism, and that in it the whole universe is one’s own body and hence one equanimously cares for all sentient beings and natural phenomena just as one cares for oneself, but on the other it alludes to the fact that, since one’s behavior is spontaneous rather than contrivedly regulated to fit a preconceived, externally imposed mold, unpredictable ways of behavior spontaneously arise to respond to situations and to the acts of sentient beings in the most fitting and beneficial ways. Since they do not fit any

^a Tib. *deng* (Wylie, *gdeng*: with confidence) *dröl* (Wylie, *grol*: in liberation) *toktucha* (Wylie, *thog tu bca'*: directly continue).

^b Skt. *bhāvanā*; Tib. *gompa* (Wylie, *sgom pa*); Ch. 修習 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūxí*; Wade-Giles, *hsiū¹-hsi²*).

^c Tib. *chöpa* (Wylie, *spyod pa*); Skt. *caryā*; Pāli and Skt. *carita*; Ch. 行 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng*; Wade-Giles, *hsing²*).

^d Wylie, *spyod pa*; Skt. *caryā*; Pāli and Skt. *carita*; Ch. 行 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng*; Wade-Giles, *hsing²*).

^e Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* (Wylie, *mnyam bz'bag*); Ch. 等引 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^f Tib. *tun* (Wylie, *thun*); Skt. *upaveśa[h]*.

preconceived pattern, those ways of behavior could be perceived by others as improper of spiritual people, or of Buddhists, etc., and be judged negatively and possibly condemned—which may give rise to unpleasant feeling tones that the *yogin* or *yoginī* will employ as an alarm reminding him or her to apply the instruction that will facilitate the spontaneous liberation of the negative concept or idea that others projected on him together with the unpleasant feeling tone. Or, in those who are more advanced, it could directly result in the spontaneous liberation of the concepts or ideas in question together with the unpleasant feeling tones induced by them. In fact, though we will initially lose the state of rigpa and hence the chöpa again and again during our daily activities, falling under the sway of delusion, good practitioners use their flaws, errors and mistakes to return to the state of rigpa thus recovering the chöpa or Behavior, precisely because the effects of those falls, errors and mistakes shake them, impairing their usual ego-sustaining mechanisms and in particular their adherence to the idea that they are consummate practitioners and the ensuing pride (which is most detrimental, for pride makes delusion comfortable, turning into an insurmountable obstacle to successful continuation of the practice).⁴⁷³ The way this is achieved by the chöpa of Dzogchen will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, in the context of the meaning of Refuge in Atiyoga, and will be analyzed in greater detail in Part Two of this book.

In short, the Path lies in the disclosure of the Base in the manifestation of tawa or Vision, and in the continuity of this disclosure by means of gompa or Contemplation (i.e. of the continuity of tawa or Vision during sessions of practice, for as noted above when the arising of thought is reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, and so long as this reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of thought is still manifest, we are not in gompa or Contemplation) and chöpa or Behavior (i.e. of the continuity of Contemplation or gompa beyond sessions of practice, which signifies that when the arising of thought is reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, and so long as this reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of thought is manifest, we are not spontaneously manifesting the chöpa or Behavior). Thus it is clear that there is a perfect continuity, not only between the Base, the Path and the Fruit of Ati, but also between the three aspects of the Path—a continuity that is lacking even in the inner Tantric vehicles of the Path of Transformation, for in them the conceptual character of the tawa, which is no more than a theoretical view, contrasts with the nonconceptuality they attribute to the Fruit; likewise, gompa does not lie in the pure and perfect continuity of tawa, for it involves a creation or generation stage in which visualization is contrivedly generated and sustained, and a perfection or completion stage in which initially contrived practices with channels, energy circulation and energetic volume determining the scope of awareness often have to be applied; and chöpa may involve contrivedly going beyond the discrimination between pure and impure, contrivedly maintaining a set of *samayas*^a or commitments, and so on.

Since the term rangdröl^b that here is being translated as “spontaneous liberation” is as a rule translated as “self-liberation,” some people have understood it to mean that one liberates oneself as a result of one’s own action and power rather than through the grace

^a Tib. damtsik (Wylie, *dam tshig*); Ch. 三摩耶印 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānmóyé yìn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mo²-yeh² yin⁴*).

^b Wylie, *rang grol*.

of an external power. This is totally wrong, for the event in question is utterly beyond the chasm between an internal and an external dimension, and would be thwarted by action or effort seemingly having the illusory mental subject as its agent, for the latter would affirm and maintain the spurious existence of the grasper and the grasped, which are the pivot of delusion and active *samsāra*; moreover, since action *produces* results, any action aimed at liberating oneself by one's own power would do no more than sustain the sphere of the contrived, produced, conditioned and/or compounded,^a thus averting self-liberation: in this way liberation could *by no means* occur. (However, this should *not* be taken to signify that one is liberated through the grace of an external power, for there is nothing external to our true condition.) In order to properly understand the meaning of “spontaneous liberation,” we must keep in mind that, as noted repeatedly, in the Dzogchen teachings the primordial gnosis whereby the state of rigpa manifests and that is no other than the self-reGnition^b (of) Awake awareness that makes its own face patent, is characterized as “all-liberating single gnosis,”^c for the very instant this self-reGnition manifests, and so long as it continues to (be) manifest, reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized thoughts liberate themselves spontaneously (i.e. they instantly dissolve of their own accord) as their true condition, which is the *dharmakāya*—true condition of ourselves and of the whole universe—becomes perfectly patent. In fact, this self-reGnition dissolves all of the aspects of types of *avidyā* discussed in this book, and hence this nondual primordial gnosis of Awake awareness is not veiled by either the contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction that obscures rigpa's inherent nondual self-awareness and thus prevents it from making patent its own face and from manifesting its all-liberating nature, or by the spurious subject-object duality and the ensuing illusion of there being a distance between awareness and the phenomena it manifests, etc. Thus the functionality of rigpa as the all-liberating single gnosis is fully active: rigpa (is) like a mirror in which there is no distance between the reflective capacity and the reflections manifested and in which there is no one to adhere to the reflections; therefore, the very moment this single gnosis is self-reGnized,^d its all-liberating nature is actualized and whichever thought is present liberates itself instantly and spontaneously—and so long as the gnosis in question continues to (be) self-reGnized, whichever thoughts may arise self-liberate as they arise like drawings on water, leaving no traces^e or conditionings in that gnosis or awareness, just as reflections leave no traces in a looking glass. Contrariwise, when the delusion involving the subject-object duality manifests, the nonduality of primordial gnosis is veiled by the illusion that our cognitive capacity is at a distance from the appearances it manifests and that these appearances arise from an external source or else are produced by the illusory mental subject; therefore, there is an automatic clinging to the latter through either acceptance or rejection, attachment or aversion—which prevents the self-liberation of the concepts that condition the perception of those appearances and results in the production of karmic traces that give rise to never-ending *samsāra*.⁴⁷⁴ Therefore, though it is true that in this vehicle we are liberated by the power of our own potentiality rather than by the power of

^a Skt. *samskrta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^b Tib. **ranggo shepa** (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^c Tib. *chikshe kundröl* (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*).

^d Tib. **ranggo shepa** (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^e Tib. *jeme* (Wylie, *rjes med*).

a meditation deity (as *seems to be the case* on the Path of Transformation), this liberation does not at all result from our own actions or our own efforts: it is the natural function of the pure spontaneity that is the self-perfection / self-rectifying aspect of the Base, utterly beyond the cause-effect relation. At any rate, it should be perfectly clear by now that the Ati principle of spontaneous liberation or self-liberation is radically different from the principle of transformation characteristic of the other inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa and the Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa.

In Part Two of this book the three series of teachings of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo will be considered in some detail. At this point, it is sufficient to say that Mañjuśrīmitra, the main disciple of Primordial Master Garab Dorje, on the basis of the three phrases of the latter's testament, classified the doctrines and instructions he received from him into three series of teachings, which will be discussed in greater detail in Volume II of this book. At this point, suffice to offer the following brief outline of them:

1) The teachings that were mainly concerned with *Direct introduction* and that, despite being founded on the principle of spontaneous liberation, bore some resemblance with those of the Sūtrayāna, he gathered into the (*Nature of*) *mind series* (Semde^a) of Dzogchen teachings. The great twentieth century lady teacher, Sera Khandro, wrote:^b

[This series involves] the thorough investigation of the mind, the examination of which is primary among the body, voice, and mind, and the examination of the mind's origin, location, destination, form, shape, color and so on. This is followed by the actualization of the clear light, in which luminosity and awareness (are) undifferentiated. Finally, the unification of appearances and mindsets is asserted to be the culmination of the tawa or Vision.

The original teachings of this series emphasized the inconceivable nature of the true condition of reality and the uncontrived character of the practice, which must be free from action, contrivance, manipulation, and one-pointed fixation / concentration.^c It must be emphasized that one-pointed fixation / concentration is not the main practice in any of the Dzogchen Series, as in all of them the principal practice lies in abiding in the natural Contemplation^d that is no more than the continuity of nonconceptual, nondual Awake self-Awareness,^e which is without reference points.^f However, at some point the noted Aro Yeshe Jungne,^g who besides being a Master of the Dzogchen Series of (*the Nature of*) *mind* of was a Master of the *Dùnmén*^h or Tönmunⁱ Tradition,⁴⁷⁵ of the gradual Mahāyāna,

^a Wylie, *sems sde*; Skt. Cittavarga.

^b *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, p. 67)

^c Tib. *tsechik tinggedzin* (Wylie, *rtse gcig ting nge 'dzin*).

^d Tib. *rangbabkyi samten* (Wylie, *rang babs kyi bsam gtan*).

^e Tib. rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*); Skt. *svasamvedana*; Ch. 自證 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, zìzhèng; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-cheng⁴*) / 自覺 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, zìjué; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-chüeh²*).

^f Tib. migme (Wylie, *dmigs med*).

^g a ro ye shes 'byung gnas. Jigme Lingpa mentions him as the source of this tradition but does not suggest that he created something new; cf. Thinley Norbu (2015, p. 68).

^h This is the Chinese name. Ch. 頓門 (simplified: 顿门; Hànǚ Pīnyīn, dùnmén; Wade-Giles, *tun⁴-men²*).

ⁱ This is the Tibetan name (Wylie, *ston mun*).

and of Tantra as well, introduced into this series teachings from the *Dùnmén* or Tönmun Tradition (and possibly from the gradual Mahāyāna as well), giving rise to the Semde Tradition of Kham,^a which seems to have been utterly unprecedented in Dzogchen (for in the account that, in the *Samten Migdrön*, Master of the [*Nature of*] *mind Series* Nubchen Sangye Yeshe offers of the variegated traditions that in his time existed within the *Series* in question, there is no mention of anything that exhibits the slightest resemblance with the practices of the Kham tradition and, on the contrary, one-pointed concentration, which is applied in the initial practices of the Kham tradition, is censured as contradicting the principles of the Ati Path of spontaneous liberation and as being utterly foreign to it). In the Kham tradition there is a sequential progress through four stages that are called the four naljor^b or yogas—each of them culminating in a Contemplation^c—among which the main practice of the first in a way resembles some of those of calm abiding or *śamatha*, the main practice of the second in some way resembles those of insight or *vipāśyanā* (so that *in this regard* the practices of this tradition may seem somewhat similar to those of the Sūtrayāna),⁴⁷⁶ and so on. The Semde tradition of Kham seems to have been at the root of the present forms of Kagyü Mahāmudrā^d meditation practice (as different *both* from the formless Mahāmudrā Gaṅgāma that the mahāsiddha^e Tilopā taught Nāropā on the banks of the Ganges—which seems to have borne a much greater resemblance with the original teachings of the [*Nature of*] *mind series* of Dzogchen teachings—and from Mahāmudrā as the Fruit of the path of Transformation of Anuttarayogatantra). Note that this tradition also incorporated practices based on the Vase breathing⁴⁷⁷ that is the basis of many of the Tantric practices of tsa-lung-thigle^g of the perfection or completion stage^h and therefore also involves practices (such as a series of semdzinⁱ) that somewhat resemble those of the path of Transformation, even though their principle is still that of spontaneous liberation. At any rate, the four Naljor of the tradition of Kham and their respective contemplations will be discussed in Vol. II of this book, and the various traditions of the original series that Nubchen Sangye Yeshe discussed in the *Samten Migdrön* will be enumerated and very briefly reviewed.

2) The teachings that mainly dealt with the means for *Not remaining in doubt*, were grouped into the *Space series* (Longde^j) of Dzogchen teachings.⁴⁷⁸ In this regard, Sera Khandro wrote:^a

^a Wylie, *khams*.

^b Wylie, *rnal 'byor*.

^c Here the term Contemplation renders the Tibetan tingdzin or tingngedzin (Wylie, *ting [nge] 'dzin*); Skt. *samādhi*; Ch. 三昧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānmèi*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mei⁴*).

^d Tib. chyagya chenpo (Wylie, *phyag rgya chen po*); Ch. 大印 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dà yìn*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-yin⁴*) / 大手印 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dàshǒuyìn*; Wade-Giles *ta⁴-shou³ yin⁴*).

^e Tib. drubchen (Wylie, *sgrub chen*); Ch. 大聖 (simplified, 大圣) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dàshèng*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-sheng⁴*): great adept, adept with great power(s).

^f Skt. *kumbhaka*; Tib. bumchen or lung bumpa chen (Wylie, [*rlung*] *bum [pa] can*).

^g Wylie, *rtsa rlung thig le*; Skt. *nāḍī prāṇavāyu bindu*.

^h Skt. *sampannakrama*, *niṣpannakrama* or *utpannakrama*; Tib. dzogrim (Wylie, *rdzogs rim*); Ch. 圓滿次第 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn cìdì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ tz'u⁴-ti⁴*).

ⁱ Wylie, *sems 'dzin*, which may have the sense of “fixing—or concentrating—the mind,” or of “grasping the mind.” The senses of these translations will be discussed in the discussion of Dzogchen in general in terms of the Series of pith instructions.

^j Wylie, *klong sde*; Skt. *Abhyantaravarga*.

Having indivisibly unified the absolute space [that ordinarily we perceive as] external and the nonconceptual nondual Awake called rigpa [that may be thought of as] internal and then [rested in the] Contemplation (of) [their indivisibility], this [resultant] indivisibility of the absolute space of phenomena and the nonconceptual nondual Awake called rigpa is asserted to (be) the culmination of the tawa or Vision.

Although Sera Khandro then notes that in this series the pace is a bit slow, with regard to the gradual Series of [the nature of] mind of the tradition of Kham in this series access to the indivisible state of rigpa is more sudden. It involves means for acting directly on the individual's energetic system, and thus may be said to bear some resemblance with the practices of the path of Transformation, even though its principle is self-liberation. This series' teachings on the Vajra-bridge,^b so-called because it (is) like a bridge between our ordinary condition and the attainment of the rainbow body,^c for several generations gave rise to the attainment in question, beginning with Pang Mipham (Sangye) Gönpö.^d In this tradition there are four symbols,^e which are: (1) that of luminosity or clarity;^f (2) that of nonconceptuality of thoughtless^g (which is a nyam^h not unlike that of emptiness); (3) that of pleasure or bliss;ⁱ and (4) that of the inseparability or indivisibility^j of the other three, which manifest simultaneously and coincidentally, being totally unified. They will be discussed in Vol. II of this book.

3) Finally, the teachings that were mainly concerned with the way to *Continue in the State (of rigpa)*, that were most abrupt, and that were most radically different from those of vehicles and Paths other than Atiyoga, were gathered under the label Dzogchen *Series of pith instructions*.^{k479} With regard to the teachings of this series, Sera Khandro wrote:^l

Third, among the outer cycle, the inner cycle and the secret cycle, and the very secret, unsurpassed cycle within the category of pith instructions, this is called the category of very secret, unsurpassed pith instructions. With regard to the correct practice of these instructions, there are four sections: (i) determining the Base by means of the tawa or Vision; (ii) how to

^a *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gypai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In Düdjom Lingpa (2015, p. 67).

^b Tib. dorje zampa (Wylie, *rdo rje zam pa*).

^c Tib. jalü (Wylie, *'ja' lus*).

^d Wylie, spang mi pham (sangs rgyas) mgon po.

^e Tib. da (Wylie, *brda*).

^f Tib. selwa (Wylie, *gsal ba*) / selwai da (Wylie, *gsal ba'i brda*).

^g Tib. mitokpa (Wylie, *mi rtog pa*) / mitokpai da (Wylie, *mi rtog pa'i brda*).

^h Wylie, nyams: illusory experiences of the practice. In Chán or Zen a whole kind of such experiences are called demonic states (Ch. 魔境: Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *mó jìng*; Wade-Giles, *mo²-ching⁴*; Jap. *makyo*).

ⁱ Tib. dewa (Wylie, *bde ba*) / dewai da (Wylie, *bde ba'i brda*).

^j Tib. jerme (Wylie, *dbyer med*) / dewai da (Wylie, *dbyer med brda*).

^k Tib. menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*); Skt. Upadeśavarga.

^l *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gypai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In Düdjom Lingpa (2015, p. 67).

practice by cultivating the Path; (3) teachings on the behavior that is the support of the former two; and (4) the way in which the Fruit is attained.

The above four sections will be briefly discussed below and also in Vol. II of this book, in which the Series of pith instructions will be explained in terms of the four chogzhag^a or “as it (is),” and also the noted four successive visions of Tekchö and Thögel (which also occur in the *Series of space*) will be briefly discussed.

Let us illustrate the practice of Dzogchen with the example of the Series of pith instructions^b and the most essential and direct teachings of this series, which are gathered in the Nyingthik.^c Above it was noted that the teachings and practices of this Series were mainly concerned with the way to *Continue in the State (of rigpa)*; however, they also involve three groups of practices that may serve for gaining *Direct introduction* and for *Not remaining in doubt*. In fact, in the context of a ceremony, the Master offers the would-be disciples a possibility of having *Direct introduction*. Either if, after they had *Direct introduction*, they remain in doubt, or if they fail to have *Direct introduction*, they must apply the secret practices exclusive to this Series of instructions called rushen,^d the semdzin^e of this Series, and also the threefold seventh lojong.^f

In the semdzin, the *mind is fixated or concentrated* (which is the sense of the term semdzin) on an object in such a way as to generate experiences of simultaneous calm and movement, and/or of emptiness, clarity and/or pleasure, or a combination of two or all three of the latter, after which one may try to *grasp the mind* (which is a non-traditional reading of the term semdzin) by *turning around as though one were to grasp the mental subject, which cannot appear as object* (for it appears in an *indirect* and *implicit* way, whereas its objects are perceived *directly* and *explicitly*), or *notice that which notices the experiences*, or *discover the Gnitve power or awareness in which, as in a mirror, all experiences manifest*, etc.—which is what Garab Dorje’s *mudrā* of Direct introduction is urging us to do (he is pointing to the inside of our head so as to direct us to look in that direction rather than toward the outside, as we usually do).

^a Wylie, *cog bzhag*.

^b This section is based on the instructions in Capriles (1990). Relevant works are the two books on which I received instructions and which were the basis for my practice: Dūdjom Rinpoche (1979, 2005; the first version that came to my hands was 1978, which Dūdjom Rinpoche warned me not to take seriously) and Jigme Lingpa, *The Lion’s Roar* (I studied a rough translation by Tulku Thöndup after reading the one in Chögyam Trungpa, 1972, pp. 21-26, in an English that did not flow but that, because of its literal character, was one of the greatest helps to my practice; however, currently other great versions are available: Thinle Norbu, 2015, pp. 75-88; Nyoshul Khenpo, 2015, pp. 135-149, with Commentary by Nyoshul Khenpo, pp. 151-216; and van Schaik, 2004, pp. 225-234). Beside the books just mentioned I consulted Petrül Rinpoché, *Khepa sri gyalpoi khyechö* (in Reynolds, 1996) and *Dzogpa Chenpoi nyamlengyi nemthar thukpai tsadrel öselgyi nangcha zhejawa*, in Namkhai Norbu, 2013b); and Jigme Lingpa’s *Yeshe Lama* (2008; Lama Chönam & Sangye Khandro, trans.), among others.

^b Tib. ngangla zhakpa (Wylie, *ngang la bzhag pa*).

^c Tib. nyingthik (Wylie, *snying thig*).

^d Wylie, *ru shan*. The full name of these practices is khorde rushen chywewa (Wylie, *’khor ’das ru shan phyeb*): distinguishing between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

^e Wylie, *sems ’dzin*, which may have the sense of “fixing—or concentrating—the mind,” or of “grasping the mind.” The senses of these translations will be explained below in the regular text.

^f Wylie, *blos byong*.

In the rushen, often while there is a quite intense samsaric experience, methods are applied that may *block samsaric experience*, or *that make it trip up and instantly collapse* (so to speak), so that *nirvāṇa* may have a chance of manifesting and, if *nirvāṇa* actually manifests, so long as it is manifest it will imbue the individual with certitude that what is manifest at that point is the true condition of all phenomena, implicitly showing *samsāra* to have been like a bad dream. Then, when *avidyā* arises again and conceptual experience is thus reestablished, and hence *samsāra* is once again activated, even though, as it has been repeatedly noted, one will be unable to remember the condition beyond memory or to remember totality from the fragmentary, tunnel-like perspective, its occurrence may *provide a striking contrast to samsaric experience*. Moreover, if the samsaric experience that instantly self-liberates is intense, this self-liberation *endows the practitioner with a capacity for the self-liberation of thought-conditioned experiences of the same intensity*. These methods are exclusive to the Series of instructions and are regarded as very secret and very powerful means to catalyze the self-manifestation of *rigpa* and, under some circumstances, develop capacity.

Finally, in the seventh lojong, methods are applied that result in experiences of the indivisibility of pleasure and emptiness, or of the indivisibility of clarity and emptiness, or of a condition utterly beyond thought that may reveal the ultimate nature of phenomena. Then the experiences that thus arise are used *as reflections in a mirror that may become the means to discover the true condition of the mirror that is their true condition and that is free from the subject-object duality and hence from acceptance and rejection*. This may seem to be the same principle of the Path of transformation; however, in the latter it takes quite a few years in retreat to generate the experiences that are to be used for discovering the awareness that is compared to the mirror, whereas these methods of the Series of instructions can elicit those experiences in an extremely short time.

The above practices are applied until the certitude that arises in the realization of the essence or nature of mind in the nirvanic condition gradually seeps to the experience of mind in the samsaric condition, imbuing the latter with that certitude until the point at which the practitioner no longer remains in doubt. Therefore, if there was a practitioner with such a high capacity that after having had a most clear Direct introduction has not remained in doubt, she or he might not even need to ever apply them. However, even in such cases, these practices will always be extremely useful—and in any case people with such a high capacity are so rare that one should assume that one is not an individual of this kind.

At any rate, once one no longer remains in doubt, the practice of Contemplation may be undertaken in order to *Continue in the State (of rigpa)*. In this Series there are two successive stages of the practice of Contemplation, the first of which is the one called Tekchö^a or “spontaneous, instant, absolute release of tension,” in which practice is applied exclusively with thoughts, which are phenomena of dang^b energy that as such manifest in a seemingly inner dimension, and in which the practice consists in creating the conditions for the spontaneous liberation of all thoughts in the realization of the true condition of the dang mode of manifestation of energy of which they are manifestations, which (is) the *dharmakāya*—mental aspect of Buddhahood. By means of this practice one must develop a sufficient capacity of spontaneous liberation—ideally at elevated levels of experiential

^a Wylie, *khregs chod*.

^b Wylie, *gdangs*.

intensity and energetic level determining the scope of awareness—so as to be able to undertake the practice of Thögel. To develop this capacity, the most effective method may lie in potentiating the practice of Tekchö by devoting oneself to the practice of Chö that will be discussed in Vol. II of this book.

Then, once a sufficient capacity of spontaneous liberation is achieved by means of this practice, one can undertake the second stage of this Series, which is that of Thögel,^a which here I will render as “swiftly crossing over,”⁴⁸⁰ in which practice is applied mainly with rölpa energy, which initially manifests in a seemingly external dimension but then dissolves the inner-outer chasm. As noted above, the essence of the Series of instructions and its most direct teachings, were distilled into the Nyingthik^b teachings. Although this term has often been wrongly rendered as “heartdrop,” Chögyal Namkhai Norbu remarks that the term nying^c does not refer to the physical heart, but to whatever is most essential, and that thik,^d which is a phonetic transliteration of the root syllable of the word thigle, in this context means potentiality (for as explained in the endnote wherever there is a thigle there is potentiality⁴⁸¹); therefore, the term could be translated as “essence of potentiality.” It is often said that in the Nyingthik Tekchö and Thögel are indivisible, for although the explanations emphasize Tekchö, they often speak of the clear light and its manifestation in a seemingly external dimension, and in general describe elements that manifest most clearly in Thögel, without explicitly stating that such descriptions refer to a special, more advanced stage of the practice. Likewise, although general Nyingthik practice is focused on Tekchö, Thögel experiences could spontaneously occur in it and resolve themselves in the ways proper to this practice. At any rate, the Nyingthik’s most essential teachings, which stress the activation of luminosity and rölpa energy in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena^e—thus emphasizing the practice’s Thögel aspect—are those of the Yangthik.^f Since the Tibetan term yang^g means “even more so,” if we rendered Nyingthik as “essence of potentiality,” we could translate Yangthik as “innermost essence of potentiality.”⁴⁸² Since the Yangthik stresses Thögel, all that has been said and that will be said below concerning Thögel applies to it.

Let us begin with a brief, simple explanation of Tekchö. We know that, when the supersubtle threefold directional thought structure is reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, the subject-object duality arises, and when subtle / intuitive thoughts are reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, the illusion arises that the object is of a specific type and has inherent qualities that may be positive, negative or neutral (and, implicitly and indirectly, that also the subject has inherent qualities). Once this has occurred, since the mental subject necessarily has to adopt some attitude—which can only be a mode of rejection, acceptance, or indifference—toward the objects it experiences as other than itself, and since the mental subject and its objects seem to be absolutely real ultimately important and therefore their fate seems to be a death or life matter, the illusory subject-

^a Wylie, *thod rgal*.

^b Tib. nyingthik (Wylie, *snying thig*).

^c Tib. nying (Wylie, *snying*).

^d Tib. thik (Wylie, *thig*).

^e Skt. *antarābhava*; Tib. bardo (Wylie, *bar do*); Ch. 中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yu³*) / 中陰 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyīn*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yin¹*).

^f Tib. yangthik (Wylie, *yang thig*).

^g Tib. yang (Wylie, *yang*).

^h Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, Ed., unpublished).

object duality always involves a lesser or greater degree of tension. Then the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of discursive thoughts will have the function of justifying and reinforcing the attitude that already arose, making it develop and in this way increasing tension. It is when, in the passional context of the realm of sensuality,^a the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought in general becomes more intense and the resultant tension stronger, that it is said that we are being affected by a passion—for passions are nothing more than emotionally charged attitudes that a mental subject has toward an object.

After we have been directly Introduced to the nonconceptual and as such nondual Awake, undistorted awareness called *rigpa*^b in the form of the *transparent, unimpeded, unobstructed primordial gnosis*^c of the *dharmakāya*—true condition of the *dang*^d form of manifestation of energy^e—that beyond concepts reveals the empty nonconceptual Awake awareness called *rigpa*,^f and repeated recurrence of this gnosis has dispelled all doubts regarding the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena, we must look at the thought that is the direct object of consciousness in the face and, rather than concentrating on what the thought expresses and grasping its content as though it were the naked truth,^g directly See the stuff the thought is made of, so as to reGnize it.^h Since thought (is) a manifestation of the essenceⁱ aspect of our true condition, and the stuff it is made of (is) the *dang*^j form of manifestation of energy^k, and since the true condition both of the essence aspect of the Base and of *dang* energy (is) the *dharmakāya*, when one looks at the stuff in question in this way the *dharmakāya* may be reGnized.^l If this happens, since the *dharmakāya* (is) the

^a Pāli and Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. *döpai kham* (Wylie, *dod pa'i kham*); Ch. 欲界 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yùjiè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*).

^b Wylie, *rig pa*.

^c Tib. *yeshe zangthal* (Wylie, *ye shes zang thal*).

^d Wylie, *gdangs*.

^e The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “*thukje*” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness or mercy*]), which is rendered as “compassion.” After Awakening a Buddha continues to live solely as the function of nonreferential compassion. The Base, which is the Buddha-nature and which is what we (are) in truth, is the true, ultimate, birthless, deathless Buddha. Since the energy aspect of the Base is unobstructedness and continued manifestation, so long as experience continues to manifest through us, it is the true Buddha that is continuing to manifest experience—the energy aspect—in us, *doing so because of compassion* (even when we are unaware of this and feel “thrown” [Ger. *Geworfen*, in Heidegger’s sense] in the world). This is the reason why in the Dzogchen teachings the aspect that, following Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, I am rendering as *energy*, is called the *compassion* aspect.

^f Tib. **rigtong lode** (Wylie, *rig stong blo 'das*).

^g Tib. *cherdzin* (Wylie, *gcer 'dzin*).

^h We reGnize the nature—i.e. the stuff—of whichever thoughts arise: Tib. **namtok chi shar rang ngo shepar che** (Wylie, *nam rtoḡ ci shar rang ngo shes par byas*).

ⁱ Wylie, *ngo bo*; Skt. *svabhāva* (which may also be rendered by the Tibetan *rang bzhin*); Ch. 自性 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*).

^j Wylie, *gdangs*.

^k The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “*thukje*” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness or mercy*]), usually rendered as *compassion*. This term is used because (as explained in a footnote above) from the standpoint of Buddhahood all experience arises as the function of nonreferential compassion.

^l Tib. **ranggi ngowo shena** (Wylie, *rang gi ngo bo shes na*).

intrinsically all-liberating single gnosis,^a this gnosis will become functional and whichever reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized thoughts is present at the moment, as well as the thoughts that are implicit in that thought as traces left by previous thoughts (see the explanation of this below—and hence also the subject-object duality that results from the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure—will instantly dissolve *of themselves* like feathers entering fire, leaving no traces^b whatsoever. Since all tensions require the existence of the subject-object duality and in general the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of thought, at that point the individual's body-voice-mind will totally, instantly relax in a way that has been compared to a stack of firewood falling on the ground when the cord holding it together breaks of its own accord.⁴⁸³

The above is far removed from calm abiding,^c for the latter certainly can mollify and slow down the workings of mind and enable us to begin to perceive the undercurrents of thought, but cannot dissolve *avidyā* in the revelation of the *dharmakāya*. In fact, calm abiding is based on *mollifying the attitude* the mental subject has toward its objects, but cannot instantly dissolve the duality in question, and hence cannot result in the *instant, absolute* relaxation that characterizes the manifestation of the state of *rigpa* in the practice of Tekchö.⁴⁸⁴ The point is that when thoughts of any of the three kinds described in this book are reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, like drawings made on fresh clay that leave traces that remain printed on the clay, they leave a trace that is like a kind of lingering memory, which establishes or reinforces karmic propensities^d and reinforces our delusive obstructions,^e and which serves as the basis for the continuity of thought to be possible. For example, the threefold directional thought structure^f manifests, leaving its traces as just described; then, when immediately thereafter a subtle, intuitive thought^g with regard to singled-out sense data manifests, on the basis of the trace left by the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure the subtle thought is experienced as an object other than the mental subject that we feel we are and standing at a distance from it. Since a trace is left by this subtle thought as well, on the basis of the trace left by that thought then a coarse, discursive thought may arise to explain the previous subtle thought. Since this thought also leaves a trace, on the basis of that trace, either an understanding in terms of subtle thoughts may manifest, or subsequent coarse, discursive thoughts may arise—in either case giving rise to a chain of thought.

Discursive thoughts, in particular, may be compared to waves that rise, reach their apogee and gradually subside, leaving their karmic traces^h—for a lingering, conditioning

^a Tib. chikshe kundröl (Wylie, *gcig shes kun grol*).

^b Tib. jerme (Wylie, *rjes med*).

^c Skt. *śamatha*; Pāli: *samatha*; Tib. zhine (Wylie, *zhi gnas*); Ch. 止 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhǐ*; Wade-Giles, *chih*³; Jap: *shi*).

^d Skt. *vāsanā* Tib. bagchag (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch'i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch'i⁴*).

^e Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. dribpa (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^f Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlún*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^g Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. dōnchi (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總事 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-shih⁴*) or 總義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*).

^h Skt. *vāsanā* Tib. bagchag (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch'i⁴-hsi²*) or 習

memory remains that posits something that is implicitly taken for granted, even when it is no longer a direct object of conscious awareness, and that conditioning memory serves as the basis for discursive thinking to find its continuity. This process may be slowed down by the practice of mental pacification,^a and by persisting in the latter practice it may even be halted in an absorption of the neutral base-of-all,^b in which the first aspect or type of *avidyā*—which conceals the *dharmakāya*—is manifest. However, the karmic traces^c and delusive obstructions^d left by the reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized thoughts since time without beginning are still conditioning whoever attains this result, and although they are not producing thought-conditioned experience, when those traces are activated once more, whoever attained the result in question will find him or herself in the same situation as before entering the absorption—except that his or her possibilities of entering a hellish psychological state will be greater. This is why the Dzogchen teachings compare this to cutting our own head: because spending a significant part of our human existence in those absorptions would amount to squandering the precious human birth, for a period that may be very long would pass without us having any possibility of liberation—and by the same token that would create karma of immobility,^e which is the cause of rebirth in the formless realms (in which one has no possibility of liberation and which as a rule are followed by birth in lower states of existence—very often in transient hells). Such feats are in stark contrast to the spontaneous liberation of Dzogchen Ati, which neutralizes or burns out the karmic traces^f and delusive obstructions^g left by reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized thoughts, gradually neutralizing or burning out the propensity for delusion to manifest and for *samsāra* to go on without cessation, and which, in the initial mode of liberation—which is called “liberation through bare [Seeing]”^h—may be compared to a wave that, having reached its apogee, *instantly* evaporated of its own accord, thus ceasing to conceal the transparent and nondual true condition of the ocean so that the condition in question becomes perfectly patent. This liberation neutralizes karmic traces proportionally to the wave’s size—i.e. to the energy sustaining the thought in the instant immediately preceding its dissolution—and to the water’s temperature—a clumsy metaphor for the energetic volume determining the scope

氣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch⁴i⁴*). Qua obstacles to the “omniscience” of Buddhahood: Skt. & Pāli *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^a Skt. *śamatha*; Pāli: *samatha*; Tib. *zhine* (Wylie, *zhi gnas*); Ch. 止 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhǐ*; Wade-Giles, *chih³*; Jap: *shī*).

^b Tib. *kunzhi lungmaten* (Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*). Such absorptions may be instances of what the Dzogchen teachings call *kunzhi kham* (Wylie, *kun gzhi'i kham*s).

^c Skt. *vāsanā* Tib. *bagchag* (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch⁴i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch⁴i⁴*). Qua obstacles to the “omniscience” of Buddhahood: Skt. & Pāli *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^d Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^e Skt. *āniñjyakarma*; Pāli *aniñjītakamma*; Tib. *migyowai le* (Wylie, *mi gyo ba'i las*); Ch. 不動業 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùdòng yè*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-tung⁴ yeh⁴*).

^f Skt. *vāsanā* Tib. *bagchag* (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch⁴i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch⁴i⁴*). Qua obstacles to the “omniscience” of Buddhahood: Skt. & Pāli *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^g Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. *dribpa* (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^h Tib. *cherdröl* (Wylie, *gcer grol*).

of awareness. As Longchen Rabjam expresses it in the noted *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Rangdröl*:^a

However much [meditative] effort one applies, if from the net of thoughts
later thoughts arise after the cessation of former ones,
though one may take that cessation for liberation, thoughts are just passing in succession
[rather than] self-liberating.

Spontaneous liberation occurs in three consecutive ways, and the explanation in the three preceding paragraphs respond to the initial one, which is the one in which, being a beginner meditator, one tends to see thoughts as enemies that need to be dissolved in the reGnition (of) the *dharmakāya* for one to achieve the aim of the practice, and at which an intentional action is therefore required for the thought to dissolve, liberating itself in the reGnition in question: this is the mode of liberation referred to as “liberation through bare [Seeing],”^b in which one directly discovers the energy that makes up the thought that is already manifest as object, and this thought dissolves instantaneously in the realization of the *dharmakāya*. The difficulty at this stage of the practice is that *one should not* allow arising coarse, discursive thoughts to generate further thoughts, giving rise to chains of thought, or allow subtle, intuitive thoughts to initiate an undercurrent of proliferating delusions,^c thereby getting entangled in a mind-produced web of memories^d—yet *neither should one* become like a policeman in charge of arresting all arising thoughts through reGnizing the true condition of the energy of which they are made, for this would sustain and increase the strength of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought, thus maintaining the subject-object duality and begetting and / or reinforcing aversion and nervousness—which, if allowed to develop beyond a certain point, may give rise to energy disorders.^e Therefore, one must find the middle point between excessive zeal and slackness. At any rate, since the essence of the practice lies in reGnizing^f the stuff and true condition of thought by means of *the primordial gnosis*^g that previously we met,^h and at this stage zealous practitioners tend to see thoughts as enemies, this level of reGnitionⁱ is compared to recognizing an old friend,^j for it is like suddenly coming on someone in a frightening dark area of town and then recognizing his face as that of an old friend. Repetition of this makes us gradually become familiar with the unimpeded open transparency of unbound, unfettered Awake awareness^k and makes our capacity of self-liberation increase.

Since each and every time tension breaks of itself in realization of the *dharmakāya* the mental subject that appears to be the thinker of thought, agent of action and receiver of experiences—and which seems to be the agent of mindfulness—instantly dissolves, the

^a Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid rang grol*; alternative translation in Tulku Töndup (1996, p. 343).

^b Tib. *cherdröl* (Wylie, *gcer grol*).

^c Tib. *okgyu tulnjam* (Wylie, 'og 'gyu 'khrul 'byams).

^d Tib. *lojye jurten* (Wylie, *blos byas 'jur dran*).

^e Tib. *lungne* (Wylie, *rlung nad*).

^f Tib. *ngo shepa* (Wylie, *ngo shes pa*).

^g Tib. *yeshe* (Wylie, *ye shes*); Skt. *jñāna*; Ch. 智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih*⁴; Jap. *chi*).

^h Tib. *ngöndrikyi yeshe denyi ngözung* (Wylie, *sngon 'dris kyi ye shes de nyid ngos bzung*).

ⁱ Tib. *ngözung* (Wylie, *ngos bzung*).

^j This modification of the example was adapted from Reynolds (1996).

^k Tib. *zangthal khayen rigpa* (Wylie, *zang thal kha yan rig pa*).

practice of Tekchö is also called Tenchö,^a meaning *rupture of mindfulness*. This should be no surprise, because when one thought of any of the three types discussed in this book self-liberates, all thoughts of all three types self-liberate—which signifies that the subject and the object produced by the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure instantly dissolve. And since what seems to be in charge of exerting mindfulness is the mental subject that seems to lie at the core of dualistic consciousness, the instant the mental subject dissolves mindfulness dissolves—and hence the spontaneous rupture of thought is by the same token a spontaneous rupture of mindfulness. Therefore, constant repetition of this works as a remedy for the deviation that lies in exerting a contrived, relentless mindfulness^b that struggles to detect the arising of thought like a hunter concealed in a bush awaiting a deer to emerge from the vegetation in order to shoot it dead—and continued practice makes mindfulness ever more relaxed and spontaneous, in the long run turning into a self-manifesting natural mindfulness.^c In particular, one develops the ability to uncontrivedly release into rigpa^d “deep inside” the mental subject that seems to be the agent of mindfulness, rather than maintaining the contrived, relentless mindfulness^e that I just compared to the hunter. As one becomes more and more familiar with this capacity or mode of liberation, beside the just mentioned gradual development of a self-manifesting natural mindfulness, one develops—in most cases gradually—a capacity to remain for longer and longer time in the condition that manifests the instant at which the reGnition in question takes place.^f And all of this makes one develop ever-greater capacity, so that the next mode of self-liberation may manifest and gradually come to prevail. In fact, this is the reason why a terma revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa reads:^g

Oh Vajra of Mind, the rope of mindfulness and firmly maintained attention is dissolved by the power of Contemplation, until finally the ordinary mind of an ordinary being disappears...

Subsequently, outer appearances are not impeded, and the rope of inner mindfulness and firmly maintained attention is cut. Then you are not bound by the constraints of good meditation, nor do you fall back to an ordinary state through pernicious ignorance and delusion. Rather, ever manifest translucent, luminous awareness shines through, transcending the conventions of Vision, Contemplation and Behavior. Without the dichotomizing of self and other whereby you can say, “this is consciousness” and “this is the object of consciousness,” the primordial, self-emergent awareness is freed from clinging to experiences.

At any rate, even before realization is complete, once one undertakes the practice of Thögel and this practice develops beyond a certain point, no mindfulness or exertion of

^a Tib. *tenchö* (Wylie, *dran chod*).

^b Tib. *duḡtsir jur tengyi chingwa* (Wylie, *sdug btsir 'jur dran gyis bcings ba*).

^c Compare the Tib. *rangbab nyugmai tenpa* (Wylie, *rang babs gnyug ma'i dran pa*) with the Tib. *yangdak nyukmai tenpa* (Wylie, *yang dag gnyug ma'i dran pa*).

^d Tib. *sharkhen kho ranggi righthok tulö* (Wylie, *shar mkhan kho rang gi rig thog tu klod*).

^e Tib. *duḡtsir jur tengyi chingwa* (Wylie, *sdug btsir 'jur dran gyis bcings ba*).

^f Tib. *ngangla zhakpa* (Wylie, *ngang la bzhaḡ pa*).

^g *Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorjei nyingpo* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po*). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. III, p. 28).

mindfulness will be necessary for spontaneous liberation to occur each and every time delusion manifests.^{a485}

The middling capacity or mode of liberation is the one in which the thought is reGnized the instant it begins to arise, in the seemingly internal dimension,^b before it has become established as an object that seems to be *in front of* the mental subject. In fact, as I noted in the late 1970s and early 1980s^c in a manual on the practice of the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions based on my experience of the practice, initially in this mode of liberation it may seem as though one mentally turned back in the direction in which at that point thoughts may seem to arise, behind the eyes and deep into the skull's inner space. Since the thought instantly dissolves spontaneously *as it begins to arise*, this mode of liberation is traditionally compared to a snake spontaneously untying the knot into which its body had been tied. Hence in this mode of liberation, which is called "liberation upon arising,"^d an automatic, unpremeditated *reaction* is indispensable for the thought to dissolve, self-liberating. (Note that when Dzogchen texts speak of the "three coils of a snake liberating themselves simultaneously,"^e this refers to the simultaneous liberation of the three main types of thought: coarse / discursive, subtle / intuitive and supersubtle.^f) Since the instant at which the snake begins to undo its knot until the instant the snake disappears in the space of the true condition of phenomena, no traces are left, because the phenomenon in question is not perceived in terms of a hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thought, and thus rather than being like a drawing made on fresh clay, this movement of thought is like a drawing made on water that dissolves at each instant while it is drawn, leaving no traces (or, rather than "while it is drawn," "while it self-manifests," for the mental subject is *not* the thinker of thought). The reason why this is so is because whatever arises^g while the *dharmakāya* is patent liberates itself directly.^h And the result of

^a Tib. *tenme* (Wylie, *dran med*) or *maten* (Wylie, *ma dran*). This is because, since mindfulness involves the subject-object duality that issues from the reification of supersubtle thoughts and subtle conceptualization of objects, the uncontrived true condition cannot be sustained or grasped with mindfulness (Tib. *tenpa mazung* [Wylie, *dran pa ma bzung*]).

^b Tib. *nangying* (Wylie, *nang dbyings*): the dimension of *dang* (Wylie, *gdangs*) energy in which thoughts, memories, fantasies and the imagined manifests, which *once tsel* (Wylie, *rtsal*) *energy arises and seems to constitute an external dimension* (Tib. *chiying* [Wylie, *pyi dbyings*]), appears to be an internal dimension.

^c Capriles (1989), which would become one of the chapters of Vol. III of this book should the volume in question be finally published. The explanations of the practice in this section are based on the experiences I describe in the book in question, and on my assimilation, on the basis of my own practice, of the teachings of my kind, precious teachers, and of supplementary readings.

^d Tib. *shardöl* (Wylie, *shar grol*).

^e Tib. **tulgyi düsum düchikla drölwa tabu** (Wylie, *sbrul gyi mdud gsum dus gcig la grol ba lta bu*).

^f As noted repeatedly, coarse thoughts are the discursive thoughts in Sanskrit called *śabdāsāmānya* (Tib. *drachi* [Wylie, *sgra spyi*]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*]), which modifying a translation devised by Alex Berzin (2001) I render as word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings. Subtle thoughts are the ones in Sanskrit called *arhasāmānya* (Tib. *dönchi* [Wylie, *don spyi*]), which modifying a translation devised by Alex Berzin (2001) I render as universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] that conveys a meaning. And the supersubtle thought par excellence is the one in Sanskrit called *trimaṇḍala* (Tib. *khorsum* [Wylie, *'khor gsum*]; Ch. 三輪 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*]), which I render as threefold directional thought-structure and which involves the notion that there is an experience, something experienced and an experiencer; a thinking, a thought and a thinker; an action, an object of action and an agent; etc.

^g Tib. *sharwa denyi* (Wylie, *shar ba de nyid*).

^h Tib. **thoktu dröl** (Wylie, *thog tu grol*) or **rangi thogtu drölwai** (Wylie, *rang gis thog tu grol bas*): directly

this is that, rather than establishing or reinforcing karmic propensities^a and delusive obstructions,^b as reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized thoughts do, this traceless self-liberation neutralizes propensities, obstructions and *karma* proportionally to the intensity with which thoughts were being reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized—and therefore to the intensity of the experience—in the instant immediately preceding self-liberation, and also proportionally to the height of the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness at the time when illusory self-liberation occurs.

It has been asserted that at this point thoughts arise from within as Contemplation, without ever concealing the fact that they (are) manifestations of our unobstructed and transparent, [nonconceptual, nondual] Awake self-awareness.^c If this is taken to mean that while the thought is self-liberating as a snake undoing its knot the fact that they (are) manifestations of our unobstructed and transparent, [nonconceptual, nondual] Awake self-awareness, this is correct. However, we should not overlook the fact that in this capacity or mode of spontaneous liberation an automatic reaction—which *involves a very subtle type of action and hence of delusion*—is still necessary for them to self-liberate; that before their self-liberation, for an extremely brief instant, the incipient, arising thought is hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized; and that it is as one implicitly detects the hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized incipient, arising thought that the reaction in question takes place. Therefore, as the thought arises duality and delusion begin to arise as well; in implicitly noticing the incipient, arising thought, duality and delusion are involved; and subtle duality and delusion are also present in the reaction necessary for the thought to self-liberate in the reGnition of the *dharmakāya*:^{d486} it is only while the thought is self-liberating like a snake undoing its knot and when the thought has dissolved into the space of the *dharmakāya* that duality and delusion are no more—at least until the next thought begins to arise.

At any rate, with the passing of time the state of rigpa that manifests upon self-liberation lasts for increasingly longer spans, and one becomes ever more familiar with *liberation upon arising*. This signifies that one's capacity is gradually increasing, and thus at some point one will begin to be capable of *remaining in the state^e of rigpa or reGnition^f as thoughts arise*, at least for limited periods. Since so long as this state is manifest contents of thought do not conceal the *dharmakāya* that is the true condition of thought, and since no dualistic consciousness^g having a mental subject at its core arises to protect itself from what such a consciousness would experience as the intrusion of thought, at this

self-liberate by its own power [without any mindfulness being exerted to this end (Tib. tenme [Wylie, *dran med*] or maten [Wylie, *ma dran*])]. Cf. endnote 494.

^a Skt. *vāsanā* Tib. bagchag (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch'i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch'i⁴*).

^b Skt. *āvaraṇa*; Tib. dribpa (Wylie, *sgrib pa*); Ch. 遮障 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēzhàng*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-chang⁴*).

^c Tib. **rigpa zangthalgnyi ngangle rangtsel du charwa** (Wylie, *rig pa zang thal gyi ngang las rang rtsal du 'char ba*).

^d In this context, in the *Khepa sri gyalpoi khyechö* (Wylie, *mkhas pa sri rgyal po'i khyad chos*), Dza Petrü Rinpoche (Wylie, *rdza dpal sprul rin po che*), Orgyen Jigme Chökyi Wangpo (Wylie, *o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po*, 1808-1887) used the term **drölchai chöku ngözung** (Wylie, *grol cha'i chos sku ngos bzung*); cf. Reynolds (1996, p. 115).

^e Tib. **ngangla zhakpa** (Wylie, *ngang la bzhang pa*).

^f Tib. ngözung (Wylie, *ngos bzung*).

^g Skt. *vijñāna*; Pāli, *viññāna*; Tib. namshe (Wylie, *rnam shes*); Ch. 識 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shí*; Wade-Giles, *shih²*).

point there is no one that may feel threatened or be harmed by the arising of thought. This is why in this third capacity or mode of spontaneous liberation arising thoughts are compared to a thief in an empty house: firstly, there does not seem to be someone that may be harmed by thoughts; and secondly, thoughts at no point conceal the true condition of nonconceptual, nondual Awake awareness, and thus no action or reaction on the part of a meditator is required to liberate them, for all thoughts are primordially liberated.^a It is because at this point contents of thought are not hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized and hence thoughts do not conceal in any way the *dharmakāya* that is their true condition, but they certainly do so when their contents are hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized, that Jigme Lingpa stated^b that before this stage is reached “it is too early to label all thoughts as *dharmakāya*.” In fact, at this point nothing manifests apart from the primordial gnosis that reveals the essence aspect of the Base that (is) our true condition^c—i.e. there (is) a single, singular condition—and thus rigpa is self-sustaining or self abiding:^d this is what is designated as the yoga^e of the natural river-like flow^f and often as nonmeditation.^g Since at no point is there reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of thought and hence at no point do thoughts leave traces, it may be said that one (is) resting in the state of *primordial liberation*.^h This capacity or mode of liberation is the one properly called *spontaneous liberation* or *self-liberation*ⁱ; since in it arising thoughts at no point conceal the *dharmakāya*, in this capacity of mode of liberation the two gnoses of the so-called Buddha omniscience, as they are understood in the Mahāyāna, manifest coincidentally just as, according to the Mahāyāna, they do in Buddhahood, rather than the gnosis that reveals the true condition^j manifesting in the Contemplation state^k and the gnosis of variety^l manifesting in post-Contemplation^m (the distinctive way in which they are understood in the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions will be briefly considered below, and will be discussed in greater detail in Vol. II of this

^a Tib. yedröl (Wylie, *ye grol*).

^b In *The Lion's Roar* (Senggei Ngaro [Wylie, *seng ge'i nga ro*]). This is the rendering of the statement in an extremely simplified version of the text by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1972, p. 23). Other translations in Thinle Norbu (2015, p. 78); Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, p. 139); van Schaik (2004, p. 227)

^c Compare with the Tib. **ngowo chikle madepai yeshe** (Wylie, *ngo bo gcig las ma 'das pa'i ye shes*).

^d Compare with the Tib. **rigpa rangnge** (Wylie, *rig pa rang gnas*).

^e As already noted in the regular text, the Skt. *yoga* means union, which contradicts Dzogchen, where there is no one to unite and nothing to be united with. Thus the term is to be understood in the sense of the Tib. naljor (Wylie, *rnal 'byor*), understood as *remaining in the patency of our unaltered original, true condition*.

^f Tib. **rangzhin chuwo gyüngyi naljor** (Wylie, *rang bzhin chu bo rgyun gi rnal 'byor*). This implies that we remain in the continuous flow of the uncontrived natural condition (Tib. machö nelug gyünkyong [Wylie, *ma bcos gnas lugs rgyun skyong*]) or continuous flow of the primordial gnosis whereby rigpa manifests (Tib. rigpai yeshe gyünkyongwa [Wylie, *rig pa'i ye shes rgyun skyong ba*]). Note that this unwaveringly continuing in Awake awareness is also called **rigthok nema gyowa** (Wylie, *rig thog nas ma g.yos ba*).

^g Tib. gomme (Wylie, *sgom med*).

^h Tib. yedröl (Wylie, *ye grol*).

ⁱ Tib. rangdröl (Wylie, *rang grol*).

^j Skt. *yātvadbhāvīkājñāna*; Tib. ji tawa khyenpai yeshe (Wylie, *ji lta ba mkhyen pa'i ye shes*); Ch. 如理智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúlǐzhì*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-lǐ³-chih⁴*).

^k Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. nyamzhak (Wylie, *mnyam bz'hak*); Ch. 等引 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*).

^l Skt. *yātvadbhāvīkājñāna*; Tib. ji nyepa khyenpai yeshe (Wylie, *ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes*); Ch. 如量智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúliángzhì*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-liang²-chih⁴*).

^m Skt. *prṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. jethob (Wylie, *rjes thob*); Ch. 後得 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*).

book).

In fact, when we are in the dualistic condition in which we feel we are the mental subject produced by the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure and we feel that the gnitive power of the essence or nature of mind pertains to this illusory subject, which looks toward what it perceives as being away from itself and other than itself, it is as though the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness called *rigpa* (which as noted repeatedly is symbolized by a mirror) were looking away from itself^a—even though this is not precise, for only the mind having the mental subject as its core (which is exemplified as a reflection) is at that point under the illusion of being a separate self that can look either to itself or away from itself. At any rate, this illusion that *rigpa* looks away from itself is named a deviation,^b for when it is manifest, as our own manifestations arise, they appear to be other^c than ourselves, or something that manifested elsewhere^d than in ourselves. Contrariwise, in *self-liberation* or *spontaneous liberation*^e properly speaking, *rigpa* naturally maintains itself^f or abides as itself^g without this requiring any action and without straying from its own condition of undistracted, naked, instant Awake awareness.^h This continuing directly in [awareness (of) the true condition of] the Base—i.e. in the Vision—is the main, core practice,ⁱ in which we must persevere until we obtain stability beyond concepts in the expanse of empty Awake awareness that is our condition of total plenitude and perfection.^j This is so because as a rule on the Path firstly the Awake awareness called *rigpa* is developed and mastered^k through the practice of Tekchö; then *rigpa* expands and unfolds^l in the practice of Thögel; and finally *rigpa* reaches its fullness or completeness^m as the Fruit. However, the seeming gradualism of these stages should not be taken to mean that the three modes or capacities of liberation discussed in the last several paragraphs are sharply delineated, consecutive modes of liberation: although at the inception of the practice average *yogins* or *yoginīs* experience only the first, but as they become more familiar with it, the first and

^a Tib. *zhentögyi rigpa* (Wylie, *gzhan ltos gyi rig pa*).

^b Tib. *gölsa* (Wylie, *gol sa*) is rendered as diversion or deviation. Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, p. 151) says the term refers to the point in the practice when one can become sidetracked or deviated, noting that the term is contrasted with *norsa* (Wylie, *nor sa*), which is rendered as error (in the practice), and *shorsa* (Wylie, *shor sa*), which is rendered as ways of straying (due to a mistaken comprehension or application of emptiness).

^c Tib. *rangi nangwa zhendu sharwa* (Wylie, *rang gi snang ba gzhan du shar ba*).

^d Tib. *rangi nangwa zhendu sharwa* (Wylie, *rang gi snang ba gzhan du shar ba*).

^e Tib. *rangdröl* (Wylie, *rang grol*).

^f Tib. *rigpa rangne* (Wylie, *rig pa rang gnas*).

^g Tib. *rigpa rangne* (Wylie, *rig pa rang gnas*).

^h By *instant Awake awareness* I render the Tib. *kechik rigpa* or *kechik mayi rigpa* (Wylie, *skad cig [ma yi] rig pa*) / *rigpa kechikma* (Wylie, *rig pa skad chig ma*). As stated in endnote 473, here “instant” (Tib. *kechikma* [Wylie, *skad chig ma*]) means that Awake awareness is free from the division of the temporal continuum into past, present and future that arises when the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought-structure sunders the Base, which in itself is free from divisions and interruptions, into subject and object, thus giving rise to space, time and knowledge as different dimensions. Cf. the explanation above in the regular text.

ⁱ Tib. *ngözhi rangthog tuzhi chawa* (Wylie, *ngos gzhi rang thog tu gzhi bca' ba*).

^j Tib. *rigtong londe dzogpa chenpoi longdu tensa zinpa* (Wylie, *rig stong blo 'das rdzogs pa chen po'i klong du btsan sa zin pa*).

^k Tib. *tsalwa* (Wylie, *rtal ba*).

^l Tib. *gyepa* (Wylie, *rgyas pa*).

^m Tib. *dzogpa* (Wylie, *rdzogs pa*).

the second may alternate. And although it is a fact that with the passing of time the third may come to prevail, this does *not* mean that after some threshold the first two modes of liberation necessarily cease to manifest and only the third does so. Therefore to speak of successive stages will be misleading if one understands this in too narrow a sense.

When one practices in the right way and develops the necessary capacity, as Sera Khandro noted,^a “gurus of the past have stated that to the extent that thoughts proliferate, to the same extent the [patency of the] *dharmakāya* increases its power, just as a mass of fire flares up in accordance with the amount of fuel.” In fact, this is the reason why often during the sessions of practice practitioners direct their gaze upwards into the space in front of them, which their awareness is perfectly integrated: to increase the rate of arising and liberation of thoughts. And that whereas other meditations are building up practices based on the development of a dualistic mindfulness that then may become dormant when absorptions become stable, and the absorptions in question are fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned and / or compounded^b states, the practice of the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions is based on the constant self-liberation of mindfulness and of all of the meditative states achieved by means of mindfulness, including those in which mindfulness has become dormant. As the great Guru of Oḍḍiyāna said:^c

There are many who know how to build up meditation,
but only I know how to break it down.

To conclude with the practice of Tekchö, let me note that in order to potentiate the practice in question and make the self-liberation of thought neutralize karmic traces in general to a greater extent and free us from the power of demons, infectious illnesses and all fear, we engage in the practice of Chö^d that will be discussed in Vol. II of this book. This is the best way to make the practice of Tekchö reach its climax and purify delusions. In fact, in Dzogchen it is made clear that demons and gods are no more than reification of thought, and that when this reification is neutralized we become immune to the power of demons and from the hope of obtaining any help from gods. This will be illustrated with some classic Tibetan stories and important quotations from a Terma revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa.^e

For their part, Thögel and the Yangthik^f set the conditions for the self-arising of vision^g in the form of luminous spheres^a and other apparition-like phenomena that initially

^a In *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). An analogous though not identical translation is available in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. II, p. 249).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, *'dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^c Cited by Sera Khandro in *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. II, p. 249).

^d Wylie, *gcod*.

^e *Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorjei nyingpo* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po*).

^f Wylie, *yang thig*.

^g Tib. *rangnang* (Wylie, *rang snang*).

manifest in what seems to be an external dimension^b—which is the way of manifesting proper to tsel energy—but since these visions are phenomena of rölpa energy that exhibit the latter’s wondrous dimensionality (which will be discussed below), and since they are sustained by an extremely high energetic volume determining the scope of awareness, their presence activates the self-rectifying dynamics of luminosity *qua* rölpa energy that are inherent in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena,^c which do not allow the illusion of there being an outer dimension and an inner dimension, a subject and an object, to have a continuity and consolidate. A Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa reads:^d

Since the mental afflictions conquer themselves, they manifest as wrathful forms. This great primordial gnosis that is replete with all such Awake qualities makes manifest the *dharmakāya*’s primordial gnosis that is inherent in the Base.

Traditional explanations of the above, *based on experiences of Thögel practice*, note that the clear light of our true, Awake condition—namely of the *dharmakāya*—that physiologically is said to be inner^e because it has its chief abode in the “heart’s^f cavity,” like a projector’s light bearing the images to be projected, is made to appear on the seemingly external dimension—in fact, they initially appear to be in front of oneself—through the extremely subtle, hollow, crystal-like channels called *kati channels*,^g *gnosis-channels*^h or *smooth white channels*,ⁱ which link the eyes with the heart’s cavity. As just noted, the light in question manifests in the form of the luminous spheres called thigles and other visions that are manifestations, in what initially seems to be an external dimension,^j of the energy of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness called rigpa.^k Once one experiences visions that are more luminous than physical entities and that seem as real as the latter, one gains certainty that this is also how the everyday reality that we perceive as an external physical world, and which pertains to tsel energy, arises—the reality in question being therefore neither external nor truly existent. It must again be emphasized, however, that though both Thögel visions and the physical world are *manifestations of the [energy of the nature of] mind*,^l they are not mind.

^a Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^b Tib. ying (Wylie, *dbyings*).

^c Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*). This bardo normally manifests between physical death and rebirth, but in practices such as Thögel or the Yangthik it is made to manifest while the organism is alive and well (which also happens spontaneously in some psychoses).

^d *Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorjei nyingpo* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po*). Alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. III, p. 63).

^e This is why it is called “inner light.” Tib. nang ö (Wylie, *nang 'od*); Skt. *antarajyoti[h]*.

^f Tib. tsitta (Wylie, *tsit ta*).

^g Tib. *kati shelgyi bugu chen* (Wylie, *ka ti shel gyi sbu gu can*).

^h Tib. *yeshe tsa* (Wylie, *ye shes rtsa*).

ⁱ Tib. *karjam tsa* (Wylie, *dkar 'jam rtsa*).

^j Compare with the Tib. *zhen ngo nang tsül* (Wylie, *gzhan ngo snang tshul*).

^k Compare with the Tib. rigpai tsel (Wylie, *rig pa'i rtsal*).

^l Tib. semkyi nangwa (Wylie, *sems kyi snang ba*—in which *sems* may refer to semnyi [Wylie, *sems nyid*] / changchub sem [Wylie, *byang chub sems*]).

In Contemplation those spontaneous visions^a are spontaneously met^b by rigpa, at the outset of the practice in the same way in which one immediately recognizes one's own face in a mirror or an old friend one has not met in a long time,^c and hence the vision directly liberates itself into its own inherent condition,^d which means that it is no longer experienced as something external to awareness, for the mental subject that experiences itself as being at a distance from the vision has disappeared: the vision reveals itself *qua* vision as empty,^e while its luminosity, which is rigpa, is self-reGnized.^f However, once the visions have developed beyond their initial stages, as suggested above, if this does not spontaneously occur in an immediate way, the wondrous dimensionality of this form of manifestation of energy and the extremely high energetic volume determining the scope of awareness that accompanies and sustains the visions of rölpa energy will catalyze the spontaneously rectifying^g dynamics of the Base. In fact, the visions' immutability and imperviousness activate the delusive tropisms that give rise to aversion / antagonism / irritation,^h causing one to react to the phenomena of luminosity—which (are) one's own condition manifesting in a seemingly external wayⁱ—with irritation and thus to beget strong tensions and conflict. And this makes the illusion of there being a mental subject in an internal dimension at a distance from the visions manifesting as objects that appear to lie in an external dimension^j turns into conflict—which when the practice has developed occurs as soon as that mental subject arises. *Provided that we have sufficiently developed a capacity of spontaneous liberation through the practice of Tekchö*, this irritation / antagonism / aversion, together with the dualistic delusion that constitutes its condition of possibility, will instantly self-liberate^k by means of the reGnition (of) [the stuff and true condition of the subtle^l and supersubtle^m thoughts at the root of] the irritation, antagonism or aversion,ⁿ and therefore tension and conflict will be instantly released—thus working

^a Tib. rangnang (Wylie, *rang snang*).

^b Compare Petrül Rinpoché: Tib. rang rang threpa (Wylie, *rang rang phrad pa*).

^c Tib. **rang du ngoshepa** (Wylie, *rang du ngo shes pa*).

^d Tib. **rang gi rang thok tu drölwe** (Wylie, *rang gi rang thog tu grol bas*).

^e Compare with the Tib. nangwa tongpa (Wylie, *snang ba stong pa*).

^f Compare with the Tib. **selwa rigpar ngoshepa** (Wylie, *gsal ba rig par ngo shes pa*).

^g Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^h Skt. *dveṣa*; Pāli *dosa*; Tib. zhedang (Wylie, *zhe sdang*); Ch. 瞋 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chēn*; Wade-Giles *ch'en*¹). This is the same tropism at the root of boredom, and is somewhat similar to the way in which the pleasure of being caressed by the goose's feathers turns into a torture.

ⁱ Teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Also compare Petrül Rinpoché: Tib. **chirmang rangyin** (Wylie, *cir snang rang yin*).

^j The mental subject, which is no more than an appearance of dang (Wylie, *gdangs*) energy (which as such has no characteristics perceivable through the five external senses, and which cannot be perceived as object because it appears implicitly and indirectly as the perceiver of appearances that manifest as object) arising in the nonconceptual, nondual awareness called essence or nature of mind (Tib. *semnyi* [*sems nyid*])—like a reflection in a mirror—seems to be an internal awareness (i.e. the awareness represented with the mirror seems to pertain to the illusory mental subject), while the visions seem to be external appearances. This is called **matokpa larang zhennyi sujung** (Wylie, *ma rtogs pa la rang gzhan gnyis su byung*).

^k Compare Petrül Rinpoché: Tib. **zhedangnyikyid drölwa** (Wylie, *zhe sdang nyid kyiis grol ba*).

^l I.e. the universal, abstract concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings (Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* [Wylie, *don spyi*]; Ch. 總義 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung*³⁻⁴]).

^m I.e. the threefold directional thought structure (Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. *khorsum* [Wylie, *'khor gsum*]; Ch. 三輪 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlún*; Wade-Giles, *san*^{1-lun}⁴]).

ⁿ Compare Petrül Rinpoché: Tib. **zhedang dü shepe dröl** (Wylie, *zhe sdang dus shes pas grol*).

as the catalyzer of the spontaneous, instant, absolute release of tension characteristic of Tekchö, which it intensifies and accelerates, thus enhancing and optimizing its power to neutralize delusion. This is so because the fact that the visions elicit irritation / aversion / antagonism makes it impossible for delusion to persist, as it could do it, in the practice of Tekchö, one became distracted, and because each and every time delusive phenomena liberate themselves spontaneously, the propensity for delusion to manifest is neutralized to an extent that is directly proportional to both the magnitude or height of the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness^a and the degree of experiential intensity in the moment immediately preceding self-liberation—both of which reach their maximum potential in the practice of Thögel.⁴⁸⁷ Since in this practice the illusory mental subject that appears to be at a distance from an object is spontaneously dissolved—either the moment it arises, or after irritation / antagonism / aversion makes tension and conflict increase to a threshold—Thögel has the power to swiftly neutralize the propensity for the individual to experience him or herself as a mental subject in an internal dimension that is at a distance from objects lying in an external dimension and in general all aspects of *avidyā*.

The practices of Thögel and the Yangthik are means to make the **intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena^b manifest while the practitioner is physically alive and to elicit the projection of the visions of rölpa energy** proper to this intermediate state.^c As suggested above, the reason for this is that, unlike phenomena of tsel energy, these visions do not allow the illusory divide into mental subject and object, or internal and external dimension—which is a most elemental appearance of dualistic delusion—to persist and consolidate. In fact, this is a key reason why the symbol of rölpa energy is a mirror in which there is no distance between reflective power and reflections: because the practice forces the *yogin* or *yoginī* to return to the condition in which there does not seem to be a distance between reflective power and reflections (another reason being that the mirror illustrates the *sambhogakāya*'s primordial gnoses of quality and quantity, which will be briefly discussed below and, in greater detail, in Vol. II of this book). In fact, the purpose of eliciting those visions is to activate the self-rectifying dynamics that force the *yogin* or *yoginī* to integrate^d with what seems to be external but that in fact is not so—in this case, with the visions that initially arise in what seems to be an external dimension by virtue of the radiance of the dang^e aspect of our true condition—so that when that integration is achieved (so to speak) only one dimension^f remains. However, it must be kept in mind that the expression “the *yogin* or *yoginī* is forced to integrate with the visions” is metaphoric, for what the self-rectifying dynamics of rölpa energy do is to force the *spontaneous dissolution* of the mental subject that appears to be at a distance of the objects—and hence no one is left that may be said to have integrated with the visions: only the nonconceptual, nondual primordial gnosis that makes rigpa patent remains.

^a Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*), which renders the Skt. *bindu* but in this context has a sense somewhat akin to that of the Skt. *kuṇḍalinī*.

^b Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

^c Skt. *antarābhava*; Tib. bardo (Wylie, *bar do*); Ch. 中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yu³*) / 中陰 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhōngyīn*; Wade-Giles, *chung¹-yin¹*).

^d Tib. sewa (Wylie, *bsre ba*).

^e Compare with the Tib. **rangdang** (Wylie, *rang gdangs*).

^f Tib. **ying chik** (Wylie, *dbyings gcig*).

To recapitulate, the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena^a is made to manifest while the individual is physically alive so as to activate the self-rectifying dynamics of the rölpa energy proper to the intermediate state in question, which as noted above are related to the wondrous dimensionality of this mode of manifestation of energy (discussed below) and an extremely elevated energetic volume determining the scope of awareness, which do not permit the persistence of the dualisms of subject and object, and of internal dimension and external dimension. If the self-recognition^b of the visions’^c true condition does not immediately occur, the irritation / antagonism / aversion the deluded, dualistic consciousness having the illusory mental subject as its core will at some point experience in the face of the visions’ immutability and imperviousness will be made to increase exponentially in a positive feedback loop together with the tensions it elicits and with the anguish that the situation may produce, to a threshold level at which—provided that the *yogin* or *yoginī* developed a sufficient capacity of self-liberation in the practice of Tekchö—they self-liberate. This is the reason why the practice of Thögel may be regarded as a spontaneous^d zhitro^e or “peaceful-wrathful” practice: as just noted, the characteristics and dynamics inherent in rölpa energy activate what is known as the spontaneous wrathful activity^f or wrathful^g dynamics proper to the true condition of phenomena, which as such are activated in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena,^h and which are the condition of possibility of Thögel practice. However, since so far I have stressed only the “wrathful”ⁱ aspect of this practice, it must be noted that in the dynamics of spontaneous rectification activated in Thögel practice, and in particular in the practice of darkness, the *total pleasure* (so to speak) associated with the zhiwa^j or peaceful aspect is as important with regard to the ensuing learning as the arising, exacerbation and spontaneous liberation of tensions that constitutes the dynamics of the throw^k or “wrathful” aspect. In fact, the peaceful aspect and the total bliss or pleasure inherent in it manifest when the [disclosure of the true, nonconceptual and nondual] condition of the visions liberates [our deluded, conceptual, dualistic perception of] those visions,^l so that the delusion of feeling that there is an internal dimension or space^m that is the dwelling and domain of an internal Awake awareness,ⁿ and an external dimension or space^a filled

^a Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. *chönyi bardo* (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

^b Tib. **ranggo shepa** (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

^c Tib. *nan-gwa* (Wylie, *snang ba*); Skt. *ābhāsa*; Ch. 現 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiàn*; Wade-Giles, *hsien⁴*).

^d Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie, *lhun grub*).

^e Tib. *zhithro* (Wylie, *zhi khro*).

^f Tib. *thinle drakpo* (Wylie, *phrin las drag po*).

^g Tib. *trowo* (Wylie, *khro bo*).

^h This dynamics are proper to the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. *chönyi bardo* [Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*]; Ch. 法性中有 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*] because, as will be explained below in the regular text, the intermediate state in question is the one in which one’s true condition, which is the true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *chönyi* [Wylie, *chos nyid*]; Ch. 法性 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*]), is projected, initially onto a dimension that is perceived as external, in the form of visions of rölpa energy.

ⁱ Tib. *throwo* (Wylie, *’phro bo*).

^j Tib. *zhiwa* (Wylie, *zhi ba*).

^k Tib. *throwo* (Wylie, *khro bo*).

^l Compare with the Tib. **nan-gwa nyi nangwe dröl** (Wylie, *snang ba nyid snang bas grol*).

^m Tib. *nangyin* (Wylie, *nang dbyings*).

ⁿ Compare with the Tib. term **nang rigpa** (Wylie, *nang rig pa*).

with extraneous objects, instantly dissolves in the realization of the single space or dimension^b of the true condition^c—and hence total bliss or pleasure is associated with the spontaneous reGnition of our own true condition, working as a reinforcement in the learning to be achieved.

Now the reason why the family of purification is the Vajra Family, the Buddha of which is Vajrasattva, may be easily understood. Vajrasattva represents the *sambhogakāya* and is the deity traditionally visualized in Anuyoga zhitros^d as containing all peaceful and wrathful deities, whose mantra has one hundred syllables, one for each of these deities, and is used in Tantric purification. And the passion of this family is aversion / irritation / antagonism / anger / wrath,^e which is the means *par excellence* for the most powerful, swiftest purification of delusion and the passions that issue from it (and hence also of the karmic seeds for the manifestation of *all of them*^f)—namely the practices of Thögel and the Yangthik^g for which the Anuyoga modality of the practice of zhitro is a preparation, and which are based on the activation and spontaneous liberation of aversion / antagonism / irritation / anger / wrath in the genuine, true zhitro.⁴⁸⁸ Once more, evidence points to the *Samten Migdrön*'s assertion that Dzogchen Ati is the primordial ancestor of all vehicles.

Once more let me emphasize the contrast between Dzogchen reGnition and what is termed recognition, which was explained in endnote 35 to this book:^h whereas the latter involves the understanding of singled-out sensa in terms of contents of thought—normally a reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized subtle thoughtⁱ that manifests as object due to the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle thought that I call threefold directional thought structure^j—the Dzogchen reGnition of the *dharmakāya* instantly dissolves all types of recognition. Therefore, when it is said that by awareness identifying^k the emotional defilement to be liberated, at that very instant^l they will vanish, this is not to be taken literally; for example, it is simply wrong to say that anger is liberated due to its being recognized as anger, for recognizing anger as anger is what occurs to any samsaric being who becomes aware that she or he has been possessed by anger. In fact, anger is liberated by (being) self-reGnized^m as the *dharmakāya* beyond any recognition in terms of thought-contents. The example of anger was used because of

^a Tib. chiyng (Wylie, *phyi dbyings*).

^b Tib. ying chik (Wylie, *dbyings gcig*).

^c This is an extended explanation of that which is referred to by the Tib. **ranggi nang ngoshepe** (Wylie, *ranggis nang ngo shes pas*).

^d Tib. zhithro (Wylie, *zhi khro*).

^e Skt. *dveṣa*; Pāli *dosa*; Tib. zhedang (Wylie, *zhe sdang*); Ch. 瞋 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chēn*; Wade-Giles *ch'en*¹).

^f Skt. *vāsanā* Tib. bagchag (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch'i⁴-hsí²*) or 習氣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsí²-ch'i⁴*).

^g Wylie, *yang thig*.

^h Tib. *samjñā*; Tib. duche (Wylie, *'du shes*); Ch. 想 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang*³).

ⁱ Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. dönchi (Wylie, *don spyi*); Ch. 總事 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-shih⁴*) or 總義 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*). Modifying a translation devised by Alex Berzin (2001), I render this term as universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] that conveys a meaning.

^j Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum (Wylie, *'khor gsum*); Ch. 三輪 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*).

^k Tib. ngözin (Wylie, *ngos zin*).

^l Tib. nyamdu (Wylie, *mnyam du*).

^m Tib. rangngo shepa (Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*).

its relevance to Thögel practice, but the same applies to the self-liberation of all passions in the practice of Tekchö that, before one undertakes the practice of Thögel, must be perfected to a considerable degree.

The above was said with regard to Thögel and the Yangthik because the latter are the most powerful triggers and catalyzers of the spontaneous self-rectifying dynamics of the Base's spontaneous perfection aspect, as they are the practices in which the visions of rölpa energy self-manifest from primordial gnosis^a in a seemingly external dimension^b—and these visions are, for their part, the paradigmatic, most radical trigger and catalyzer of the positive feedback loops that lead aversion / antagonism / irritation / anger / wrath to develop in a runaway to a threshold level at which it self-liberates. However, the positive feedback loops of the self-rectifying dynamics in question can also manifest with lesser intensity when thoughts or other mental phenomena arise in what seems to be an internal dimension.^c In either case, if by means of the practice of Tekchö we have developed a sufficient capacity of spontaneous liberation, it is certain that if delusion together with all the tensions it elicits fails to immediately liberate itself, it will do so after a runaway of tension makes the latter reach a threshold level.

Furthermore, the instant the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena manifests—whether after physical death or in practices such as Thögel or the Yangthik^d—the clear light of rigpa will manifest in the sequence sound > light > rays (the latter being the manifestation of rigpa's clear light as the visions of rölpa energy that initially seem to lie in an external dimension). Primordial gnoses^e are events of rigpa, which in those in whose mental continuum^f rigpa has manifested are called the son,^g son clear light,^h or Path clear light.ⁱ For its part, rigpa's clear light is called the mother clear light,^j Base clear light,^k or clear light abiding as the Base^l—the true condition of which is the *dharmakāya*. If we have developed the necessary familiarity with the rigpa of which each and every primordial gnosis (is) a Gnitive event, then when the clear light arises at the outset of the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena^m—whether this occurs after physical death or in life while engaging in practices such as those of Thögel or the Yangthik—we have a effective possibility of reGnizing it as our mother, and thus realize the indivisible integration beyond duality of mother (the nonconceptual and therefore nondual Awake awareness [of] the primordial state) and son (primordial gnosis).ⁿ Once

^a Compare with the Tib. **rangnang yeshekyi rölpa** (Wylie, *rang snang ye shes kyi rol pa*).

^b Tib. *chiying* (Wylie, *phyi dbyings*).

^c Tib. *nangyin* (Wylie, *nang dbyings*).

^d Wylie, *yang thig*.

^e Tib. *yeshe* (Wylie, *ye shes*); Skt. *jñāna*; Ch. 智 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih*⁴; Jap. *chi*).

^f Skt. *saṃtāna*; Tib. *semgyü* (Wylie, *sems rgyud*) or *gyün* (Wylie, *rgyun*); Ch. 相續 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*); in general used as 心相續 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnxiāngxù*; Wade-Giles *hsin¹-hsiang¹-hsü⁴*).

^g Tib. *pu* (Wylie, *bu*).

^h Tib. *pui ösel* (Wylie, *bu'i 'od gsal*).

ⁱ Tib. *lamgyi ösel* (Wylie, *lam gyi 'od gsal*).

^j Tib. *maï ösel* (Wylie, *ma'i 'od gsal*).

^k Tib. *zhi ösel* (Wylie, *gzhi' 'od gsal*).

^l Compare with the Tib. **zhine maï ösel** (Wylie, *gzhi gnas ma'i 'od gsal*).

^m Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. *chönyi bardo* (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

ⁿ Compare with the Tib. **mapunyi jorwa** (Wylie, *ma bu gnyis sbyor ba*).

this has occurred, we have a really powerful potentiality, which we can further develop by means of Tekchö practice, for the self-liberation of dualism in the reGnition of the rigpa that (is) the Base clear light when, in the practice of Thögel, the clear light manifests in the form of visions that initially seem to be external to us exactly as the phenomena we call physical seem to be,^a and which begin with the projection of our own luminosity in an apparently external dimension—for they are the mother into which we integrate (so to speak). (If we relate this symbolism of mother and son to the previously discussed sense of the phrases *naturally manifest primordial gnosis individually realized through the spontaneous awareness of the primordial, true condition*^b and *individually realized primordial gnosis of spontaneous Awake awareness [rigpa]*,^c we must say that although there is a single mother, the events of primordial gnosis that make it fully patent occur individually in the mental stream^d of a *yogin* or *yoginī*.)

Although the six lamps or lights^e of Thögel and the Yangthik will not be discussed at this point, as they are relevant solely for the practices in question, let it be said that the first lamp, called the lamp or light of rigpa’s dimension or space,^f is the luminosity of our true condition—the true condition of phenomena^g—which shines in the center of the body at the level of the heart, initially as dang energy shining in an inner dimension.^h It is this light that shines inside the heart properly as the lamp of the fleshy heart,ⁱ as what is called innermost luminosity,^j and which is compared to a lamp shining at the center of a pot, illumining the pot’s inside. The light goes through the above mentioned, extremely subtle, hollow, crystal-like channels that link the eyes with the heart’s cavity—the *kati channels*,^k *gnosis-channels*^l or *smooth white channels*^m—and is then projected onto what seems to be an external dimensionⁿ in the form of *initially* tiny luminous spheres^o and other visions—all of which are manifestations in what initially seems to be an external dimension,^p of the

^a Compare with the Tib. **zhenngo nangtsül** (Wylie, *gzhan ngo snang tshul*).

^b Skt. *pratisaṃvid* (Dorje & Kapstein, in Düdjom Rinpoche, 1991), *pratyātmagati*, *pratyātmādhigama* or *pratyātmavid* (Brunnhölzl, in Nāgārjuna & Illrd Karmapa, 2007); Tib. soso ranggi rigpa (Wylie, *so so rang gi rig pa*).

^c Skt. *pratyātmavedanīyajñāna*; Tib. soso rangrigpai yeshe (Wylie, *so so rang rig pa'i ye shes*).

^d As stated in a previous footnote, with this term I am rendering the Skt. *saṃtāna*, usually translated into Tibetan as gyün (Wylie, *rgyun*) or as semgyü (Wylie, *sems rgyud*) and into Chinese as 相續 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*), in general used as 心相續 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnxiāngxù*; Wade-Giles *hsin¹-hsiang¹-hsü⁴*). Note that the Tibetan terms could also render the Skt. *saṃtati* (similar to *saṃtāna*), *jāti* (normally rendered as kyewa [Wylie, *skye ba*]: birth) and *anvaya* (directly, following, connection, male descendant, lineage, family, succession, inheritance, drift, tenor, or, in logic, negative implication [e.g. “when there is no (longer a) pot there is clay”]).

^e Tib. drönma drug (Wylie, *sgron ma drug*).

^f Tib. **rigpa yingkyi drönma** (Wylie, *rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma*).

^g Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chönyi (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fǎ³-hsing⁴*).

^h Tib. **nang yin** (Wylie, *nang dbyings*).

ⁱ Tib. **tsitta shai drönma** (Wylie, *tsit ta sha'i sgron ma*).

^j Tib. tingsel (Wylie, *gting gsal*): lit. depths luminosity.

^k Tib. **kati shelgyi pugu chen** (Wylie, *ka ti shel gyi sbu gu can*).

^l Tib. yeshe tsa (Wylie, *ye shes rtsa*).

^m Tib. karjam tsa (Wylie, *dkar 'jam rtsa*).

ⁿ Compare with the Tib. **zhenngo nangtsül** (Wylie, *gzhan ngo snang tshul*).

^o Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*).

^p Tib. **zhenngo nangtsül** (Wylie, *gzhan ngo snang tshul*).

energy of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness called rigpa.^a Thus it is the true condition of phenomena,^b which is our true condition, that is projected outside in the form of the visions of rölpa energy, with which, metaphorically speaking, we must become completely integrated, without the slightest appearance of dualism. In fact, the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena^c was given this name because it is the state in which the true condition of phenomena^d that is our true condition manifests in what initially seems to be an external dimension, in the form of luminous visions of rölpa energy: this is the reason why, no matter whether the physical organism is dead or alive, if the visions of rölpa energy are manifest, that will signify that the *yogin* or *yoginī* finds her or himself in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena.

To conclude let me emphasize once more that the practices of Thögel and the Yangthik should not be undertaken until the necessary capacity of spontaneous liberation has been developed through the practices of Tekchö and/or the Nyingthik, for otherwise our practice will be blocked, or they will result in psychosis, or they will give rise to other undesirable outcomes. However, under the right conditions, it will be most important to undertake these practices, for they will boost the process of spontaneous liberation set in motion through the practices of Tekchö or the Nyingthik, accelerating it, so that whichever realization has been attained so far may develop most rapidly to the level at which the illusory sundering of the Base by the appearance that there is a subject in an internal dimension and a world in an external dimension finally comes to an end, arising no more. Furthermore, if luminous visions of rölpa energy or a mass of light have not manifested in the seemingly external dimension or ying, the awareness associated with our organism (and thus this very organism) will not have the possibility of integrating with it—which means that we will not be able to obtain either of the two highest modes of ending life characteristic of the Dzogchen teachings.

The Fruit

We have seen that in the Atiyoga the Fruit is simply the definitive stabilization of the complete unveiling of the indivisibility of the three aspects of the Base, so that it will never again be concealed. However, this Fruit is not achieved all at once, but by stages: first the *dharmakāya* manifests as the true condition of the essence^e aspect of the Base and of the dang^f form of manifestation of the energy^g aspect of the Base are realized; then,

^a Tib. rigpai tsel (Wylie, *rig pa'i rtsal*).

^b Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chönyi (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*).

^c Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

^d Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chönyi (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*).

^e Tib. ngowo (Wylie, *ngo bo*), which is one of the Tibetan translations of the Skt. *svabhāva* (Ch. 自性 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. *jishō*]).

^f Wylie, *gdangs*.

^g The term “energy” renders the Tibetan “thukje” (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]), which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being *nyingje* [Wylie, *snying rje*]; Ch. 悲 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei¹*—lit. *sadness* or *mercy*]), which is rendered as “compassion.” After Awakening a Buddha continues to live solely as the function of nonreferential compassion. The Base, which is the Buddha-nature and which is what we (are) in truth, is the true, ultimate, birthless, deathless Buddha. Since the energy aspect of the Base is unobstructedness and continued manifestation, so long as experience continues to manifest through us, it is the true Buddha that is continuing to manifest experience—the energy

while the *dharmakāya* is patent, the *saṃbhogakāya* manifests when the true condition of the Base’s nature^a aspect and of the rölpa^b form of manifestation of the Base’s energy aspect are realized; finally, while the *dharmakāya* and the *saṃbhogakāya* are patent, the *nirmāṇakāya* manifests as the true condition of the Base’s energy^c aspect and of the tsel^d form of manifestation of the Base’s energy aspect are realized. Once the indivisibility of the three aspects of the Base has completely unveiled and this unveiling has become stable, it could be said that the *svabhāvikāya* has manifested as the Fruit—though in fact it is difficult to establish a precise point at which this may be said to have occurred, for in this vehicle the Path is a process of ongoing Awakening that may be said to reach an end only once the fourth vision of Thögel has unfolded to its ultimate degree. When the Buddha-activities of those who reach this point have been completed, rather than going through the process of death they attain the Total Transference or Phowa Chenpo that will be briefly referred to below.⁴⁸⁹

Since each of the above stages corresponds to the realization of the true condition of one of the aspects of the Base, which is achieved by treading the Path, and since the last of these stages consists in the realization of the indivisibility of the three aspects of the Base, again there can be no doubt that in this vehicle there is a perfect continuity of Base, Path and Fruit.⁴⁹⁰

1) The *dharmakāya*: As we have seen, in the Series of pith instructions^e of Dzogchen Atiyoga entrance to the Path consists in the disclosure of the true condition of the essence aspect of the Base (which is the Base’s emptiness and the *dharmakāya-qua-Base*: the single dimension,^f the space or sky,^g or the expanse^h where all phenomena, “internal” or “external,” may arise unobstructedlyⁱ) and of the dang form of manifestation of the energy aspect of the Base, in the noted Direct introduction to the *transparent, unimpeded, unobstructed primordial gnosis*^j that reveals the *dharmakāya* occurring as the *basic disposition of the essence aspect of the Base*^k shines forth (for an illustration of this in terms of the Atiyoga method for direct Introduction through the abrupt pronunciation of the syllable PHAT!, cf. endnote 238). Then, once practitioners no longer remain in doubt with regard to the fact that what manifested at that point was the true condition of themselves and all phenomena, they must devote themselves to the practice of Tekchö or of the Nyingthik (in which as noted above Tekchö predominates), wherein they must reGnize the stuff and true condition of thoughts and phenomena of the dang mode of manifestation of energy in general—and whenever the essence and true condition of these

aspect—in us, *doing so because of compassion* (even when we are unaware of this and feel “thrown” [Ger. *Geworfen*, in Heidegger’s sense] in the world). This is the reason why in the Dzogchen teachings the aspect that, following Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, I am rendering as *energy*, is called the *compassion* aspect.

^a Tib. rangzhin (Wylie, *rang bzhin*).

^b Wylie, *rol pa*.

^c Tib. thukje (Wylie, *thugs rje*); see explanation of this term in previous footnotes.

^d Wylie, *rtsal*.

^e Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngag [gyi] de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*).

^f Tib. ying chik (Wylie, *dbyings gcig*).

^g Tib. namkha (Wylie, *nam mkha'*); Skt. *ākāśa*; Ch. 空 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *kōng*; Wade-Giles, *k'ung¹*).

^h Tib. long (Wylie, *klong*).

ⁱ Tib. magagpa (Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*), gagme (Wylie, *'gag med*) or even magag (Wylie, *ma 'gags*).

^j Tib. yeshe zangthal (Wylie, *ye shes zang thal*).

^k Tib. **ngowo shi** (Wylie, *ngo bo'i gshis*).

“mental” phenomena and of the dang energy that constitutes them is reGnized and the *dharmakāya* manifests. Constant repetition of this enables practitioners to reGnize the true condition of thought whenever thoughts are reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, making them perfectly familiar with the *dharmakāya* and capable of realizing it at all times. If the third capacity or mode of liberation—the one properly called spontaneous liberation or self-liberation—becomes stable, it may be said that the *dharmakāya* has been stabilized and hence the first level of realization of this practice has been achieved.

2) The *sambhogakāya*: As explained in the section on the Path of Ati, once practitioners have developed a sufficient capacity of spontaneous liberation through practice of Tekchö or the Nyingthik, they must devote themselves to the practice of Thögel or that of the Yangthik, in which, while physically alive, access is gained to the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena in which the immaterial luminous visions of rölpa energy manifest. Though they initially do so in a dimension that seems to be external,^a as do the phenomena of the tsel mode of manifestation of energy, as it was also explained, since rölpa energy is refractory to the arising and consolidation of the dualisms of subject and object, and internal dimension^b and external dimension,^c the spontaneous self-rectifying^d dynamics inherent in the rölpa mode of manifestation of energy will catalyze the repeated self-liberation of those dualities. After being reGnized as the *sambhogakāya* that is the true condition of both the nature aspect of the Base and the rölpa form of manifestation of the Base’s energy aspect, the luminous visions continue to be there, but our dualistic perception of them (which involves the illusions of there being a mental subject and an object, an inner dimension and an outer dimension) liberates itself spontaneously each and every time it arises, and do so at maximum levels of experiential intensity and height of energetic volume determining the scope of awareness. Since under these conditions the power of spontaneous liberation to neutralize the propensities for manifestation of *avidyā* and of those particularly powerful instances of *avidyā* that we designate as passions, as the practice unfolds our propensities for delusion and dualism and hence for the passions to manifest are progressively neutralized or burned out in the swiftest and most radical way possible and the *sambhogakāya* gradually consolidates.

3) The *nirmāṇakāya*: If the practice of Thögel or the Yangthik is carried on to its limit, rölpa energy and tsel energy will overlap, so that it becomes evident that the three forms of manifestation of energy form a continuum, and indeed rölpa and tsel energies begin to function as a continuum that manifests from and has its power source in the individual’s rigpa. Therefore, those who attain this realization never again experience themselves as being at a distance from the continuum of the universe—and thus never depart again from *total completeness / plenitude* (Dzogchen). Likewise, in them there is no longer a mental subject that may establish a link-of-being⁴⁹¹ with the object indicated by the individual’s name, and hence it will no longer be possible for them to be self-encumbered like the centipede of the poem cited in a previous chapter. And since the roots of evil have been eradicated and the whole universe is their own body, all activities will benefit all beings

^a Tib. **nangyin** (Wylie, *nang dbyings*).

^b Tib. **chiying** (Wylie, *phyi dbyings*)

^c Tib. **nangyin** (Wylie, *nang dbyings*).

^d Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirāboghā* or *anāboghā*).

without exception or partiality. Therefore, in their activities, they manifest *total perfection* (Dzogchen).

Furthermore, since rölpa energy and tsel energy have overlapped and there is no longer any illusion of there being an external dimension containing phenomena that are other than and beyond the power of their Awake, nonconceptual and hence nondual awareness and that can oppose resistance to them (in the Heideggerian sense in which this means that one cannot modify reality by merely thinking of it and if one tries to do so will have to overcome the resistance of the physical world) or overpower them, it is said that the “physical” elements are at this point subject to the power of rigpa^a and that those who attain this realization develop what others perceive as a capacity of performing miracles. In particular, the *sambhogakāya*’s primordial gnoses of quality and quantity (which will be briefly discussed below and then will be considered in greater detail in Vol. II of this book) will manifest at the level of tsel energy, being perceived by ordinary beings as miracles that defy the dimensionality of the physical world.

The point is that the rölpa mode of manifestation of energy, the true condition of which is the *sambhogakāya*, has a dimensionality that seems wondrous and magical to sentient beings conditioned by the dimensionality of tsel energy, which is the one proper to the physical world as perceived by ordinary people. An example of this wondrous dimensionality has been offered by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,^b who recounted that in the practice of Thögel he once had a vision of one central thigle surrounded by four other thigles (one above, one below, one at the right and another one at the left), and that after the practice he tried to draw the vision, but was unable to do so, for in the vision there was no empty space between the thigles and nonetheless none of them invaded the space occupied by the others, whereas in the drawing it was impossible for the thigles to touch each other in more than one point of their circumference without each invading the space occupied by the others and hence it was impossible to draw them as manifesting as he had seen them. As noted above, in the practitioner in whom the fourth vision of Thögel has developed beyond a threshold, the dimensionality of rölpa energy has overlapped with tsel energy, and hence tsel energy manifests the qualities proper to rölpa energy, defying the limitations and rules of ordinary tsel dimensionality—i.e. of the dimensionality ordinary people see the physical world as having and common sense takes for granted. Therefore, as practitioners reach the point at which all three forms of manifestation of energy overlap and tsel energy can begin to manifest the qualities of rölpa energy, and at which they attain the simultaneous manifestation of the primordial gnoses proper to Buddha-omniscience,^c these manifest as seemingly miraculous powers.

What does Buddha-omniscience have to do with what I am referring to here as the *sambhogakāya*’s primordial gnoses of quality and quantity? In the Sanskrit language, the two primordial gnoses that coincide in Buddha-omniscience are referred to by the names *yathāvadbhāvikajñāna*^d—which many Mahāyāna translations render as *primordial gnosis that apprehends the true condition*, for it lies in the nonconceptual and therefore nondual

^a Tib. **jungwa la wanyur nūpa** (Wylie, *’byung ba la dbang skur nus pa*).

^b Personal communication.

^c Skt. *sarvākārajñatā*; Tib. *nampa thamche khyenpa* (Wylie, *rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa*); Ch. 一切種智 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *yīqièzhǒng zhì*; Wade-Giles *i¹-ch¹’ieh⁴-chung³ chih⁴*).

^d Tib. *ji tawa khyenpai yeshe* (Wylie, *ji lta ba mkhyen pa’i ye shes*); Ch. 如理智 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *rúlǐzhì*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-li³-chih⁴*).

awareness (of) absolute truth—and *yāvadbhāvīkajñāna*^a—often translated as primordial gnosis of variety, for it consists in the nondual presence of variegated phenomena without grasping at them and hence without being tainted by them (so that one neither falls under their influence nor is driven to cut them off) while dwelling in the primordial gnosis that reveals the true condition, and without ever losing a keen, alert awareness.^{b492} However, that which the two Sanskrit terms in question and their Tibetan translations designate in Dzogchen goes far beyond the coincident manifestation of the nonconceptual, nondual awareness of absolute truth and awareness and discernment of phenomena, because they *also* designate: (1) two qualities of the *sambhogakāya* that both illustrate and attest to the wondrous dimensionality of rölpa energy; and (2) the manifestation *qua* *nirmāṇakāya* in tsel energy, as a result of the overlapping of rölpa energy *qua* *sambhogakāya* and tsel energy *qua* *nirmāṇakāya* when the fourth vision^c of Thögel develops beyond a threshold, of those two qualities of the *sambhogakāya*.

The above may seem mysterious, but it can be easily clarified by teachings offered by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. In order to make the point that in Dzogchen the two terms in question do *not* designate solely the referents they have in the Mahāyāna, this Master renders the first term as *wisdom of quality* and the second as *wisdom of quantity*—which here, since I am rendering the term *yeshe* as primordial gnosis, I will turn into *primordial gnosis of quality* and *primordial gnosis of quantity*. In teachings that the aforesaid Master offered in near Caracas (Venezuela) in the 1990s, he illustrated the referents of the gnosés in question in the Dzogchen teachings with the symbol of a small mirror and a couple of episodes from the hagiography of Milarepa. The *gnosis of quality* he illustrated with the fact that a small mirror can equally reflect the smallest and the hugest of objects, just by moving it nearer the object or farther away from it; and he exemplified its manifestation in the *nirmāṇakāya* dimension of tsel energy with the great Tibetan yogin taking shelter from a hailstorm within a yak’s horn that lay on the ground, without reducing the size of his body or increasing that of the horn. For its part, the *gnosis of quantity* he illustrated with the fact that a small mirror can equally reflect a single entity or as many entities as we may wish, also by moving it nearer to the object or farther away from it; and he gave as an example of this gnosis’ occurrence in the *nirmāṇakāya* dimension of tsel energy, the great Tibetan yogin’s cremation, which was performed in various places although there was only one corpse (all of this will be discussed in greater detail in Vol. II of this book^d). Although ordinary people would view these examples of these two gnosés in terms of Milarepa’s life and *parinirvāṇa* as being miraculous feats, they are not so. As Gendün Chöphel^e wrote:^f

^a Tib. *ji nyepa khyenpai yeshe* (Wylie, *ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes*); Ch. 如量智 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúliángzhì*; Wade-Giles, *ju²-liang²-chih⁴*).

^b This is based on a definition Sera Khandro offered in *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lama'i zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*), which I reproduce in the endnote. In *Düdjom Lingpa* (2015, Vol. II, p. 152).

^c This vision is called *chöze londe* (Wylie, *chos zad blo 'das*) or exhaustion of phenomena beyond concepts.

^d These wisdoms were explained in terms of the simile of a mirror in Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, Ed. unpublished); it is on the basis of this explanation that they will be discussed in Part Two of this book.

^e Wylie, *dge 'dun chos 'phel* (1903–1951).

^f Chöphel (2005); Chöphel & Capriles (in press).

The *Book of the Kadam*[pas]^a says that after performing numerous [seeming] miracles such as fitting his perfect body into a small bowl, Atīśa stated, “What I showed you today, reason-clinging logicians call contradictory. If they want to take it like that, let them do so. I could swear in front of all of India and Tibet that this is how the true condition of phenomena (is).”

What those seeming feats signify is simply that the *nirmāṇakāya* has consolidated to the point at which it is ready to transmute into a body of light⁴⁹³—which for its part is an index of the consolidation of the indivisibility of the *trikāya*. The realized individual is now like a Universal Monarch who cannot fear anything external, for all is under his or her power—or, more precisely, there is no longer anything that seems external, for there is no sense whatsoever of being a separate self with a separate, individual will and power. In fact, individual awareness has dissolved, and at the end, when all Buddha activities have been completed and the time of death would normally come, the integration of the nonconceptual Awake awareness into the vision^b—so to speak, for what has happened is that there is no longer a mental subject that seems to be a separate source of thoughts and agency or recipient of experiences—will become absolute and irreversible. And since the essence or nature of mind^c depends on the physical organism, whereby it experiences and the voluntary movements of which it controls, when the fourth vision of Thögel develops to the point at which the awareness in question has been fully integrated into the nature of phenomena^d that had been projected outside, the physical organism on which the essence or nature of mind depended totally dissolves, and the total transference^e is attained. If the fourth vision of Thögel has not unfolded to the point at which integration is fully attained in life, when the term of one’s life comes, the organism will go through the process of physical death, **but rather than becoming unconscious and going through the intermediate state of the moment of death,^f one will directly continue in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena in which one was practicing while alive. And since in the afterlife clarity reaches an even higher degree than it had reached in the practice of Thögel while one was alive**, the so-called integration of the essence or nature of mind into the true condition of phenomena will be easily completed during the first week following *parinirvāṇa*^g and one will attain the body of light.^h

The so-called integration of the essence or nature of mind into the true condition of phenomena signifies that the karmic tracesⁱ that created and sustained the body have

^a Tib. *Kadam legbam* (Wylie, *bka' gdams glegs bam*). The Kadampas referred to in the title of that book are the original Kadampas founded by Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna; not the demon-worshippers who oppose H.H. the Dalai Lama, who were accused of killing the head of the School of Dialectics in Dharamsala, and who call themselves the “New Kadampas.”

^b Compare with Petrül Rinpoché: Tib. **rigpa nangpu la thimpa** (Wylie, *rig pa snang bu la thim pa*).

^c Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*; Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*).

^d Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *chönyi* (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*).

^e Tib. *phowa chenpo* (Wylie, *'pho ba chen po*).

^f Tib. *chikhai bardo* (Wylie, *'chi kha'i bar do*).

^g The Skt. *parinirvāṇa*; Pāli *parinibbāna*; Tib. **yongsu mya ngenle depa** (Wylie, *yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa*); Ch. 般涅槃 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bānnièpán*; Wade-Giles, *pan¹-nieh⁴-p'an²*) refers to a *nirmāṇakāya*'s physical death.

^h Tib. *ökyi ku* (Wylie, *'od kyi sku*).

ⁱ Skt. *vāsanā*; Tib. *bagchag* (Wylie, *bag chags*); Ch. 氣習 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch'i⁴-hsi²*) or 習氣 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch'i⁴*).

been absolutely neutralized or burned out, and impure vision^a has utterly dissolved, and hence there is no longer any karmic cause for the manifestation of a physical body (even though emanations of Masters who attained the body of light have been recognized along Tibetan history). It must be noted, however, that as will be explained in Part II of this book, these special modes of ending human existence can hardly obtain in the case of practitioners who establish themselves as teachers with many disciples, for the disciples' violations of the Tantric or Dzogchen commitment^b becomes an obstacle for the manifestation of these realizations by the teacher. However, Masters who have the corresponding potential, even if they cannot manifest the special modes of putting an end to human existence that are exclusive to the Atiyoga, will manifest other signs that show that they have attained the corresponding potential and realization. A treasure teaching of Dūdjom Lingpa reads:^c

...When there is no fragmentation of the panoramic sweep of rigpa, indwelling confidence is acquired in your own rigpa.

Still, that by itself will not bring you to Awakening. When phenomenal appearances have been extinguished into the absolute condition, there is an infinite expansion into the total, all-encompassing sphere of the absolute, empty expanse where phenomena manifest,^d devoid of even a trace of the appearances and mindsets of saṃsāra. You have reached the state of liberation.

Within this realization, even the subtlest of obstacles of cognitive delusive obstruction^e have been utterly cleared away, and mastery is gained over the total primordial gnosis that realizes reality as it (is) and is aware of the full range of phenomena. So you achieve Buddhahood in the *dharmakāya*, which is like space, and the three *kāyas* arise as displays of uniform pervasiveness.

And Sera Khandro comments:^f

At this time, with your body like a corpse living in a charnel ground, even if you were surrounded by a hundred assassins, there would be no fear or trepidation. With your speech responding to others like an echo, the movements of energy winds of your voice are naturally

^a Tib. **lenang** (Wylie, *las snang*). Though this is a synonym of **madakle nang** (Wylie, *ma dag las snang*), the point is neither transforming impure vision into pure vision (Wylie, *dag snang*) nor projecting the latter over the former.

^b Skt. *samaya*; Tib. *damtsik* (Wylie, *dam tshig*); Ch. 三摩耶 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānmóyé*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mo²-ye²*).

^c Dūdjom Lingpa, *Buddhahood without meditation (Rangzhin dzogpa chenpoi rangzhäl ngöndu jepai dampa magom sangye [Wylie, rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i rang zhal mngon du byed pa'i gdams pa ma bsgom sangs rgyas])*. Alternative translations in Dūdjom Lingpa (1994, p. 169-170) and Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, pp. 41-2 and 268).

^d Skt. *dharmadhātu*; Tib. *chöying* (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); Chin. 法界 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*).

^e Skt. *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *ñeyyāvāraṇa*; Tib. *shedrib* or **shéchai dribpa** (Wylie, *shes [bya'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 所知障 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *suǒzhīzhàng*; Wade-Giles *so³-chih¹-chang⁴*).

^f In *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. II, pp. 269-270). The terminology was adapted to the one used in this book and minor modifications to the translation were made.

released into their own place of rest. With your mind like a rainbow disappearing into the sky, phenomenal appearances are extinguished into the absolute condition; and there is an infinite expansion into the total, all-encompassing sphere of the absolute, empty expanse where phenomena manifest,^a primordial purity, free of conceptual fabrications and devoid of even a trace of the appearances and mindsets of *saṃsāra*. You have then reached the state of liberation.

At this time there are three levels: Optimally, dreams are purified in the clear light, which uninterruptedly pervades all your experiences throughout day and night. Next best is to recognize the dream state for what it is, leading to such abilities as emanating within and transforming dreams. At the very least, bad dreams cease altogether and you have only good dreams, such as dreams of seeing deities and buddhafiends, drawing *maṇḍalas*, bestowing empowerments upon others, and teaching the dharma, for negative habitual propensities have been extinguished...

For those with superior faculties, even the subtlest of obstacles of cognitive delusive obstructions^b are completely cleared away within seven days; for those with middling faculties, six months; and for those with inferior faculties, within one year. Then you gain mastery over the Base by means of the primordial gnosis that realizes reality as it (is). Due to gaining mastery over the Path by means of the primordial gnosis that is aware of the full range of phenomena, the *dharmakāya* (is) the essential nature of emptiness, the *saṃbhogakāya* is the unimpeded nature of spontaneous perfection and rectification, and your *nirmāṇakāya* manifests as unimpeded displays of omnipresent energy.^c For your own sake, you realize the state of *dharmakāya* in the total expanse of the uniformly pervasive three *kāyas*, and you become a Buddha.

For the sake of others, by means of the *rūpakāyas*, you arise as the great *saṃbhogakāya* of absolute space until the three realms of *saṃsāra* are empty. Emerging from this are the *nirmāṇakāyas* and *saṃbhogakāyas*, the six sages that subdue living beings, and the one who reveals the way of the Buddhas, such as Śākyamuni, by way of the twelve Awake deeds of a supreme *nirmāṇakāya*. In addition you reveal created *nirmāṇakāyas*. living-beings *nirmāṇakāyas*, material *nirmāṇakāyas*, and so on, manifesting in whatever ways are needed to train sentient beings. In these ways you perfectly perform the deeds of a Buddha, in which your own well-being and that of others are perfected in the vast ability to serve the needs of the world.

Thus in the Series of oral or pith instruction of Atiyoga the sequence of realization begins with the *dharmakāya*, goes on with the *saṃbhogakāya*, and concludes with the *nirmāṇakāya* and the indivisibility of the three *kāyas*; therefore, it is *the inverse* of the one established in the Tantric vehicles of the Path of Transformation, which is *nirmāṇakāya* > *saṃbhogakāya* > *dharmakāya* > *svabhāvikāya*. This apparent contradiction is due to the fact that the terms *nirmāṇakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, *dharmakāya* and *svabhāvikāya* do not have the same referents in this series of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo as in lower vehicles. In fact, that which is glimpsed in the Direct Introduction of Dzogchen is that which manifests as the *final stage* of realization of the Tantric Path, which in the latter is called *svabhāvikāya*, but which in Ati Dzogpa Chenpo may be explained as the realization of the true condition

^a Skt. *dharmadhātu*; Tib. *chöying* (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); Chin. 法界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*).

^b Skt. *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *ñeyyavāvaraṇa*; Tib. *shedrib* or *shéchai dribpa* (Wylie, *shes [bya'i] sgrib [pa]*); Ch. 所知障 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn *suǒzhīzhàng*; Wade-Giles *so³-chih¹-chang⁴*).

^c Lit. compassion: Tib. *thukje* (Wylie, *thugs rje*; Skt. *karuṇā*). Explanation in the term in a footnote to the Introduction and a few other footnotes.

of the essence aspect of the Base and of the dang^a mode of manifestation of energy^b in a *transparent, unimpeded, unobstructed primordial gnosis*^c that reveals the *dharmakāya* which, as noted repeatedly, (is) the true condition of both the aspect of the Base and the form of manifestation of energy in question. For their part, the subsequent levels of realization, which the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions calls *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, go far beyond anything that may be attained through the practice of other vehicles or Paths. The point is that, just as the Path of Renunciation culminates in the realization of emptiness, which is the starting point of the Path of Transformation, the latter culminates in the realization of rigpa that is the very starting point of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation—which leads far beyond the points of arrival of all other Paths and vehicles. This should not be taken to signify that first one has to follow the Path of renunciation until emptiness is realized, and then tread the Path of transformation until rigpa is attained, so as to be able to set foot on the Path of spontaneous liberation: if this were the case, Dzogchen Ati would not be a fast Path. On the contrary, as already shown, the Path of self-liberation has powerful means to gain Direct introduction and Not remain in doubt, so that practitioners may Continue in the state in the properly Dzogchen way. Therefore, there can be no doubt that, in the case of those having the appropriate capacity, the Path of Spontaneous Liberation can lead to a far more complete realization in a much shorter time.

In the Mahāyāna, the two Buddha-bodies—the *dharmakāya* and the *rūpakāya* (the latter consisting, as we have seen, of *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*)—are generally held to be the result of the accumulations of merits and knowledge, respectively.⁴⁹⁴ In the Mahāyogatantra this vision is maintained to a certain degree, for it is said that in the final level,^d which in this vehicle is the thirteenth, which is called the *cakra of letters* (or, more precisely, the *immutable maṇḍala*: cf. the discussion of the term *akṣara* in endnote 429), despite the fact that the condition represented as letters is acknowledged to be immutable and empty, the *maṇḍala* of symbolic attributes is held to be *the result of the accumulation of merits*. In the Atiyogatantra such causal relationships are not established, for it is the Path beyond the cause-effect relation, in which realization is the actionless result of the spontaneous perfection aspect of the Base applied as Path; therefore, in Ati the Fruit is unborn, unconditioned, unproduced, nonfabricated, unmade and uncompounded, as such being the only definitive solution to the *duḥkha* that is the first noble truth and the *avidyā* that is the second noble truth: it (is) Buddhahood, which as the teachings of all Buddhist vehicles and paths agree, is alone unborn, unconditioned, uncompounded, nonfabricated, unmade and unproduced.⁴⁹⁵ In fact, the causally obtained *rūpakāya* of Mahāyoga, which is held to manifest as such in the level of the immutable *maṇḍala* (or “level of the *cakra* of letters”), is not at all the same as the spontaneous^e *rūpakāya* of Atiyoga, which is beyond

^a Wylie, *gdangs*.

^b The term energy refers to the aspect of the Base called thukje (Wylie, *thugs rje* [lit. *soft and noble heart*]) in Tibetan, which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. *karuṇā* (the other one being nyingje [Wylie, *snying rje*]); Ch. 悲 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *bēi*; Wade-Giles, *pei*¹ [lit. *sadness or mercy*]). The reason for using these terms is that from the standpoint of Buddhahood all experience arises as the function of nonreferential compassion.

^c Tib. *yeshe zangthal* (Wylie, *ye shes zang thal*).

^d Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. *sa* (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^e Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*).

origination and that does not manifest in the thirteenth level, but as the result of a further development of realization that cannot be attained through Mahāyogatantra.⁴⁹⁶

What about the Fruit of Anuyogatantra, which involves going beyond the level of the immutable *maṇḍala* (or of the “*cakra* of letters”) and, according to various Anuyoga and Atiyoga sources, attaining a fourteenth level^a that is called Great Bliss^b? (Anuyoga sources sometimes speak of twenty-one levels, but those levels have no equivalents in the levels enumerated in Dzogchen texts—for that classification arose in order to emphasize correspondences that are proper to the Anuyoga—and hence this number is not used when Anuyoga is compared with Dzogchen Ati.) As shown in the section on this Tantric vehicle, the latter is flawed in its concept of the Fruit as being the result of a cause, and thus the Fruit in question falls short of the spontaneously accomplished, uncaused Fruit of Dzogchen Ati. In fact, even if one attains the Fruit of the Anuyoga, still one will need to enter, while alive, the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena in order to practice Thögel and thereby attain the true, spontaneous^c Fruit of Atiyoga.

Unlike the teachings of other vehicles and Paths, the Dzogchen teachings speak of one single level,^d for the practitioner is compared to a *garuḍa* bird that, upon hatching out, is fully developed:⁴⁹⁷ the state that manifests in the direct Introduction that marks the outset of the Path of Atiyoga is not different from the Awakening that is the final Fruit of this Path. However, as implied in the above paragraphs, in Atiyoga that state may unfold far beyond the arrival point of Mahāyoga and Anuyoga, until the illusory cleavage into a subject in an internal dimension and a world in an external dimension is definitively and irreversibly eradicated. This is why, in terms of a perspective different from that which establishes a single level, the *Rigpa Rangshar Tantra*^e (one of the root texts of the Ati Series of pith instructions^f) states that in this vehicle it is possible to reach three levels beyond the final goal of Mahāyogatantra and two levels beyond that of Anuyogatantra: it is possible to reach a fifteenth level, designated as “*Vajradhāra* level,” and a sixteenth level, known as the “level of supreme primordial gnosis” (however, even when the Path is explained in terms of this multi-level optics, the individual does not need to go through the levels in the gradual way typical of the Mahāyāna, for progress on the Path can also happen in such a way as to make it impossible to pinpoint the precise level the individual is going through at any given moment).^{g498} The fifteenth level referred to by the *Rigpa Rangshar* is one in which one goes through the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena^h (since in Ati the ultimate realization is attained in a single lifetime, it is clear that this refers to practices such as Thögel and the Yangthik, which are carried out in that intermediate state while the organism is clinically alive), and the unsurpassable Fruit that it identifies as the sixteenth level is the final attainment of the practice of Thögel or the Yangthik (and perhaps of the Series of space as well).

^a Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *sa*); Ch. 地 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí*⁴).

^b Tib. dechen or dewa chenpo (Wylie, *bde [ba] chen [po]*); Skt. *mahāsukha*; Ch. 大樂 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dàlè*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-le⁴*).

^c Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*).

^d Tib. sa chikpa (Wylie, *sa gcig pa*).

^e Wylie, *rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud*.

^f Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*).

^g Cf. Tibetan Text 5, as well as Tibetan Text 11.

^h Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. chönyi bardo (Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*); Ch. 法性中有 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng zhōngyǒu*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴ chung¹-yu³*).

At any rate, progress on the Dzogchen Series of space^a and the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions^b—including Tekchö and the Nyingthik, and Thögel and the Yangthik—is not measured in terms of paths or levels, but in terms of four successive visions, the fourth of which is called “exhaustion of phenomena beyond concepts”^c or “vision of the exhaustion of reality.”^d When this fourth vision unfolds beyond a threshold, the *yogin* or *yoginī* attains extremely high realizations that culminate in three special modes of death, and when the vision in question reaches its culmination, whoever attains this realization will not undergo the process of death of the material body at the end of his or her life. Among these ways of putting an end to material existence, the three modes of death—in which the sensitive parts of the body dissolve within a period of seven days after physical death has occurred and only the insensitive parts (nails and hair) remain⁴⁹⁹—are:

(1) The rainbow body or jalü^e, which results from the “mode of death of the *dākinīs*,”^f proper to those who have attained the highest realization resulting from the practice of the Vajra-bridge or Dorje Zampa^g pertaining to the Dzogchen Series of space, which occurs when all Buddha activities have been completed by those who, through the practice of this system, have reached or gone beyond a threshold in the development of the fourth vision of Dzogchen. This precise realization has not been attained for several centuries, from which I have inferred that the exacerbation of delusion *might* have made the methods of Longde incapable of bearing such fruit in our time. However, the practices of the Space series continue to be most effective for practitioners who remain in doubt regarding direct introduction, in order to dispel their doubts and in this way enable them to continue in the state of rigpa by means of the practices of the Series of pith instructions. This realization should not be confused with the so-called “rainbow body” resulting from specific Tantric practices of the Path of Transformation, which is not at all equivalent, as the latter does not involve dissolution of the physical body or a realization going beyond the state of Direct Introduction of Dzogchen.

(2) The body of infinitesimal particles,^h which results from the “mode of death of holders of nonconceptual, nondual Awake awareness,”ⁱ proper to those who have attained the highest realization resulting from the practice of Tekchö or the Nyingthik—which, as it is clear by now, belong to the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions. After death, the body will dissolve into infinitesimal particles, and hence this mode of death will *not* result in a *nirmāṇakāya* body of rölpa energy that may continue to give teachings to those able to perceive the energy in question and to receive teachings from bodies of light and rainbow bodies. This realization is compared to the breaking of a closed vase, upon which the internal space or dimension and the external space or dimension fuse. Since no one has

^a Tib. Longde (Wylie, *klong sde*); Skt. Abhyantaravarga.

^b Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, *man ngag [gyi] sde*).

^c Tib. chöze londe (Wylie, *chos zad blo 'das*).

^d Tib. chönyi zepai nangwa (Wylie, *chos nyid zad pa'i snang ba*).

^e Tib. jalü (Wylie, *'ja' lus*).

^f Tib. khandro or khandroma (Wylie, *mkha' 'gro [ma]*); Ch. 荼枳尼 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *túzhīnī*; Wade-Giles, *t'u²-chih³-ni²*).

^g Tib. dorje zampa (Wylie, *rdo rje zam pa*).

^h Tib. lü düil thren du deng (Wylie, *lus rdul phran du dungs*).

ⁱ Skt. *vidyādhara*; Tib. rigdzin (Wylie, *rig 'dzin*); Ch. 持明 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chímíng*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih²-ming²*; Jap. *jimyo*; Kor. *chimyōng*). In Pāli, *vijjādhara*.

attained this realization in a very long time, as in the preceding case, I infer that that the exacerbation of delusion *might* have made Tekchö and the Nyingthik alone incapable of bearing such fruit in our time.

(3) The body of light,^a which results from the mode of death called “self-consuming like a fire,”^b proper to those practitioners of Thögel and/or the Yangthik who have reached or gone beyond a threshold in the development of the fourth vision of Dzogchen, and thus attain the second highest level of realization that can result from these practices. The body in question—which is very often called “rainbow body” as well—is a *nirmāṇakāya* body of rölpa energy that has the power of continuing to give teachings to those able to perceive the energy in question and to receive teachings from such bodies. In our time the only one among these special modes of death that continues to manifest is the one listed as (3); therefore, this is the only one concerning which we can be absolutely certain that we have the effective possibility of attaining (however, I discussed all three because it was important to list all three special modes of death; these modes of death were also discussed in Capriles [2000a, 2003, 2013 vol. II], and will be briefly discussed once more in Vol. II of this book).

Finally, the realization resulting in deathlessness is:

(4) The total transference,^c sometimes called total transference [into the] rainbow body,^d which does *not* involve going through the process of death, which occurs by means of the mode of ending life called “invisible like space,” and which results from the highest level of realization in the practices of Thögel and/or the Yangthik: the one in which the fourth vision reaches its culmination. The ensuing *nirmāṇakāya* body of rölpa energy—which like the body of light (fruit of the third of the realizations discussed above) involves an active function, for those who attain it can manifest as visions to those most advanced Dzogchen practitioners who are capable of perceiving the energy in question, and offer them the teachings that they or their contemporary fellow practitioners require—is also known as Vajra Body,^e which is how Padmasambhava’s and Vimalamitra’s current light bodies are referred to in the teachings. In this realization, once the *yogins* or *yoginīs* complete their Buddha-activities in this world, and in front of their disciples if they have them, offer their final teaching and advise—after which their flesh and bone bodies dissolve into rainbow light leaving no remains whatsoever, for even the hair and nails disappear when the physical body dissolves. To my knowledge the last yogin to reach this realization was Jetsun Senge Wangchuk,^f who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries CE. (This attainment of deathlessness was also discussed in Capriles [2000a, 2003, 2013 vol. II], and will also be briefly discussed in Vol. II of this book).

^a Tib. ökyiku (Wylie, 'od kyi sku) or öpfung (Wylie, 'od phung).

^b Tib. mepung (Wylie, me dpung).

^c Tib. phowa chenpo (Wylie, 'pho ba chen po).

^d Tib. jalü phowa chenpo (Wylie, 'ja' lus pho ba chen po).

^e Tib. dorjeiku (Wylie, rdo rje'i sku).

^f Wylie, lce btsun seng ge dbang phyug.

ORIGIN, VALIDITY AND LINEAGES OF TRANSMISSION OF THE THREE PATHS

As noted above, according to the classification of the Nyingmapas' nine vehicles into the Paths of Renunciation, Transformation and Spontaneous Liberation expounded in the *Kathang Dennga* and the *Samten Migdrön*, the first Path, which responds mainly to the bodily, physical aspect of human individuals the true nature of which is the *nirmāṇakāya*, manifested in the human world *through* the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni. The second Path (including the outer Tantras that constitute the Path of Purification and those among the inner Tantras that make up the Path of Transformation strictly speaking), which responds chiefly to the vocal or energetic aspect of human beings the nature of which is the *sambhogakāya*, arrived in the human world *by means of* *sambhogakāya* manifestations. The third Path, which responds mainly to the mind aspect of individuals the true nature of which is the *dharmakāya*, came to the human world directly *through* the *dharmakāya*—for as already noted, since its methods work at the level of mind, there was no need for the first human links to have visions that subsequently would become methods of the practice. Thus the explanation of the origin of the three Inner Tantras (Ati, Anu and Mahā) in both the *Kathang Dennga* and the *Samten Migdrön* differs from the most widespread explanations, according to which the three vehicles in question arose through the *dharmakāya*.

The most ancient form of teachings and practices *that from the outset* bore the label “Buddhist” are those of the Sūtrayāna that make up the Path of Renunciation. Though the Hīnayāna negates that the Mahāyāna was taught by Buddha Śākyamuni, the Mahāyāna asserts that its teachings have their source in the Sage, although it does acknowledge that in most cases they were spoken by mouth of attending bodhisattvas after having been empowered by the Buddha to do so (a way of teaching that will be discussed below). For its part, the Sudden Mahāyāna affirms that Awake awareness was “transmitted” directly by Śākyamuni to Mahākāśyapa without uttering a single word in the event known as the Silent Sermon. Thus each of the vehicles of this Path affirms that its source was the Buddha Śākyamuni, through the “material” level of the *nirmāṇakāya* dimension—according to the Tibetan tradition of gradual Mahāyāna, by means of the three successive Promulgations that gave rise to the texts that form the canonical basis of the Path of Renunciation⁵⁰⁰ (the most ancient written texts of this Path being those of the First Promulgation);⁵⁰¹ according to the Sudden Mahāyāna, by means of one silent transmission (which manifested through the *nirmāṇakāya*, even though the transmission in question would have taken place at the *dharmakāya* level).

However, agreement is not unanimous with regard to the other two Paths and six vehicles (which are not listed as Buddhist Paths and vehicles in ordinary canonical

sources or commentaries of the Sūtrayāna and hence are not accepted as Buddhist by followers of the Path of Renunciation, except perhaps in the case of followers of the sudden Mahāyāna). According to the *general teachings* of the Nyingmapa, the three inner Tantras that make up this system’s highest category (Ati, Anu and Mahā) were “transmitted” in a nondual manner (i.e. without a transmission properly speaking, for transmitter and receiver were in the single nonconceptual, nondual Awake awareness) from *dharmakāya* to *saṃbhogakāya*,⁵⁰² and then passed from the *saṃbhogakāya* to the *nirmāṇakāya*—thus being held to have the *dharmakāya* as their common source. The three outer Tantras arose through the *saṃbhogakāya*’s symbolic transmission, and that the Sūtrayāna arose through the oral explanations of the *nirmāṇakāya* and in particular of the Buddha Śākyamuni.⁵⁰³ Thus we can see that, as noted above, these general teachings do not distinguish between the arising of the Tantras of the Path of Transformation through *saṃbhogakāya* visions, and the nonconceptual and therefore nondual transmission of Atiyoga independently of visions, but simply assert that the three inner Tantras had their source in the *dharmakāya*.⁵⁰⁴ The *Gongpa Dūpa Gyü*,^a fundamental root Tantra of the Anuyoga, reads:^b

The dimension of *dharmakāya* is like space, its name is “total pervasiveness,” and the teacher is Samantabhadra, who transmits the teaching through the nonconceptual dimension and through the three inner Tantras [which are *Mahā*, *Anu* and *Ati*].

In the Akaniṣṭha^c palace of [the Buddha] Vairocana, like a King, the *saṃbhogakāya* teaches the bodhisattvas the three series of outer Tantras—Kriyā, Ubhaya and Yoga—by means of the symbols of the manifestation it has embodied.

South of Jambudvīpa [our world], the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni took on the form of a *śrāvaka* and taught various disciples the three sections (*piṭaka*) of *Sūtra*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma*, transmitting the teaching through the three analytical (i.e. Sūtrayāna) vehicles.

For tis part, the *Kunje Gyälpo*,^d fundamental root Tantra of the Semde series of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, reads:^e

From the self-arisen awareness of the One who creates all—that is, Myself—there arise the three natures (i.e. essence or ngowo, nature or rangzhin, and energy or thukje), which manifest as the Masters of the three dimensions: [respectively] the *dharmakāya*, the *saṃbhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*. Concerning the nature of these three dimensions... the *dharmakāya* is the natural beginningless condition that transcends subject and object; the *saṃbhogakāya* is perfect enjoyment [of] the desirable riches [that are my own qualifications]; the *nirmāṇakāya* is taking on any [possible physical] form in order to

^a Wylie, *dgongs pa ’dus pa rgyud*.

^b Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, p. 22; see also note 16, p. 264). Adriano Clemente took the quotation from the Colophon of Tibetan Text 14, attributed to Longchen Rabjampa (Wylie, *klong chen rab ’byams pa*). Reproduced with slight modifications in order to adapt the terminology to the one used in this book.

^c Tib. Ogmin (Wylie, *’og min*). The term means “the highest” and designates the pure dimension in which various teachings arose (so that different types of Akaniṣṭha are spoken of according to the different manifestations of wisdom).

^d Wylie, *kun byed rgyal po*.

^e Tibetan Text 23, 48-22b, 5.

teach. The teaching of the Masters of the three dimensions manifests in three aspects, [which are the] secret, [the] inner and [the] outer.

The teaching of the *dharmakāya* Master is revealed in the nature of the “three secrets,” which are called “secret” because they are not accessible to everyone: from the pure nature of the Base there arise the three aspects of [the] secret generation [stage that is the essence of Mahāyoga], [the] secret completion [stage that is the essence of Anuyoga], and [the] secret total completeness and perfection [that is essence of Atiyoga].

The secret teaching [of Mahāyoga], in which the three stages [consisting in the contemplation of the essential nature, the contemplation of total vision, and the contemplation of the cause] are generated from nothingness, is called “secret generation.”

In the teaching [of Anuyoga], called “secret completion,” [by] developing inner *prajñā* one does not conceptualize the three contemplations, and all phenomena that manifest in perception during inner contemplation are said to be the essence of *prajñā*: having visualized one’s pure mind as the original deity, without dualism between view and behavior, beyond acceptance and rejection, the *vajra* sensory bases of the body are defined as “the nature of total I-ness:” this is called “secret completion.”

Concerning the teaching of secret total completeness and perfection [corresponding to the vehicle of Atiyoga], all existent phenomena are *not* transformed into [the primordial state of] *bodhicitta* by means of the three contemplations, nor are they perfected by reciting the essential syllable [of the deity]: I, who creates all, am total completeness and perfection because there is nothing in me that is not complete and perfect. My nature manifests in three aspects [which are] the three *bodhicittas* of total completeness and perfection (i.e. are essence, nature and energy): this is called “total secret completeness [and perfection].”

This is the teaching of the *dharmakāya* Master.

The *Kathang Dennga* and the *Samten Migdrön*, which as noted repeatedly are the source of the classification of vehicles into Path of Spontaneous Liberation, Path of Transformation and Path of Renunciation, coincide with the above assertion that the source of Atiyoga is the *dharmakāya*, but make the point that the supreme Master Garab Dorje did not need the vision of a *sambhogakāya* deity as mediation, for he simply remained in the state of *dharmakāya* beyond the duality between one who transmits and another who receives the transmission.⁵⁰⁵ With regard to Anuyoga and Mahāyoga, these texts posit as their source the *sambhogakāya*, for they arose when the true nature of the elements and their functions manifested in the dimension of the energy of the great adepts or *mahāsiddhas* who were to become the first human links of each of the Tantras, as a given *sambhogakāya* deity in the pure dimension of his or her *maṇḍala* (in which the various types of energy, the five elements, the five aggregates and all of the functions of the *mahāsiddha*’s existence were personified as deities): in this case, these great adepts may be said to *somehow* have received transmission *through the manifestation of the deity*. With regard to the latter, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu notes:^a

The Tantric teachings [that constitute the Path of Transformation] appeared in our human dimension *through the visionary experiences* of realized individuals such as *mahāsiddhas*, who had the capacity to contact other dimensions and transmit to the human realm the teachings received in those dimensions. The Tantric initiation arose because, once a

^a Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, Ed., unpublished).

mahāsiddha received the transmission of a practice based on the principle of transformation, he or she used paintings or drawings showing the respective divinities and the respective *maṇḍalas*, as well as oral explanations, in order to communicate it to others and enable them, through the use of imagination, to transform themselves in the prescribed way. It is said that the teachings of Tantrism have a more symbolic character than those of the Sūtrayāna because when the *mahāsiddhas* transmitted to their human disciples the methods of transformation they had received, with their respective *maṇḍalas* and the figures of the corresponding divinities, these became symbols: the garland of heads of a manifestation began to signify this, its diadem of skulls began to signify that, and so on.

The general teachings of the Nyingmapa, the *Kathang Dennga* and the *Samten Migdrön* agree, however, that the teachings of the outer Tantras of purification have as their source the *saṃbhogakāya* and the teachings of the Path of renunciation arose from the *nirmāṇakāya*. For example, after the passage cited above, the *Kunje Gyälpo*^a goes on to list and explain the teachings of the *saṃbhogakāya* Master, which are the three outer Tantras, and the teachings of the *nirmāṇakāya* Master, which are the three vehicles of the Sūtrayāna. The Tantra reads:^b

The teaching of the *saṃbhogakāya* Master comprises the three outer series of action [consisting in Kriyā, Ubhaya and Yoga].

According to the general view of the Nyingmapa School, the Vajrayāna Path of purification, which roughly could be said to consist in the three levels of Tantra that this school calls “outer” and that the Sarmapa schools call “lower,”⁵⁰⁶ was taught in the Akaniṣṭha palace of Buddha Vairocana by the *saṃbhogakāya* in its dimension of color and light, which is neither material nor concrete.⁵⁰⁷ In a book in Italian published in 1988, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asserted that such general explanations are not definitive, and quoted the *Bairo Drabag*,^c which despite being a Nyingma text, coincides with the Sarmapas in asserting that the three outer Tantras were taught by the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni:^{d508}

To the disciples endowed with particular capacities [the Buddha Śākyamuni] transmitted some teachings of Tantra. Thus [he] taught the Kriyāntāna in the Nairāñjanā River and in

^a Wylie, *kun byed rgyal po*.

^b Ibidem.

^c Wylie, *bai ro'i 'dra 'bag*.

^d Namkhai Norbu (1988, Part III, Chapter IX, p. 84). The quote is from the *Bairo Drabag* (Tibetan Text 15), p. 6 b, 4.

Siṃgāla Park; the Ubhayatantra at Subāhu^a Park; [and] the Yogatantra in the palace of the Blazing Mountain.^b

The teachings of the Sarmapa assert that the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni taught, not only the three vehicles of the Sūtrayāna, but also the three lower Tantras, which are Kriyā, Cārya (corresponding to Ubhaya) and Yoga, and the Anuttaratantras that according to their system make up the highest category of Tantras. In the book in Italian quoted above, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wrote:^c

[According to the teachings of the Sarmapa...] ...in the glorious stūpa of Dhanakuṭa^d in Southern India, Śākyamuni Buddha... manifested in the divine aspect of Śrī Kālacakra and... transmitted the Tantra bearing the same name.

Likewise, some Sarmapa accounts of the origin of the *Guhyasamājatantra*—a Tantra that, like the *Kālacakratantra*, Sarmapas include in the Anuttarayogatantra, but which unlike the latter is also one of the Nyingma Mahāyogatantras—claim that when King Indrabhūti the Great, ruler of Oḍḍiyāna, invoked Śākyamuni, the sage magically manifested before him, and finally granted him transmission in the form of Śrī Guhyasamāja.⁵⁰⁹ However, in general the Sarmapa accounts according to which Śākyamuni transmitted the Anuttarayogatantras agree in asserting that he did so *from an immaterial dimension of color and light* pertaining to the *sambhogakāya*, in the form of the *yab-yum* manifestation (i.e. the manifestation in union with a consort)^e of a Tantric meditation deity,^f rather than in his habitual *nirmāṇakāya* form as a celibate monk. As the Master Namkhai Norbu has pointed out, the fact that a monk may have manifested in this way may seem to be a contradiction, but it is not, for as just noted the deity and his consort, rather than being something material or concrete, were a manifestation, in the dimension of natural energy,⁵¹⁰ of the true nature of the elements and their functions, arising in response to the karmic potentialities of the one receiving the transmission.⁵¹¹ Thus, it is clear that the Anuttaratantras of the Sarmapa were also introduced into the human world through *sambhogakāya* manifestations.

At any rate, it makes no sense to ascribe so emphatically the source of all the Tantras to Śākyamuni, for as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu writes in the same book cited above:^g

^a Tib. **Pungzangki** (Wylie, *dpung bzang kyis*). This is how this park is called in Tibetan Text 15, p. 6 b, 4; this Tibetan name, which may mean “good shoulder,” “good upper arm,” “good army,” etc., renders the Indian name Subāhu (meaning strong / handsom shoulder / arm), as found in the *Tantra of the Dialogue with Subāhu* (Skt. *Subāhupariṣcchānamātantrapiṇḍārthavṛtti*; Tib. **Punzangkyi zhupai gyükyi düpai döndrölwai jejang** [Wylie, *dPung bzangs kyis zhus pa'i rgyud kyī bsdus pa'i don dgrol ba'i brjed byang*] [Toh. 2673] (**Tibetan Text # rig 'dzin??**)).

^b Tib. Meri Barwa (Wylie, *me ri 'bar ba*): another Tibetan name for the pure land of Akaniṣṭha (Tib. Omin; Wylie, 'og min) presided over by the Buddha Vairocana, of the Buddha family (center of the *maṇḍala*), meaning Blazing Mountain. (In higher Tantra the name can also refer to the inner fire).

^c Namkhai Norbu (1988, Part III, Chapter IX, p. 84).

^d Tib. Drepung (Wylie, 'bras spungs: heap of fruition [from “heap of rice”]).

^e Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, ed., unpublished).

^f Skt. *iṣṭadevatā*; Skt. yidam (Wylie, *yid dam*—probably a contraction of *yid kyī dam tshig*: *samaya* of mind, or non-Jungian archetypal forms [with which] *samaya* [is kept]).

^g Namkhai Norbu (1988, Part III, Chapter IX, p. 85).

...in truth the manifestations of Vajradhāra are infinite, as the dimensions of worlds in the universe, and a teaching may not be limited by holding that it was transmitted in a certain epoch and solely by a certain teacher. In the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* it is indeed written:

“It was taught by the Buddhas of the past;
it will be taught by those of the future,
and it is always taught
by the perfect Buddhas of this time.”^a

The same Master goes on:

To be considered authentic, a teaching (...) does not necessarily need to have been taught by Buddha Śākyamuni. The authenticity of the teaching of the Buddhas, in fact, must be demonstrated in terms of four fundamental principles:

- 1) It is not based on the provisional sense, but in the true (or definitive) one
- 2) It is not based on a doctrine, but on the individual(’s realization).
- 3) It is not based on the words, but on the meaning.
- 4) It is not based on the mind, but on primordial gnosis.

According to the general Nyingma teachings, among their inner Tantras, the Mahāyogatantras fell on the palace of Indrabhūti the younger, King of Oḍḍiyāna,^{b512} and during the initial period were transmitted mainly by adepts from this country, which as noted above might have had its capital in the valley of Swat in present day Pakistan (and might have extended itself deep into Western Tibet—perhaps as far as Mount Kailāśā). According to one of the best-known accounts of the history of these Tantras their lineage originated in the transmission from *dharmakāya* Samantabhadra to *saṃbhogakāya* Vajrasattva, and then to the *nirmāṇakāya* bodhisattvas of the three families (which are Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi); from them it passed to Licchavi Vimalakīrti,^c the protagonist of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*,^d along with the four other excellent beings. From these, it passed through one of the noted kings of Oḍḍiyāna called Indrabhūti,^e who, as Dūdjom Rinpoche^f remarks, might have been Indrabhūti the Middle (the second of the three kings called Indrabhūti), the later Kukurāja, Indrabhūti the younger, and then through six more links (including princess Gomadevi) until it reached Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, who introduced the lineage into Tibet.^g Though it is said that the Mahāyogatantras fell on Indrabhūti’s palace, according to this account later on the King decided to receive the transmission for all these Tantras from the Licchavi Vimalakīrti.

^a *Jetsun tamcheпа bairotsanai namthar drabag chenmo* (Wylie, *rje btsun thams cad bai ro tsa na’i rnam thar ’dra ’bag chen mo*) (Tib. text # ??), p. 6 b, 4. Lhasa: 1976.

^b Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I. p. 460).

^c Tib. Drime Drakpa (Wylie, *dri med grags pa*; in full: *li tsa bi dri ma med par grags pa*).

^d Luk, Ch. (Upāsaka Lü Kuan Yu) (trans. 1972).

^e AKA Indrabodhi or Ja (Tib. dza; Wylie, [*rgyal po*] dza).

^f Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I. p. 459).

^g Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I. p. 458 et seq.); Tulku Thöndup (1984, pp. 19-21).

With regard to the Anuyogatantras of the Nyingmapas, Dūdjom Rinpoche cites a prophesy according to which they would originate in Śrī Laṅkā;^{a513} however, he tells us that they were first received by Kambalapāda (Indrabhūti the younger), King of Oḍḍiyāna, who spontaneously understood their meaning, but then, in order to legitimate his understanding, he received teachings from the Licchavi Vimalakīrti.^b Another account tells us that the lineage of these Tantras passed from *dharmakāya* Samantabhadra to the *sambhogakāya* Buddhas of the five families; from them to the *nirmāṇakāya* bodhisattvas of the three families, to Licchavi Vimalakīrti, to King Ja (Indrabhūti the younger of Oḍḍiyāna), to the later Kukurāja, and then through nine more links to Nubchen Sangye Yeshe.^c At any rate, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu^d has pointed out that it was Nubchen Sangye Yeshe, who had received teachings from Dharmabodhi,⁵¹⁴ Vasudharā,⁵¹⁵ and, principally, from Drushai Chetsenkye^e in the land of Drusha,^f who introduced them into Tibet from the latter country, which bordered on Oḍḍiyāna, and which, according to this Master and some other scholars, roughly corresponds to the present (ex-Soviet) republic of Kyrgyzstan.⁵¹⁶ Chögyal Namkhai Norbu affirms that the human transmission of the Anuyoga, unlike those of the other Tantric vehicles, originated in Drusha.

To sum up, though the transmission of both Mahāyoga and Anuyoga arose in the dimension of the *dharmakāya*, the *mahāsiddhas* who initiated the transmission of these Tantras in the human world received the respective methods through visions of the true condition of the elements and their functions that were neither material nor concrete, appearing in the dimension of their own energy in visible *sambhogakāya* form.⁵¹⁷ Furthermore, though for their part the Sarmapa traditions tell us that it was the Buddha Śākyamuni who originally communicated the Anuttarayogatantras to our world, as we have seen, the first human practitioners also received them through a *sambhogakāya* manifestation. And in fact, a Path that deals mainly with the level of energy somehow should arise precisely through this level.

Lastly, the Atiyogatantrayāna, which according to Tibetan Buddhism (and in particular to the tradition of the Old or Nyingmapa School) is the supreme vehicle of Buddhism, was transmitted by the *dharmakāya* Samantabhadra—who is none other than nonconceptual, nondual Awake Awareness—to the *sambhogakāya* Vajrasattva, who transmitted it to the *nirmāṇakāya* Prahevajra (i.e. Garab Dorje), who was born 55 CE.⁵¹⁸ As we have seen repeatedly, the Atiyoga is the teaching of the Mind level of human existence, the true condition of which is the *dharmakāya*; therefore, for its transmission to be received, there is no need for the manifestation of any particular vision (even though, as we have seen and as we will see in greater detail in Part Two of this book, the self-generated, spontaneous visions of Thögel are the most powerful catalyst of the spontaneous liberation that characterizes this vehicle). Thus when it is said that the lineage went from the *dharmakāya* to the *sambhogakāya* and from the

^a Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I. p. 460).

^b Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I. p. 485 et seq.).

^c This is the account given in Tulku Thöndup (1984, pp. 22-23).

^d Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, ed., unpublished).

^e Chetsenkye of the land of Drusha (Wylie, *bru sha'i che btsan skyes*). For references to this Master see Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I. pp. 489, 537, 607 and 609).

^f Wylie, *bru sha*.

latter to the *nirmāṇakāya*, this is so because the *saṃbhogakāya* is always the link between *dharmakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, and not because visions were necessarily involved.

Validity of the Tantras as Buddhist Teachings

Does the fact that the Nyingma Tantras were not taught by Śākyamuni, or the fact that the Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapas were not taught by *the physical dimension* of Śākyamuni, mean that they are not Buddhist teachings? As noted above, that which determines whether a teaching is or not Buddhist is not whether or not it was first transmitted in our human world by Śākyamuni, but whether or not it conforms to a series of established criteria (of which above four were enumerated: 1. Rather than being based on a provisional sense, it is based on the true (or definitive) one; 2. Rather than being based on a doctrine, it is based on the individual's realization; 3. Rather than being based on the words, it is based on the meaning; 4. Rather than being based on the mind, it is based on primordial gnosis). Jamgön Kongtrül's *All-Embracing Encyclopedia* (*Sheja Kunkhyab*^a)^b offers a more exhaustive explanation of the criteria involved:^c

[Whether or not] a person who adheres to a philosophical system [is a Buddhist] can be determined [on the basis of the following points]: [concerning the view or tawa], by whether or not they accept as their view the 'four signs' of the Buddha's word; [concerning the meditation or gompa], by whether or not the meditation [they practice] should become an antidote to [the highest level of mundane meditative absorption, corresponding to the fourth formless realm or *ārūpa loka*, which is that of neither-being-nor-nonbeing, and that is normally referred to as] the 'peak of existence;'^d concerning behavior or chöpa, by whether or not they relinquish the two extremes [consisting of] the self-mortification [of the ascetic] and the insatiable craving [of the hedonist]. Concerning the Fruit [consisting in] liberation, by whether or not they recognize [the third Noble Truth, which is] the Truth of cessation, as the special state wherein there is no more negativity to overcome. *The Luminous Discipline* (*Dülwa Ölden*^e) reads:

"It perfectly teaches the three trainings [consisting of *śīla* or moral discipline, *samādhi* or meditative absorption, and *prajñā* or discriminative wisdom]; it perfectly possesses the four signs [that will be enumerated below]; it brings about virtue at the beginning [of the Path], the middle [of the Path] and the end [of the Path]: in this way the wise recognize the word of the Buddha."

[According to Buddhism] the 'four signs' are the four epitomes of dharmas; as one can read in *Infinite Secrets* (*Sangwa Samkyi Mikhyabpa*^f):

^a Wylie, *shes bya kun khyab*.

^b Tibetan Text 11. See Bibliography for data on English translations.

^c Adapted from Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 23-24.) The quotation is from Tibetan Text 11, A: vol. 2, p. 359, 13.

^d Skt. *bhavāgra*; Tib. *sidtse* (Wylie, *srid rtse*) or *sidpai tsemo* (Wylie, *srid pa'i rtse mo*); Ch. 有頂天 (*Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*).

^e Wylie, *'dul ba 'od ldan*.

^f Wylie, *gsang ba bsam kyis mi khyab pa*.

“The Tathāgata has epitomized all Dharmas in four aphorisms:

“Everything compounded is impermanent;
Everything contaminated by delusion⁵¹⁹ is suffering;
All phenomena are devoid of independent being or existence;
Nirvāṇa (the condition beyond suffering) is peace.”

In fact, as noted in the preceding section, some of the most important and revered *sūtras* note that it was the great bodhisattvas or the great arhats, rather than Śākyamuni, who pronounced the words recorded in them; however, since they gave the teachings through the power of the Buddha, these are considered to be the word of the Buddha. Something similar happens in the case of the *mahāsiddhas* of Oḍḍiyāna who revealed the inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa: if they received and transmitted them through the power of the *trikāya* of the Buddha—i.e. from the *dharmakāya*, the *saṃbhogakāya* or the *nirmāṇakāya*, even if Śākyamuni was not involved)—and if the Tantras they received fulfill both the four criteria enumerated in a passage by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu cited above and those enumerated in the *Sheja Kunkhyab* and quoted above, these texts are authentic Buddhist teachings.

As to the teachings of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, which, as noted repeatedly, were introduced into the human world by Tönpa Garab Dorje^a, it must be emphasized that, even though no one has ever attributed these teachings directly to Śākyamuni, no serious Tibetan Master would dare to assert that they do not constitute a Buddhist Path—or even that they do not constitute the supreme Path of Buddhism. On the one hand, for a teaching that does not belong to the concrete, material level—as is the case with Dzogchen Ati—to be Buddhist, it is not necessary that it should have been taught by Śākyamuni’s *nirmāṇakāya*, concrete material level. On the other hand, just as there is one type of teaching of the Buddha that arises when he empowers the bodhisattvas to voice them, and another type that arises as the Buddha empowers the arhats (both of which are contained in Buddhist *sūtras* and considered to be direct teachings of the Buddha), there is still another type of Buddhist teachings that is transmitted through prophecy: Śākyamuni announces that at such and such a moment, in such and such a place, such and such individual will reveal such and such type of Buddhist teaching, and consequently, when the prophesied teaching arises, it is considered as a direct teaching of the Buddha. Since Śākyamuni prophesized that a certain time after his *parinirvana* or physical death, there would appear in Oḍḍiyāna a teaching beyond cause and effect which would be the most essential of all Buddhist teachings, it is universally recognized by Tibetan Buddhists that the Buddhist Dzogchen teaching taught in Oḍḍiyāna by the Tönpa Garab Dorje^{b520} is a direct teaching of the Buddha. And, in contrast to the teachings that bodhisattvas and arhats give in the *sūtras*, since Garab Dorje is deemed to be an emanation of the Buddha, the teachings of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo that came into the world through him are not considered to have been given through “empowerment,” but to have been taught directly by the Buddha.

^a Wylie, ston pa dga’ rab rdo rje.

^b Wylie, ston pa dga’ rab rdo rje.

Furthermore, since Tönpa Garab Dorje was an emanation of Śākyamuni, the latter could not have been unaware of the principle of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo. In fact, although Śākyamuni's Awakening was not the result of applying Dzogchen methods, it occurred as Awake awareness manifested from the condition of the base-of-all, in a way that was analogous to those Atiyogatantrayāna ways of directly Introducing rigpa in which the latter is reGnized as nonconceptual, nondual Awake self-Awareness^a arises spontaneously from the condition of the base-of-all.⁵²¹ Hence it is not difficult to understand why do so many *sūtras* of the Mahāyāna pertaining both to the second and third Promulgations include teachings that seem to be based on the principle of Ati, or that somehow show its traces.

Regarding Mahāyāna Buddhism, both sudden and gradual, it is also important to bear in mind that, as stated in an endnote to a previous chapter, according to the traditions of the Ancient or Nyingmapa School of Buddhism codified in the *Chöjung Khepai Gatön*^b by Pawo Tsuglag Threngwa^c and in the Bairo Drabag,^d one of the two lines of transmission originating in Garab Dorje passed through Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva—the latter of whom, according to the former source, attained the rainbow body.^{e522} Therefore, according to the text in question, the founder of the Mādhyamaka School and his direct successor were links in the transmission of Dzogchen Atiyoga (which may be taken to somehow imply that the Mādhyamaka is the result of adapting the point of view deriving from Dzogchen to the principles of the Mahāyāna). And, as noted in the section on the Sudden Mahāyāna, Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva are also listed in the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*^f as links in the transmission of Mind

Antecedents of Dzogchen in Pre-Buddhist Traditions

The fact that no serious Tibetan Master would dare to assert that Dzogchen is not a Buddhist Path, or even that it is not the supreme Path of Buddhism, does not mean that the principle of Atiyoga and the Dzogchen teachings are strictly confined to Buddhism. No doubt, if Dzogchen Atiyoga is, as stated in the *Samten Migdrön*, the primordial vehicle that is the universal ancestor of all vehicles, which rather than a philosophical system is a direct access to the nonconceptual, nondual Vision (of) the primordial state, by no means could it be circumscribed to a single religious system, a single country or a single culture. According to the Dzogchen Tantras, Dzogchen was already taught in the primordial time when humans were in a condition of limitless, total space, time and knowledge and therefore the duration of life was experienced as

^a Tib. rangrig (Wylie, *rang rig*); Skt. *svasamvedana*; Ch. 自證 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tzü⁴-cheng⁴*) / 自覺 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tzü⁴-chüeh²*).

^b Wylie, *chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, which may be rendered as *A Feast for the Erudite*.

^c Wylie, *dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba*.

^d Wylie, *bai ro'i 'dra 'bag*.

^e Namkhai Norbu (Italian 1988).

^f Ch. 壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Tánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *T'an²-ching¹*), 六祖壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Liùzǔtánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *Liu⁴-tsu³ T'an²-ching¹*), which abbreviate 六祖大師法寶壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Liùzǔdàshī fábǎotánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *Liu⁴-tsu³-tā⁴-shih¹ Fa²-pao³-t'an²-ching¹*); full title: 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經.

infinite, by the primordial revealer^a Khyeu Nangwa Tampa Samgyi Mikhyabpa.^b Then whenever the teachings and transmission deteriorated or was lost, a new primordial revealer would appear in the world in order to reintroduce it. And even the currently existing Dzogchen traditions are not all Buddhist; roughly 1.800 years⁵²³ before the arising of Buddhist Dzogchen, Primordial Revealer of Bön, Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche,^c Lhabön Yongsu Tagpa^d, taught a series of Dzogchen teachings in the area of Mount Kailāśā and Lake Mānasarovar (or, properly, Mānasa Sarovar) in Western Tibet (seat of the city of Khyunglung,^e at that time capital of that province of the Kingdom of Zhang-zhung, or possibly of the whole Kingdom).⁵²⁴ And though these teachings look quite seminal and rudimentary when compared with the current Dzogchen teachings of Buddhism, they are beyond doubts based on the principle of spontaneous liberation and as such are an authentic form of Dzogchen Atiyoga.

Upon considering the origins of Bön and of the teachings of Tönpa Shenrab, and on the basis of thorough historical research, the Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci rightly noted that there was an intimate connection between Dzogchen and Śaivism,⁵²⁵ and offered some evidence suggesting a connection between these traditions (and also some circumstantial evidence of a connection between them and both Zurvanism and Ismā‘īlism). However, seemingly under the influence of the biased views of some influential mainstream Tibetan Buddhist scholars, the renowned Is.M.E.O scholar came to interpret the presence of Śaivas in the region of Mount Kailāśā and the connections and terminological coincidences between Śaivism and Dzogchen as proving that both Dzogchen and Bön derived from Śaivism.⁵²⁶ Chögyal Namkhai Norbu replied to this wrong view in the following words:^g

The most concentrated essence of the Nyingthik^h is the body of teachings grouped under the term Yangthik.ⁱ In Tibetan, “yang” means “even more.” For example, if something is profound, it is characterized as “zabmo,”^j and if it is even more profound, it is characterized as “yangzab.”^k “Essential” is “nyingpo,”^l and “even more essential” is “yangnying.”^m It is important to point this out because Professor Tucci has written that the fact that the Dzogchen teachings use words including the terms “Ati,” “Chiti”⁵²⁷ and “Yangthik,” each of which is considered more essential than the former, proves that the Dzogchen teaching derived from Kashmiri Śaivism, which features terms similar to these ones. This is a paramount inversion. “Ati” is the term in the language of Oḍḍiyāna that corresponds to the Sanskrit *ādi*, meaning “primordial”. In turn, “Chiti,” a term used to refer to the more general teachings of Atiyoga, is a combination of “chi,” which in

^a Wylie, *ston pa*.

^b Wylie, *khye’u snang ba dam pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa*.

^c Wylie, *ston pa gshen rab mi bo che*.

^d Wylie, *lha bon yongsu dag pa*.

^e Wylie, *khyung lung*.

^f Tucci (1970, English 1980, Chapter Seven [pp. 213-248], and in particular pp. 213-224).

^g Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 2004.

^h Wylie, *snying thig*.

ⁱ Wylie, *yang thig*.

^j Wylie, *zab mo*.

^k Wylie, *yang zab*.

^l Wylie, *snying po*.

^m Wylie, *yang snying*.

ⁿ Wylie, *spyi ti*.

Tibetan means “more general,” and “ti,” which are the last two letters of *ati*. Finally, “Yangthik” is a totally Tibetan term that indicates the more specific teachings of Atiyoga. Some Tibetan Buddhist scholars have asserted that certain concepts of the Bön tradition and of the Dzogchen teachings were received from Śaivism, and it is possible that Professor Tucci may have derived his views from these interpretations by Tibetan Buddhists.

If it were true that all these terms appear in Kashmiri Śaivism, that would not at all be surprising, for the chief sacred place of Śaivism is Mount Kailāśā in West Tibet, located in what at the time of the arising of Bönpo Dzogchen was the Kingdom of Zhang-zhung, where the Bön tradition prevailed, and where it was maintained and transmitted until its posterior diffusion through Eastern Tibet and Bhutan. Everyone automatically assumes that the culture, religion and philosophy of India and China are very old and autochthonous. However, the very opposite occurs with the culture, religion and philosophy of Tibet: people tend to assume that they must have in their integrity come from other countries, such as India, China, or even Persia. This way of thinking is typical of those who are totally conditioned by the traditions established by pro-Indian Buddhists in Tibet. If many concepts of Dzogchen and Bön came from Śaivism, where did Śaivism come from? Since it is supposed to be of Indian origin, Śaivism could not have come from elsewhere but India, whereas Bön and Dzogchen, being Tibetan, must be something absorbed or imported from other regions and traditions.

What a naïve way of thinking! The Śaivas keep the whole history of their teachings, and according to it, their doctrine originated in Mount Kailāśā. This is the reason why every year hundreds of Śaivas go on pilgrimage from India to Mount Kailāśā and circumambulate it. Now, where is Mount Kailāśā? In India or in Tibet? And if Kailāśā is in Tibet and it was there that Śaivism originated, why should it be said that Bön and Dzogchen took their concepts from India? It is logical to hypothesize that Śaivism may have had its roots in Bön, which prevailed in the region of Mount Kailāśā ever since Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche^a established it there some 3.800 years ago, and which contains its own Dzogchen teachings, part of which may have leaked into Śaivism.

In fact, Śaivism holds Mount Kailāśā to be the abode of Lord Śiva himself, and if that tradition places the abode of its deity in Tibet, it is utterly absurd to think that the teachings of Bönpo Dzogchen came from Śaivism—the logical conclusion of this being that it was the other way around. Furthermore, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has referred to extant Bön sources according to which the great sages Lhadag Nagdro of India, Legtang Mangpo from China and various great sages from an ample region that extends itself West to Persia, South to India, and East and North to China, spread the teachings taught by Shenrab Miwoche in their own countries. He writes:^b

Shenrab Miwoche was born in Zhang-zhung, and was therefore a Tibetan, or better a Zhang-zhung-pa, though the Bön that he taught soon spread far beyond Zhang-zhung, to countries like Tazig (Persia or Tadzhikistan), India and China. Some credible Bön sources report that the great sages Mutsa Trahe of Tazig, Hulu Baleg of Sumba, Lhadag Nagdro of India, Legtang Mangpo from China, and Serthog Chejam of Khrom translated into their respective languages and spread in their native lands the teachings of Shenrab included in

^a Wylie, ston pa gshen rab mi bo che.

^b Namkhai Norbu (2004, pp. 28-29). The text was compared with Namkhai Norbu (1997, pp. 26-27), and a modification on the basis of the latter was made to the English version.

the four series (or four gates) of “divine Bön” (Lha bön go zhi^a)—the Shen of the Cha (Cha shen^b), the Shen of the Universe of Phenomena (Nang shen^c), the Shen of Existence (Si shen^d) and the Shen of Magic Power (Tul shen^e)—and in the three series known as the Divine Bön of Ritual Offerings (Shökyi lhabön^f), the Bön of Village Funeral Rites (Dronggi durbön^g) and the Bön of Perfect Mind (Yangdagpai sembön^h)...

[It is] certain... that the Bön of Perfect Mind (Yangdagpai sembön) taught by Shenrab Miwoche was an archaic form of Dzogchen: in fact, we possess the list and the histories of all lineage Masters of Dzogchen of the Oral Transmission of Zhang-zhung (Zhang-zhung nyengyüⁱ). If Shenrab Miwoche taught Dzogchen, which is also the final aim⁵²⁸ of all the teachings transmitted by Buddha Śākyamuni, we cannot doubt his extraordinary qualities; we can, moreover, deduce that Tibet in that period had not only a culture, but also an exceptional form of spiritual knowledge.⁵²⁹

Another source, also on the basis of ancient Bön texts, asserts the following:^j

Of Tönpa Shenrab’s many disciples, the foremost was Mucho Demdrug (Mu-cho lDem-drug), who in his turn taught many students, the most important of whom were the “Six Great Translators:” Mutsha Trahe (dMu-tsha Tra-he) of Tazig, Trithog Pasha (Khri-thog sPa-tsha) of Zhang-Zhung, Hulu Paleg (Hu-lu sPa-legs) of Sum-pa (east of Zhang-Zhung), Lhadag Ngagdröl (Lha-bdags sNgags-grol) of India, Legtang Mangpo (Legs-tang rMang-po) of China and Sertog Chejam (gSer-thog lCe-byams) of Phrom (Mongolia).

From the above it may be inferred that Śaivism may have originated from the teachings of the sage Lhadag Nagdro, Indian disciple of Shenrab’s main disciple; that Chinese Daoism^k may have had its source in the teachings of sage Legtang Mangpo, Chinese disciple of Shenrab’s main disciple; that Persian Zurvanism^l may have had developed on the basis of the teachings of the sage Mutsha Trahe, Persian disciple of Shenrab’s main disciple (note that according to G. Tucci [1970; English 1980], not only Śaivas, but also Persian Zurvanists and Ismā‘īlīs^m assiduously went to Mount Kailāśā on pilgrimage)—and that Paleo-Siberian Shamanism may be a corruption of

^a Wylie, *lha bon sgo bzhi*.

^b Wylie, *phyva gshen [theg pa]*.

^c Wylie, *snang gshen [theg pa]*.

^d Wylie, *srid gshen [theg pa]*.

^e Wylie, *’phrul gshen [theg pa]*.

^f Wylie, *bshos kyi lha bon*.

^g Wylie, *grong gi ’dur bon*.

^h Wylie, *yang dag pa’i sems bon*.

ⁱ Wylie, *zhang zhung snyan brgyud*.

^j Lopeta, Vaitkus y Rute (undated).

^k Since I am using Hànyǔ Pīnyīn transliteration, I will use the newly coined English terms “Daoism” and “Daoist” instead of the best-known “Taoism” and “Taoist.”

^l The deity of Zurvanism was Zurvan, who like Śiva Mahākāla was total or infinite time (Zurvan was also total or infinite space), and like the Ardhanārīśvara aspect of Śiva, was simultaneously male and female.

^m In Capriles (2011a) I speculated that Ismā‘īlīm may have resulted from an infiltration of Zurvanism into Islam. And it is a fact that the Ismā‘īlī “mysticism of light” has much in common with that of the Bönpos, and that there are many points in common between Ismā‘īlīm, Zurvanism and Śaivism. And in fact, though there are no decisive proofs of this theory, in the paper in question I provide weighty evidence that suggests that this theory may be correct.

the system introduced by Serthog Chejam, Mongol disciple of Shenrab's main disciple. (The latter adds a new region on the North to the ones mentioned in the passage by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, not because a land is mentioned in this passage that is not featured in the passage by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, but because the name Phrom is interpreted as referring to Mongolia). At this point I put an end to the discussion of possible connections between Śaivism, Dzogchen and Bön; whoever wants to explore those possible connections in greater detail may consult a paper in which I speculated about them.^a

At any rate, from the above it may be inferred that the area of Mount Kailāśā was a hub from which irradiated the essential transmission and attending conceptual framework of all genuine Awakening systems in Asia (some of which, for their part, were the source of most of European mysticism since the fifth century CE onwards, as I have suggested elsewhere^b)—including Chinese Daoism and Persian Zurvanism and Ismā'īlism. As to Chinese Daoism, since Legtang Mangpo carried the teachings of Shenrab Miwoche to China some fourteen centuries before the time of Lǎozǐ^c (Lao Tzu), and there is so much in common between original Daoism and the Dzogchen teachings, as well as so much significant evidence suggesting connections, as to make it worthwhile to undertake a brief discussion of the subject. So at this point let me speculate on possible connections between Bönpo Dzogchen and Chinese Daoism.

According to William Rockhill,^d the Chinese usually identified the Bönpos in Eastern Tibet as Daoists (Taoists), and Shenrab Miwoche^e was generally thought to be a name that stood for Lǎozǐ^f—who, by the way, according to the legend wrote the *Dàodéjīng* or *Tao-te-ching*^g at the request of a border official when he left China for a country to the West, which for the reasons that will be adduced below, I find it hard to imagine was other than Zhang-zhung (which included present day Tibet). Alexandra David-Neel was another author who pointed out the alleged genetic relation between Daoism (Taoism) and Bön^h—and I for my part have personally heard oral reports about Daoist (Taoist) Masters asserting the identity of their own tradition with that of Bön. For his part, the Chinese scholar on Tibetan history Shěn Zōnglián (Shen Tsung-lien)ⁱ wrote:^j

“Bön-Po, one form of Shamanism, is considered by some scholars to be a Tibetan copy of a later decadent phase of Chinese Daoism... However, by borrowing too freely from the abundance of Buddhism, it was not long before Bön-Po lost its own characteristics and became absorbed into its rival.”

^a Capriles (2011a).

^b Cf. Capriles (2011a) and other works.

^c 老子; Wade-Giles, Lao³-tzu³.

^d Rockhill (1997, pp. 217-218, n. 2).

^e Wylie, gshen rab mi bo che.

^f 老子; Wade-Giles, Lao³-tzu³.

^g 道德經; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Dàodéjīng*; Wade-Giles *Tao⁴-te²-ching¹*.

^h I have tried hard to remember the work in which she did so, but I still fail to do so.

ⁱ 沈宗濂; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Shěn Zōnglián; Wade-Giles, Shen³ Tsung¹-lien².

^j Shen (1953, this Ed. 1973, p. 37).

The ancient sources consulted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu^a and other scholars suggest that, just as in the case of Tucci’s explanation of the relations between Bön, Dzogchen and Śaivism, the course of the influences between Bön, Dzogchen and Daoism may have been inverted by Chinese scholars, for many people in China have regularly viewed the rest of humankind as barbarians, and their Tibetan neighbors in particular as wildly uncultured barbarians (like Tucci, such scholars seem to have been utterly unaware of the fact that Paths of Awakening antedate civilization, and that civilization is both a product and a catalyst of degeneration).

The most significant evidence suggesting a connection between Dzogchen and Daoism, however, is the fact that both the “holy immortal’s”^b “ascension to Heaven” in what Herrlee Creel called Xiān Daoism,^c and the sign of final consummation of the realization of “Complete Reality” in Quánzhēn^d Daoism,^e are illustrated with the image of a snake shedding its old skin—which the Dzogchen teachings traditionally use to illustrate the extraordinary modes of death undergone by those who attain some of the highest levels of realization that may be reached through the practice of Dzogchen (and in particular the mode of death called “self-consuming like a fire,”^f which as noted above results from the second highest realization that may be attained through the practices of Thögel and the Yangthik and gives rise to the body of light^g), which are followed by the dissolution of the sensitive parts of their physical bodies, which cease to be tangible in the lapse of the seven days immediately following death, so that only are left as tangible remains the parts of the body that lack sensitivity and that constantly grow toward the outside (namely nails and hair) together with the clothes that were enveloping the body—which lie on the floor in such a way as to make the ones who see it associate it with the skin shed by a snake.

Like Dzogchen, the teachings of Lǎozǐ,^h Zhuāngzǐⁱ (Chuang-tzu) and Lièzǐ^j (Lieh-tzu)—which H. Creel^k subsumed under the label *Contemplative Taoism* and I have subsumed under the label *Daoism of Unorigination*^l—stressed the fact that the Fruit of true Paths of Awakening is the realization of the uncreated, nonfabricated, uncontrived, unborn, unconditioned true nature of reality, and therefore, were Daoism actually linked to Dzogchen, the Daoism so linked would no doubt be that of Lǎozǐ, Zhuāngzǐ and Lièzǐ and its continuation in the form of Quánzhēn^m Daoism—which as will be shown below, like Xiānⁿ or Shénxiān^o Daoism^a but unlike the extant, available

^a Namkhai Norbu (2004, pp. 28-29).

^b 神仙; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shénxiān*; Wade-Giles, *shen²-hsien¹*.

^c Creel used the Wade-Giles, calling it Hsien¹ Daoism; the Chinese name of the school is 神仙傳 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Shénxiānzhuàn*; Wade-Giles, *Shen²-hsien¹ Chuan⁴*). For a discussion cf. Creel (1970).

^d 全真; Wade-Giles, *Chuan²-chen¹*.

^e Liu I-ming (trans. Thomas Cleary, 1988).

^f Tib. mepung (Wylie, *me dpung*).

^g Tib. ökyiku (Wylie, *'od kyi sku*) or öphung (Wylie, *'od phung*).

^h 老子; Wade-Giles, *Lao³-tzu³*.

ⁱ 莊子; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Zhuāngzǐ*; Wade-Giles, *Chuang¹-tzu³*.

^j 列子; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Lièzǐ*; Wade-Giles, *Lieh⁴-tzu³*.

^k Creel (1970).

^l Capriles (2009a).

^m 全真; Wade-Giles, *chuan²-chen¹*.

ⁿ 仙; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiān*; Wade-Giles, *hsien¹*. Creel used the Wade-Giles, calling it Hsien¹ Daoism.

^o 神仙; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shénxiān*; Wade-Giles, *shen²-hsien¹*.

treatises by the three venerable Masters just mentioned, illustrate the highest realizations that may be attained by treading their Path with the simile of the snake shedding its skin (the fact that the image is not featured in those treatises could be due to the image being part of a secret oral transmission, probably passed down hand by hand with a symbolic transmission and a mind transmission). And since it seems most unlikely that such an odd image as a snake shedding its skin may have been used by genetically linked traditions in neighboring countries to illustrate completely different occurrences, if the Daoism of these three Masters and its continuation in the form of Quánzhēn Daoism had actually been genetically linked to the Dzogchen tradition, I would assume that it used the image in question to refer to the same realizations that it illustrates in the Dzogchen teachings, and that Xiān or Shénxiān Daoism absorbed the image from it.

Since the image of the snake is shared by the Quánzhēn and Xiān forms of Daoism, one could assume that these two traditions share the same views, aims and methods. This is not at all the case, for the former seems to have given continuity to the Daoism of the venerable ancient sages, whereas the latter is an utter distortion of Daoism that vilified the sages in question together with their views and methods. In fact, roughly since the eighth century BC, Xiān Daoism has been bent on prolonging the human lifespan and, by means of *generative* methods, *pretending* to *produce* immortal bodies—a paramount contradiction, for as Buddhist doctrine makes it clear, all that is fabricated, produced, contrived, conditioned, configured, made and / or compounded^b is impermanent, and only the nonfabricated, unproduced, uncontrived, unconditioned, unconfigured and /or uncompounded^c is beyond corruption, cessation and death. Not long after Zhuāngzǐ^d and probably at the time of Lièzǐ, in the *Inner chapters*^e of Gěhóng’s (Ko-hung’s)^f *Bàopúzǐ*^g (“He Who Holds to Simplicity,” a pseudonym of the author), referred to Zhuāngzǐ’s^h way as “pure conversation”ⁱ—a term that Alan Watts^j rendered as “nothing but a head trip”—and vilified Zhuāngzǐ for his view that death should not be opposed.^{k530} All of this demonstrates that this form of Daoism could not have led to the realization represented with the image of the snake shedding its skin, and suggests that it absorbed the simile from the original forms of Daoism and used it to illustrate the attainment of immortality they fancied but could by no means achieve.

^a In full the Chinese name of the school is 神仙傳 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Shénxiānzhuàn; Wade-Giles, Shen²-hsien¹ Chuan⁴). For a discussion, cf. Creel (1970).

^b Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* (Wylie, ’*dus byas*); Ch. 有為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*).

^c Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Skt. *asamskṛta*; Tib. *dümache* (Wylie, ’*dus ma byas*); Ch. 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

^d 莊子; Wade-Giles, Chuang¹-tzu³ (ca. 369-286 BCE).

^e 內篇: Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Nèipiān*; Wade-Giles, *Nei⁴-p’ien¹*.

^f 葛洪; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Gěhóng; Wade-Giles, Ko³-hung² (circa 283-343 BCE).

^g 抱朴子; Wade-Giles, Pao⁴ P’u²-tzu³.

^h 莊子; Wade-Giles, Chuang¹-tzu³.

ⁱ 清談; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *qīngtán*; Wade-Giles, *ch’ing¹-t’an²*.

^j Watts (1975).

^k Creel (1970, I, p. 22); Watts (1975, p. 91); a partial English translation of Gěhóng’s writings appeared in 1967 in the book now available as Ware (trans. 1981).

For its part, Quánzhēn^a Daoism, which traces its roots to Lǎozǐ, Zhuāngzǐ and Lièzǐ, like the Daoism of these three great Masters, seems to be a means for realizing the uncreated, unborn, unconditioned true nature of reality and thus realize that one is not the creature that is born and dies, but the unborn and undying true condition of all phenomena—which puts an end to rejection of death, as the realized individual has gone *beyond death itself*. Therefore, like the Daoism of the venerable ancient sages, Quánzhēn Daoism seems to have many points of coincidence with Dzogchen—from which one may infer that in this type of Daoism the image of the snake shedding its skin *might* have referred to the actual, consummating realizations that the Dzogchen teachings illustrate with the same image. [For a longer discussion of all of this, cf. the paper referred to in the footnote^b and the contents of the endnote.⁵³¹]

Just like the Chinese scholars referred to above, Keith Dowman^c affirmed that Daoism influenced Tibetan religion, but in his view the influence was received by Buddhist Dzogchen, *via* Chán Buddhism, and both Chán and Dzogchen ultimately originated from Śaivism. Though above I acknowledged that Chán (and possible the gradual Mahāyāna as well) might have influenced both the teachings and the practices of the Kham tradition of the Series of the [essence or nature] of mind, taken as a general principle the idea that it was Daoism that influenced Dzogchen rather than the other way around seems to turn facts upside down, for the *universal ancestor of all vehicles* is posited as a hybrid derived from two or more of the traditions that in truth seem to have derived from it. Furthermore, in the same book, Dowman has claimed that the term chatral,^d which he explained as denoting spontaneous activity beyond intentional action:^e

...is probably derived from the Taoist notion of *wu-wei*; Taoist concepts arrived in Dzogchen metaphysics *via* the Chinese Chán^f School.

If at some point of its development Dzogchen would have lacked the principle of spontaneous accomplishment through nonaction, since this principle is its inherent, distinctive principle, which sets it apart from other Paths of Awakening, it would not have been Dzogchen and could not have been so called. In Dzogchen Contemplation^g the paramount expressions of this principle are the practices of Thögel and the Yangthik, and its second highest expression is the advanced stages of the principal practice of the Series of space, for the practices in question function on the basis of

^a 全真; Wade-Giles, Chuan²-chen¹.

^b For a more exhaustive discussion of the coincidences between Dzogchen and Daoism, see Capriles (2009a).

^c Dowman (Ed. & Trans. 1984, pp. 295-8). Keith is my vajra brother, who I hold in very high esteem and with whom I meet when we coincide in the same town, but it was imperative to clarify this point.

^d Bya bral. Actually, as will be shown below, more pertinent to the subject under discussion are terms such as thinle (Wylie, *phrin las*), dzepa (Wylie, *mdzad pa*), and even lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*).

^e Dowman (ed. & trans. 1984, p. 243).

^f Chán: 禪 or 禪; Wade-Giles, Ch'an; Jap. ぜん (hiragana) / Zen (romaji); Korean, 선 (Seon); Viet. Thi ền.

^g Tib. gompa (Wylie, *sgom pa*); Skt. *bhāvanā*; Ch. 修習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūxí*; Wade-Giles, *hsiu¹-hsi²*).

the Base's spontaneous perfection or self-rectification aspect—in Tibetan, *lhundrub*,^a which may be rendered as nonaction and which in this context works by means of systemic activities utterly free from action that are designated by terms that are often and most properly rendered as nonaction, such as *thinle*^b and *dzepa*.^{c532} Chán / Zen is a Mahāyāna tradition that does not feature the explanation of the Buddha-nature as a Vajra-nature having the two aspects which are primordial purity and spontaneous perfection, for it does not master the spontaneous, self-rectifying^d dynamics of energy at the root of practices such as those of the three aforementioned practices, or even the lower mastery of energy proper to the Path of Transformation. In fact, the degree to which the practices of Thögel and the Yangthik, essence of the Contemplation of Dzogchen, are based on the principle of nonaction, is not matched by any of practice of Chán Buddhism.

For its part, the Behavior^e of Dzogchen—which is the context in which the term *chatral*,^f which was the one that Keith Dowman rendered as nonaction, is employed—is utterly based on nonaction, for it is only while, outside sitting sessions, practitioners remain in the continuity of the Vision or, which is the same, in the state of *rigpa*, that it is said that they are manifesting the *chöpa* or Behavior—and since in the state of *rigpa* there is no reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure or of any other kind of thought, no agent of action, action or object of action manifests in it.

As noted above, since in Dzogchen the simile of the snake that sheds its skin illustrates the special modes of death of that result from the realizations of the Series of pith instructions and the Series of space, the fact that exactly the same simile is found in Daoism suggests that this system may have had practices analogous to the Dzogchen practices that result in the realizations at the root of those modes of death. However, as also suggested above, if there existed, or had existed at some point, similar practices in Daoism, the evidence adduced above and, in greater detail, in a paper I published in Spanish,^g indicates that they were quite probably absorbed from Dzogchen Atiyoga rather than the other way around: these higher Dzogchen practices could not have been imported from any other tradition, because they are the supreme embodiment of the principle that, since the very rise of Dzogchen Atiyoga, has been its hallmark, which sets it apart from other Paths, teachings and practices. In fact, purportedly around eighteen hundred BCE,⁵³³ and therefore over one millennium before the rise of Daoism, of Buddhism in general and of Chán in particular, the primordial revealer^h of Bön, Shenrab Miwoche transmitted the original verses of the

^a Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*. This principle implies freedom from contrived action and in certain contexts may be properly rendered as nonaction.

^b Wylie, *phrin las*; Skt. *karman*.

^c Wylie, *mdzad pa*.

^d Wylie, *lhun grub*; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

^e Wylie, *spyod pa*; Skt. *caryā*; Pāli and Skt. *carita*; Ch. 行 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng*; Wade-Giles, *hsing*²).

^f Wylie, *bya bral*.

^g Capriles (2009a).

^h Tib. *tönpa* (Wylie, *ston pa*).

seminal instruction^a of the *Oral Transmission of Dzogchen of Shang Shung* compiled in the *Twelve Brief Tantras of the Single Sphere of Bodhicitta*^{b534}—which at a much later stage were put in writing and explicated by the great teacher Cherchen Nangzher Löpo,^c and which clearly expressed the principle of nonaction. (According to a Bönpo chronicle put into writing by Nyima Tenzin in his *Tentsi*^d and to various Internet pages,^e the teachings of Shenrab Miwoche were bestowed some eighteen thousand years ago,^f but I follow the dating offered by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, which is about 1,800 BC). The text in question reads:^{g535}

The Path is self-accomplished, beyond effort and progress...
 The Fruit is self-accomplished in its own condition...
 In the ultimate unborn dimension
 abides the primordial gnosis without interruption—
 the single sphere beyond the duality of birth and cessation.

These verses clearly express the “beyond action” principle, summarized in the assertion that the Path does not involve either effort or progress, and that the Truth to be realized is free from birth and as such could not be *produced* or attained through contrived practices. No doubt, the concepts of achievement through non-action and of Awakening as involving spontaneous activities utterly free from intention and action must be acknowledged to be inherent in the primordial vehicle and universal ancestor of all vehicles, Ati Dzogpa Chenpo. Though it was from Daoism that Chán absorbed the Chinese terms *wúwéi*,^h meaning nonaction, and *wéiwúwéi*,ⁱ meaning action by means of nonaction, as noted repeatedly Daoism is later than Bönpo Dzogchen, with which it seems to have had a most intimate connection—and so one may assume that Daoism absorbed the corresponding concepts from Dzogchen Atiyoga, to which the principle of spontaneous accomplishment beyond action and the ensuing spontaneous activity that is free of human intentionality is inherent. Furthermore, as noted at the end of the preceding section, Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva were Dzogchen Masters, and according to the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*,^j they were, respectively, the 14th and 15th Patriarchs of the Dhyāna (Chán or Zen) School in India, and therefore it

^a Tib. nyengyü (Wylie, *snyan rgyud*). In Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente (English 1999), Note 245 by Adriano Clemente, p. 215, reads: In the present case *snyan rgyud*, literally ‘oral transmission’, signifies an aphorism encapsulating in a few words the content of vast and profound teachings.

^b Tibetan *Changsem thigle nyagchikgi gyü buchung chunyi* (Wylie, *byang sems thig le nyag gcig gi rgyud bu chung bcu gnyis*), op. 24: p. 171, 5.

^c Gyer chen snang bzher lod po.

^d Wylie, *bstan rtsis*.

^e E.g. Anonymous author (undated).

^f That is, around 16,000 BCE; cf. Kvaerne (1971). According to some Internet pages (e.g. Chumney, S. (ed.), 2008), Shenrab lived around 18,000 BCE, but I believe this to be the result of mistaking the phrase “about eighteen thousand years ago” for the phrase “some eighteen thousand years BCE.”

^g Op. 24: first two lines, p. 171, 5; last three lines, p. 172, 1.

^h 無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*).

ⁱ 為無為 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wéiwúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wei²-wu²-wei²*).

^j Ch. 壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Tánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *T’an²-ching¹*), 六祖壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Liùzǔtánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *Liu⁴-tsu³ T’an²-ching¹*), which abbreviate 六祖大師法寶壇經 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *Liùzǔdàshī fáobǎotánjīng*; Wade-Giles, *Liu⁴-tsu³-tā⁴-shih¹ Fa²-pao³-t’an²-ching¹*); full title: 南宗頓教最上乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經.

would not be far-fetched to speculate that these Masters may have introduced into Chán concepts belonging to the Semde^a series of Ati, which they may have adapted to the functional principles of the Mahāyāna. Moreover, with the passing of time there were many contacts between Dzogchen Ati and Chán; for example, Bodhidharma, who introduced Chán into China, also was a link in the transmission of the Anuyoga (which throughout history has been applied by practitioners of Dzogchen Ati, and whose Fruit, as we have seen, is called Dzogchen); later on, Namkhai Nyingpo, who was one of the 25 main disciples of Padmasambhava, as well as one of his 8 most selected disciples, became a Master of both schools; as the *Blue Annals*^b note, Aro Yeshe Jungne^c was the seventh link in both the transmission of Tibetan Chán and of Ati Dzogpa chenpo;⁵³⁶ likewise, Nubchen Sangye Yeshe was a Master of both Chán and Dzogchen—and so on.

In conclusion, it would be extremely naïve to believe that Daoism—historians and Masters of which having often asserted their tradition to be one and the same as Tibetan Bön—was known to Tibetans via Chán Buddhism. However, speculation about of the relations between Daoism, Bön and Dzogchen must stop at this point; the interested reader may consult a paper in which I discuss the subject in far greater detail.^d

Lineages of Transmission of the Nyingmapa Vehicles of Inner Tantra (Including Dzogchen Atiyoga)

The transmission and teachings of the Nyingma vehicles of inner Tantra included in the Paths of transformation and spontaneous liberation have come to us through two different channels, which are: (1) the kama or ringyü kama^e tradition of “long lineages,” and (2) the terma or ringyü terma^f transmission of “short lineages.”

The Kama Tradition

The first—the Kama tradition—consists in a continuous line of transmission, *both* of rigpa itself, *and* of teachings, texts, practices, *sādhanas*, and even worldly realizations. The corresponding lineages are said to be “long” because in them the transmission has passed from Master to student in an uninterrupted succession since the introduction of the inner Tantras into our human world, and thus they involve many links.

This tradition comprises three principal lineages with their respective forms of transmission, which are:

^a Wylie, *sems sde*.

^b Roerich (Trans. 1979, p. 167); cf. also Dowman (Ed. & Trans. 1984, p. 350, note 19). Note that the translation attributed to Roerich was actually the work of the great Gendün Chöphel.

^c A ro Ye shes 'Byung gnas.

^d Capriles (2009a).

^e Wylie, *ring brgyud bka' ma*.

^f Wylie, *ring brgyud gter ma*.

(1) The nonconceptual, nondual, direct transmission^a of the Awake awareness^b of the Victors^c (i.e. of Buddhahood)—in Tibetan, **gyälwa gongpai gyüpa**^d—consisting in the continuity through successive generations of human beings, of the state of nonconceptual, nondual Awake awareness called rigpa as manifested in primordial gnoses. The source of this lineage is beyond time, in the *dharmakāya* dimension, personified as the primordial^e Buddha^f Samantabhadra, whose timeless dimension is known as the Akaniṣṭha^g pure land.⁵³⁷ As we have seen, it is said that the state of rigpa is “transmitted” through Vajrasattva (in Mahāyoga) or through the Buddhas of the Five Families (in Anuyoga); however, we have also seen that, in a strict sense, for something to be transmitted there would have to have a transmitter and a receiver of the transmission separate from him or her; since the very state of this “transmission” is absolutely beyond dualism, so that the duality of transmitter and receiver is absent, the term should not be understood in a literal manner—a fact that is most evident in the case of the transmission of Atiyoga. As expressed in the *Derdü tsagyü*^{h,i}:

“I am at the same time the one who teaches and the one who receives the teaching.”⁵³⁸

(2) The symbolic transmission of Awareness-holders,^j known in Tibetan as **rigdzin dai gyüpa**,^k which was transmitted through the Lords of the Three Families (Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara)^l and, from the latter, through a series of nonhuman and human rigdzin.⁵³⁹

(3) The oral transmission by means of human links, known in Tibetan as **gangzag nyenkungi gyüpa**^m, which is not limited to the inner Tantras that contain the teachings of the Paths of transformation and spontaneous liberation, for there is also a transmission of this type in the case of the three outer levels of Tantra that convey the

^a Tib. gyüpa (Wylie, *brgyud pa*).

^b Tib. gongpa (Wylie, *dgongs pa*); this term is often rendered as “wisdom mind.” Note that the term is the honorific for “sampa” (Wylie, *bsam pa*), meaning “thought” or “intention,” but in the Dzogchen teachings it refers to the wisdom mind of Buddhas, or of bodhisattvas in their state of Contemplation (Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. nyamzhak [Wylie, *mnyam bzhak*]; Ch. 等引 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyǐn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*]), both of whom are beyond thought and intention in the ordinary sense of the terms.

^c Skt. *jina*; Tib. gyalwa (Wylie, *rgyal ba*); Ch. 最勝 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zuìshèng*; Wade-Giles, *tsui⁴-sheng⁴*).

^d Wylie, *rgyal ba dgongs pa'i brgyud pa*.

^e Skt. *ādi*; Oḍḍiyāna language, *ati*; Tib. dōma (Wylie, *gdod ma*).

^f Skt. *ādibuddha*; Tib. dōmai sangye (Wylie, *gdod ma'i sangs rgyas*) / dangpoi sangye (Wylie, *dang po'i sangs rgyas*) / yene sangye (Wylie, *ye nas sangs rgyas*); Ch. 本初佛 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *běncū fó*; Wade-Giles, *pen³-ch'u¹ fo²*).

^g Pāli Akaniṭṭha; Tib. Ogmin (Wylie, *'og min*); Ch. 色究竟天 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sèjiùjìng tiān*; Wade-Giles, *se⁴-chiū⁴-ching⁴ t'ien¹*).

^h Wylie, *bder 'dus rtsa rgyud*; also *Desheg düpa tsawai gyü* (Wylie, *bde gshegs 'dus pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*): a Tantra belonging to the Sādhana Section of Mahāyoga found in Vol. OM and AH of the Nyingma Gyübum.

ⁱ Tibetan Text 17. Quoted in Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, p. 449).

^j Skt. *vidyādhara*; Tib. rigdzin (Wylie, *rig 'dzin*); Ch. 持明 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chímíng*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih²-ming²*; Jap. *jimyō*; Kor. *chimyōng*). In Pāli, *vijjādhara*.

^k Wylie, *rig 'dzin brda'i brgyud pa*.

^l These are also the three principal deities of the outer Tantras, and they represent, respectively, wisdom (discerning and nonconceptual), energy and compassion (referential and nonreferential).

^m Wylie, *gang zag snyan khung gi brgyud pa*.

teachings of the Path of purification, as well as in that of the Sūtrayāna (and, in particular, with regard to the Mahāyāna compilation accomplished by 500 scholars and 500 assistants under the patronage of King Lakṣāśva).

The lineages of the kama transmission may also be explained by identifying the specific origin and lines of transmission of each one of the three inner Tantras and their respective sections, but to do that more extensively than was made in the sketch offered in a previous section of this chapter would go far beyond the purpose of this book.⁵⁴⁰ For our aims, it is sufficient to point out that, although in the word kama the particle “ka” literally means “word of Buddha,” this does not imply that this tradition only contains the words of Buddha Śākyamuni. For example, in the case of the kama transmission of the teachings of Dzogchen Ati, the particle “ka” makes the point that these teachings have their origin in the *dharmakāya*—that is, in the primordial Buddha or *ādi Buddha* Samantabhadra—and that, being essentially beyond time, they appear in all times and directions. Thus when it is said that the teachings of Buddhist Atiyoga come from Garab Dorje, reference is being made to the teachings of Ati existing in our time, for as shown above Garab Dorje was the first teacher in human form to receive these teachings *in their current form*, as well as the first link in the presently existing human transmission.⁵⁴¹

The Terma Tradition

As noted above, the terma tradition is the second pathway of transmission of the state of rigpa, as well as of teachings, texts, practices, *sādhana*s and so on of the Paths of transformation and spontaneous liberation⁵⁴²—but also of ritual objects, images, medicinal substances and a series of other precious objects, as well as of worldly realizations. Lineages of this tradition are said to be “short” because they involve a much lesser number of human links than the kama tradition: in most cases, the transmission goes directly from Padmasambhava (eight century CE) to a Revealer^b manifesting at the time when such teachings and so on must be reintroduced into the human world, who transmits it to his or her true disciples and, most importantly, to his or her successor(s). Thus also in our time there are Revealers who are revealing the treasures that correspond to the times and culture, or that were lost and it is in this time that they could be reintroduced. Beside being most appropriate for our time, the treasure teachings and so on may be more effective because, having passed through a lesser number of hands, it is less likely that the transmission may have been damaged because some of its links broke the Tantric commitment^c (and, if the Revealer is our own teacher, there is simply no possibility that the transmission may have been damaged, unless we ourselves break the Tantric commitment). In particular, this type of transmission has made it possible, when time and circumstances are propitious, for the revelation of teachings or objects that either were not suitable for previous times, or that, had they been revealed in those times, in the best of cases would have been lost.

^a *bka'*.

^b Tib. tertön (Wylie, *gter ston*, where *gter* means treasure and *ston* means revealer).

^c Skt. *samaya*; Tib. damtsik (Wylie, *dam tshig*); Ch. 三摩耶 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānmóyé*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-mo²-ye²*).

The individuals who reveal these teachings, objects, substances, etc. and who as noted above are called Revealers^a are neither angels without a solid, material organism with physiological necessities, nor world-renouncing saints who are an insurmountable gulf away from human passions. It is especially important to note, on the one hand, that the tertön who reveals complete cycles of teachings is compelled to take a consort,⁵⁴³ and, on the other hand, that in most cases, before tertöns have begun to discover terma, they have been regarded as ordinary individuals rather than as tulkus, scholars or practitioners.⁵⁴⁴

The essential nucleus of Guru Padmasambhava's terma tradition consists in the "transmission of the cognitive mandate."^b It is said that the great Master concealed many teachings in the continuum of the wisdom mind^c or awareness of his realized disciples through the power of the "transmission of the cognitive mandate," upon which both Master and disciple remained in the state of indivisibility of realization and of the teaching thus hidden, and therefore the teachings, the blessings and the corresponding attainments were kept intact in the disciple's continuum of primordial gnosis or awareness. However, it is the fact that the Master manifested the aspiration that the teaching be revealed at the appropriate moment for the benefit of sentient beings, which makes it possible for the discovery of the teachings to effectively occur.

In connection with the above, Padmasambhava, as well as his main Tibetan consort, Yeshe Tsogyäl^d,⁵⁴⁵ and other "lords of the treasures" directly associated with them, hid teachings, papers with types of symbolic writing, and complete texts, as well as "material treasures"^e (including images, medicinal substances and ritual objects), in different places in the "physical" world, so that, when the propitious moment arrived, a particular individual would reveal them.

The terma tradition comprises six types or stages of lineage. The first three are the same ones as in the kama transmission, which were explained upon considering this transmission: (1) The nonconceptual, nondual, direct transmission of the Awake awareness of the Victors (i.e. of Buddhahood)^f consisting in the continuity of the state of nonconceptual, nondual Awake awareness called rigpa as manifested in primordial gnoses; (2) the symbolic transmission of Awareness-holders;^g and (3) the oral transmission by means of human links.^h Then there are the three lineages exclusive to the terma tradition, namely: (4) the transmission named "empowered by (Awake) aspiration,"ⁱ which is the principal aspect of the transmission and corresponds to the

^a Tib. tertön (Wylie, *gter ston*).

^b Tib. tergya (Wylie, *gtad rgya*).

^c Skt. *abhiprāya*; Tib. gongpa (Wylie, *dgongs pa*); Ch. 意趣 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yìqù*; Wade-Giles, *i⁴-ch'ü⁴*). As stated in other footnotes, the term "gongpa" (Wylie, *dgongs pa*) is the honorific for "sampa" (Wylie, *bsam pa*), meaning "thought" or "intention," yet in the Dzogchen teachings it refers to the wisdom mind of Buddhas, or of bodhisattvas in their state of Contemplation, both of whom are beyond thought and intention in the ordinary sense. The term is a synonym of the Tib. thug (Wylie, *thugs*).

^d ye shes mtsho rgyal.

^e Tib. dzeter (Wylie, *rdzas gter*).

^f Tib. **gyälwa gongpai gyüpa** (Wylie, *rgyal ba dgongs pa'i brgyud pa*).

^g Tib. **rigdzin dai gyüpa** (Wylie, *rig 'dzin brda'i brgyud pa*).

^h Tib. **gangzag nyenkungi gyüpa** (Wylie, *gang zag snyan khung gi brgyud pa*).

ⁱ Tib. **mönlam wangkur** (Wylie, *smon lam dbang bskur*).

cognitive mandate considered above; (5) the transmission that is based on prophetic authorization,^a in which the Master inspires the disciple and, indicating that in the future he or she will become a tertön, causes this to occur, and (6) the transmission entrusted to the *dākinīs*,^b in which the Master entrusts to the *dākinīs* for protection the three main elements of the transmission: the treasure or terma, the Revealer or tertön, and the treasure's Masters and practitioners.

Though in general there are eighteen categories of terma, with regard to the way they are discovered there are two main categories, which are: (1) gongter^c or “treasures of Awake awareness,” and (2) sater^d, or “earth treasures.”

The first—the treasures of Awake awareness—are not related to any type of material support (neither to a “yellow scroll”^e nor to anything else); although some times their discovery is catalyzed by the manifestation of visions and/or sounds (which may or may not include symbolic words), the tertön discovers the treasure^f of Awake Awareness^g when, the circumstances having matured and the auspicious moment arrived, the transmission of the cognitive mandate spontaneously awakes from the rigpa or Awake Awareness that makes the boundless expanse of primordial gnosis evident. These are regarded as the supreme and most important treasures.

Generally speaking, the second—the earth treasures—may be equally hidden in rocks, mountains, lakes, temples, images and even in space, and among them there may be material objects such as, for example, a roll of paper known as “yellow scroll”^h bearing some form of symbolic writingⁱ that may serve as a key so that, on reading it, the tertön may discover the treasure *in his or her own Awake awareness*. This is so because the discovery of treasures consists in their appearing in the empty expanse where phenomena manifest,^{j46} by the power of the self-arisen state of rigpa that manifests upon its nonconceptual, nondual self-reGnition through a primordial gnosis.⁵⁴⁷ For this reason, it is said that those who do not have a firm realization of the state of rigpa of *Ati Dzogpa Chenpo*, which embraces the primordial empty expanse and is inseparable from it, would never be able to discover a terma transmitted through the cognitive mandate of Padmasambhava.

However, earth treasures are also a subcategory among the eighteen classes of treasures, and when so considered it includes only the treasures that are unearthed after having been hidden in the earth; therefore, treasures found in lakes or submerged

^a Tib. **lungten kabab** (Wylie, *lung bstan bka' babs*).

^b Tib. **khandro tergya** (Wylie, *mkha' 'gro gtad rgya*).

^c Wylie, *dgongs gter*. These are also referred to as thukter (Wylie, *thugs gter*)—“thuk” being roughly a synonym of “gong,” for in this context both terms refer to the state of rigpa.

^d Wylie, *sa gter*.

^e Tib. **shogser** (Wylie, *shog ser*).

^f Tib. *ter* (Wylie, *gter*).

^g Tib. *gong* (Wylie, *dgongs*). As stated in previous footnotes, the term “gongpa” (Wylie, *dgongs pa*) is the honorific for “sampa” (Wylie, *bsam pa*), meaning “thought” or “intention,” yet in the Dzogchen teachings it refers to the wisdom mind of Buddhas, or of bodhisattvas in their state of Contemplation, both of whom are beyond thought and intention in the ordinary sense.

^h Tib. *shogser* (Wylie, *shog ser*).

ⁱ Tib. *dayik* (Wylie, *brda yig*).

^j Skt. *dharmadhātu*; Tib. *chöying* (Wylie, *chos dbyings*); Chin. 法界 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-chieh⁴*).

in water in general, are called water treasures;^a treasures found in space are referred to as space treasures;^b etc. Finally, among those treasures that are not treasures of Awake awareness properly speaking, yet have no material support and are not hidden in the earth, it also important to mention the dream treasures,^c which are those that are discovered by means of dreams.

Lastly, it may be pointed out that there is also a category of revealed teachings that are known as “teachings of pure vision,”^d but they are not treasures,^e and may be discovered by less realized individuals. What has been explained in this section has been simplified as much as possible, for this is not the place to give a detailed description of all the possible types of treasures; for an intermediate explanation and for another, more exhaustive one, I refer the reader to two specific texts published in Western languages.^{f548}

^a These being called water treasures (Tib. **chuter** [Wylie, *chu gter*]).

^b These being space treasures (Tib. **namkha ter** [Wylie, *nam mkha' gter*]; the term *namkha* also means “sky” and in this context is often translated as such [“in the sky”]).

^c Tib. **milam ter** (Wylie, *rmi lam gter*).

^d Tib. **dagnang** (Wylie, *dag snang*).

^e Tib. *terma* (Wylie, *gter ma*).

^f For an “intermediate” explanation of treasures or *termas*, I particularly recommend Tulku Thöndup’s essay “The Terma Tradition,” reproduced in Tulku Thöndup (1995). For a more extensive discussion, Tulku Thöndup (1986) may be consulted.

REFUGE, ROLE AND STATUS OF THE TEACHER, AND COMMITMENT AND PRECEPTS IN THE THREE PATHS

Refuge

One of the key elements of the Path of Renunciation is Refuge in Buddha,^a *dharma*^b and *saṃgha*,^c which arose in the Hīnayāna—in which Buddha is understood to refer solely to Śākyamuni, *dharma* is understood to designate the teachings of the First Promulgation, and *saṃgha* is taken to refer to the community of monks and nuns—but progressively spread to all Buddhist Paths and vehicles, where those three nouns acquired much wider senses.

In the face of the insecurity inherent in life, which is unstable and ever-changing, and of the transitory problems that constantly occur in it, all human beings crave finding a stable refuge. The most naïve ones take refuge in religious beliefs and other ideologies, lovers, money, power, status, idolized personages (of pop culture, politics, religion, the academy, etc.), groups, fame and fans, drugs, etc. However, it is not difficult to realize that these objects of refuge, instead of offering a refuge from insecurity, exacerbate our worries: if I take refuge in my lover, this will increase the insecurity associated with the possibility that she or he may prize or love another more than myself; if I take refuge in money, I will be worrying that it may be stolen or somehow I may lose it, or that stock markets may crash, etc.; if I take refuge in ideologies, I take the risk that they may fail, be refuted, show their flaws or be abandoned by the masses; drugs have a very transient effect and in most cases create far worse problems than immediately they may seem to solve—and something of the kind is true of all mundane objects of refuge. As to those who take refuge in spiritual states that, being *produced*, are impermanent, as we have seen, these also offer no more than a temporary solace that at some point will be followed by the shock of having to face new, undesirable experiences.

The only secure, stable, everlasting Refuge lies in Buddhahood, which consists in the definitive and irreversible consolidation of the Awake state, for only in this state no vicissitudes can affect us: neither the sensations that normally would be experienced as pain, nor illness, nor old age, nor death, nor any other circumstance will be able to alter the immutable condition of *total completeness / plenitude and perfection* that, being free from the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of thought is beyond the subject-object duality and in general beyond dualism—thus being beyond acceptance,

^a Tib. sangyé (Wylie, *sangs rgyas*); Ch. 佛 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fó*; Wade-Giles, *fo*²).

^b Pāli *dhamma*; Tib. chö (Wylie, *chos*); Ch. 法 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³; Jap. *hō*).

^c Pāli: *saṅgha*; Tib. gendün (Wylie, *dge 'dun*); Ch. 僧伽 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *sēngjiā*; Wade-Giles, *seng*¹-*chia*¹).

rejection and indifference (and therefore beyond the ephemeral, petty pleasure that arises from the first, the pain that arises from the second, and the neutral feeling issuing from the third), beyond life and death, beyond hope and fear, beyond dexterity and clumsiness. The Mahāyāna and higher vehicles refer to this condition of nonconceptual, absolute wisdom^a or primordial gnosis,^b as absolute Refuge, or as supramundane Refuge directly received from the true nature of phenomena (i.e. from the *dharmatā* or *chönyi*^c), for as just shown, the irreversible stabilization of the condition in question is the only absolute Refuge.

Relative Refuge: Provisional and Definitive

In *The Precious Vase*, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu writes:⁵⁴⁹

There are two ways to understand the meaning of ‘taking refuge’: the provisional way and the definitive way.

Provisional refuge means taking refuge temporarily in a person, in a non-human being, in the power of a *rig ngag mantra*⁵⁵⁰ etc. with the aim of avoiding direct or indirect disturbances to one’s body, voice and mind—and even finding shelter in a cave or at the foot of a tree when caught in a downpour.

The aim of definitive Refuge, on the other hand, consists not only in overcoming momentary problems but also in resolving their cause or root, which is our dualism, in such a way as to obtain lasting release from the ocean of *saṃsāra*. To this end we take Refuge in the Three Precious Jewels, that is, in the Teacher [Śākyamuni], who teaches the Path in a perfect way, in his teachings, which constitute the holy *dharma*, and in the noble *saṃgha* or community of those who help us apply such teachings in the right way.

In other words, provisional refuge is the refuge human beings in general, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist, take in different mundane objects in order to avoid specific threats, whereas definitive Refuge is the Refuge that Buddhists take in the Three Precious Jewels (or in their equivalents in Paths other than that of renunciation, which will be considered below) as the means to attain the Awake state that, as we saw above, is the only secure, stable, everlasting Refuge.

Refuge on the Path of Renunciation

As already shown, it is as part of the method for having access to the absolute condition that is the only true, stable and immutable Refuge, that in the Hīnayāna (and in general in the entire Path of Renunciation) one takes relative Refuge: (1) in the Buddha as the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni who, having obtained the true, absolute Refuge that one wishes to obtain, became the source of the teachings of this Path; (2) in the *dharma* or teachings of the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni as the Path for reaching the true and absolute Refuge; and (3) in the *saṃgha* or community of practitioners as the true helpers with the practice aimed at gaining access to the true and absolute Refuge and, subsequently, at

^a Skt. *prajñā*; Tib. sherab (Wylie, *shes rab*); 般若 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*). Here these terms are to be understood in the sense of *absolute prajñā*, as understood in the Prajñāpāramitā teachings.

^b Skt. *jñāna*; Tib. yeshe (Wylie, *ye shes*); Ch. 智 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴*; Jap. *chi*).

^c Wylie, *chos nyid*; Ch. 法性 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*).

becoming firmly established in it. The third of these aspects is directly related to the role that teachers have in the Hīnayāna and gradual Mahāyāna—who in this case are the elder members of the *saṃgha* who help one understand and apply the teachings correctly, or to follow the discipline correctly, but that may not give us orders that must be incontestably followed—which will be considered in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Concerning the way to take Refuge, in the Hīnayāna, which strongly places the emphasis on the taking of vows, Refuge ended up turning into a vow. In the Mahāyāna, for its part, it has been noted that the key concept is not that of taking vows that may by no means be transgressed, but that of engaging in a training that, contrariwise, implies the commitment to go beyond one’s limits if that is necessary in order to benefit others (even when this may be dangerous for one’s own comfort, security and so on); therefore, in the Mahāyāna, rather than being a vow that one takes, Refuge is a training one engages in. (However, the Mahāyāna incorporated the system of vows from the Hīnayāna, subjecting it to a properly Mahāyāna motivation, intention and way of applying, and thereon in this vehicle there arose that which became known as the “Refuge vow and training of the *bodhisattva*.”) Furthermore, in the Mahāyāna, once one attains nonconceptual, absolute *prajñā* and thereby enters the Third Path, which is that of Vision, it is said that one has attained the absolute Refuge, which is the one referred to as the “supramundane Refuge received directly from the true nature of phenomena.”^a

The above explanation of Refuge in the Mahāyāna is a literal, outer interpretation that is far from being the only one. It is said that in an inner Mahāyāna sense the Buddha is the state of Awakening, the *dharma* is the teachings and practices characteristic of the Mahāyāna, and the *saṃgha* is formed by the higher bodhisattvas (those in the third and fourth paths, i.e. from the first through the tenth level). Likewise, it is said that in a secret Mahāyāna sense the Buddha is the *dharmakāya*, the *dharma* is the *saṃbhogakāya*, and the *saṃgha* is the *nirmāṇakāya*.⁵⁵¹ Only in the last acceptance is Refuge absolute, for it is only in the condition of irreversible indivisibility of the three *kāyas* that nothing can harm us or affect us negatively.

When all Paths and vehicles are taken into account, the conventional Refuge of the Sūtrayāna is the outer Refuge.⁵⁵² Padmasambhava^b explained this outer Refuge in characteristically Mahāyāna terms by emphasizing compassion and working for others; noting that the essence of taking Refuge is the aspiration to attain supreme Awakening, together with commitment to compassion; and asserting that it is called Refuge because it releases from fear of the three lower states and from wrong beliefs that attribute absolute, inherent truth and self-existence to the impermanent aggregates. He further stated that this Refuge has three causes, which are fear of the suffering of *samsāra*, faith in the Three Jewels as the place of Refuge, and recognition of the Three Jewels as the object of Refuge; that its object is the Three Jewels, the only means to bring about the cessation of birth-and-death; that the requisites of the one who takes it are aspiration, devotion and faith, as well as always keeping in mind the qualities of the Three Jewels (which implies

^a Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *chönyi* (Wylie, *chos nyid*); Ch. 法性 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*).

^b According to a terma by Nyang Nyima Özer (Nyang Nyi ma ’od zer: 1124-1192), this explanation is part of the advice given by the great teacher of Odḍiyāna to his consort Yeshe Tsogyäl. Cf. *Guru Padma’s Advice in the Form of Questions and Answers* (*Lopön Pemai zheldam zhulen* [Wylie, *slob dpon pad ma’i zhal gdams zhu lan*): Tibetan Text 19: A: p. 256, 6; B: p. 20, 3); quoted in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 99-101).

recognizing that it would not make sense to take Refuge in conditioned and samsaric entities or conditions, such as the deities of the eternalists, and that it only makes sense to take it in the state of Buddhahood, unconditioned and nirvanic, which is the sole place of freedom in all respects); that the method of taking Refuge should be based on devotion through body, voice and mind, fear of the three lower states of *samsāra*, trust in the power of the Three Jewels, and stable faith and compassion; and that the intention in taking it should be the liberation of all beings, as otherwise one’s selfish intention will assert and maintain the illusion of selfhood. This last point explains the reason why we recite: “In order to liberate all beings from the suffering of *samsāra*, I and all beings of the three worlds take Refuge until we have reached the essence of Awakening.”⁵³

Refuge on the Path of Transformation

As we have seen, according to the classification of the nine vehicles into Path of Renunciation, Path of Transformation and Path of Spontaneous Liberation, the views and methods of the Path of Transformation in their entirety were introduced into the human world by *nirmāṇakāya mahāsiddhas* who received them through manifestations of the *sambhogakāya*, and who then communicated them through lines of transmission that at some point reached our teachers in human form, who obtained the realization of the state that the teachings of this Path communicate and, in turn, obtained the capacity to transmit it. This is why true Tantric Masters have the capacity to transfer the power of this state to us by means of Tantric empowerments, which, when the third empowerment is effective, may be the occasion for an example of primordial gnosis^a to manifest in our own continuum of experience—which in the case of a male disciple is introduced in the form of a female partner, symbolized by a nude dancing girl. In the fourth empowerment, for its part, an oral indication of the nature of mind is offered that, by the power of the transmission, in fortunate individuals may be the key for the spontaneous occurrence of the *actual primordial gnosis*^b that in freedom from conceptual fabrications^c reveals the true condition of ourselves and of the whole of reality, as well as the true meaning of the *dharma*—which is none other than this *actual primordial gnosis* itself. Then, even after the veil of hypostasized / reified / valorized conceptualization is reestablished, since we have apprehended the true condition at least for an instant, we know what it is and thus if we do not remain in doubt we no longer depend on explanation or analogy. Furthermore, it is even possible that we may have learned how to have access to it again, and since we have also received the power of the transmission, we may have the capacity to practice on our own.

This is why, on the Path of Transformation, Refuge is taken in the Master (*guru* or lama^d) rather than in the Buddha: the Master is no other than Vajradhāra—a name that

^a Tib. **peyi yeshe** (Wylie, *dpe yi ye shes*).

^b Tib. **döngyi yeshe** (Wylie, *don gyi ye shes*).

^c Skt. *niṣprapañca*; Tib. thödräl (Wylie, *spros bral*); Ch. 不戲論 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *pu²-hsi⁴-lun⁴*) or Skt. *aprapañca*; Tib. töme or töpa mepa (Wylie, *spros [pa] med [pa]*); Ch. 無戲論 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *wu-hsi-lun*). In properly Dzogchen terminology, Tib. **la dawa** (Wylie, *la bzla ba*).

^d Wylie, *bla ma*; Ch. 師 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shī*; Wade-Giles, *shih¹*) or 上師 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shàngshī*; Wade-Giles, *shang⁴-shih¹*). However, the word-by-word rendering of *bla ma* is 藏文 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zàngwén*; Wade-Giles, *tsang⁴-wen²*).

is given to whoever has attained the supreme realization of Tantrism—and as such is the ultimate source of the empowerment that allows the primordial condition to unveil in our continuum, as well as of the methods we apply (for here the methods are the deities we visualize, which were transmitted by the human teachers who first realized the respective Tantric methods and then through a line of transmission until our teacher, from whom we receive them) and of our realization, which is totally dependent on that which we receive from him or her in the course of the four empowerments, our devotion to the Master, on the way we perceive the teacher, on our keeping the commitment or *samaya* with the Master, etc. Furthermore, the primordial gnosis of which first we receive a sample in the third empowerment and, if everything works perfectly, we perfectly realize in the fourth empowerment, and in which we aspire to firmly establish ourselves, is the teacher’s state of true, absolute Refuge. In short, the Tantric Master is the source of all Empowerments, Methods and Realizations. Padmasambhava stated:^a

You should understand that the Teacher is more important than the Buddhas of the thousand kalpas, for all the Buddhas of past kalpas^b have attained Awakening by following a Teacher. Before the arising of a Teacher not even the name “Buddha” existed.

And also:^c

The Teacher is Buddha, the Teacher is the *dharma* and equally the Teacher is the *saṃgha*:^d He or she is the root of the Three Jewels. Even if you neglect any other offering but honor the Teacher perfectly, satisfying him or her, then all the *siddhis* you desire will manifest.

Likewise, just as on the Path of Renunciation we take Refuge in the *dharma* (externally identified with the teachings given by Śākyamuni) as the Path to tread in order to attain the condition of true, absolute Refuge, on the Path of Transformation we take Refuge in the “meditation deity”^e because this deity is the main method of the practice that the Tantric Master communicates as the Path to gain access to the true and absolute Refuge.

Finally, just like on the Path of Renunciation one takes Refuge in the *saṃgha* or community of practitioners as the true helpers of the practice to be applied in order to establish oneself in the state of true and absolute Refuge, on the Path of Transformation one takes Refuge in the *ḍākinīs*,^f owners of the Teachings, who, together with guardians,^g

^a According to a terma by **Nyang Nyima Özer** (nyang nyi ma ’od zer: 1124-1192), the following words are part of the advice given by the great teacher of Oḍḍiyāna to his consort Yeshe Tsogyāl. See Tibetan Text 19: A: p. 256, 6; B: p. 20, 3. Quoted in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 104).

^b Pāli: *kappa*; Pāli *kappa*; Tib. kalpa (Wylie, *bskal pa*); Ch. 劫 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh*²; jap. *gō*) or 劫波 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *jié bō*; Wade-Giles, *chieh²-po¹*): time-cycle, which is divided in various ways, including the one into four eras (Skt. *yuga*; Tib. den [Wylie, *ldan*]; Ch. 時 [Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn *shí*; Wade-Giles, *shih*²].

^c *Ibidem*.

^d Pāli *saṅgha*; Tib. gendün (Wylie, *dge ’dun*); Ch. 僧伽 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *sēngjiā*; Wade-Giles, *seng¹-chia¹*).

^e Skt. *deva*, *devatā*, or, more precisely, *iṣṭadevatā* (where *iṣṭa* means “cherished” or “revered”); Tib. yidam (Wylie, *yi dam*: probably a contraction of *yid kyi dam tshig*: probably a contraction of *yid kyi dam tshig*: *samaya* of mind, or non-Jungian archetypal forms [with which] *samaya* [is kept]).

^f Tib. khandro or khandroma (Wylie, *mkha’ ’gro [ma]*); Ch. 荼枳尼 (Hànnyǔ Pīnyīn, *túzhīnǐ*; Wade-Giles, *t’u²-chih³-ni²*).

pawos and pamos, and *vajra* brothers and sisters, on this “swift” Path are the true helpers of the practice.^b Why are *dākinīs* the principal true helpers of the practice? The Sanskrit term *dākinī* has many different levels of meaning, which may be classified into the three *kāyas* and into a series of classes, but it is the *dākinīs* of the three *kāyas*, as well as all wisdom-*dākinīs*, which are the true helpers of the practice *par excellence*. From the standpoint of the male, in particular, the *dākinī* *qua* Tantric secret consort^c is a primary helper in some of the main practices of the Vajrayāna Path of Transformation, as well as a trigger for activating the passions, for the relationship with her activates possessiveness, attachment, anger, jealousy and so on, which the practitioner must deal with by means of transformation, turning them into the corresponding facets of primordial gnosis so as to keep the Tantric commitment^d—which is a powerful impulse for *dharma* practice. However, the *dākinīs* represent the energies of life, the activities of the Masters, and so on, and also all of these are the true helpers of the practice, for the situations that present themselves in our lives, and in particular those that are created by the Master’s activities, are trials that offer the opportunity to swiftly advance on the Path—or else incur into pitfalls that may block the advance in question. (It may be noted that the Refuge explained in this paragraph is the one corresponding to the external level of Refuge on the Path of Transformation; the inner level is explained below in the regular text of this chapter;)

Padmasambhava^e notes that to take Refuge the Vajrayāna way, which when all Paths and vehicles are taken into account, is the one that is referred to as inner Refuge, one has to enter the Path of Secret *Mantra*;⁵⁵⁴ that the way of taking it must be based on respect and devotion through body, voice and mind; that the three specific intentions of the individual taking Refuge must be to see the teacher as Buddha, never to forsake the meditation deity even at the cost of his or her own life, and to worship all khandros or *dākinīs* without interruption; that the duration of Refuge is from moment of taking the commitment of *bodhicitta* during the initiation until attaining the level of Vajradhāra;⁵⁵⁵ that the secondary cause is having respect and devotion toward the Path of Secret *Mantra* (*Guhyamantrayāna*); and that its aim and benefits are to make one suitable to tread the Mantrayāna Path and to receive the empowering flow that is proper to this Path.

However, when the Vajrayāna Path of Transformation is considered on its own, the Refuge that in this discussion I have associated with this Path is the outer Refuge, for it is the one that is referred to literally in the texts; and in that case the inner Refuge is the one taken in the true nature of each of the three aspects of the *vajra* body: (1) the seed-

^a Skt. *dharmapāla*; Pāli *dhammapāla*; Tib. chökyong (Wylie, *chos skyong*); Ch. 法護 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāhù*; Wade-Giles, *fā³-hu⁴*).

^b With regard to the relation between the Refuge of the Path of Renunciation and the Refuge of the Path of Transformation, cf. Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 93-103).

^c Tib. *sangyum* (Wylie, *gsang yum*).

^d As Gampopa said once, “you must not show the *karmamudrā* (Tib. *lekyi chaggye* [Wylie, *las kyi phyag rgya*]) jealousy or antagonism.” In this context *karmamudrā* refers to the Tantric consort.

^e According to a terma by Nyang Nyima Özer (nyang nyi ma ’od zer: 1124-1192), the following words in the regular text are part of the advice given in Tibet by the great teacher from Oḍḍiyāna to his consort Yeshe Tsogyäl. See Tibetan Text 19: A: p. 256, 6; B: p. 20, 3. Quoted in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, pp. 101-102).

essence indivisible from the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness;^{a556} (2) the energy currents or winds,^{b557} and (3) the energy pathways.^{c558} In the same context, the secret Refuge may be said to be the three *kāyas* as they are understood in the context of the Vajrayāna Path of Transformation—and on the basis of the fact that in this Path the general object of Refuge is the *ḍākinī*, it may be said that it is the state of rigpa, for the *dharmakāya ḍākinī* Samantabhadri stands for the *total, empty expanse where all physical and mental phenomena manifest*, which is indivisible from the *dharmakāya* represented as her consort, Samantabhadra.

In actual practice, on the Path of Transformation there is no need to take a Refuge vow, as it suffices to recognize the three Refuges in the Tantric Initiation, or else to take Refuge on one’s own, without the need for a ritual and simultaneously with the *bodhicitta* commitment as it is done in the System of the Profound View^d attributed to Nāgārjuna. According to the celebrated lines in *The Pure Dimension of Mañjuśrī*:^e

All *dharmas* are secondary causes
And depend entirely on one’s intention.

As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu notes, it is thus easy to see that this system is in full accord with the basic principle of all the Mahayana training methods, which is that everything depends on the intention of the individual. However, in everyday life Tantric practitioners, visualizing in front of them the field of merits consisting in the *guru* (which in the case of the Nyingmapa may be represented with Padmasambhava or Garab Dorje), the *deva(s)*, and the *ḍākinī(s)* and so on, in the context of a ritual one should recite the phrases *namo guru bhya*, *namo deva bhya*, *namo ḍākinī bhya*.

Refuge on the Path of Spontaneous liberation

We have seen that the only secure, true Refuge is Buddhahood; that on the Path of Renunciation the source of the teachings is the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni, Buddha of our age; and that therefore Refuge is taken principally in the Buddha. We have also seen that on the Path of Transformation the state of the Master is held to be Buddhahood; that the true source of empowerment and blessings is the Master; and that therefore Refuge is taken principally in the Master. Well, on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation there is full awareness that the only secure, true Refuge is our own state of rigpa, which is also the source of the teachings, blessings and realization,⁵⁵⁹ and which is not in any sense or to any degree different from the *dharmakāya* Samantabhadra, root of the transmission of

^a Tib. thigle (Wylie, *thig le*), which renders the Skt. *bindu* (also *tilaka*), but which at the same time has an acceptance very similar to that of the Skt. *kuṇḍalinī*—this being the reason why I render the term as “seed-essence indivisible from the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness.” Cf. endnote 567.

^b Skt. *prāṇavāyu* (combination of the terms *vāyu* and *prāṇa*), *prāṇa* (Tib. sog [Wylie, *srog*]; Ch. 波那 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōnà*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-na⁴*]) or *vāyu* (Pāli *vāyu* or *vāyo*; Tib. lung [Wylie, *rlung*]; Ch. 風大 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fēngdà*; Wade-Giles, *feng¹-ta⁴*]), according to context. In this context the Tib. and Ch. seem to be the terms that render the Skt. *vāyu*.

^c Skt. *nāḍī*; Tib. sa (Wylie, *rtsa*).

^d Tib. **zabmo tawai lug** (Wylie, *zab mo lta ba’i lugs*).

^e Tib. *Jampal zhingkhö* (Wylie, *’Jam dpal zhing bkod*), four chapters contained in the *Könchok tsempai do* (Wylie, *dkon mchog brtsegs pa’i mdo*; Skt. *Ratnakūṭasūtra*), translated by *lotsawa* Yeshe de (Wylie, *ye shes sde*) and the Indian Paṇḍita Śilendrabodhi 65, 109. Cited in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2000).

these teachings—and therefore it is this state that constitutes the true Refuge. (However, this should not be taken to mean that the Master is unimportant on this Path: ordinarily rigpa is realized through the instruction and blessings of the Master, and therefore there is a commitmentless commitment of the *yogin* or *yoginī* with her or him, who is also a catalyzer of rigpa’s blessings. And this is the case also in those individuals who initially realize rigpa without an external *nirmāṇakāya* Master’s instruction or empowerment.)

In fact, concerning the type of Refuge corresponding to the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, which in comparison with the Refuge of other Paths and vehicles is referred to as secret Refuge,⁵⁶⁰ Padmasambhava^a stated that the objects of Refuge are tawa^b or Vision, gompa^c or Contemplation, and chöpa^d or Behavior. As noted in the chapter on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, as is the case with every Buddhist vehicle, Ati Dzogpa Chenpo has three aspects, which are the Base, the Path and the Fruit—each one of which has in turn three aspects. As we have also seen, the first of the aspects of the Path of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo is tawa or Vision, which, unlike the tawas of other vehicles, is not an intellectual view about reality, knowledge, truth and method, but the state of rigpa: for the reasons expressed above, on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation this is the equivalent of the Buddha on the Path of Renunciation, and of the Master on that of Transformation, and as such on this Path it is the first element of Refuge.⁵⁶¹ With regard to this element, Padmasambhava asserted that the tawa should be based on certainty, which in terms of the three phrases of Garab Dorje’s testament means that for this aspect of Refuge to be truly effective one should be able to remain free of doubts with regard to the fact that the condition that unveiled itself in the Introduction is the true condition of all entities and experiences. With regard to specific intentions, the Mahāguru Padmasambhava noted that the tawa involves not harboring any attachment or desire to achieve Awakening or relinquish *samsāra* (the point in this being that the tawa of Ati is the unveiling of the primordial state corresponding to Awakening, which does not permit the manifestation of hope or fear—which are two of the main demons with regard to whom one is taking Refuge in the demon-destroying *vajra* of rigpa).

Just as on the Path of Renunciation it was the *dharma* taught by Śākyamuni that was to be practiced, and on the Path of Transformation the methods of the practice were the meditation deities, on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation what is to be applied is the second aspect of this Path, which as we have seen is gompa or Contemplation, defined as “continuing in the tawa or Vision.” Thus continuing in the intrinsically all-liberating nondual state free from hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization, so that all thoughts and perceptions that otherwise would veil this state self-liberate, on this Path corresponds to the *dharma* on the Path of Renunciation and the yidam on the Path of Transformation, thus being the second element of Refuge. With regard to this element, Padmasambhava noted that the gompa should be based on the direct Seeing [(of) the true condition of all reality]: it must consist in *the continuity of this Seeing*.⁵⁶² Furthermore,

^a According to a terma by Nyang Nyima Özer (nyang nyi ma ’od zer: 1124-1192), the following words are part of the advice given by the great teacher of Oḍḍiyāna to his consort Yeshe Tsogyäl. Cf. Tibetan Text 19: A: p. 256, 6; B: p. 20, 3. Quoted in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 102).

^b Wylie, *lta ba*; Skt. *dr̥ṣṭi* (also *darśana*; especially when referring to nonBuddhist systems); Ch. 見 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiàn*; Wade-Giles, *chien*⁴).

^c Wylie, *sgom pa*; Skt. *bhāvanā*; Ch. 修習 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiūxí*; Wade-Giles, *hsiū¹-hsi²*).

^d Wylie, *spyod pa*; Skt. *caryā*; Pāli and Skt. *carita*; Ch. 行 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng*; Wade-Giles, *hsing*²).

Padmasambhava said that one should not have any concept of being in “Contemplation” or in “meditation:” the Contemplation of Ati lies in being beyond the limits established by concepts,⁵⁶³ and if the thought of being in meditation arises and does not liberate itself spontaneously, this means *samsāra* has interrupted our Contemplation.

Finally, just as on the Path of Renunciation the true helpers of the practice were the members of the *saṃgha* (which in the external sense was the community of monks and nuns), and just as on the Path of Transformation they were the *ḍākinī* s, together with the guardians of the teachings, the pawos and pamos and the *vajra* brothers and sisters, on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation the true helper of the practice is the third aspect of the Path, which is *chöpa* or Behavior—with regard to which Padmasambhava said that “one should neither accept nor reject anything, thus never falling into partiality” (so that in this regard one should be like a pig or a dog, which will gobble shit as enthusiastically as caviar, beyond discrimination). The point is that the *chöpa* of Atiyoga consists in the spontaneous flow of actionless activities that manifests when the state of *rigpa* that is the essence of *gompa* or Contemplation is carried beyond the limits of sessions or thuns—and since the state of *rigpa* is totally beyond judgment, this implies being utterly beyond acceptance and rejection and therefore beyond partiality. If at some point the continuity of the state of *rigpa* (and therefore of *chöpa* or Behavior) is interrupted, we must maintain the same impartiality beyond acceptance and rejection, and therefore our unconventional courses of behavior, or the disapproving opinions of others concerning these courses of behavior, will elicit hypostatized / reified / absolutized / valorized judging thoughts that will yield conflict—which will be most useful, for in Atiyoga the turning of contradiction into conflict is the essential catalyst of the process of spontaneous liberation allowing us to proceed swiftly on the Path.⁵⁶⁴

For example, when we act like bodhisattvas and hence the way we are perceived by others causes us to experience a pleasant feeling tone, it is extremely easy to forget the practice and be carried away by the habit of clinging to our thoughts. Contrariwise, when the way others perceive us induces in us an unpleasant feeling tone, this feeling can be effectively used as an alarm reminding us to look at our thoughts in the ways prescribed by the teachings, so that they self-liberate—or, if we have developed a higher capacity, it may directly result in the self-liberation of those thoughts. However, this does not mean that we must devise specific courses of action that we expect will have a pre-conceived effect on ourselves or others: the *chöpa* or Behavior, to be so, must be uncontrived—and when we slip from the state of *rigpa* and fall into delusion, the way we will behave will to a great extent depend on how our idiosyncratic delusion is, what are our preponderant passions, etc.

One of the most concise and yet most precise keys to understanding the *chöpa* of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo may be the following stanza discussing it, which Dūdjom Rinpoche (Jigdräl Yeshe Dorje) wrote in the poem entitled *Calling the Lama from Afar*:

The careless craziness of destroying clinging to a style...
may this human lifetime be spent in this State of uninhibited, naked ease.

Throughout history, consummate Dzogchen practitioners manifested extremely unconventional modes of Behavior, and the bad reputation and rejection they gained by so doing became a great help to their practice. However, each must behave in terms of his or her level of realization (or lack of it): if those who are not highly realized implemented

such courses of action, the medicine would turn into poison: how sad it would be if we inflated our egos by being seen as mad *yogins*, *mahāsiddhas* or the like! Moreover, the West of our time is not the Tibet in which those practitioners lived, and behaving as they did could make us get into great trouble—and, what is worse, the bad reputation that such behavior would yield could stain our teacher, his or her Community, and possibly even Dzogchen Ati and Tibetan Buddhism as a whole. Therefore, far more reasonable than imitating legendary figures of the distant past would be to find inspiration in the conduct of our own teacher. However, this does not mean that we should *imitate* him or her: to begin with, the disciple normally does not have the Master’s level of realization; in the same way, a Master may have to show an authority and an imperviousness that would not at all befit those who are not Masters; and finally, finding inspiration in the teacher’s conduct is not the same as *imitating* that conduct, for imitation would sustain the dualistic control of conduct that the Behavior of Dzogchen is meant to help us surpass.

In particular, we should keep in mind that the Behavior of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, if genuine, will at no point neglect the needs of others. So long as we act spontaneously in the continuity of the Vision or *tawa*, we are free from the belief in a self and from the selfishness that issues from this belief, and since we do not experience other beings or the world as external, we spontaneously care for them the way deluded beings care for their own bodies. And then, when the arising of delusion interrupts the continuity of the Vision or *tawa*, we must apply the principle of self-responsibility on the basis of the *presence of responsible awareness*.^a Chögyal Namkhai Norbu illustrated *responsible awareness*^b with the example of a glass containing poison: whoever has a responsible awareness knows the effects of poison and therefore does not drink from the glass.^c In turn, presence^d indicates the lack of distractedness that prevents us from *inadvertently* drinking from the glass. Hence Padmasambhava’s renowned statement: “Though my Vision is ampler than the sky, my observation of the law of cause and effect is finer than sand.”⁵⁶⁵

At any rate, all that was said in the above paragraphs concerning the *chöpa* of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo should allow us to understand why on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation *chöpa* is the equivalent of the *samgha* on the Path of Renunciation and of the *dākinī* on the Path of Transformation, and why as such it is the third element of Refuge.

To conclude the discussion of the Refuge of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo that here is being referred to as secret Refuge, it must be remarked that with regard to it Padmasambhava said about it:^e

The person should have supreme capacity and aspiration to Awakening

^a Skt. *smṛtisamprajanya*; Pāli *satisampajañña*; Tib. tenpa dang shezhin (Wylie, *dran pa dang shes bzhin*); Ch. 正念慧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngniànhuì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-nien⁴-hui⁴*).

^b Tib. dangshe zhin (Wylie, *dang shes bzhin*).

^c Namkhai Norbu (1995).

^d Tib. tenpa (Wylie, *dran pa*). This term, which translates the Pāli *sati* and the Sanskrit *smṛti*, has been rendered into English as “mindfulness,” “collectedness,” “attention,” “presence,” etc. The Pāli term that refers to *foundations of sati* or mindfulness, which are four (that of the body, that of the feelings, that of the mind, and that of mental objects), is *satipaṭṭhāna* (Skt. *smṛtyupasthāna*; Tib. tenpa nyerzhak [Wylie, *dran pa nyer gzhaḡ*]; Ch. 念處 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *niànchù*; Wade-Giles, *nien⁴-ch’u⁴*).

^e The following words are part of the advice given by the great teacher of Oḍḍiyāna to his consort Yeshe Tsogyāl according to Tibetan Text 19: A: p. 256, 6; B: p. 20, 3. Quoted in Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 102).

With regard to its duration, it lasts until irreversible total Awakening.
As for the secondary cause, you take Refuge with the wish not to be reborn.
Concerning its benefits, it serves to attain perfect Awakening in this very lifetime.

In this Path, Refuge is not taken by means of a ceremony, nor is it received in the context of an initiation; rather, the individual who, with pure motivation, aspires to attain realization and thus studies with and follows a teacher, automatically has taken Refuge in the teacher and the teaching—which in this Path is the essence of Refuge in the outermost sense of the term. Thereafter, once truly on the Path, whenever the state of *rigpa* manifests, the individual is in the condition of Refuge in the innermost sense of the term.

The above should not be understood to mean that in the Dzogchen Atiyoga we do not do any kind of ritual Refuge practice. In general, Dzogchen practitioners regularly do a Tantric style Refuge practice, visualizing the *guru* or lama in the space in front of them (or, alternatively, over their own head)—which, if carried out with supreme devotion, is an essential key for effective progress on the Path, as this practice may have a great value as an invocation (lit. wish-Path^a) helping us to open ourselves up to the transmission, so that we may actually receive it together with the blessings of our true condition and the lineage.⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, the outcome of treading the Path totally depends on the manner in which our relationship with the physical Master from whom we receive transmission evolves and, as will be reiterated in a subsequent section of this chapter, particularly on the way we maintain our commitment or *samaya* with him or her.

The Role and Status of the Teacher

Role and Status of the Teacher on the Path of Renunciation

Concerning the relationship between students and those from whom they receive instruction, each vehicle of the Path of Renunciation has its particular norms and outlook; however, in all three gradual varieties of the Path of Renunciation the figure of a Master bearing unquestionable authority is nonexistent.

In the Hīnayāna, the *śrāvakas*, as well as those would-be *pratyekabuddhas* who live at a time when a Buddha's teaching is flourishing,⁵⁶⁷ must learn limitlessly from their older *kalyāṇamitta*^b or “noble friends.” In particular, in a Buddhist monastery each novice chooses, among the older monks, one to instruct him in the *dharmā*,^c whom he will call *ācariya*,^d and another one who will instruct him in the norms of discipline, whom he will

^a Tib. mönlam (Wylie, *smon lam*); Skt. *praṇidhāna*; Pāli *panidhāna*; Ch. 願 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuàn*; Wade-Giles, *yuān*⁴).

^b This word is Pāli; Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*; Tib. gewai shenyen (Wylie, *dge ba'i bshes gnyen*); Ch. 善知識 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *shànzhīshì*; Wade-Giles *shan*⁴-*chih*¹-*shih*⁴).

^c This is the Pāli word; Skt. *dharma*; Tib. chö (Wylie, *chos*); Ch. 法 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎ*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³; Jap. *hō*).

^d This word is Pāli; Skt. *ācārya*; Tib. lobjön (Wylie, *slob dpon*); Ch. 阿闍梨 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *āshéllí*; Wade-Giles, *a*¹-*she*²-*li*²; Jap. *ajari*) or 阿闍梨耶 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *āshéllíyē*; Wade-Giles, *a*¹-*she*²-*li*²-*yeh*¹; Jap. *ajariya*). The Sanskrit term was used in the Hīnayāna communities of Northern India. Since monastic institutions always belong to the Hīnayāna, independently of whether the individual or tradition adheres to

refer to as Pāli *upajjhāya*.^a Nevertheless, novices who receive instruction do not have to make a commitment of absolute obedience to either of the two types of instructor, because they are neither the source of the teachings nor infallible authorities, but fellow members of the *sangha*^b who, being more learned and experienced, are capable of being “true helpers with the practice” (which is how the *sangha* was defined in the context of the Sūtrayāna in the previous section of this chapter).

In the gradual Mahāyāna, students must also learn limitlessly from their older “noble friends” or *kalyāṇamitra*,^c and concerning such friends in general the situation is very much as in the Hīnayāna. One minor difference between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in this regard is that, since the inner Mahāyāna *sangha* consists of the higher bodhisattvas, who are those who have reached the first level but have not gone beyond the tenth, in the Mahāyāna the “true helpers with the practice” may be laymen rather than monks or nuns.⁵⁶⁸ In fact, it would be difficult to conceive a better *dharma* friend than the Licchavi Vimalakīrti.

Finally, in the sudden Mahāyāna, consisting in Chán Buddhism, students do not learn from “noble friends” wielding no special authority to command others, but from the *ācārya*,^d who in this tradition has practically the same commanding authority as the *guru* or *vajrācārya* of the Path of Transformation.

Role and Status of the Teacher in the Path of Transformation

The role of the teacher in the Path of Transformation is very different from the one it has in the Path of Renunciation. As we have seen, here the source of the teachings and of their realization is not Śākyamuni Buddha, but the Tantric Master (the *guru*^e or *vajrācārya*^f): it is he or she that is the source of the empowerment that enables disciples to directly experience the example of primordial gnosis^g that will set them on the Path, as well as the source of actual primordial gnosis^h that constitutes the student’s realization. In fact, the state we want to reach is the state of the teacher, and hence its attainment totally

that vehicle or to the Mahāyāna (or even of the Vajrayāna), the term was also used, and is still used, in the monastic communities professing the views and practices of the Ample Vehicle.

^a This term is Pāli; Skt. *upādhyāya*; Tib. khenpo (Wylie, *mkhan po*); Ch. 和尚 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *héshàng*; Wade-Giles, *he²-shang⁴*; Jap. *oshō* / *wajō* / *kashō*; Korean *hwasang*). Originally rendered into Kashgar by a term that sounds like Chinese 社 *shè*, *héshàn* derives from the Khotani and is not a precise translation (cf. Cheung, ed. annot. & comm. 2014, § 293). The Sanskrit term was used in the Hīnayāna communities of Northern India. As with the term discussed in the preceding note, this term was also used, and is still used, in the monastic communities professing the views and practices of the Ample Vehicle.

^b This term is Pāli; Skt. *sangha*; Tib. gendün (Wylie, *dge 'dun*); Ch. 僧伽 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *sēngjiā*; Wade-Giles, *seng¹-chia¹*).

^c Pāli *kalyāṇamitta*; Tib. gewai shenyen (Wylie, *dge ba'i bshes gnyen*); Ch. 善知識 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn *shànzhīshì*; Wade-Giles *shan⁴-chih¹-shih⁴*).

^d Pāli *ācariya*; Tib. lobjön (Wylie, *slob dpon*); Ch. 阿闍梨 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *āshé lí*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-she²-lí²*; Jap. *ajari*) or 阿闍梨耶 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *āshé lí yē*; Wade-Giles, *a¹-she²-lí²-yeh¹*; Jap. *ajariya*). In this context the term has a meaning utterly different from the one it has in the Hīnayāna.

^e Tib. lama (Wylie, *bla ma*); Ch. 上師 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shàngshī*; Wade-Giles, *shang⁴-shih¹*). However, the word-by-word rendering of *bla ma* is 藏文 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *zàngwén*; Wade-Giles, *tsang⁴-wen²*).

^f Tib. dorje lopön (Wylie, *rdo rje slob dpon*); Ch. (lit.) 金剛阿闍梨 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāng āshé lí*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹ a¹-she²-lí²*) or (lit.) 金剛師 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāngshī*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹-shih¹*).

^g Tib. *peyi yeshe* (Wylie, *dpe yi ye shes*).

^h Tib. *döngyi yeshe* (Wylie, *don gyi ye shes*).

depends on our relationship with her or him. So true is this that, as we have seen, in the Vajrayāna it is said that before the teacher existed, not even the name of Buddha existed, and it is asserted that realization depends completely on the teacher. Furthermore, in this Path reliance on the teacher is so pivotal that the results of the transmission that we receive depend on the way we perceive her or him: it is said that if students perceive the teacher as a Buddha, they will have the possibility of obtaining the realization of a Buddha; if they perceive the teacher as a *vidyādhara*,^{a569} they may possibly obtain that of a *vidyādhara*; if they perceive the teacher as a *mahāsiddha*,^b they may be able to obtain that of a *mahāsiddha*; if they perceive the teacher as a *siddha*,^c they will have the possibility of obtaining that of a *siddha*; if they perceive the teacher as a *yogin*,^d they may possibly obtain that of a *yogin*; if they perceive the teacher as a *bodhisattva*,^e they have the possibility of obtaining that of a *bodhisattva*—and if they perceive the teacher as a dog or as a demon, they will be able to obtain the states of a dog or that of a demon, respectively. This implies that, as will be shown in the next section of this chapter, this vehicle involves the Tantric commitment or *samaya* to perceive the teacher in a pure manner, and our realization depends on the degree to which we succeed in maintaining this commitment.

The above explains why on the Path of Transformation an absolute authority is attributed to the *vajrācārya*^f or Vajra Master, who has the authority to dictate to his or her disciples what they must do, who must be the object of the latter's utmost respect, and whom they must hold in a position clearly superior to their own. This, however, does not mean that they must regard him or her as inherently superior to themselves; it simply means that they must see him or her as the embodiment of the state that they consider to be supreme and that, precisely through the transmissions and teachings that they receive from him or her, they themselves want to reach.

Role and Status of the Teacher on the Path of Spontaneous liberation

The way things are on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation everything is radically different from the ways they are in all other Paths. In fact, as explained in the previous section, on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation the teacher, in the most genuine, profound sense of the term, is the practitioner's own Vision or tawa. This does not mean, however, that in it there is no place for the Master as an external individual in human form. In fact, it seems that since the time of Garab Dorje no individual has been born who could derive the complete system of teachings and practices making up Ati Dzogpa Chenpo from his own Vision or tawa, Contemplation or gompa, and Behavior or chöpa: all Masters seem

^a Tib. rigdzin (Wylie, *rig 'dzin*); Ch. 持明 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chímíng*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih²-ming²*; Jap. *jimyō*; Kor. *chimyōng*). In Pāli, *vijjādhara*.

^b Tib. drubchen (Wylie, *sgrub chen*); Ch. 大聖 (simplified, 大圣) (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dàshèng*; Wade-Giles, *ta⁴-sheng⁴*): great adept, adept with great power(s).

^c Tib. drubthob (Wylie, *grub thob*).

^d Tib. naljorpa (Wylie, *nal 'byor pa*); Ch. 修行人 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīxíng rén*; Wade-Giles, *hsiu¹-hsing²-jen²*). The Chinese term refers to practitioners of the Buddha-dharma in general.

^e Pāli *bodhisatta*; Tib. changchub sempa (Wylie, *byang chub sems dpa'*); Ch. 菩薩 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *púsà*; Wade-Giles, *p'u-sa*; Jap. *bosatsu*; Kor. *posal*).

^f Tib. dorje lopön (Wylie, *rdo rje slob dpon*); Ch. (lit.) 金剛阿闍梨 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāng āshéllí*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹ a¹-she²-li²*) or (lit.) 金剛師 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāngshī*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹-shih¹*).

to have needed to rely on the transmission initiated by the supreme Master Garab Dorje, lord of all rigdzins, who historically became the source of the teachings of Atiyoga in their Buddhist form upon directly transmitting the patency of the primordial condition according to the teaching of the single state that transcends effort, Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, “the total completeness / plenitude and perfection (of the primordial state).” Not even those Masters and Treasure Revealers who obtain the first unveiling of primordial gnosis on their own and without the instructions and empowering of an external teacher, can do without the transmission and the teachings that are received from the external teacher in human form, who is of primordial importance on this Path. In fact, it is said that on this Path realization depends on devotion to the root guru. Sera Khandro cites some important Dzogchen texts and comments on them as follows:^a

The {Ati köpa chenpo^b or} Great Presentation of Ati states:

It is better for the guru to appear in the *maṇḍala* of your mind than to visualize a hundred *kāyas* of deities.

And :

Worshipping the buddhas of the three times is not equivalent to one one-hundredth of worshipping the guru.

In summary, do not do anything to displease your guru even for an instant, but rather please him with your body, speech and mind, and listen to whatever he says. If you please him by all that you do, this will purify all your previous karma, mental afflictions and habitual propensities, and you will instantly accomplish an ocean of accumulations of merit and knowledge.

The best [form of service] is to establish the teachings of the practice lineage through rendering service by means of your spiritual practice. Middling is to render service with your body and speech, which can only purify obscurations of the body, speech, and mind. And the least form of service is to please the guru with material goods, which adds to your accumulations of the two kinds. The {*Damtsik chogtu köpa dongpoi gyü^c* or} *Tantra of the Supreme Samaya* states:

Faithful ones who desire siddhis:
siddhis arise from pleasing the guru.

(...) {And the *Drataljur Tsawai Gyü^d* or} *Reverberation of Sound Root Tantra* states:

The advantages of devoting [yourself to the guru] are
immeasurable greater than the advantages of a wish-fulfilling tree,

^a In *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In *Düdjom Lingpa* (2015, Vol. II, pp. 263-265). Clarifying additions by the translator are in square brackets; my own clarifying additions are within curly brackets.

^b Wylie, *a ti bkod pa chen po*.

^c Wylie, *dam tshig mchog tu bkod pa sdong po'i rgyud*.

^d Wylie, *sgra thal 'gyur rtsa ba'i rgyud*.

a wish-fulfilling jewel, and a wish-fulfilling cow.
Bearing this in mind, devote yourself to the guru,
and this will turn the battle of *samsāra*.

On the Path of Spontaneous Liberation disciples must be aware that Garab Dorje is the supreme Master who introduced in our world the teachings that they practice, and when they do an external *guru-yoga* practice in the Tantric manner they must represent the source of the transmission by his image, or by that of Padmasambhava, who is the source of this transmission in Tibet, which seems to be the only one that has survived until our time and which is the one all Dzogchen practitioners of our time have received. Likewise, disciples must firmly adhere to the instructions of the external teacher—who, just as in the Path of Transformation, has the rank of *guru* or *vajrācārya*—and treat him or her with utmost respect, pleasing her or him in all possible ways.⁵⁷⁰ Otherwise, as Sera Khandro also notes by citing the *Gyutrül dwawa*^a or *Illusory Matrix*:^b

The disadvantage of disparaging the guru
and disturbing his mind
is that suffering is experienced for the duration it would take
to scoop out all the water
in the great, outer ocean with a hair:
this is known as {Transient} Vajra Hell.

I do not assume that my readers have adopted transmigration as a dogma in the external sense in which it is taken to mean that after our physical body ceases to be alive we will be reborn in one of the six realms of existence. In fact, in the *Kālāma Sutta*^c and elsewhere Śākyamuni taught that one should not accept any doctrine out of respect for the proclaimer, but on the contrary should put all theses to trial and accept only those that pass the assay of reason and that are for our own good and the good of others. Moreover, in section 17 of the same *Sutta* went so far as to proclaim that a happy and moral life would be correct even if there were no *karma* and reincarnation, proclaiming his noted four assurances, or solaces:

The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom four solaces are found here and now. “Suppose there is a hereafter and there is a fruit, result, of deeds done well or ill. Then it is possible that at the dissolution of the body after death, I shall arise in the heavenly world, which is possessed of the state of bliss.” This is the first solace found by him. “Suppose there is no hereafter and there is no fruit, no result, of deeds done well or ill. Yet in this world, here and now, free from hatred, free from malice, safe and sound, and happy, I keep myself.” This is the second solace found by him. “Suppose evil (results) befall an evil-doer. I, however, think of doing evil to no one. Then, how can ill (results) affect me who do no

^a Wylie, *sgyu 'phrul dva ba*.

^b In *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In Düdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. II, p. 264). My own clarifying additions and changes to the translation in the aforementioned text are within curly brackets.

^c Skt. *Kālāma Sūtra*.

evil deed?” This is the third solace found by him. “Suppose evil (results) do not befall an evil-doer. Then I see myself purified in any case.” This is the fourth solace found by him. The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom, here and now, these four solaces are found.

In brief, one should abstain from disparaging the guru and disturbing his mind, not out of fear of punishment, either in this life or in future lives, but by keeping the presence of the awareness that one’s realization totally depends on it, and that acting in such ways may shorten the Master’s lifespan and make him susceptible to the influences that induce illness—and yet it is certain that the psychological state represented as the *vajra* hell will befall one if one disparages the guru and disturbs his mind, and should one do so, if one does not repair the pitfall in the way that will be explained in the discussion of the *samaya* commitment on the Path of spontaneous liberation.

Although, as clearly shown by the above citations, on this Path the Master and the quality of the relationship and *samaya* commitment of the *yogins* and *yoginīs* with her or him is determinant, by means of their practice, on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation all *yogins* and *yoginīs* must acquire such familiarity with the Vision or tawa and confidence in it as to be able to become autonomous and self-sufficient—so that, as a result of their advance on the Path, their own state of rigpa becomes their direct source of inspiration and point of reference, and one no longer requires clarifications from an external source. In fact, a true student is not a blind person and a true Master is not a guide dog;^a the true Master leads students to See, so that they do not depend on him or her, and the true student is the one who succeeds in Seeing. If a teacher behaves like a guide dog, it is either because a student’s capacity is too low, or because the teacher him or herself does not See—and, when the blind lead the blind, they fall together into the abyss.⁵⁷¹

All this allows us to understand why it is said that the principle of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation is self-responsibility rather than putting ourselves totally under the authority of others:⁵⁷² while in the state of nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake Awareness called rigpa, pure spontaneity is the guide of Behavior; when the state of rigpa is not manifest, the practitioner must keenly keep in all circumstances the “presence (or mindfulness) of responsible awareness”^b that lies in not being distracted and being aware of the likely consequences of his or her actions, as will be explained in Part Two of this book.

Commitment, Precepts and Vows

Vows and Training on the Path of Renunciation

As we have seen, among the vehicles of the Path of Renunciation, the Hīnayāna is most strictly based on the principle of renunciation, associated with the adoption of vows that may not be broken for any reason, while the Mahāyāna is based on the principle of training, which implies the commitment to go beyond one’s own limits (and even to

^a I.e. a dog for guiding the blind or “seeing eye dog” (the latter name is actually a U.S. trademark).

^b Skt. *smṛtisamprajanya*; Pāli *satisampajañña*; Tib. *tenpa dang shezhin* (Wylie, *dran pa dang shes bzhin*); Ch. 正念慧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngniàn huì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-nien⁴-hui⁴*).

break one's vows and transgress the rules of behavior established by Buddhism) if that is necessary to benefit others, and one is certain that the result of one's actions will be good.

For the Hīnayāna, the supreme form of undertaking the practice is to become a monk or nun and thereby assume all the vows that this implies—which is a quite obvious form of renunciation. Otherwise we must take one or another of the alternative sets of Prātimokṣa^a vows or “vows for individual liberation” offered by the Vinaya,^{b573} and keep them steadfastly, doing one's best not to break them for any reason. Conversely, we have seen that the principle of the Mahāyāna is not that of taking vows, but that of undertaking a training based on the intention to help all sentient beings surmount their problems and, specially, overcome *duḥkha* altogether by attaining Awakening (or at least the individual liberation^c that is the aim of the Hīnayāna, but which, as noted in a previous section, the Mahāyāna does not recommend, for it does not view it as an irreversible liberation). In the Mahāyāna, instead of being bound by inviolable precepts, practitioners are *constrained to infringe whichever precepts or limits they may have imposed on themselves*, provided that their intention is to benefit sentient beings, and they are certain that their actions will be effective in achieving this aim. This is owing to the fact that, while the aim of the Hīnayāna is to free oneself from suffering, that of the Mahāyāna is to free the totality of sentient beings from it—even if one has to face various sufferings in order to achieve this goal, including those that result from committing the actions that the Hīnayāna views as negative and shuns. Consequently, whereas according to the Hīnayāna the character of an action will depend exclusively on whether the type of action involved is sanctioned by the teachings, forbidden by them, or considered neutral, in the Mahāyāna its character depends on the *intention* with which it is carried out: if the intention behind the action is good, and the individual has certainty that the action's results will be good, the action will be good and will produce merits and positive *karma*, even if some Hīnayāna vow was broken in order to carry it out. Therefore, even though one is willing to suffer the bad consequences of committing a forbidden action, if one does so with a good intention and is certain that the results will be positive, the consequences of the action will be good and rather than suffer those consequences foreseen by the Hīnayāna, will ripe progress on the Path and/or worldly happiness.

Even though the base of the Mahāyāna is not the adoption of the vows established by the Vinaya, but the principle of training, the influence of the Hīnayāna principle of taking vows resulted in the creation in the Mahāyāna of the *bodhisattva* vows. Although the principle of vows pertains to the Hīnayāna, since in this case the vows are based on Mahāyāna principles, they do not establish absolute rules of behavior to be kept even at the cost of one's life, but, on the contrary, compel practitioners to disregard any Hīnayāna vow they may have taken or any general prohibition on the levels of body and voice established by the Buddhist teachings, provided that they *intend* to benefit others and are certain that their actions will achieve this aim. In fact, those votes, as well as the Mahāyāna principle of training, compel Mahāyāna practitioners to carry out any of the seven nonvirtuous actions of body and voice forbidden by the Vinaya (which is an

^a This is the Sanskrit word; Pāli Pātimokkha; Tib. Sosor tharpa (Wylie, *so sor thar pa*); Ch. 波羅提毘木叉 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōluótípímùchā*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-lo²-t'i²-p'i²-mu⁴-ch'a¹*).

^b This is the Skt. and Pāli; Tib. dūlwa (Wylie, *'dul ba*); Ch. 律 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lù*; Wade-Giles, *lü⁴*).

^c Skt. *prātimokṣa*; Pāli, *pātimokkha*; Tib. sosor tharpa (Wylie, *so sor thar pa*); Ch. 波羅提毘木叉 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōluótípímùchā*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-lo²-t'i²-p'i²-mu⁴-ch'a¹*).

exclusively Hīnayāna collection), provided that their intention is to benefit others and they have certainty that the results will be good; however, under no circumstances are they allowed to commit any of the three nonvirtuous actions related to the level of mind, because one cannot be of benefit to anyone by craving other people's property, harboring a malevolent intention, or upholding an erroneous view (such as, for example, negating the law of cause and effect or law of *karma*).

Imagine you are walking through the forest and unexpectedly see Śākyamuni pass in front of you, and then after a while you meet a platoon pursuing him to kill him, the commander of which asks you, “in which direction did the monk they call ‘the Buddha’ go?” If you say the truth they will kill Śākyamuni and humankind will lose its guide and illuminating light; if you remain silent they will kill you and you will lose the precious human opportunity; but if you tell them that he went in a direction contrary to the one he actually took, perhaps you manage to spare his life and, if you also run in the opposite direction, perhaps you spare your own life as well. Likewise, imagine you find out that someone at the campus has war weapons hidden somewhere and plans to kill his fellow students, and for some reason you cannot denounce him: if you are sure you have a chance of stealing his weapons and disposing of them without being noticed, that would no doubt be a good action. The *Upāyakauśalyasūtra*^a tells us an even more radical story about a past life of Śākyamuni, according to which in was a bodhisattva in the guise of a ferry captain called Great Compassionate One whose boat was carrying five hundred bodhisattvas in the guise of merchants transporting a valuable cargo, and one bandit who planned to kill them all to steal the cargo—and circumstances were such that the only way he could prevent the mass murder, saving the bodhisattvas, sparing their families a life of misery and, especially, saving the bandit from accumulating such a terrible karma, was by killing the bandit. He did so, and the canonical source tells us that rather than creating bad karma, the bodhisattva curtailed his stay in *saṃsāra* by 100.000 cosmic time cycles (eons or aeons^b). The *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* and the *Bodhisattvabhūmiśāstra* tell stories with similar morals.

Even though the Mahāyāna is not based on the Hīnayāna principle of controlling our physical existence by means of vows, since its teachings are mainly related to our corporeal existence and the material level, that vehicle is held to belong to the “Path of Renunciation.” And because both the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna have to do with the material level, both keeping the former's vows and engaging in the latter's training are circumscribed to the waking state, and both the former's vows and the latter's training come to an end at death. For example, monks or nuns are forbidden to engage in any kind of sexual activity while waking; however, it is not forbidden for them to have an erotic dream once they have fallen asleep, and ejaculate⁵⁷⁴ with their “physical” body because of the stimulation produced by the dream.

Precepts on the Path of Transformation

On the Path of Transformation the regulation of behavior depends on a principle radically different from those proper to the Path of Renunciation—namely that of the

^a Cf. Tatz (trans. 1994, pp. 73-4); summarized in King (2013/2016, p. 634).

^b Skt. *kalpa*; Pāli *kappa*; Tib. *kalpa* (Wylie, *bskal pa*); Ch. 劫 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh*²; jap. *gō*).

Tantric commitment, which is known as *samaya*. Since this Path is related to the energy level, which is not interrupted by sleep and is not cut off by death as material existence is, the precepts corresponding to the Tantric *samaya* are not limited to the waking state, nor do they come to an end when the practitioner dies.

When practitioners receive an initiation of the outer Tantras, they must promise (in some cases by touching a *mala* or rosary that the Master presents them) that they will recite daily the *mantra* that is thereby transmitted to them, and that they will maintain certain types of “pure” conduct, etc. This is, in a nutshell, the commitment *or samaya* of these Tantras.

When practitioners receive a transmission belonging to the Path of method of an inner Tantra (for example, of Mahāyogatantra), instead of the commitment to maintain certain types of externally “pure” conduct, they acquire, among others, the commitment to go beyond discrimination between “pure” and “impure.” On this level of Tantra, it is imperative to entirely transcend judgment and discrimination by discovering the state of “one taste”,^a just as in the formless Mahāmudrā teaching of Tantrism (which, as we have seen, in its present form is very similar to the teachings of the Dzogchen Series of [the essence or nature of] mind). However, whereas in the Mahāmudrā teaching the *yogins* are not required to carry out some specific type of action, on the Path of method of the inner Tantras it is imperative to manifest a “resolute conduct”^{b575} that requires the individual to perform actions that the “lower” vehicles would consider impure—the most widespread and well-known example of which is the obligation to eat meat and drink alcohol in the ritual called *ganapuja*.⁵⁷⁶

As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has said, “one taste” does not mean to mentally put all phenomena together and convince oneself that they all have the same taste, and in this way adding another layer to the onion of delusion, but to discover the single, unaltered nondual awareness that underlies the multifarious pleasant, unpleasant and neutral experiences, and remain in that single awareness, which does not discriminate between the experiences it manifests—all of which are the same to it—and is not altered by any possible experience. That awareness has been compared to a mirror that does *not* feel separate from the different experiences it manifests, as they manifest *in it*, *nor* does it feel that it is the experiences, for these are always changing while it itself is unchanging and at no point does it acquire the characteristics of the reflections appearing in it; therefore, it is beyond discrimination and unable to refuse to reflect some kinds of objects or to agree to reflect other kinds of objects: it simply reflects anything that is put in front of it, for, being impartial toward reflections because it does not derive pleasure from nice ones or disgust from unpleasant ones. In turn, “one taste” is compared to the primordial gnosis that [reveals] the common,^c single condition of the mirror in which the multiple reflections that are infinitely diverse^d manifest and which, being unaltered by the different reflections, has the same taste indifferently of the type of reflection that appears in it—so that in it all reflections have the same taste. As already noted, it is when this primordial gnosis is active and unconcealed, that all thoughts and thought-tinged perceptions self-liberate as they arise by means of their very arising.

^a Tib. *rochik* (Wylie, *ro gcig*).

^b Tib. *tulzhug* (Wylie, *brtul zhugs*).

^c Tib. *yeshe chi* (Wylie, *ye shes spyi*).

^d Tib. *natsog sunang yang* (Wylie, *sna tshogs su snang yang*).

How can we come to discover this single taste by means of the practice of the two stages of generation and completion, for example in Anuttarayogatantra? Imagine that on the basis of the clarity of primordial awareness we transform ourselves into a deity and transform the universe into a *maṇḍala*; if instead of continuously feeling that we are the deity and that our dimension is the *maṇḍala*, at some point we discover the underlying unalterable nondual awareness, transformation becomes Mahāmudrā and thus we attain the highest realization of Anuttarayogatantra.⁵⁷⁷ Merely feeling that we are the deity and that all that surrounds us is the pure dimension of the *maṇḍala* is nothing but a conditioned and made, thought-tinged experience pertaining to *samsāra*; contrariwise, the unalterable nondual awareness that unveils in the realization of Mahāmudrā is the unproduced, unconditioned Base of both *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and its nondual unveiling is the unproduced, unconditioned realization of *nirvāṇa*.

In the inner Tantras (for example, in Anuyogatantra) males take the precept not to ejaculate, except for seven especially prescribed purposes, which include reproduction in order to engender a son or daughter for the transmission of the teaching, medical reasons, and the requirements of the transmission of the teaching and of the means of purification by disciples of the *samaya* or commitment in connection with this transmission. As we have seen, because dreams are manifestations of the level of energy,⁵⁷⁸ and because ejaculation during sleep also results in the loss of the ejaculatory variety of the seed-essence (*bindu* or thigle),⁵⁷⁹ those who practice these Tantras must maintain this precept even during sleep. For their part, females must stop menstruating altogether, and allow the return of menstruation only when they intend to engender a son or daughter for the transmission of the teaching, when they need to produce some particular requirements of the transmission of the teaching and of the means for disciples to purify their *samaya* or commitment, or when they must carry out any of the other exceptional activities established in the original texts.⁵⁸⁰

If there is a contradiction between the duties imposed by one's Tantric *samaya* and those imposed by the Sūtrayāna, it is the principle of the "higher" vehicle that must be followed (just as in the case of a contradiction between the vows of the Hīnayāna and the principle of the Mahāyāna training, one had to break the former in order to conform to the latter): if in order to maintain the Tantric *samaya* one has to contravene a rule of a "lower" vehicle, one will be keeping both precepts, for "lower" precepts are contained in "higher" ones but not the other way around. Contrariwise, if one decides to break the "higher" precept in order to keep the "lower" rule, one will be breaking both the "higher" and the "lower" precept.

One could wonder on what grounds one should, for example, fail to help others as established by the principle of training of the Mahāyāna, if this were necessary for keeping a Tantric *samaya*. The reply is that in such a case the principle of compassion would not be violated because one keeps the Tantric *samaya* in order to swiftly attain full realization, for one knows that only if one is fully realized one can help others in a truer sense (firstly, because then one has the power to give them a definitive rather than a provisional help; secondly, because one will have overcome the "law of inverted effect" or "reverse law" that causes one to do evil while trying to do good).

By means of transmission, besides introducing the much discussed example of primordial gnosis,^a the Master teaches us how to transform ourselves and be in the pure dimension of the deity, and also how to perform the practices that will allow one to have access to the actual primordial gnosis.^b Then, whenever we perform the practice and fully find ourselves in the dimension of the transformation (as well as fulfilling the other nine of the ten commitments (performing the number of the corresponding *mantra* recitations the commitment obliges us to perform everyday, and the corresponding *mudras*, *samādhi*, offerings, *samaya*, etc.)—and, ideally, when the actual primordial gnosis is manifest—we are fulfilling our commitment or *samaya*. However, this is not all, for one of the most important points of the Tantric commitment or *samaya* lies in the duty to maintain a pure perception of the Master and our fellow students, who are known as “*vajra* brothers and sisters.” Our realization, but also to a certain degree the health and long life of the teacher, as well as the development of our fellow students, will depend on the degree to which we succeed in maintaining this pure perception, and on our earnestness in purifying our Tantric commitment or *samaya* whenever we have failed in maintaining it in a perfect way. Since this is the same as on the Path of spontaneous liberation, what was stated with regard to the teacher in the section on the Teacher on the Path of spontaneous liberation, and what will be said below about restoring the *samaya* commitment on the same Path applies here as well.

Precepts on the Path of Spontaneous liberation

As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu noted in *The Path of Spontaneous Liberation and our Total Plenitude and Perfection*,^c whereas on the Tantric Path there are ten essential principles of the commitment or *samaya*, which are normally listed as the transformation into the deity and the application of *mantra*, *mudra*, *samādhi*, offerings, *samaya* and so on, in Dzogchen teaching there are the “ten nothingnesses” or “ten absences,” which are nothing but the negation of the ten essential principles of Tantrism. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu states in this regard:^d

The Tantras tied to the Path of Transformation must necessarily be based on ten fundamental points, called the “ten natures of Tantra,” which constitute the main means of realization in that Path: view, conduct, *maṇḍala*, initiation, commitment (*samaya*), capacity for spiritual action, *sādhana*, visualization, making offerings, and *mantra*...⁵⁸¹ The *Kunje Gyälpo* (which is the essential Tantra of the Semde series of Dzogchen teachings) continuously refers to [a variety of these] ten aspects: view, commitment, capacity for spiritual action, *maṇḍala*, initiation, Path, levels of realization, conduct, wisdom and spontaneous perfection.

However, it does so in order to negate them, as corresponds to the principle of the “ten absences” or “ten there isn’t”^e characteristic of the deep understanding of Dzogchen. The same Master lists the ten absences:^f

^a Tib. *peyi yeshe* (Wylie, *dpe yi ye shes*).

^b Tib. *döngyi yeshe* (Wylie, *don gyi ye shes*).

^c Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, ed., unpublished).

^d Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, pp. 67-68).

^e Tib. *mepa chu* (Wylie, *med pa bcu*).

^f *Ibidem*.

1. There is no view on which one has to meditate.
2. There is no commitment or *samaya* one has to keep.
3. There is no capacity for spiritual action one has to seek.
4. There is no *maṇḍala* one has to create.
5. There is no initiation one has to receive.
6. There is no Path one has to tread.
7. There are no levels of realization (bhūmi or *sa*) one has to achieve through purification.
8. There is no conduct one has to adopt or abandon.
9. From the beginning, self-arisen wisdom has been free of obstacles.
10. Spontaneous perfection is beyond hope and fear.

Thus the Dzogchen Atiyoga negates the Tantric principle of *samaya*; however, it does not do so because in Dzogchen there is no *samaya*, but because the *samaya* of Dzogchen is very different from that of Tantrism. In particular, the *samaya* of Dzogchen requires us to be beyond judgment, in the condition that in the preceding section was compared to that of the mirror that does not discriminate among reflections but simply manifests them in its own condition of total completeness / plenitude and perfection—which contradicts the constraint to keep specific *samayas* such as those established by the Tantric teachings, which require that we be constantly judging in order to determine what acts we can carry out and what must be avoided, in order to check whether or not we are keeping our *samaya*, etc.

The above is the reason why, as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu stated in *The Path of Spontaneous Liberation and our Total Plenitude and Perfection*, the principle of the *samaya* of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo is explained in terms of the “four absences” or “four there isn’t”:^a (1) “there is no *samaya* commitment;” (2) “uninterrupted nonconceptual and thus nondual, instant Presence;” (3) “single State;” and (4) “spontaneously perfect.”^{b582} The last three elements oblige us to maintain the state of rigpa, and the first principle is “there is no *samaya*” because, as noted above, keeping precepts necessarily involves the action of the mental observer that judges our conduct, which implies the subject-object duality and the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of concepts and judgments, and therefore doing so would interrupt the state of rigpa that the other three principles of the commitment or *samaya* of Ati oblige us to keep. In fact, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has remarked that the last three principles may be summarized in the phrase “always in the spontaneously manifest and spontaneously perfect nondual Presence of the single State of rigpa.”

What was said above with regard to Dzogchen, applies also to the formless Mahāmudrā teachings associated with the Tantras, both in the original form they had in the Mahāmudrā Gaṅgāma that the mahāsiddha Tilopā taught Nāropā on the banks of the Ganges, and in their current form (which as noted in a previous section is closely related to that of the Dzogchen Series of [the essence or nature of] mind. In fact, it was precisely for the above reasons that Tilopā told Nāropā on the banks of the Ganges: “The supreme *samaya* is broken by thinking in terms of precepts:” by thinking in terms of precepts that compel us to abstain from some acts and to carry out others we introduce or maintain the

^a Tib. mepa zhi (Wylie, *med pa bzhi*).

^b Tib. lhundrub (Wylie, *lhun grub*); Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*.

subject-object duality and the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of concepts and judgments that veil the state of rigpa that the *samaya* of this teachings compels us to maintain. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explains the four absences of the *samaya* of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo in slightly different terms while elucidating chapter forty-six of the *Kunje Gyälpo*:^a

Dzogchen talks of four characteristic samayas: (1) mepa, or absence—all is empty from the beginning and there is nothing to confirm; (2) chälwa^b, or omnipresence—this is clarity that manifests; (3) chikpu^c, or single—the state of the individual as pure, nondual Presence; (4) lhundrub, or spontaneously perfect. In short, this means that the state of rigpa of each individual is the center of the universe. The condition of each person is like the sun beyond the clouds. Even though at times the clouds obscure the sun so that we cannot see it, the quality of the sun always exists and never changes. That is why the state is said to be lhundrub, spontaneously perfect from the origin. A realized one may seem different from us, but the only difference is that he or she has overcome the obstacle of the clouds and lives where the sun shines. So, we must recognize and have these four samayas, whose gist is that as practitioners we should never get distracted (with respect to the nondual state of rigpa)—this is our only real commitment.

Thus lhundrub also means that our own rigpa and the whole of phenomena have always been spontaneously perfect and thus need not be perfected by means of the two stages of generation and completion; chikpu means that all phenomena are manifestations of the single state of rigpa and therefore they must continuously manifest in this state; chälwa means that this state has no center or periphery and, being a condition of Total Space-Time-Awareness, encompasses all the phenomena that manifest in the single state of rigpa; and mepa means that there are no specific precepts to keep because trying to do so would interrupt the state of rigpa. A Tantra revealed by Düdjom Lingpa reads:^d

If rigpa is committed to its own state, and if you achieve the confidence of never departing from it, you will effortlessly achieve the supreme siddhi in this lifetime. If you do slip away from it and fall into a state of ignorance or delusion, the sufferings of *samsāra* and the miserable states of existence will scorch you like fire. So this is the great samaya: the essential nature of all vows and commitments consists of binding yourself to the space of rigpa, never being confused by the deluded ways of grasping at self-existence.

Thus in Dzogchen to keep the *samaya* commitment is no more than to continue in the state of rigpa without ever becoming distracted and integrating all experiences in this state. If at some point we become distracted, this does not mean we ought to feel guilty for having broken the commitment; quite to the contrary, feeling guilty would be a further violation of *samaya* because it would imply the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of a judgment. This is why this commitment may be said to be utterly free from guilt: it requires the dissolution of the mental observer that judges the

^a Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, p. 113).

^b Wylie, *phyal ba*.

^c Wylie, *gcig bu*.

^d *Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorjei nyingpo* (Wylie, *dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po*). Alternative translation in Düdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. III, p. 66).

individual's conduct. Hence Milarepa stated: "This *dharma* of Milarepa is such that one is not ashamed of oneself." And one of the phrases in a renowned dictum by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu goes "Noi non ci vergogniamo per niente" (we do not become ashamed for any reason whatsoever). As noted above, the state of rigpa, which is compared to a mirror, being free from the subject-object duality (is) beyond value judgments that may approve or disapprove, and thus (is) without acceptance and rejection. However, this does not mean that we should allow ourselves to become distracted; as soon as we notice that we have become distracted we apply the instruction that will create the conditions for the coarse, subtle or super-subtle thoughts at the root of the distraction to liberate themselves spontaneously, so that we may instantly recover the nondual Presence corresponding to the state of rigpa—Awake awareness or Truth.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu^a relates that once someone asked the famous Dzogchen Master, Yungtön Dorje Pel^b, what was it that he practiced, and the Master replied with the negative "mepa" or "there isn't." Then his startled questioner asked again, "Then you don't meditate?" to which the Master replied, "And when am I ever distracted?" This is the essence of the *samaya* commitment in the Dzogchen teachings: not to meditate or to practice something with the mind and yet never be distracted, for the point is to remain uninterruptedly in the spontaneous perfection of the single state of rigpa.

The fact that in Dzogchen Atiyoga the true teacher is the Vision or tawa aspect of the Path, and that the commitment consists in being beyond judgment and hence beyond thinking in terms of precepts, does not mean that when the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought interrupts the state of Contemplation there will be no commitment to keep concerning the Master and fellow practitioners.⁵⁸³ The *vajra* relationship between the Master and the students lasts until final realization, and so in most cases it goes far beyond the grave. Likewise, the fact that different practitioners follow the same teaching and have the same Master, or that they do a practice together in the state of Contemplation, establishes a bond between them that will last until final realization. This type of relationship is compared to that between people crossing a river in the same boat with the intention of reaching the other shore: if they damage the boat or start to fight with each other in the middle of the river, the boat may capsize, preventing all those that were on board from reaching the "other shore" consisting in Buddhahood. Those who intend to cross the river of existence in the boat of a certain Master are known as *vajra* brothers and sisters; they must collaborate with and respect each other, for if collaboration and respect are present, even though minor incidents may occur, major impediments will be avoided.

However, the fact that we are in the same boat with a respected Master and with our *vajra* brothers and sisters, especially when the Master is very highly regarded and his boat is associated with the teaching universally regarded as supreme (or at least regarded as such by us), involves the danger of using our belonging to the group that we regard as the most special, led by the most important Master, to enhance our sense of identity and swell our chests with pride. This is especially dangerous at the present time, when Tibetan Buddhism has become trendy and chic in Hollywood, rock and pop culture, the transpersonal scene and so on, and it has become widely known that Dzogchen is the supreme teaching of this form of Buddhism. In such conditions, being a practitioner of

^a Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, ed., unpublished).

^b Wylie, gyung ston rdo rje dpal.

Tibetan Buddhism and in particular of Dzogchen may be taken as a status symbol, and the condition of “old practitioner” may confer an even higher sense of identity in the individual.

However, enhancing our sense of identity by means of the practice of Buddhism would imply using the teaching that may lead beyond *samsāra* to temporarily ascend to higher samsaric realms, selfishly pushing down non-Buddhists and all that do not belong to our group. It would be pathetic for us to use Dzogchen as an alibi to freely give way to the impulses that Buddhism and the Dzogchen teaching should allow us to overcome.

To conclude, it may be useful to reiterate that by keeping a higher precept we will be also keeping the lower ones, even if we embark on courses of behavior that the latter forbid. It has already been noted that, if we break a Hīnayāna vow in order to follow the principle of the Mahāyāna training, we are neither breaking the former nor contravening the latter. It has also been noted that, if we transgress vows of the Path of Renunciation in order to keep the Tantric *samaya*, we will be keeping both this *samaya* and the precepts of the Path of Renunciation, and not breaking either. Likewise, Dzogchen practitioners, *so long* as they keep the supreme *samaya* of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, no matter what Tantric *samaya* commitments or precepts of the Path of Renunciation we may break, there will be no transgression whatsoever. In fact, so long as we are in the state of rigpa, selfishness will not manifest, nor will impulses arise that may give rise to courses of behavior that are harmful to others or self. On the contrary, from the innate disposition of emptiness^a a nonreferential compassion naturally arises that embraces all beings and phenomena in general, and when thought is hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized, giving rise to the substantialistic illusion of dualism and pluralism, compassion and a fervent love^b for all sentient beings naturally arise. In such cases, what purpose would vows, precepts or commitment serve?

The essence of vows is to help practitioners maintain the morality that derives from a strong wish to liberate oneself from *samsāra*; its characteristic nature is to adopt a resolute conduct based on intention not to harm others. In Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, vows are substituted by the continuity of the state of rigpa; however, when this state is interrupted, we must avoid manifesting selfish conduct, and to this end we must keep the presence or mindfulness of responsible awareness,^c which consists in not been distracted with regard to experience, the motivations behind our acts, our behavior in general and the expectable consequences of our acts.

Furthermore, when we are unable to keep the Dzogchen state of rigpa, we must keep the immediately lower *samaya* commitments and precepts; when we cannot keep these, we must keep the immediately lower ones—and if we cannot keep any of the other sets of precepts or conform to any of the other principles, we should keep the vows of the Hīnayāna if we have them, or otherwise *at least* avoid the ten nonvirtuous actions and so on.⁵⁸⁴ Does this mean that if we have taken Tantric initiations in which we assumed the commitment to perform a mala of the mantra of different deities we will have to spend the whole of our time reciting mantras in order to keep our commitment? According to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in those cases performing a Dzogchen Guru Yoga with form

^a Tib. **tongnyikyi shi** (Wylie, *stong nyid kyi gshis*).

^b Tib. tsewa (Wylie, *brtse ba*).

^c Skt. *smṛtisamprajanya*; Pāli *satisampajañña*; Tib. tenpa dang shezhin (Wylie, *dran pa dang shes bzhin*); Ch. 正念慧 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhèngniànhuì*; Wade-Giles, *cheng⁴-nien⁴-hui⁴*).

will be enough to keep all the lower *samaya* commitments, even if we are not spending the whole of our time in rigpa (and one can safely assume that the same would apply if one spends time everyday in the formless Guru Yoga that consists in simply being in the state of rigpa for as long as we can). However, at any rate, if we are Dzogchen or Tantric practitioners, we will have under all circumstances to be extremely aware in order to avoid breaking our *samaya* commitment with the Vajra Master and the *vajra* brothers and sisters—and, if we break it, we must as soon as possible do whatever may be necessary in order to restore it.

The above principle also applies to criticism of lower views. Ponder on the lines that Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna wrote in the *Tsawai Tungwai Gyacher Drelpa*:^a

If, with the intention of identifying and teaching higher and lower views, other precepts are deprecated, this is not a transgression, but greatly increases merit.

In brief, one should most carefully keep the *samaya* commitment with the *vajra* Master and the *vajra* siblings. However, for the same reasons explained in the discussion of the relationship with the Master on the Path of spontaneous liberation right after the quotation from the *Kālāma Sutta*, one should not do so out of fear of punishment, either in this life or in future lives, but do so with the presence of the awareness that one's realization totally depends on it, and that breaching the *samaya* commitment with the *vajra* Master may shorten his lifespan and make him susceptible to the influences that induce illness—and yet it is certain that the psychological state represented as the *vajra* hell will befall one if one breaks the *samaya* commitment and does not repair it.

Finally, concerning the way to restore the *samaya* commitment with the teacher in case we break it, it is stated in the *Rigpa Rangshar Gyü*^b or *Tantra of Self-Arising Rigpa*, pertaining to the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions:^c

If your *samayas* degenerate regarding your teacher,
create a great *maṅḍala* of *gaṇacakra* offerings,
and do the same for your *vajra* siblings;
make offerings of goods that please your teacher,
and offer whatever you have to the {Seer^d}.

^a Wylie, *rtsa ba'i ltung ba'i rgya cher 'grel pa*. Cited by Jigme Lingpa in van Schaik (2004, p. 219).

^b Wylie, *rig pa rang shar rgyud*.

^c Cited in *Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen* (Wylie, *rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan*). In Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. II, p. 264). My own clarifying additions and changes to the translation in the aforementioned text are within curly brackets.

^d Skt. *ārya*; Tib. *phagpa* (Wylie, *'phags pa*); Ch. 聖 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèng*; Wade-Giles, *sheng*⁴): one who has insight into the absolute truth—namely the *vajra* teacher (Skt. *vajrācārya*; Tib. *dorje lopön* [Wylie, *rdo rje slob dpon*]; Ch. [lit.] 金剛阿闍梨 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāng āshé lí*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹ a¹-she²-lí²*] or [lit.] 金剛師 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāngshī*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹-shih¹*]).

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(II) TEXTS IN TIBETAN (QUOTED INDIRECTLY)
(Numbered according to order of appearance.)

- Tibetan Text 1: *bSam gtan mig sgron* (*sGom gyi gnad gsal bar phye ba bsam gtan mig sgron*) by gNubs chen Sangs rgyas Ye shes (IX c.), published by Tashigangpa, Leh 1974. (A fundamental texts for understanding the gradual and direct *sūtra* traditions, Mahāyoga and Atiyoga.)
- Tibetan Text 2: Vimalamitra (discovered as a terma [*gter-ma*] by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (*'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dBang po*) [1820-1892]), *kLong lnga'i yi ge dum bu gsum pa* (*Man ngag thams cad kyi rgyal po klong lnga'i yi ge dum bu gsum pa*).
- Tibetan Text 3: *Sūtra of the Nucleus of the Tathāgata*. Tib. *De-bzhin gshegs-pa'i snying-po'i mdo*. Skt. *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*. Tohoku University catalogue of the sDe-dge edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon (Ed. H. Ui et al. Sendai, 1934), 258. P. Pfandt, *Mahayana Texts Translated into Western Languages* (Köln: In Kommission bei E. J. Brill, 1983), 231.
- Tibetan Text 4: *Rong zom lta 'grel* (*Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba zhes bya ba'i 'grel pa*), by Rong zom Pandita Chos kyi bZang po (1012-1088), in SNGA 'GYUR BKA' MA'I CHOS SDE, vol. 'a,; published by Si khron bod kyi rig gnas zhib 'jug khang. (Commentary to *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba* by Padmasambhava.)
- Tibetan Text 5: *Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud*, transmitted by dGa' rab rdo rje, in RNYING MA'I RGYUD BCU BDUN, vol. I, published by Sangs rgyas rDo rje, New Delhi 1973. (One of the seventeen principal Tantras of the Man ngag sde.)
- Tibetan Text 6: *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*, by Padmasambhava (VIII c.) A: in SNGA 'GYUR BKA' MA'I SCHOS SDE, vol. 'a, published by Si khron bod kyi rig gnas zhib 'jug khang; B: in GDAMS NGAG MDZOD, vol. Ka, published at Paro in Bhutan, 1979. (One of the rare texts of the oral tradition ascribed to Padmasambhava; translated in Dowman, *Flight of the Garuda*, Ithaca 1992; Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, Leiden 1988; Italian translation in Baroetto, *L'insegnamento esoterico di Padmasambhava*, Arcidosso 1990.)
- Tibetan Text 7: *Thar lam gsal sgron* (*Klong chen snying thig gi sngon 'gro'i khrid yig thar lam gsal byed sgron me zhes bya ba*), by A 'dzam 'Brug pa 'Gro 'dul dpa' bo rdo rje (1842-1934), published by bsTan 'dzin dbang rgyal, Darjeeling 1974. (A text of explanations of the preliminary practices of the *Klong chen snying thig*.)
- Tibetan Text 8: *A Feast for the Erudite* (*Chöjung Khepai Gatön: chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), by Pawo Tsuglag Threngwa (*dPa'bo gtsug lag phreng ba*). Two editions of this text are the ones published by: (A) Mi-rigs dpe sKrun Khang, Peking, 1986; (B) Delhi Kharmapae Chödey Guialwae Sungrab Partun Khang, Delhi, 1980 (I-Tib 81-900485. SP 9, 1961).
- Tibetan Text 9: *sDe-gsum snying-po'i don-'grel gnas-lugs rin-po-che'i mdzod ces-'bya-'ba'i grel-pa*, by Longchen Rabjampa (*kLong-chen Rab-'byams-pa*).
- Tibetan Text 10: *Kun-mkhyen zhal-lug bdud-rtsi'i thigs-pa* (commentary to the *Gnas-lugs rdo-rje'i tshig-rkang*), by Jigme Lingpa (*'Jigs-med gLing-pa*).

- Tibetan Text 11: *Shes bya kun khyab* (*Shes bya kun la khyab pa'i gzhung lugs nyung ngu'i tshig gis rnam par 'grol ba legs bshad yongs 'du shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho zhes bya ba*), by Kong sprul Ngag dbang Yon tan rGya mtsho (1813-1899). A: published by Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Beijing 1982. B: Shatapitaka Series, I-Tib 77-913514. Saraswati Vihar, New Delhi, 1970. (A work that encompasses the whole of Buddhist knowledge. Currently being translated into English, so far two volumes have been published: *Myriad Worlds*, Ithaca, Snow Lion, 1995 and *Buddhist Ethics*, Ithaca, Snow Lion, 1998.)
- Tibetan Text 12: *Theg mchog mdzod* (*Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod ces bya ba*) by Klong chen rab 'byams pa Dri med 'od zer (1308-1363), in MDZOD BDUN, vol. cae, published by rDo grub chen rin po che, Sikkim. (A text of explanations of rDzogs chen; one of the 'seven treasures' of Klong chen pa.)
- Tibetan Text 13: Sa skya pan di ta Kun dga' rgyal mtshan: *sDom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i bstan bcos*, p. 104, 3. Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, Lhasa 1986.
- Tibetan Text 14: *kLong-chen Chos-'byung* (*Chos-'byung rin-po-che'i gter mdzod bstan pa gsal bar byed pa'i nyi 'od*), by rGyal-sras Thugs mchod rtsal (written in 1362), Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, Lhasa 1991. The author has been identified as Longchenpa by various scholars including Jigme Lingpa, but others remain in doubt as to the author's identity.
- Tibetan Text 15: *Bai ro 'dra 'bag* (*rJe btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bai to tsa na'i rnam thar 'dra 'bag chen mo*). Lhasa, 1976. Edition contained in *Bai ro rgyud 'bum*, vol. Ja, pp. 405-605, Leh 1971.
- Tibetan Text 16: Tantra Comprising the Supreme Path of the Method that Clearly Unveils Samantabhadra's Primordial Gnosis. *Kun-bzang Ye-shes gSal-bar sTon-pa'i Thabs-kyi Lam-mchog 'Dus-pa'i rGyud. rNying-ma'i rgyud-'bum: Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa*. Thimpu, Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, 1973, vol. 3, No. 46.
- Tibetan Text 17: Root Tantra of the Gathering of the Sugatas: *bDer-'dus rTsa-rgyud. rNying-ma'i rgyud-'bum: Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa*. Thimpu, Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, 1973, vol. 31, No. 375.
- Tibetan Text 18: *The Realization of Yoga* (*rNal 'byor grub pa'i lung*): *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions*: (mDo) dgongs(-pa) 'dus(pa), sPyi mdo dgongs-pa 'dus-pa, or 'Dus-pa mdo, the Fundamental Anuyoga Scripture, in 75 chapters. *rNying-ma'i rgyud-'bum: Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa*. Thimpu, Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, 1973, vol. 11, No. 160.
- Tibetan Text 19: *Guru Padma's Advice in the Form of Questions and Answers: Slob dpon pad ma'i zhal gdams zhus lan, gter ma* by Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192). A: In RIN CHEN GTER MDZOD, vol. i, published by Si khron bod kyi rig gnas zhib 'jug khang; B: in JO MO LA GDAMS PA'I CHOS SKOR (under the title: *sKyabs 'gro lam khyer gyi skor jo mo la gdams pa*), Paro 1983. (A text of explanations on various aspects of Buddhist practice. Some parts translated in Padmasambhava, *Dakini Teachings*, Boston 1990.)
- Tibetan Text 20: *Summary of the Wish-Fulfilling Treasure: Yid bzhin mdzod kyi grub mtha' bsdus pa* by 'Ju Mi Pham 'Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846-1912), in *Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod* by kLong-chen-pa, vol. wam, published by Dodrub Chen Rinpoche, Sikkim. (A text of explanations on the various Buddhist traditions on the

basis of the *Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod*, which is one of the Seven Treasures of kLong-chen-pa.

Tibetan Text 21: *Nor bu's bang mdzod (sLob dpon chen po pad ma 'byung gnas kyis mdzad pa's man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba'i mchan 'grel nor bu'i bang mdzod ces bya ba)* by 'Ju Mi Pham 'Jam dbyangs nam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846-1912). (Commentary to the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba* by Padmasambhava.)

Tibetan Text 22: *Ngal-gso skor-gsum gyi spyi-don legs-bshad rgya-mtsho* by kLong-chen Rabs-'byam-pa. Published by Dodrub Chen Rinpoche.

Tibetan Text 23: *Byang chub kyis sems kun byed rgyal po (rDzogs pa chen po byang chub kyis sems kun byed rgyal po'i rgyud)*, in *sNga 'gyur bka' ma'i chos sde*, vol. XVII-tsa, translated into Tibetan by Śrī Singha and Vairotsana, published by Si kron bod kyis rig gnas zhib 'jug khang.

Tibetan Text 24: *rGyud bu chung bcu gnyis (Zhang zhung snyan rgyud kyis rgyud bu chung bcu gnyis)*, *snyan rgyud* written down by sNang bzher lod po (VII c.), published by Lokesh Chandra, International Academy of Indian Culture, Delhi 1968. (One of the fundamental texts of the *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud*.)

Tibetan Text 25: *Chos mnon pa mzdod kyis bsad pa* (trans. of *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*), written by Vasubandhu. In *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons* (Edited by Ui, Suzuki, Kanakura, and Tada. Sendai, Japan: Tohoku University, 1934): 4090; also in *The collated sDe dge edition of the bsTan 'gyur* (Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyis shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1995–2005): 79.

¹ If I ever allowed a biography of myself to be published it would discuss this in detail. A brief account may be offered as follows:

I was in retreat in the Padmasambhava cave in Chumig Changchub Ringmo (Wylie, chu mig byang chub ring mo) on the lower Himalaya chain between Kathmandu Valley and the Terai, and was poisoned with a mushroom by a non-Buddhist, non-Tibetan and non-Bhutanese attendant of the local Bhutanese lamas. To his surprise, I survived, and on my return to Kathmandu I went to visit Chatral Rinpoche. A family from Yölmo Gangra (Wylie, yol mo gangs ra; Nepalese, Helambu), the region on the higher Himalayas where I usually went into retreat, was visiting Rinpoche, and one of Rinpoche's monks was with him. Without me saying anything to him about the poisoning, he advised me to never again go into retreat at Chumig Changchub Ringmo, and to go to Yölmo instead. He told me not to stay in the cabin where I had stayed the preceding time, for the owner was a disciple of a Gelugpa lama who lived in a temple over 100 yards uphill on the path to Guru Lhakhang (Wylie, gu ru lha khang) / Guru Drukpu (Wylie, gu ru 'brug phug)—a Padmasambhava cave where I had also stayed, which is over 16,000 feet high—and a mountain pass on the Langtang (Wylie, lang tang) range that is well over 19,000 feet high, warning that the lama in question “was very evil,” and directed me to stay at the retreat cabin owned by the Yölmo family that was visiting him. I had never heard a lama I respected speak that way of another lama, and hence I was very surprised, but didn't give it much thought.

When I arrived in Yölmo, I was taken to the retreat cabin that was offered me by the family that was visiting Chatral Rinpoche, and I found there was a nun, with a giant fleshy protuberance hanging from one of her cheeks, living in the house. They told her she had to move to the cabin next door, and hence I went to the cabin in question to inspect whether it was hospitable, and found it had a hole on the roof. It was November, at well over 9,000 feet over the sea level, and it was beginning to be cold, and shortly it could get so cold that it could snow. So I said I would move into the cabin with the hole, but they didn't allow me, and at the end I had to yield and move into the cabin where the nun had been staying, so long as I was allowed to offer the nun food and drink throughout my stay. The monk who was at Chatral Rinpoche's was also there, and he told me he was going to be staying in another cabin some tens of yards uphill from the one that was offered me.

Then one day I was sitting cross-legged in the porch looking into the sky in Tekchö namkha arte (Wylie, khregs chod nam mkha' ar gtad), and when a knot-like delusion arose and its description and that of the way to resolve it with the practice came to my mind and I began to write it down in a hurry so that it would become a chapter of my book on Tekchö titled *The Source of Danger is Fear*. As I was writing, suddenly the monk drew the blanket I was using as a curtain so that no one could see me from outside, and, of course, I lost the thread and forgot what I was in the process of writing, losing the chapter that I intended to incorporate into the book. The monk shouted, aaaa-ha!, and walked to the nun's house to scold her and ask her to come and see what I was doing—i.e. that I was writing rather than doing black magic.

I was totally disconcerted. Then the monk came to me to explain what was going on, even though I was in retreat and was not supposed to talk to anyone or even look at someone in the face. He said that the nun was spreading the rumor that by means of black magic I had destroyed the nunnery where she lived with other nuns who were all disciples of the “evil lama” who lived uphill, and that he was in charge of showing her that the rumors she was spreading were far from reality.

I don't remember whether it was when I was trekking to my preceding retreat in the area, that there was a particularly strong monsoon that nearly prevented me from reaching the area: not only myself with my lighter rucksack, but also the porters who were carrying around 60 kilos of luggage each, had to jump from slippery rock to slippery rock to cross a river the stream of which was so swift that whoever would fell into it would be immediately carried away by the current and drawn. Rather than going through the village of Tro Pa Trong as I had always done, I took a shortcut through the nunnery, and when I arrived at the place where the nunnery had stood, I found it was gone. On arriving at the cabin where I did that retreat, the landlord told me that a big stream had suddenly formed that destroyed the nunnery, though the nuns fortunately heard the rumble and were able to escape in time, so none of them died, but three Tibetan men who were living further down the hill and who were disciples of the lama that Chatral Rinpoche categorized as “evil” had been killed in the event.

I learned that the lama in question was a Gyalpo Shugten practitioner who wanted to discredit me because in this way he would discredit Dūdjom Rinpoche, as I had been received by the villagers because of being a disciple of H.H. whom he had recommended as a retreat guest for their retreat cabins in the Tro pa throng (Wylie unknown to me) area, which was about half an hour's walk uphill from the village of Tarke Gyang.

For information on Yölmo Gangra go to the URL <http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/Yolmo>, and for more detailed information go to http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/Guide_to_the_Hidden_Land_of_Yolmo

² This most important Master from the region of Nub (Wylie, gnubs) was Nub Namkhai Nyingpo, a direct disciple of Padmasambhava; according to various histories of the dharma, beside being a direct disciple of Guru Padma he also studied with the Atiyogatantrayāna-Dzogchen and Mahāyoga Master Hūṃkara (Wylie, hūṃ ka ra), Hūṃdze (Wylie, hūṃ mdzad) or Hūṃchen Kara (Wylie, hūṃ chen ka ra).

³ This work was hidden as a terma (Wylie, gter ma) or spiritual treasure, and was revealed by tertön (gter ston) or “Treasure revealer” Orgyen Lingpa (Wylie, o rgyan gling pa) of Yarge (Wylie, yar rje) in the fourteenth century AD. Its authenticity and antiquity is proven beyond any possible doubt by the fact that there are exact quotes of it in Nubchen Sangye Yeshe's Samten Migdrön (bsam gtan mig sgron), which was entombed in the ruins of the monasteries of Dūnhuáng (Ch. 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun²-huang⁴; also known as 燉煌; simplified Chinese, 炖煌) from the beginning of the Second Millennium AD until the beginning of the twentieth century AD, and thus we can be certain that it was not tampered with by anyone.

⁴ Some of the most important works dealing with the history of Buddhism in Tibet assert that Nubchen Sangye Yeshe (Wylie, gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes) was a direct disciple of Padmasambhava. For example, Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, pp. 607-14) says that, besides having been a direct disciple of Padmasambhava, Nubchen Sangye Yeshe may also have been a direct disciple of Śrī Simha, Vimalamitra, Kamalaśīla, Dhanadhala, Traktung Nagpo (Wylie, khrag 'thung nag po; Skt. Kālaheruka), Śāntigarbha, Dhanasaṃskṛta, Śākyadeva, Dhanaraksita, the Brahmin (Brāhmaṇa) Prakāśālamkāra, Dharmabodhi, Dharmarāja, Tsuglag Pelge (Wylie, gtsug lag dpal dge), Vasudharā and Chetsenkye of Drusha (Wylie, bru sha'i chen btsan skyes)—as well as of the erudite translator Nyak (Wylie, nnyags) Jñānakumāra and his eight principal disciples [and, among these, in particular the Sogdian—or the blacksmith, for in Tibet blacksmiths were also called Sogdians, as many of them came from that Central

Asian country—Pelgi Yeshe (Wylie, sog po dpal gyi ye shes) and Gyälwei Yönten (Wylie, rgyal ba'i yon tan]). However, according to other important works, Nubchen was not a direct disciple of the great Master of Odḍiyāna, and the latter's lineage passed through a few other links until reaching Nubchen. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who as we have seen has propagated the classification of vehicles into Paths taught by both Namkhai Nyingpo and Nubchen Sangye Yeshe, has upheld the latter view.

It is curious that the two Masters who have bequeathed to us the division of the Buddhist vehicles into Path of Renunciation (corresponding to the Sūtrayāna and comprising the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna), Path of Transformation (corresponding to the Vajrayāna or Tantrism), and Path of Spontaneous Liberation (corresponding to Ati Dzogpa Chenpo), were both born in the Tibetan region of Nub (Wylie, gnubs). However, despite this coincidence, Namkhai Nyingpo did not belong to what later on became known as the “lineage of Nub,” which is the one established by Nubchen Sangye Yeshe and which includes Khulung Yönten Gyamtso (Wylie, khu lung pa yon tan rgya mtsho), Yeshe Gyamtso (Wylie, ye shes rgya mtsho), Pema Wangyäl (Wylie, pad ma dbang rgyal) and a series of later successors of these (and whose origins go back, through the Sogdian Pelgi Yeshe (Wylie, sog po dpal gyi ye shes), Nyak (Wylie, gnyags) Jñānakumāra, Yudra Nyingpo (Wylie, g.yu sgra snying po) and Pagor Berotsana / Bairotsana (Wylie, ba gor bē ro tsa na, where the last four syllables are the Tibetan spelling of Vairocana), to Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava.

⁵ As stated in a previous note, this book was entombed in the ruins of Dūnhuáng (Ch. 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun²-huang⁴; also known as 燉煌; simplified Chinese, 炖煌), where it remained from the eleventh or twelfth century CE until 1908, when Sinologists Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot explored the cave temples that a local farmer discovered accidentally at the turn of the twentieth century. Therefore, its authenticity is beyond question.

⁶ If I receive the required permission it is also possible that I publish the texts in question as separate books. Whether it will be one way or the other will be decided when the time comes.

⁷ Neither the University of the Andes (Mérida, Venezuela), nor the Dzogchen Community of Venezuela, nor the author of this book, possesses a Library of Tibetan mss. Moreover, as I have already pointed out, during my years in Asia, rather than devoting myself to the study of Tibetan texts, most of the time I was in retreat practicing the teachings.

⁸ The four philosophical schools of the Sūtrayāna traditionally featured in Tibetan curricula are not considered in this book, for I might deal with them in some detail in the definitive version of Capriles (electronic publication 2004), in case I finally produce that version.

⁹ The Theravāda was not one of the first Eighteen Schools of Buddhism interpreting the earlier teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni (i.e. of the type of Buddhism that later on the Mahāyāna called “Hīnayāna”). In fact, the Theravāda developed within the Mahāsthavira School (one of the first four to arise in the Buddhism adhering to the First Promulgation), having been founded as an independent school by Moggaliputta Tissa in the “Council of the Pāḷi School” that this monk organized, purportedly by order of King Aśoka, and which is supposed to have convened around 244 BC (though the Pāḷi School refers to this as the IIIrd Council and, making no reference whatsoever to the Council wherein there took place the division between Mahāsāṃghikas and Sthaviras [adherents of the Sthaviranikāya], says that this division was a consequence of the IIrd Council, in fact the council in which the schism took place seems to have been the IIIrd). The Council summoned by Moggaliputta Tissa excluded the monks opposed to the latter's theses, which this monk refuted in his Kathāvatthu—which subsequently was incorporated to the Abhidharma of the Theravāda. In Ceylon, the new doctrine was adopted by the monks who adhered to the Māhavihāravāda (which was a subdivision of the Mahāsthavira School). Later on, the Theravāda divided into Mahīśāsaka (from which the Dharmaguptaka were derived) and Kāśyapīya.

¹⁰ The book in question was concealed as a terma as it was foreseen that at some point the classification of Buddhist vehicles into Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna would replace the one into Path of Renunciation, Path of Transformation and Path of Spontaneous Liberation: since in the long run this would cause the ancient way of classifying vehicles into Paths to be forgotten, it was necessary that, when the times were ripe for the reception of the older classification, it could be disseminated and made accessible to Buddhist practitioners and scholars.

¹¹ Namkhai Nyingpo was a direct disciple of Padmasambhava. In fact, he was one of the twenty-five main direct disciples of the Lotus-born or 25 of Chimpu—those who received the eight Mahāyoga sādhanas at the cave of Chimpu (Wylie, mchims phu) near Samye (Wylie, bsam yas) monastery—as well as one

of the “most fortunate eight,” each of whom received siddhi by practicing a different one among the eight Mahāyoga sādhanas, after their flower fell on the deity of the maṇḍala that corresponded to that sādhana, and they intensively practiced the corresponding sādhana for long enough.

Regarding Nubchen Sangye Yeshe, although many sources tell us that he was also a direct disciple of the Guru from Oḍḍiyāna, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche favors the sources according to which this important Master was a third generation spiritual descendent of Padmasambhava. In any case, it is a fact that Namkhai Nyingpo’s Kathang Dennga (bka’ thang sde Inga) is abundantly quoted in Nubchen Sangye Yeshe’s Samten Migdrön [bsam gtan mig sgron: Tibetan Text 1]), which remained entombed for over 1,000 years in the ruins of Dùnhuáng (Ch. 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun²-huang⁴; also known as 燉煌; simplified Chinese, 炖煌); therefore, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the former is earlier than the latter, and that the former is a genuine terma (Wylie, gter ma) teaching.

¹² The name is as a rule written without diacritic marks, but I cannot tell whether this is due to the fact that it requires none or to the fact that scholars have been unable to study the language of Oḍḍiyāna, as it is a dead language that, unlike Sanskrit, has no ongoing oral tradition.

¹³ On the basis of some textual indications, some locate Oḍḍiyāna (or Uddiyana) to the east of Bodh Gaya, identifying it with Odisha—i.e. the Indian state formerly called Orissa (e.g., Keown with Hodge, Jones & Tinti, 2003, p. 203)—on the grounds that the name derives from the Dravidian Oṭṭiyān, which refers to one who is from Oḍra (i.e. Odisha) or Oṭṭiyam (Telugu for Oḍra), which is a region where Tantrism thrived, as evinced by the Sūrya temple of Konārak, located in Konark. Moreover, Oḍḍiyāna is, according to the source cited, the middle Indic form of Udyāna, meaning “garden.”

However, on the basis of other textual indications, most Tibetan texts locate Oḍḍiyāna West of Bodh Gaya. Petrul Rinpoche (Wylie, dpal sprul rin po che: 1808-1887), in the Kunsang Lamai Zhalung (kun bzang bla ma’i zhal lung) (Petrul Rinpoche, 2d Ed. 1998, pp. 338-339) is more specific when it refers to Garab Dorje’s (Wylie, dga’ rab rdo rje) birthplace not barely as Oḍḍiyāna or Uddiyana, but more specifically as an area neighboring Lake Kutra in the region of Dhanakośa, thus placing it in present-day North-eastern Kashmir (currently occupied by Pakistan) and describing it as a region neighboring with Chitral, Gilgit and the Swat valley.

For his part, Giuseppe Tucci (1940), on the basis of the accounts of medieval Tibetan travelers Orgyenpa (Wylie, o rgyan pa) and Tagsang Repa (Wylie, stag shang ras pa), who had travelled to the Swat Valley and believed it to be the birthplace of Garab Dorje, Padmasambhava, Tilopā and Luipā and the female teachers who made this land famous as the paradise of the dākinīs, declared with conviction that the land in question had been finally identified as the Swat Valley—subsequently being followed in this identification by a host of Tibetologists and Buddhologists. As John Myrdhin Reynolds (1996, pp. 211-212) noted, thirty years latter the same Giuseppe Tucci (1970; English 1980, p. 244) reported that ceramics found in the royal tombs of Leh, in Ladakh, stand in clear relation with others that had been found in the Swat Valley, which (although Tucci failed to make this connection) suggests that both areas may have been part of the same nation and, by implication, of the same kingdom—although, of course, this cannot be proved. Reynolds concluded that (ibidem, p. 212), “...perhaps Uddiyana was actually the name of a much wider geographical area than the Swat Valley alone, one embracing parts of [present day] Pakistan, Afghanistan, and even Western Tibet (Zhang-zhung). The best approach is to remain open-minded and not to restrict the name only to the Swat Valley.”

Although the Kabul valley in present day Afghanistan is more commonly identified with Śambhala (which, however, many modern Tibetan scholars have identified with Oḍḍiyāna), other scholars have claimed that Oḍḍiyāna may have included at least part of that valley as well; however, we must keep in mind that the main connection between what nowadays constitutes Northern Pakistan and what nowadays constitutes Afghanistan has for millennia been the Khyber pass. Therefore if that theory were correct, either Oḍḍiyāna included the Khyber pass or else communications between its Western and Eastern regions were as difficult as that between some parts of Tibet and the rest of that land. For a résumé of the subject cf. Evan Setio (undated).

At any rate, as a disciple of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, I must stress the fact that this great Master identifies Oḍḍiyāna with the Swat Valley, without further complicating things.

¹⁴ In Part Two of this book I discuss the reasons why the Menggagde (Skt. Upadeśavarga) is the most effective of the three series of Dzogchen teachings. However, in order to proceed swiftly on the Path it

is convenient to have a good knowledge of the three series, so that even if one focuses mainly on the practice of the Menngagde, one may apply any of them as required by circumstances.

¹⁵ It was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who asked me to compile the book in question, and at the time of its compilation he approved it for publication and wrote a preface for it. However, the publishers I send the book to for evaluation rejected it and then I stopped pursuing its publication, so that many years passed. And in the meantime the rules for the publication of works by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu changed and it was established that a Translations Committee had to approve them for publication after confronting the files with the original recordings of Rinpoche's teachings. Since the latter were damaged, it became impossible to have the book approved.

¹⁶ The clarity and thoughtlessness that manifests shortly after the unconsciousness that occurs right after falling asleep is an instance of the consciousness of the base-of-all (Tib. kunzhi namshe or kunzhi nampar shepa [Wylie, kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}]; Skt. ālayavijñāna), and Longchenpa notes that some Sarnapa Masters claim that those who can realize this state and then stay absorbed in it enjoy the absolute nature of clarity without having any dreams. However, this is not so in Dzogchen, wherein that which is to be reGnized and on which one must rest during sleep is the second luminosity that shines forth, which is piercing and which is the luminosity of the dharmakāya. Longchen Rabjampa writes in *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngalsoi Drelwa Shingta Chenpo* (Wylie, rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po), vol. I, 86b/5 (in Tulku Thöndup, 1996, p. 225; the terminology was adapted to the one used in this book):

“[When] an individual of the realm of sensuality goes to sleep, [first] the consciousness of the five senses and the consciousness of defilements (Skt. klišṭamanovijñāna; Tib. **nyönyiki namshe** [Wylie, nyon yid kyi rnam shes] or **nyönmongpa chengyi yiki nampar shepa** [Wylie, nyon mongs pa can gyi yid kyi rnam par shes pa]; Ch. 末那識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, mò nà shì; Wade-Giles, mò⁴-na⁴ shih⁴]) dissolve into the consciousness that perceives mental phenomena (Skt. manovijñāna; Pāli manovīññāna; Tib. yiki namshe or yiki nampar shepa [Wylie, yid kyi rnam {par} shes {pa}]; Ch. 意識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yì shí; Wade-Giles, i⁴-shih²]). [Then] the consciousness of mental phenomena dissolves into the consciousness of the base-of-all (Skt. ālayavijñāna; Tib. kunzhi namshe or kunzhi nampar shepa [Wylie, kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}]; Ch. 阿賴耶識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, ā lài yē shí; Wade-Giles, a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴] or 藏識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zàng shì; Wade-Giles, tsang⁴-shih⁴]), and [immediately thereafter a state of] clarity and thoughtlessness arises for a while. Some Masters of the New [Translation] Tantras (Tib. Sarma [Wylie, gsar ma]) assert that those who are able to become aware of this state and can become absorbed in it enjoy the absolute nature of clarity without having any dreams. [Then] the consciousness of the base-of-all dissolves into the thoughtless base-of-all (Skt. ālaya Tib. kunzhi [Wylie, kun gzhi]; Ch.). Then upon the dissolution of the base-of-all into the absolute space of phenomena (Tib. chöying [Wylie, chos dbyings]) the gross and subtle perceptions dissolve and there arises the absolute nature [in which] emptiness and luminosity [(are) indivisible], free of conceptual fabrications. If one realizes this [all] delusions will be dissolved, [although thereafter] they will manifest again: from the absolute condition there arises the base-of-all, from the base-of-all the consciousness of the base-of-all arises and from that the consciousness of mental phenomena arises alone [(i.e. without the consciousness of the five senses)]. At his point various kinds of dream arise and one apprehends the [dream] phenomena, [which are] the objects of the mind of karmic traces (Skt. vāsanā Tib. bagchag [Wylie, bag chags]; Ch. 氣習 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, qì xí; Wade-Giles, ch¹-i⁴-hsi²] or 習氣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xí qì; Wade-Giles, hsi²-ch¹-i⁴]).”

Although the Buddhist teachings generally refer to what above was called the consciousness of the five senses plus the consciousness of mental phenomena as the “six consciousnesses,” in terms of the concept of consciousness that is reflected by Western languages, it may be more precise to explain them as the specific capacities of a single consciousness to perceive six different types of objects through six different “doors” (the five senses universally recognized, plus the mental sense that presents thoughts and other mental objects—i.e. objects of dang [Wylie, gdangs] energy).

To conclude, it must be emphasized that an experience of luminosity the true condition of which is not reGnized will be no more than an illusory experience (Tib. nyam [Wylie, nyams]) that may correspond to the base-of-all or of the consciousness of the base-of-all, whereas managing to become absorbed in that experience of formless luminosity without reGnizing its true condition may be an absorption of the base-of-all or a formless contemplation (Skt. ārūpyasamāpatti; Tib. zugmepai nymjug [gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wú-sè-jìe dìng; Wade-Giles, ssu⁴ wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴]).

¹⁷ In particular, with regard to my explanation of the reintegration of the subject with the object that takes place by means of the practice of Thögel (Wylie, thod rgal), (1) as corresponding to the disappearance of the illusion of there being a subject and an object, (2) as involving the dissolution of the illusion of there being an internal dimension (Tib. nangying [Wylie, nang dbyings]) and an external dimension (Tib. chiying [Wylie, spyi dbyings]), and (3) as resulting in the manifestation of the condition of yerme (Wylie, dbyer med) in the Thögel sense of the term, it must be noted that (1) and (2) also occur in the practice of Nyingthik or Thubthik Tekchö, albeit in a way that is different from the one in which it occurs in Thögel and the Yangthik, whereas indivisibility (Tib. yerme [Wylie, dbyer med]) in the sense in which the term is used in (3) applies only to the Fruits of Thögel, the Yangthik and the Longde series. Thus whereas (1) and (2) were based on relating my own Nyingthik / Thubthik practice of Tekchö with my understanding of Thögel, (3) was inferred from teachings of Namchö Mingyur Dorje (Wylie: gnam chos mi 'gyur rdo rje, 1645–1667), Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Lopön Tenzin Namdak (Wylie, slob dpon bstan 'dzin rnam dag, born 1926).

For its part, the description of the form in which saṃsāra manifests right after the illusory experience (Tib. nyam [Wylie, nyams]) of clear startled awareness called heddewa (Wylie, had de ba) when its true condition is not reGnized, and most of the rest of the yogic-philosophical explanations that are found in the work, derive from confronting texts with my own experience of the practice. Explanations of how to apply the practices that lead to this experience, of how to reGnize the true condition of the Base on the basis of this experience, and of how to reGnize the true condition of whatever manifests in the process of arising of saṃsāra from the neutral condition of the base-of-all, were based on the interaction of the instructions offered mainly by Dudjom Rinpoche, Thinle Norbu Rinpoche and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with texts by Longchen Rabjampa (and partly with a text by Dūdjom Lingpa) and my own experience of Dzogchen practice.

As it may be inferred from the regular text of the Introduction, my explanations of the practice of the Series of Pith Instructions (Tib. Menngag[gyi]de [Wylie, man ngag {gyi} sde]; Skt. Upadeśavarga) are based on my own experience, which for its part derives from the instructions I received from Thinle Norbu Rinpoche and Dudjom Rinpoche and from the two books mentioned in the Introduction's regular text (Dudjom Rinpoche's Richö [1979; trans. by M. Ricard on the basis of instructions by Dunge Thinle Norbu Rinpoche and Tulku Thöndup] and Jigme Lingpa's Senge'i ngaro [unpublished: rough translation by Tulku Thöndup]). Much later my own instructions were confronted with the public oral teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the teachings in the books mentioned in footnotes to the regular text—namely the translations of Jigme Lingpa's Senge'i ngaro in Chögyam Trungpa (1972, pp. 21–26), Thinle Norbu (2015, pp. 75–88), Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, pp. 135–149, with Commentary by Nyoshul Khenpo, pp. 151–216) and van Schaik (2004, pp. 225–234), plus Petrül Rinpoche's **Khepa sri gyalpoi khyechö drelpa dangchepa** (mhas pa sri rgyal po'i khyad chos' grel pa dang bcas pa, in Reynolds, 1996) and **Dzogpa Chenpoi nyamlengyi nemthar thukpai tsadrel öselgyi nangcha zheja zhukso** (rdzogs pa chen po'i nyams len gyi gnad mthar thug pa'i rtsa 'grel 'od gsal gyi snang cha zhes bya bzugs so, in Namkhai Norbu, 2013b) and Jigme Lingpa's Yeshe Lama (rdzogs pa chen po klong chen snying thig gdod ma'i mgon po'i lam gyi rim pa'i khrid yig ye shes bla ma; in Jigme Lingpa, 2008; Lama Chönam & Sangye Khandro, trans.), among others.

However, the discussion of the reGnition of the luminosity of the absolute expanse of phenomena (Tib. chöying [Wylie, chos dbyings]) while one sleeps in the preceding endnote (endnote 16) is solely based on Longchen Rabjampa's **Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Ngalsoi Drelwa Shingta Chenpo** (Wylie, rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid ngal gso'i 'grel ba shing rta chen po), vol. I, 86b/5; in Tulku Thöndup (1996, p. 225), with no incidence of my own experience.

¹⁸ Among the explanations I have inferred from relating my own general experience of Buddhist practice, and in particular of the Dzogchen Menngagde, with various Buddhist teachings, it is important to stress that of the illusory duality between the mental subject and the physical world as a result of reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the directional threefold thought structure, which gives rise to the illusion that the spurious mental subject (which is an appearance of the dang [gdangs] form of manifestation of energy) is a soul or a substantial and autonomous mind, inherently separate from the physical world, located in what the individual may experience as the incorporeal “crossing point” of the four dimensions (the three of space, and time).

And, in general, that of how delusory experience arises when, on the basis of the first aspect or type of avidyā posited by the Dzogchen teachings (i.e. the unawareness of our true condition), the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure gives rise to the second type of avidyā—the perception of sensa as external—and that of subtle, intuitive thoughts gives rise to the illusion of substantial multiplicity, etc.

In general, such explanations are too numerous to be enumerated.

¹⁹ These are two cycles of Treasures or *termas* (Wylie, *gter ma*): the first was revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa (Wylie, *bdud 'joms gling pa*: 1835-1904) and the second was revealed by Jigdrāl Yeshe Dorje himself under the title “New Treasure of Dūdjom” (Dūdjom Tersar [Wylie, *bdud 'joms gter gar*]).

²⁰ These personalized teachings consisted in a series of sessions. In each session, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche would give a series of instructions concerning Ati Dzogpa Chenpo that later on I would have to apply on my own; then, in the following session and before receiving the next teaching, I had to report the results obtained on applying the preceding ones.

Concerning transmissions, I received from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche: the Khandro Nyingthik, Yabshi (Wylie, *mkha' 'gro snying thig, ya bzhi*) revealed by Longchen Rabjampa (Wylie, *klong chen rab 'byams pa*); the Longchen Nyingthik (Wylie, *thugs gter klong chen snying thig gzhung rtsa ba gsal byed dang bcas pa*) revealed by Jigme Lingpa (Wylie, *jigs med gling pa*); the collection of *termas* revealed by Chöling Karwang Chime Dorje (*chos gling gar dbang 'chi med rdo rje*), and the complete Rinchen Terdzö (Wylie, *rin chen gter mdzod*): the great compilation of the most important *termas* of the Nyingmapa (Wylie, *rnying ma pa*) or “Old School” completed in the nineteenth century by Jamgön Kongtrül (Wylie, *'jam dgon skong sprul*) the Great and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (Wylie, *'jam dbyang mkhyen brtse dbang po*).

²¹ Apart from the clarifications concerning Jigme Lingpa’s Lion’s Roar (Tib. *Senge Ngaro* [Wylie, *seng ge'i nga ro*]) referred to in the regular text, from Dodrub Chen Rinpoche I received the transmission of Jigme Lingpa’s Longchen Nyingthik (Wylie, *thugs gter klong chen snying thig gzhung rtsa ba gsal byed dang bcas pa*), which I had received already from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and the *lung* of the Rinchen Terdzö (*rin chen gter mdzod*)—the empowerments (Tib. *wangkur* [Wylie, *dbang bskur*; Skt. *abhiṣeka*]) for which I was receiving at the time from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.

²² From Chatral Rinpoche, I received the transmission for a recitation and visualization associated with Mañjuśrī sitting on a snow lion, as well as the most useful practical advice I referred to in endnote 1 to this book.

²³ The webpage in which this book was originally published is <http://www.eliascapriles.dzogchen.ru>, where it continued to be available for years; however, later on my University offered me another webpage for making available those among my works I wished, or was allowed, to make freely available, which is <http://webdelprofesor.ula.ve/humanidades/elicap>, and so now it is available in this webpage instead.

²⁴ Literally, the term *dharmacakra* means “(turning) the wheel of the teaching:” in ancient India, the introduction of a true system of spiritual teachings was illustrated with the image of setting in motion the wheel of the teaching or *dharmacakra*. The individual who did so was called a *Cakravartin*—a term that was also applied to emperors who would conquer of all known inhabitable territories.

²⁵ The canon containing the Buddhism of the First Promulgation (*dharmacakra*), in which the *Hīnayāna* was taught, is written in the Pāli language. It is the original texts of the *Mahāyāna*, which according to the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* were taught in the Second and Third Promulgations, which were written in Sanskrit. Some texts of the *Vajrayāna* or *Tantrism* are also in Sanskrit, although many others are in the language of *Oḍḍiyāna* (to a certain extent similar to Sanskrit) or in *Prakrits* (*prākṛta*) from Northern India, although those of the *Anuyoga* were originally written in the language of *Drusha* (Wylie, *bru sha*), which Chögyal Namkhai Norbu identifies as the ex-Soviet Kyrgyz Republic or Kyrgyzstan. The original texts of Buddhist Ati Dzogpa Chenpo are in the language of *Oḍḍiyāna*.

²⁶ Exceptions to this rule are the books by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, which as we have seen are based on the ancient tradition that, under this Master’s inspiration, I follow in this book.

²⁷ As a derivative of Sanskrit or a Sanskrit-related language, the language of *Oḍḍiyāna* (or *Uddiyana*) may probably be categorized as a *Prakrit* (*prākṛta*); however, as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, Ed. unpublished) has noted, though most of the words of that language are Indo-European, and are either derived from or related to Sanskrit, the language’s syntax is Tibeto-Burman. For example, whereas the Sanskrit for Dzogchen (*rdzogs chen*) is *Mahāsāndhi*, where the adjective goes first and is followed by

the noun, the Oḍḍiyāna (or Uddiyana) term is Santimaha (diacritic signs omitted because the term's exact pronunciation is unknown), where, just as in Tibetan in general and in the term Dzogchen (rdzogs chen) in particular, the noun goes first, being followed by the adjective.

²⁸ The method I have followed in doing this is the one I have called “a meta-ontological hermeneutics.” For a lengthy discussion of this method, see Capriles (work in progress). A briefer, more superficial explanation of it, is provided in Capriles (electronic publication 2007, vol. I).

²⁹ For example, in a recent work Elio Guarisco, with Adriano Clemente and Jim Valby (2013), rendered the term sambhogakāya as dimension of perfect resources and nirmāṇakāya as dimension of emanation, which are much better as translations than most of the other ones offered in the past—yet they also have the problem of emphasizing only a specific acceptance of each of the terms.

³⁰ Elsewhere I have objected to Dr. Guenther's translation of a series of terms: in Capriles (electronic publication 2004), I objected to his translation of the Sanskrit dharmakāya and its Tibetan equivalent, chöku (Wylie, chos-sku); in Capriles (electronic publication 2007, vol. I) and elsewhere I objected to his translation of the Tibetan zhi (Wylie, gzhi) and so on. In the case of dharmakāya, the original word has so many different acceptations according to the context in which it is used, that any translation of it will necessarily do away with all but one of its manifold meanings, and therefore will distort—or, at least, restrict—the sense of the passage in which the term is found. This is why the Tibetans who produced the ancient translations, who as a rule rendered the words in terms of their deeper meanings rather than in terms of their etymology, in this case kept faithful to the etymology of the Sanskrit word and coined the term chöku (Wylie, chos sku): chö (Wylie, chos) was the literal translation of dharma, and ku (Wylie, sku) was the literal translation of kaya. Unlike the Tibetans, Dr. Guenther totally disregarded the etymology of the term he was translating, and, rather than finding a translation that conveyed at least one the deeper meanings of the word, in Guenther (1977), he used one that contradicts all possible meanings of the term. Paradoxically, in a note to the latter book (p. 190, note 22), the author criticizes those who leave the term untranslated. He writes:

“...chos-sku. This term corresponds to (the) Sanskrit dharmakāya, which is either left untranslated or mistranslated by what I call the ‘literalist fallacy’. The Tibetan term sku indicates ‘existence’ in the sense of ‘Being’. It almost approximates the existentialist philosopher's conception of ‘existence’ and ‘Being’ except that it does not share the latter's subjectivism.”

What existentialist and existential philosophers called “existence” was what from a Buddhist standpoint we would have to call being-under-the-power-of-avidyā-and-hence-being-in-saṃsāra, which they analyzed in phenomenological and existentialist or existential terms as thoroughly as they could. Therefore, unwillingly Dr. Guenther is telling us that the Tibetan term ku (Wylie, sku) refers to being-under-the-power-of-avidyā-and-hence-being-in-saṃsāra, when the truth is the very opposite of this: qua Fruit, it is applied to nonstatic nirvāṇa (Skt. apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa; Tib. minpai myangdé [Wylie, mi gnas pa'i myang 'das]; Ch. 無住涅槃 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúzhù nièpán; Wade-Giles, wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²]) only, and as such is contrasted with lü (Wylie, lus), which applies only to sentient beings in deluded saṃsāra. See the books mentioned above for a systematic, exhaustive explanation of the reasons why Dr. Guenther's position is wrong.

³¹ It is the illusion of separateness that causes us to be willing to harm others in order to achieve what we wrongly see as our own benefit, and it is the projection of evil unto others that boosts the ensuing evil, giving rise to the greatest evils. The latter has to do with that which Jung called the archetype of the shadow, and with that which Gestalt psychology calls the dynamics of the shadow—although, contrary to Jung's belief, rather than being the “remnant of the violent impulses of our animal ancestors,” the archetype in question (and the dynamics inherent in it) result from being punished during the process of socialization in civilized societies. Cf. Capriles (2012, 2013b, etc.).

³² In the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions (Tib. Menngag[gyi]de [Wylie, man ngag [gyi] sde]; Skt. Upadeśavarga), which is the most direct series of Dzogchen teachings, the term nature or essence of mind (Tib. semnyi [Wylie, sems nyid]; Skt. cittatā or citta eva) refers to the (co-)Gnitive capacity that in a sense depends on the organism and seems to lie in an internal dimension (Tib. nangying [Wylie, nang dbyings]), whereas the nature or essence of phenomena other than mind (Tib. chönyi [Wylie, chos nyid]; Skt. dharmatā) is the true condition of all that manifests as object in what seems to be an external dimension (Tib. chiying [Wylie, spyi dbyings]). This difference is established because in that series of teachings the highest level of practice, which is Thögel (Wylie, thod rgal) or the Yangthik (Wylie, yang

thig), may take realization to the point at which the nature or essence of mind fully integrates with the nature or essence of phenomena, in the sense that the illusion that the former is the illusory mental subject that arises from the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure (Skt. trimaṇḍala; Tib. khorsum [Wylie, 'khor gsum]) and that as such it is inherently separate from an array of entities that manifest as object by virtue of the same mechanism dissolves and no longer arises, so that the highest type of indivisibility (Tib. yerme [Wylie, dbyer med]) is achieved—upon which the organism dissolves into light (if this is achieved while the individual is still alive, the whole organism disappears; if it is achieved after death, the hair and nails, which lack sensibility and are always growing to the outside of the body, remain). All of this will be discussed in Vol. II of this book.

³³ Dzogchen texts and teachings often speak of recognizing (Tib. ngo shepa [Wylie, ngo shes pa]) thoughts as the dharmakāya; or of recognizing the true condition, essence or nature of thoughts, and so on. In all such cases, what the texts are referring to is not what normally we understand for “recognition” (Skt. saṃjñā; Tib. duche [Wylie, 'du shes]; Ch. 想 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, xiǎng; Wade-Giles, hsiang³])—namely the understanding of a configuration / pattern / collection of characteristics (Skt. lakṣaṇa; Pāli lakkhaṇa; Tib. tsennyi [Wylie, mtshan nyid]; Ch. 相 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, xiāng; Wade-Giles, hsiang¹]) in terms of a hypostatized / reified / absolutized / valorized, subtle concept (Skt. arthasāmānya; Tib. dōnchi [Wylie, don spyi]; Ch. 總事 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zǒngshì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-shih⁴] or 總義 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zǒngyì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-i⁴]). It was in order to make clear the distinction between ngo shepa, which is what the texts refer to, and what is usually termed “recognition,” that I coined the neologisms “reGnition,” “reGnize,” and so on.

For some time I rendered the Tibetan term ngo shepa (Wylie, ngo shes pa) with the terms “reCognition,” “reCognize,” etc., which I wrote with a capital “C” so that they could be distinguished from the terms “recognition,” “recognize” and so on. However, this was far from ideal, because “reCognition” (etc.) still contained the prefix “co,” which implies the co-emergent arising of a subject and an object, which does not at all take place in what I am calling reGnition (etc.).

In fact, as Paul Claudel correctly noted in his *Traité de la Co-naissance au monde et de soi-même* (in Claudel, 1943), “la connaissance est la co-naissance du sujet et de l’objet:” the dualistic knowledge (connaissance) that is a function of delusion involves the interdependent birth (co-naissance) of subject and object. Contrariwise, in what I call “reGnition” (Tib. ngo shepa [Wylie, ngo shes pa]) the subject-object duality dissolves like feathers entering fire. (Note that Claudel was speaking of knowledge in a very particular context that is not at all the one we are concerned with here, yet his statement is correct in all contexts. He claimed that birth qua co-naissance, like time, occurs in Being, and that it forms a couple with Time—the first assertion being wrong, because the birth in question is the birth of the phenomenon of being and hence does not occur in Being, and the second being correct, for sequential time arises interdependently with subject and object, as explained in the regular text of this book and others of my works [Capriles, 2000a, 2007a Vol. I, 2012a, etc.])

The neologisms “reGnition,” “reGnize” and so on are far from perfect for rendering the Tibetan ngo shepa (Wylie, ngo shes pa), for the prefix “re”—which is absent in the Tibetan—seems to imply the arising of a wholly new event called “Gnition” each and every time the true condition of both ourselves and all phenomena is realized, and although this is correct in the sense in which it is said that each event of rigpa (Wylie, rig pa; Skt. vidyā; Pāli vijjā) is a different primordial gnosis (Skt. jñāna; Pāli ñāṇa; Tib. yeshe [Wylie, ye shes]; Ch. 智 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhì; Wade-Giles, chih⁴; Jap. chi]), it may be deemed to be wrong on account of the fact that it is the same rigpa that manifests in each and every new primordial gnosis, just as it is the nonconceptual, nondual Awake Gnitiveness / awareness called essence or nature of mind (Skt. cittatā or citta eva; Tib. semnyi [Wylie, sems nyid]) that manifests qua Path and Fruit as rigpa. At any rate, since all alternatives I considered seemed to be far more inadequate, I decided to use “reGnition,” “reGnize” and so on. (These terms may be translated into Spanish as “reGnoscimiento,” “reGnoscer” and so on, and into other Latin languages by the corresponding constructions.)

The nondual, delusion-free state in which the nondual primordial gnosis that is the Base has become perfectly evident is designated in the Dzogchen teachings by the term rigpa (Wylie, rig pa), which may render the Sanskrit vidyā or, often when the particle rang is placed before it (rang rig), Sanskrit terms such as svasaṃvedana or svasaṃvittiḥ (Ch. 自證 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zìzhèng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-cheng⁴] or 自覺 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zìjué; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-chüeh²]), and which in this book I translate as “Awake

awareness,” as “absolute Presence” (where the term is capitalized to make it clear that it should not be understood in the dualistic Platonic sense of “being before”), as “instant Presence” or “instant Awake awareness” (where “instant,” which renders the Tib. *kechikma* [Wylie, *skad chig ma*], means that, (1) awareness is free from the division of the temporal continuum into past, present and future that arises when the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valuation of the threefold directional thought-structure sunders the uninterrupted Base into subject and object, and thus into space, time and knowledge as different dimensions (cf. the explanation above in the regular text), and (2) sense data are apprehended without mediation by concepts and hence without the lapse that it takes for recognition (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushé* [Wylie, 'du shes]; Ch. 想 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, xiǎng; Wade-Giles, *hsiang³*]) to occur.

Note that the particle *she* (Wylie, *shes*) is part both of terms that refer to nonconceptual and hence nondual events that make the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena perfectly patent, such as *yeshe*, *rangjunggi yeshe* and *chikshe kundröl*, on the one hand, and of terms that refer to conceptual, dualistic, delusive events such as *kunzhi namshe* (or *kunzhi nampar shepa*), *yikiyi namshe* (or *yikiyi nampar shepa*), and *gongai namshe* (or *gongai nampar shepa*), on the other. This is so because all of these terms refer to functions of our Gnitive capacity or Base-awareness: those in the first group and many others that I failed to mention make the true condition of that Gnitive capacity or Base-awareness and of all of the phenomena that manifest through it perfectly patent, whereas those in the second group and many others that I failed to mention conceal that true condition and by the same token give rise to delusion.

In the past, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu used to render the same term as “Knowledge,” which in translations of his teachings I used to write with a capital K in order to contrast its meaning with the one the word has in ordinary language, which corresponds to its dualistic etymology. Nowadays, when not using the terms discussed above in this note for rendering *rigpa*, I render it as Awake awareness or nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness; however, when this is done, it is imperative to clearly emphasize the distinction between Awake awareness qua Base, or simply Base awareness, which in Tibetan is referred to as *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*) and which is as a rule rendered as “nature of mind,” “essence of mind,” or “Base awareness,” and *rigpa*. *Semnyi* designates the awareness that is the Base of all experiences of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, whereas the term *rigpa* (Wylie, *rig pa*) designates this very same awareness when perfectly patent in *nirvāṇa*. Therefore, *rigpa* is no other than the Base awareness referred to as *semnyi*—and yet most often the term *rig pa* is used only when the true condition of the Base is fully patent and there is no delusion-begotten self-impediment. The point is that *semnyi* has the potentiality to manifest either obscurations and self-impediment in the functioning called *samsāra*, or total lack of obscurations and self-impediment in the functioning called nonstatic *nirvāṇa*—the term *rig pa* being often used only in the second case. In brief, *rig pa* is used especially in the conditions of Dzogchen qua Path and Dzogchen qua Fruit.

I decided to also translate the words *vidyā* and *rigpa* as “Presence” because Chögyal Namkhai Norbu uses the term “presence” to refer to nondistractedness. Not to be distracted from whatever one is doing in a given moment while in the dualistic, relative state, but to be perfectly mindful and aware of it, is the relative presence that is referred to by the Tibetan term *tenpa* (Wylie, *dran-pa*; Skt. *smṛti*; Pāli *sati*; Ch. 念 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, niàn; Wade-Giles, *nien⁴*]). Not to be distracted from the nondual, delusion-free state in which the nondual primordial gnosis that is the Base is fully patent, is the absolute / instant Presence that is referred to by the Tibetan term *rigpa* (Wylie, *rig pa*). Therefore, to be distracted from what one is doing at a certain moment in the dualistic, relative state is distraction both with regard to *tenpa* or relative presence, and with regard to *rigpa* or absolute Presence. For their part, both relative distraction and relative presence or *tenpa* must be acknowledged to be distraction with regard to the absolute Presence called *rigpa*, for both conditions involve the concealment of the nondual primordial gnosis that is the Base, and therefore both are distraction with regard to the patency of this primordial gnosis.

(Note that in the Series of [the Essence of Nature of] Mind the same word, *tenpa* (Wylie, *dran pa*), is used to refer both to *tenpa* or relative presence and *rigpa* or Absolute, Instant Presence. Since this is not a text pertaining to the Series in question, and since the ambiguous usage of the term *tenpa* is likely to beget confusion, on the basis of a teaching by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu I decided to use the word **presence**, yet capitalizing it in the case of *rigpa* and not doing so in the case of *tenpa* so as to avoid a fostering a terrible confusion. (In the Series of Pith Instructions various types of *tenpa* (*dran pa*) are posited, but they will not be considered here.)

The first time these terms appear in the book, I include the pertinent explanations once again.

³⁴ I am taking as the main hypothesis in this regard the one upheld in Bocchi & Ceruti (1993). However, I leave ample room for concurrent hypotheses by Gimbutas, Jain, Gornung, Renfrew, Hodge, Danilenko, Diakonov, Gamkrelidze Ivanov, Hausler, Gimpera, Schmid, Bosch, Georgiev, Devoto, and Makkay. All of them agree that rather than having originated, as the Brahmins of India claim and as Hitler wanted to believe, in the slopes of the Himalayas, the Indo-Europeans initiated their expansion from areas far more to the West—though they disagree as to the exact location and boundaries of those areas. At any rate, all serious scientific researchers have rejected the allegedly Indian or Himalayan origin of the so-called “Aryans,” and most asserted them to have initiated their expansion from a region in the Eurasian steppes—the prevailing view seeming to be that they initiated their expansion from Northern Caucasia or nearby areas, and in particular from a strip stretching from the North of the Black Sea to the West of the Caspian Sea.

Among the many works that ratify the view according to which the proto-Indo-European invaders of India came from the Eurasian steppes, Alchin, Frank Raymond (1995), Kulke & Rothermund (2004, p. 32) may be particularly relevant, among many other works.

³⁵ Brahmin (Brāhmaṇa) traditions claim that the Indo-Europeans expanded from the Himalayas, but no one who does not blindly follow those traditions would accept that nowadays. The statement according to which contacts between the proto-Indo-Europeans and the peoples who were already settled in India may go as far as 2000 BCE has its source in the genetic studies reported in Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi & Piazza (1994), as well as in the interdisciplinary research reported in Renfrew (1987) and the one reported in Mukherjee, Nebel, Oppenheim & Majumder (2001). The latter write:

“More recently, about 15,000-10,000 years before present (ybp), when agriculture developed in the Fertile Crescent region that extends from Israel through northern Syria to western Iran, there was another eastward wave of human migration (Cavalli-Sforza et al., 1994; Renfrew 1987), a part of which also appears to have entered India. This wave has been postulated to have brought the Dravidian languages into India (Renfrew 1987). Subsequently, the Indo-European (Aryan) language family was introduced into India about 4,000 ybp.”

Since ybp means “years before present”, to calculate the years BCE it is mandatory to subtract 2000 years from the above dates. Therefore, the Dravidians would have reached India between 13,000 and 8,000 BCE, and the Indo-Europeans would have initiated their contacts with India around 2,000 BCE.

For an account of the bellicose character of the religion of the Indo-Europeans, see Eisler (1987); Bocchi and Ceruti (1993); Gimbutas (1989 and 1982); DeMeo (1998); Taylor (2005); Capriles (2012a). However, as rightly pointed out in Radford-Ruether (1992, this Ed. 1994), this does not mean that the agricultural peoples of Eurasia that later on were conquered and dominated by the Semitic and Indo-European peoples were totally non-violent, as were human beings in the Golden Age: violence was less developed among the agricultural peoples in question, but it had already developed to some extent.

³⁶ The Harrapan civilization had been peaceful, egalitarian and “gylanic” (this term, coined by Riane Eisler, refers to societies that, rather than being patriarchal or matriarchal, are egalitarian concerning gender and sex), but at later stages of its development it would have begun to produce weapons and absorb other characteristics proper to stratified, bellicose societies. My guess is that this development was the result of Indo-Europeans advance Eastward, which would have gradually made their neighbors become more bellicose, as they had to defend themselves from the Indo-Europeans and/or were contaminated by contact with the latter. At any rate, it seems that by the time Indo-Europeans invaded the Indus Valley the Harrapans were no longer as peaceful, egalitarian and “gylanic” as they had traditionally been.

³⁷ According to the most important researchers of the civilization and religion of Zhang-Zhung, and in particular to both Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (oral teachings; cf. 1992, 1996a, 2004, 2009 as well) and Lopön Tenzin Namdak (cf. Tenzin Namdak [Lopön], 1993, p. 144), in the Kingdom of Zhang-Zhung, which comprised a great deal of the Himalayas and the Hindu-Kush, the language belonged to the Tibeto-Burman family, which includes present day Tibetan, some of the Bhutanese languages and present-day Burmese, and belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family. During the reign of some of its Kings, the capital of this Kingdom—or, according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s most recent studies on Zhang-zhung (Namkhai Norbu, 2009), the capital of the Himalayan region of this Kingdom—was the city of Khyung-lung, near Mount Kailāśā and lake Mānasarovar (or, properly, Mānasa Sarovar), where the great Dzogchen Master, Primordial Revealer (Tib. *tönpa* [Wylie, *ston pa*]) Shenrab Miwoche (Wylie,

gshen rab mi bo che), taught the Dzogchen Nyengyü of Zhang-zhung (Wylie, rdzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud), probably around 1,800 BC (other accounts give us quite different dates, which will be reviewed in a subsequent note).

³⁸ The region of Mount Kailāśā, where Tibeto-Burman Master Shenrab Miwoche taught the Dzogchen tradition of the Zhang-zhung Nyengyü around 1,800 BC (see the preceding note), is precisely the place of emanation of Śaivism, which seems to have been the religion of the Dravidians. In fact, the Śaivas hold Mount Kailāśā to be the home of the god Shiva, and therefore many Indian Śaivas go there every year on pilgrimage.

Furthermore, the king who protected Shenrab, Triwer Sergyi Charuchen (Khri wer la rje gu lang gser gyi bya ru can), is regarded as the first of the eighteen kings whose crown was ornamented with horns (cf. Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1996a, p. 21, n. 7)—just like the figure represented in the so-called Paśupati Seal of the Harrapan civilization: a human, seemingly ithyphallic, horned figure with three faces. It is well known that in Paleolithic art, which did not depict anthropomorphic deities, but as shown by André Leroi Gourhan (1965, 1994) and Anette Laming-Emperaire (1962), glorified and celebrated the world as sacred, horned animals were ubiquitous throughout Eurasia. Then, when anthropomorphic deities arose in the art of the Neolithic, in religions of communion (the ones that Riane Eisler [1987] associated with the chalice) the horns reappeared as ornaments of the divinity and/or of animals associated with it. In fact, as noted in Daniélou (1984), since the arising of the deities of nature and communion in the transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic, the horns have been paradigmatic ornaments of those deities, including the Indian god Śiva and its equivalents elsewhere, such as Dionysus in Greece, Osiris in Egypt and so on—and horned animals have also been associated with those deities, as shown by the fact that Śiva's mount is Nandi the bull (in antiquity called Vṛṣabha), which is also the gatekeeper of Śiva and Parvati, and which is usually represented in Śaiva temples with a statue pointing to the shrine.

³⁹ As noted by Shereen Ratnagar (2004), an early and influential work in the area that set the trend for interpretations of archaeological evidence from the Harrapan sites that have been deemed proto-Brahmanic—although they are actually Śaiva, for Brahmanism arose after the Indo-European invaders imposed the Indo-European gods, cast system and so, on the peoples they conquered—was that of John Marshall (1931, pp. 48–78), who identified the following features as prominent in the Harrapan religion: a Great Male God and a Mother Goddess; deification or veneration of animals and plants; symbolic representation of the phallus (liṅgam) and vulva or vagina (yoni); and, use of baths and water in religious practice. Marshall's interpretations have been much debated, and sometimes disputed over the following decades (Possehl, 2002, pp. 141–156). However, the so-called Paśupati Seal represents a human, seemingly ithyphallic, horned figure with three faces, which Marshall identified as an early form of Śiva or Rudra (the latter two being the same deity, though it is claimed that their identification took place at a later stage), who is associated with asceticism, yoga, and liṅgam; who, in his form as Paśupati, is regarded as a lord of animals; and who is often depicted as having three eyes (Marshall, 1931, pp. 48–78; Possehl, 2002, pp. 141–144).

⁴⁰ Capriles (1998a, 2000b). According to the traditions of the Brahmins, the Upaniṣads would have put in writing some of the “secret doctrines” that with the passing of time had become indissolubly associated with the Vedas. However, the findings that show Vedic religion not to be older than Buddhism would have outright refuted this claim.

⁴¹ For a résumé of the debate on the location of Oḍḍiyāna, cf. note 11 to this book.

I said that their purest form and quintessence manifested in the teachings of Buddhist Dzogchen and the Vajrayāna, independently of the lineal transmission of the ancient tradition, because in the absence of evidence showing there was a transmission of teachings and realization from the pre-Buddhist tradition and the Buddhist one, we are compelled to provisionally assume that the Buddhists did not receive their Dzogchen and Vajrayāna teachings from non-Buddhist sources. The thesis I am positing is that these Buddhist teachings expressed the essence of the original practices and doctrines of the peoples speaking Tibeto-Burman and Dravidian languages more accurately than other teachings, for highest transmission and teachings of the Tibeto-Burman and Dravidian peoples must have been, as suggested in a previous note, Shenrab Miwoche's Dzogchen tradition of the Zhang-zhung Nyengyü (rdzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud), assisted by the Tantric teachings of both Bönpos and Śaivas (for evidence as to the fact that the Bönpos had Mantric teachings see Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1996a.)

⁴² Today, it is known beyond any doubt that the ancestors of the “Aryans” (Ārya) or “Indo-Europeans”—the Kurgans, who apparently had settled in a strip of land that stretched from the north coast of the Black Sea in the eastern direction to a small part of the western coast of the Caspian Sea—before beginning their conquering expansion in multiple directions had been regular marauders of their neighbors. They progressively invaded and conquered almost all of Europe, a great deal of the Middle East (which they could not conquer in its entirety because they had to compete with other mighty invaders who were conquering the region: the Semites), and then India.

In all of that ample region, previously to the Indo-European and Semitic invasions, there had prevailed an elevated culture and a nondual mystical tradition of Tantric and Dzogchen methodology that later on developed into a series of local spiritual traditions: in the case of the Tibeto-Burman from the lower slopes and high plains of the Himalayas, into Bön; in the case of the Dravidians of India, into Śaivism; in the case of the Persians, into what much later on was known as Zurvanism; in the case of the Minoan Cretans, into the Dionysian religion—and, according to Alain Daniélou, in the case of the Egyptians, into the cult of Osiris. It must be noted that, although it seems true that the pre-Aryan, pre-Semitic civilizations that later on were conquered by the Aryans and the Semites were relatively egalitarian, peaceful and nonsexist, on the basis of the works by Marija Gimbutas (Gimbutas, Marija, 1989 and Spanish 1991) and others, authors such as Riane Eisler (Eisler, Riane, 1987) and Carol Christ (Christ, 1987, 1989) seem to have somehow, somewhat exaggerated these traits, overlooking the fact that those civilizations developed as a result of settling in lands previously inhabited by other peoples with their own cultures. For example, research has shown that the Dravidians were not one of the autochthonous peoples of India (in Capriles, 1998a there is an outdated discussion of this): the former settled into the Indus valley at a relatively late date (according to Mukherjee, Nebel, Oppenheim & Majumder, 2001, between 13,000 and 8,000 BCE)—though one can assume that our time’s Pakistan and India were so scarcely populated at the time that no war of conquest was necessary, for there are no traces of weapons in archeological sites until relatively late times. The Elamite and the Sumerians probably did likewise in their respective regions, though the Sumerians seem to have turned bellicose before the Dravidians. It is also significant that Catal Hüyük (in Anatolia) James Mellaart (Mellaart, 1967, 1975) claims to have found evidence of the existence of a priestly class and an incipient social stratification, and reported the existence of primitive weapons such as sticks, spears, daggers, arches, arrows and so on; however, Mellaart was forced to leave Turkey before his research was exhaustive, having been taken over by his disciple Ian Hodder many years after Mellaart left the country—and Hodder’s exhaustive research did not show signs of significant social stratification, while showing clear signs of gender / sexual equality and suggesting that society was neither patriarchal nor matriarchal. He concluded that the female statues that Mellaart took for representations of goddesses were not deities (Hodder, in different works).

Therefore, though it is clear that there is a radical difference concerning social stratification and bellicosity between the Indo-Europeans and the Semites, on the one hand, and the peoples they conquered, on the other, in many late cases this difference is one of degree only. (In Capriles, 1998a, I also discussed the theses by Professor Victor Mair, from Pennsylvania University; Californian anthropologist James Mallory, from The Queen’s University in Belfast, Ireland; and archeologist Jeannine Davis-Kimball, director of the San Francisco Chapter of the Archeological Institute of America. These have stressed the anthropological traits of the Indo-European Tocharians, which remained in the bronze age until very late times, produced few weapons and attributed a high status to women, in order to “prove” that the original Indo-Europeans were not as bellicose, sexist, domineering and so on as they were pictured above. Davis-Kimball, in particular, asserts that the traits shown by the Tocharians demonstrate that the bellicose, androcentric character attributed to Indo-Europeans in some “popular works” is a myth. However, archeological remains of the Kurgans [proto-Indo-Europeans] in the fifth millenary BC show them to have been as described above. For his part, Mallory states that Iranian groups pushed the Kurgans to the East from their habitat in the steppes North of the Black and Caspian seas, and as a result they ended up establishing themselves on the edges of the Taklimakan desert, on the Silk Route, in Central Asia—where they remained roughly until year 1.000 CE, when either they became extinct or were absorbed by the Uighurs of present day Xinjiang. However, this either shows that not all Indo-Europeans turned bellicose at the same time, or, more likely, that the Tocharians were pacified by the people of the region where they finally settled, who at an earlier stage were Bönpos belonging to the empire of Zhang-zhung and later on converted to Buddhism—a religion stressing nonviolence. At any

rate, it is a fact that the anthropological and cultural characteristics of the different peoples cannot be reduced to a racial determinism: some human groups “fall” swifter than others, but this is not due to any inherent racial traits. In fact, recent research into the human genome has shown that no genetic differences whatsoever support racial differentiation; furthermore, presently it is widely accepted that the whole of humankind derives from the same source.)

The so-called “Aryans” suppressed the spiritual traditions proper to the lands they conquered, but later on these reappeared, apparently with greater impetus in India and Central Asia, in such a way that in India part of their lofty spirituality infiltrated the religion of the conquerors, and in some regions of Central Asia the latter converted to Buddhism, in which at some point there arose both Tantric and Dzogchen teachings.

However, the Indo-European conquerors were quite zealous in filtering away any elements of the old religion that could threaten their rule, including many of its most direct mystic methods; in particular, and to the extent that repression is inherent in the structure and function of domination, to a great extent they excluded the methods that used the energy associated with the erotic impulse as a means to reach transpersonal experiences. In the case of India, where the Indo-Europeans established the caste system as a means to maintain their privileges, they eliminated the Bacchanalia in which social stratification had been inadmissible. I treat this subject in detail in *Capriles* (work in progress) See also: (1) Durant (Spanish, 1957). (2) Bocchi & Ceruti (1993). (3) Daniélou (1984). (4) Gimbutas (1989). (5) Eisler (1987). Etc.

In *Capriles* (1998a) and elsewhere I asserted that the doctrines of the ṛṣis who compiled the Upaniṣads included those elements of pre-Aryan spiritual doctrines and practices that had not yet been destroyed at the time the texts were written, which infiltrated the religion of the invaders who later on came to be known as Indo-Europeans, becoming associated, in the form of “secret doctrines,” to the sacred books called Veda—even though the doctrines in question were purged of their egalitarian, life-celebrating elements. This view radically contradicts the traditions of the Brahmins, according to which nondual mysticism is an exclusive element of the Aryan (i.e. Indo-European) lore, which they claim was the main contribution of this people to the human race. However, it suffices to take a look at the collections (Skt. *sāṃhitā*) of hymns that make up the four *sāṃhitā* Vedas to confirm that the Ṛgveda—the most ancient of the four—does not contain any elements of nondual mysticism, is mainly mythological in character, and conveys a creationist, clearly henotheist view (it describes a plurality of gods among whom a different one prevails in different hymns and among whom one, who is also not always the same, created the world). In fact, the contents of the Ṛgveda are typical of “fallen” humankind, have no reference to methods that may lead to the unveiling of the primordial condition, and posit a hierarchical mythology that mirrors the structure of the divided, fragmented societies and psyche resulting from the “fall.” (By fall I am referring to the introduction of the subject-object duality and of judgment, which, as reflected in the etymology of the German translation of the term—which is *Urteil*—gave rise to the “original partition” at the root of the illusion of ontological dualism and pluralism.)

It was only several centuries after the arrival of the Indo-European invaders that the assimilation of the traditions of the Dravidian and Tibeto-Burman predecessors of the Aryans in India allowed for the inclusion in one of the four Vedas that are *sāṃhitā* or collections of hymns of both nondual mysticism and of different types of magic (including many of the deviations that typically arise in the context of the ancient traditions of nondual mysticism as the result of the degeneration of humankind). This happened in the Atharvaveda, which was the last collection or *sāṃhitā* of hymns. However, it was in the Upaniṣads (and later on in the Vedānta Sūtra, as well as in the different types of Vedānta that, under the inspiration of Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrines, arose out of the interpretations of this sūtra [Gauḍapāda’s Māyāvāda was influenced by Yogācāra philosophy, while Śaṅkarācārya’s Advaita Vedānta received most obvious influences from Mādhyamaka philosophy]) that some elements of nondual mysticism manifested more clearly in Brahmanic traditions.

Of course, it was with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism that the above elements acquired greater coherence, and it was with the rise of Buddhist Tantra and Dzogchen that the anti-somatic elements typical of Indo-European prejudice were totally done away in spiritual systems in Aryan-dominated India. For example, according to the Dzogchen teachings, the body is a manifestation of *tsel* (*rtsal*) energy, which for its part is one of the three forms of manifestations of the third of the three bodhicittas or wisdoms inherent in our true condition; therefore, the body is realized to be a manifestation of wisdom and bodhicitta rather

than taken to be an obstacle to wisdom and bodhicitta. And, in fact, in the methods of both Tantra and Dzogchen the body and its impulses may be used as the very Path to Awakening.

To conclude, it must be noted that recent research has unveiled the fact that the Chinese annals relate the nomadic tribes of Tibet (as different from non-nomadic Tibetans) with the Qiāng (Ch. 羌; Wade–Giles, Ch’iang¹), an ancient nomadic ethnic group that at some point had a warring presence on the North-Western confines of China and that according to the researchers who have unveiled this fact had Indo-European origins. Furthermore, they tell us that the Tibetan language and culture carry influences of the proto-Indo-Europeans as an effect of the nomads’ migrations (Pettorino, Sveva, 2003).

(The term antisomatism, coined by Mircea Eliade, refers to the belief that the body is evil or bad, or that the impulses associated with the body are evil or not to be trusted. Even when the illusory body-soul dualism is not asserted as an ontological tenet, antisomatism necessarily implies this dualism, since the fact that the mind blames and despises the body implies that it takes itself to be substantially different and separate from it. Therefore, anti-somatic systems, even when they claim to be nondualistic, cannot be truly so.)

⁴³ The date of Śākyamuni’s parinirvana is often rounded to 480 BC “because of the general nature of the traditional chronology” (Napper, Betsy, 2003, p. 661, note 60). It must be noted that one system of astrological calculation places the parinirvana at 544 BC, whereas a tradition of the Kālacakratantra places it circa 880 BC. And on the basis of recent research various scholars insist in placing it later than the traditional chronology (some of this research will be discussed below in the regular text).

⁴⁴ Those who insist that the historical Buddha was reacting to Zoroastrianism rather than to Brahmanism have to attribute a more recent date to his existence, for the hypothesis would only make sense if the Muni had lived after the Persians began to rule over Gandhara and Sindh. In particular, Beckwith (2015: 11) suggests that the Buddha’s period of asceticism and Awakening coincided with the first fifty years of Persian rule—i.e., ca. 515 to ca. 465 BC—and that supposing that he actually lived for eighty years his death may have occurred ca. 425 BC.

⁴⁵ For a résumé of these claims and their sustentation by different scholars, cf. Beckwith (2015). However, Beckwith holds that the individual who according to tradition was called Siddhārtha Gautama was the originator of something totally new—the first Path of Awakening—but seems to claim that there were precedents of philosophy among the Scyntians. The truth seems to be that the region that was occupied by the Sakas and the Scyntians in general had been part of the kingdom or empire of Zhang Zhung (cf. Namkhai Norbu, 2009), who had possessed a Dzogchen Path of Awakening and what may be justifiably seen as an associated system of philosophy since at least the nineteenth century BCE (according to a Bönpo chronicle put into writing by Nyima Tenzin in his Tentsi [bstan rtsis], the Dzogchen teachings of the kingdom or empire of Zhang zhung originated some eighteen thousand years ago [cf. Kvaerne, Per, 1971]; however, as will be shown in a subsequent endnote, in that case Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche could not have been a speaker of Tibeto-Burman languages, for the speakers of these languages settled in the area at a much later date—and hence placing his lifetime in 18,000 BCE amounts to claiming that he as not a Tibeto-Burman speaker). In short, there seem to have been precedents of Buddhism. And it does not seem unlikely that those precedents may have had a continuity among the Sakas and/or other Scyntians—even if, as it seems to be the case, there are no proofs of the hypothesis put forward by the Bönpo teacher Lopön Tenzin Namdak, who privately asserted the Buddhist Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna and Atiyogatantrayāna to have been produced by Bönpo Masters, insisting that Garab Dorje was in truth the Bönpo Master Rasang Tapihritsa (Wylie, ra sangs ta pi hri tsa). Thus so far the latter assertion may not be seen as being more than the assertion of the primacy of a particular tradition.

⁴⁶ In the Nyingma tradition, the *nirmāṇakāya*—and hence also the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni—is explained in two different ways: the ordinary way, aimed at ordinary people, consists in explaining how an individual moves from the relative, deluded, contaminated dimension to the absolute, undeluded, pure dimension, whereas the extraordinary way consists in explaining how from the *dharmakāya* emanates the *sambhogakāya* and from the latter emanates the *nirmāṇakāya*—so that no progress from the condition of an ordinary being to that of a Buddha is contemplated. For one explanation of these two approaches cf., for example, Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, pp. 69-100).

⁴⁷ Most individuals continue to believe that satisfaction, plenitude and fulfillment are possible in the normal state of mind pertaining to *saṃsāra* precisely because there are riches, pleasures, luxuries and so on that are beyond their reach, and so they can believe that upon reaching them they will obtain the satisfaction,

plenitude and/or fulfillment that presently eludes them. Therefore all that Siddhārtha Gautama's parents did to keep him from questioning human life may have had an effect opposite to the one they were trying to produce, as the prince quickly got bored of all that humans desire most, learning that it cannot yield plenitude or satisfaction—which caused him to undertake the spiritual quest they were intent on preventing. In short, his parents were victims of the “reverse law” or “law of inverted effort” that will be considered in a subsequent chapter of Part One of this book.

⁴⁸ It seems likely that these ṛṣis or Seers were those who, in pre-Indo-European times, practiced pre-Indo-European doctrines leading to liberation and mystic communion, but who, after the consolidation of Indo-European power, the Establishment identified with the authors of the Upaniṣads.

⁴⁹ The most ancient forms of Buddhism negate the existence of something independent and permanent that may be designated as “self,” inside or outside the “physical” and “psychic” existence of the individual. After the development of Vedānta, some branches of which distinguished very clearly between jīvātman or individual soul or self and paramātmā / parātman or universal soul / self, Buddhists specifically rejected the concept of a universal soul or paramātmā / parātman as well. The Upaniṣads had posited a permanent substance called brahman, which they compared to clay that can adopt manifold transitory forms (and which later on Advaita Vedānta asserted to be one with paramātmā / parātman), claiming then we wrongly perceive that substance as a multiplicity of permanent substances, but that there is no such multiplicity, for the forms we perceive as permanent substances are like the different utensils that are made from the same clay. The Buddhism based on the First Promulgation negated the existence of such a permanent substance and affirmed that the manifold transitory forms that we perceive arise and disappear at each instant without there being any substantial basis for them (i.e. without there being a substantial “clay”). In the Mahāyāna, it is asserted that entities are all tathatā (thatness or thussness: the true condition of whatever one may point at) or dharmatā (the true condition of all phenomena), but the Mādhyamaka School negated in extremely clear terms that tathatā, dharmatā or the basic constituent of all entities is a substance. (It is clear that the Buddhist remedy against eternalism could then become the poison of nihilism: this is why Buddhism developed a series of arguments in order to prevent clinging to nihilist conceptions, which it declared far more dangerous than clinging to eternalistic ones: in particular, this is why the Mādhyamaka school developed the concept of an “emptiness of emptiness.” Cf. the definitive version in print of Capriles, electronic publication 2004, in case it is finally prepared, and Capriles, in press 1; Chöphel & Capriles, in press.)

⁵⁰ Hence the early Buddhist doctrine of constant, uninterrupted change, aimed at neutralizing the belief in a substance and therefore the possibility that by dualistically, conceptually knowing a pseudo-totality as object, and dualistically, conceptually identifying with this pseudo-totality (or, in Sartrean [1980] terms, becoming this pseudo-totality by establishing a link of being with it), individuals may wrongly believe that they are having direct realization of the absolute truth, and as a result may cling to the absorptions of the formless realms and in particular of the peak of existence in the belief that he or she has attained Awakening or nirvāṇa—which was precisely the distortion in which his teachers incurred and that he rejected.

⁵¹ “This shore” it that of the experience marked by the basic delusion that characterizes “sentient beings;” the “other shore” corresponds to the “Awake” state that characterizes Buddhas or “Awake Ones.” These concepts will be explained in further detail later on in this volume, when the Mahāyāna proclamation of their nonduality is discussed.

⁵² The nāgas are elementals of nature which, according to the mythology of an ample region that extends from the Western Himalayas and perhaps the Hindu Kush through the Himalayan range and India to Southeast Asia (which I suspect may be of Tibeto-Burman origin, lived under the waters and also in the subterranean world, whose bodies at times have a human form from the waist up and a serpent-like form from the waist down, at times have a full human form, and at times have a full serpent form (they are often depicted as metamorphosing from one form to another). It is said that Śākyamuni's left the Prajñāpāramitā teachings in the underworld, in the custody of the king of the nāgas. When the latter became ill, only Nāgārjuna could cure him. Understanding that Nāgārjuna was the human prophesied by Śākyamuni's as the one to whom he should hand over the Prajñāpāramitā teachings, the king of the nāgas carried out his commission. Thus Nāgārjuna was able to disseminate them in the human world and, furthermore, to write the series of commentaries on them that make up the doctrinal base of the Mādhyamaka (“middle Way” or “middle Path”) School of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

⁵³ According to Tibetan tradition Nāgārjuna lived for 600 years beginning 400 years after Śākyamuni's parinirvāṇa or physical death; if we assume the founder of Buddhism lived from 560 BC through 480 DC, then this tradition may be read as asserting Nāgārjuna lived from 80 BC to 520 CE. Other sources give as the date of Nāgārjuna's birth 482 BC, and still others 212 BC. For an account of the various datings of Nāgārjuna, including those of Western scholars, see Ruegg (1981, pp. 4-6).

At any rate, it is important to take into account the fact that, according to Tibetan Text 8 (Chöjung Khepai Gatön [Wylie, chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston]), by Pawo Tsuglag Threngwa [Wylie, dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba]) and Tibetan text 15 (Bai ro 'dra 'bag [Wylie, rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bai to tsa na'i rnam thar 'dra 'bag chen mo]), from Garab Dorje, the first Master of Buddhist Dzogchen, there were two lines of succession, and Nāgārjuna was a link in one of them. Since the most widely accepted date of Garab Dorje's birth is 55 CE, in order to be a link in one of the succession lines deriving from him Nāgārjuna must have been alive after the said date.

It must also be noted that Tibetans tend to identify the Nāgārjuna who founded the Mādhyamaka School with the Tantric Master of the same name, who according to all extant records was a disciple of the mahāsiddha Sarahapāda and who most probably lived around the eighth century CE. If the Tibetan chronology for Nāgārjuna's birth were right, this would imply that Nāgārjuna lived for much longer than the 600 years attributed him by Tibetan tradition.

⁵⁴ Malayagiri means Mount Malaya; other names of the mountain are: Śrī Pāda (Sacred Footprint, which Buddhists claim is that of Śākyamuni, Hindus that of Śiva, and Christians and Muslims that of Adam), Mount Laṅkā, Ratnagiri (Mountain of Gems), Amāntakūṭa (Peak of End), Svargarohanam ("the climb to heaven"), Mount Rohana. The Muslims referred to it by the Arab and Persian equivalent of the latter name, Al Rohoun, and the British, following the Portuguese name of Pico de Adam, called it Adam's peak, which is how it is generally listed in Śrī Laṅkā's tourist guides.

⁵⁵ Śākyamuni's himself prophesized (Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, p. 189):

"A monk who is called Asaṅga, learned in the meaning of these treatises, will differentiate in many categories the sūtras of provisional and definitive meaning."

Concerning the principally "inner" or "outer" character of the teachings contained in sūtras of the Third Promulgation, definitively the more "inner" ones are those that teach that all that manifests or appears, either as subject or as object, is based on primordial gnosis (Skt. jñāna; Tib. yeshe [ye-shes]) rather than on mind, and that emphasize the fact that consciousness is a saṃskṛta (produced, conditioned, etc.: Pāli saṅkhata; Tib. düche [Wylie, 'dus byas]; Ch. 有為 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²]) delusive, impermanent appearance cum process that disappears upon Awakening. Furthermore, the Laṅkāvatārasūtra posits the possibility of an instantaneous Awakening and in general its tenets and way of exposition are of the innermost kind, as are also those of the Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra, and so on. Conversely, as briefly explained in Capriles (in press 1) and as will be explained in detail in the definitive version in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004)—in case I finally prepare it—the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra concentrates on the gradual Path and teaches a way to meditate on emptiness that give rise to a conceptual type of emptiness based on the subject-object duality (at least at the level of vipaśyanā or lhantong based on analysis). Thus it could be ventured that the Laṅkāvatārasūtra (and also the Āvataṃsaka and several other Third Promulgation sūtras) is "inner" and "definitive" in relation to the Saṃdhinirmocana.

The Commentaries and secondary literature by the commentators of the Third Promulgation (and the same applies, obviously, to those of the Second) may also be classified into texts having a more "inner" meaning and writings having a more "outer" meaning. In particular, in Capriles (electronic publication 2004), I listed many of the commentaries and treatises by Maitreyanātha, Asaṅga and others that belong to the innermost type; if I prepare and publish the definitive version of that book, the list in question might be improved.

Concerning the "many categories" into which Asaṅga would differentiate the commentaries and original treatises, Dūdjom Rinpoche (ibidem) lists the following characteristics as the criterion for such differentiation: (1) the standard of their composition; (2) the purpose of their composition; (3) their individual composers; (4) the manner of their composition; (5) the transmitted precepts that they explain; and (6) the meaning that they express. For their part, (6) are classified into: (A) those that teach quantitatively (for their part classified into common and uncommon), (B) those that teach qualitatively (exemplified by those among Mādhyamaka texts that emphatically establish both the coarse and the

subtle selflessness of both human beings and phenomena that are not human beings), and (C) those that teach the means for attaining liberation and omniscience (classified according to whether the author was of the superior type, like Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, of the middle type, like Dignāga and Candragomin, or of the lower type, like Śrīgupta or Śākyamati).

For an explanation of the different categories of treatises considered in the first three paragraphs of this note, see Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, pp. 88-109.

⁵⁶ This Third Truth is often stated as “stopping the causes (which are the karmas), the effects cease.” In particular, according to the Theravāda, nirvāṇa is the only dharma (meaning phenomenon or, in this case, perhaps metaphenomenon) that may be categorized as asaṃskṛta (Pāli, asaṅkhata; Tib. dūmache [Wylie, 'dus ma byas]; Ch. 無為 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²]; uncontrived, unmade, unproduced, unconditioned, uncomposite) .

It is a mistake to believe that the Theravāda conceives nirvāṇa as a mere annihilation, or, even worse, as the extinction of human life. In fact, many texts illustrate nirvāṇa with the image of a flame that seems to go out, but that in reality, rather than being annihilated, through entering pure space (Skt. ākāśa; Tib. namkha [Wylie, nam mkha']; Ch. 虛空 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, xūkōng; Wade-Giles, hsü¹-k'ung¹]) disappears from view. Therefore, nirvāṇa, which is not simply nonbeing (it is characterized as not nonbeing), would be a transition to a different dimension. For example, Hīnayāna Buddhism posits two types of nirvāṇa: nirvāṇa with a residue of condition, called sopadhīṣeṣanirvāṇa (Pāli savupadīsesa-nibbāna; Tib. **lhagche myangde** [Wylie, lhag bcas myang 'das]; Ch. 有餘涅槃 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuyú nièpán; Wade-Giles, yu³-yü² nieh⁴-p'an²]) or nirvāṇa with remainder, which is obtained during one's lifetime, and nirvāṇa without a residue of condition or nirvāṇa without remainder, called anupadhīṣeṣanirvāṇa or nirupadhīṣeṣanirvāṇa (Pāli anupadīsesa-nibbāna; Tib. **phungpoi lhagma mepar myang anle dewa** or simply **lhagme myangde** [Wylie, {phung po'i} lhag {ma} med {par} myang {an las} 'das {ba}]; Ch. 無餘涅槃 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, wúyú nièpán; Wade-Giles, wu²-yü² nieh⁴-p'an²]), which is obtained posthumously. The former is the transition to another dimension, not in the sense of going beyond our world, but of continuing to live and yet experiencing the world (so to speak, for the concept of experience does not apply here) in a totally new way, utterly beyond duḥkha and its cause, which is the basic human delusion.

At any rate, according to the Mahāyāna, the Hīnayāna' purported nirvāṇa without a residue of condition or nirvāṇa without remainder has a remainder that is a cause for rebirth, and if complete realization is to be attained the individual who attained that nirvāṇa will have to be reborn and tread the Mahāyāna Path from its inception to its conclusion, and thus attain anuttarāsamyaṅsambodhi (Tib. yangdakpar yongsu dzogpai changchub [Wylie, yang dag par yongs su rdzogs pa'i byang chub]; Ch. 阿耨多罗三藐三菩提 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, ānòduōluó sānmǎo sānpútí; Wade-Giles, a¹-nou⁴-to¹-luo² san¹-miao³ san¹-p'u²-t'i²]), which alone represents irreversible freedom from saṃsāra and a limitless capacity to benefit all beings.

Because Siddhārtha Gautama (Pāli: Siddhattha Gotama) followed a path of renunciation, Albert Schweitzer (1936) classified Buddhism as a “life denying” religion. Had Śākyamuni explained nirvāṇa to involve physical death, that classification would have been correct. However, even though Schweitzer seems to have concentrated on the Hīnayāna, overlooking the Mahāyāna, Schweitzer was aware that it did not apply to it precisely, for he referred to Śākyamuni with sympathy and reverence, dedicating to him the following passages:

“He gave expression to truths of everlasting value and advanced the ethics not of India alone but of humanity. Buddha was one of the greatest ethical men of genius ever bestowed upon the world...”

“Thus in the world and life negation to which he was devoted, the Buddha kept some measure of naturalness. This is what was great in him. Whilst he mitigated the severity of world renunciation, he made a fresh and great concession to world and life affirmation.”

Even though, Schweitzer categorized Buddhism as a world- and life- negating religion, which is not a fair judgment even for someone who concentrated on the Hīnayāna. Buddhist Tantrism and Dzogchen, on the other hand, are not only life-celebrating, but, moreover, are utterly free of the antisomatism—the body and its impulses are a source of sin and hence the impulses in question are to be repressed or else channeled in the ways in which they become permissible—at the root of world- and life-negation which is characteristic of Judeo-Christian-Muslim religion, and of the command to dominate all species and phenomena expressed in the Book of Genesis, which is at the root of ecological crisis.

⁵⁷ The Theravāda was not one of the Eighteen Schools of Buddhism that adhered to the type of Buddhism that later on the Mahāyāna referred to as “Hīnayāna.” In fact, the Theravāda developed within the Mahāsthavira School (one of the first four to arise in the Buddhism adhering to the First Promulgation), having been founded as an independent school by Moggaliputta Tissa in the “Council of the Pāli School” that this monk organized, purportedly by order of King Aśoka, and which is supposed to have convened around 244 BC (though the Pāli School refers to this as the IIIrd Council and, making no reference whatsoever to the Council wherein there took place the division between Mahāsāṃghikas and Sthaviras, says that this division was a consequence of the IId Council, in fact the council in which the schism took place would have been the IIIrd). The Council summoned by Moggaliputta Tissa excluded the monks opposed to the latter’s theses, which the monk in question refuted in his Kathāvatthu—which for its part was subsequently incorporated into the Abhidharma of the Theravāda. In Ceylon, the new doctrine was adopted by the monks adhering to the Māhavihāravāda (a subdivision of the Mahāsthavira School). Later on, the Theravāda divided into Mahīśāsaka (from which the Dharmaguptaka were derived) and Kāśyapīya.

⁵⁸ This book, still unpublished as I write this English version of Buddhism and Dzogchen, was intended to be an Appendix to it. However, then I realized it would make the present book too long, and finally in an email Chögyal Namkhai Norbu referred to it as “your new book”—which caused me to decide that the right thing to do was to turn it into a separate book. The version that was posted in my Webpage was plagued with errors and imprecisions to such a degree that I decided to delete it from that Webpage. Now I am not sure I will want to correct it and publish it, and hence in this book I refer to it as “the upcoming definitive version on print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004), in case I finally decide to prepare it and publish it.”

⁵⁹ The root of this term (Wylie, khor) literally means “wheel.”

⁶⁰ As will be shown in a subsequent chapter of Part One of this book, the Hīnayāna considers the ten nonvirtuous actions to be always nonvirtuous and thus as having to be avoided by all means under all circumstances. However, according to the Mahāyāna it is legitimate and, moreover, mandatory to commit any of the seven nonvirtuous actions concerning the body and the voice (or speech) if this is done for the benefit of sentient being and the individual is certain that the result will be positive. Only the three nonvirtuous actions concerning the mind are always nonvirtuous and should be avoided by all means and under all circumstances, for they can never be useful to sentient beings, and in all cases are harmful to the individual who commits them.

⁶¹ Note 113 by Adriano Clemente to Namkhai Norbu, Chögyal, 1999/2001 reads:

“The aggregate of form (rūpa) comprises four ‘forms’ as cause (the four elements [which are] earth, water, fire and air) and eleven ‘forms’ as effect (the five sense faculties, the five sense objects, and what is known as ‘imperceptible form’...).

“The aggregate of sensation (vedanā) consists of three types of sensation: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral.

“The aggregate of recognition (saṃjñā) basically comprises perceptions derived from contact with the six sense objects; however, its particular feature is to distinguish the characteristics of objects (e.g. color), which can embrace all three realms, [which are that] of passion [or sensuality], [that] of form and [that of formlessness].

“The aggregate of mental formations (saṃskāra) is responsible for actions and contains fifty-one virtuous and non-virtuous states associated with the active function of the mind and twenty-four formations dissociated from the active function of the mind (Idan min ’du byed), such as a newly acquired virtuous quality or a temporary state of ‘cessation’ (nirodha) in which one remains absorbed in a condition devoid of perception.

“The aggregate of consciousness (vijñāna)... [which corresponds to the awareness of objects] comprises the six consciousnesses (the five sense consciousnesses plus the mental consciousness) or eight consciousnesses (in the case of those texts of the Third Promulgation that add to these six: [1] the consciousness contaminated by the passions, and [2] the base consciousness).”

That which Clemente calls consciousness contaminated by the passions is that which here I am referring to as consciousness of defilements (Skt. kliṣṭamanovijñāna; Tib. **nyönyikyī namshe** or **nyönmongpa chengyi yikyī nampar shepa** [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa can gyi} yid kyi rnam {par shes pa}]; Ch. 末那識 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, mònà shì; Wade-Giles, mò⁴-na⁴ shih⁴]), and that which he calls base consciousness is what here has been called store-consciousness (Skt. ālayavijñāna; Tib. kunzhi namshe or kunzhi nampar

shepa [Wylie, kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}]; Ch. 阿賴耶識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, ālāiyē shí; Wade-Giles, a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴] or 藏識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zàngshì; Wade-Giles, tsang⁴-shih⁴].

It must be noted that the illusion of self, generated by the interaction of the skandhas, implies the illusion of other (-than-self). Furthermore, as soon as one becomes a separate mortal self who is prone to face suffering, one is beset by fear of whatever may happen to oneself, and of whatever one's actions may bring upon oneself. Sakya Paṇḍita, whose name is often contracted to Sapaṇ (Wylie, sa skya paṇ ḍi ta kun dga' rgyal mtshan, or simply sa paṇ: 1182–1251) exemplified both these facts with the example of a bird supposedly existing in the vicinity of Tibet that is terrorized by the sound of its own wings, which makes it believe someone else is approaching. For his part, Tibetan Master Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche spoke of “an ego and its attendant paranoia.”

⁶² For the Hīnayāna, although there was no ego and no soul, there was a succession of conscious moments that existed in an absolute manner, and countless absolutely real infinitesimal particles formed material objects. All Mahāyāna schools negated the purported absolutely real, inherent or substantial existence of infinitesimal particles; as will be shown in the upcoming definitive publication in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004)—in case I finally prepare it and publish it—the Mādhyamika-Svātantrika-Sautrāntika was the only philosophical school of the Mahāyāna to posit the existence of infinitesimal particles, but stressed the fact that such infinitesimal particles did not exist inherently or substantially. For its part, on the basis of the concept of “conscious instants,” the Yogācāra School posited a “mental current” (Skt. saṃtāna; Pāli santāna; Tib. semgyü [Wylie, sems rgyud] or gyün [Wylie, rgyun]; Ch. 相續 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xiāngxù; Wade-Giles, hsiang¹-hsü⁴], in general used as 心相續 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xīnxiāngxù; Wade-Giles hsin¹-hsiang¹-hsü⁴]) consisting of an uninterrupted succession of such instants.

⁶³ The Mādhyamaka subschools divided both the selflessness or absence of an independent self-nature (Skt. nairātmya or anātman; Pāli anattā; Tib. dagme [Wylie, bdag-med]; Ch. 無我 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwǒ; Wade-Giles, wu²-wo³]) or emptiness of self-being / self-entity (Skt. svabhāvaśūnyatā or prakṛtiśūnyatā; Tib. rangzhinggyi tongpanyi [Wylie, rang bzhing gyis stong pa nyid]; Ch. 自性空 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìxìngkōng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsing⁴-k'ung⁴; Jap. jishōkū) in human beings and phenomena that are not human beings into a coarse one and a subtle one. In the case of the selflessness or emptiness of human beings, the coarse one consists in the baselessness of the belief in a pure ego or in a center that would be different from the events it unites: it consists in the unfounded character of the belief in a truly existing, self-sufficient self conceived as a non-composite phenomenon that would exist independently from the aggregates (Skt. skandha; Pāli khandha; Tib. phungpo [Wylie, phung-po]; Ch. 蘊 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yùn; Wade-Giles, yün⁴]). In turn, the subtle selflessness of human beings is the baselessness of the belief in a pure ego or center as an event of a “self-sufficient substance:” it consists in the unfounded character of the belief in a truly existing, self-sufficient self conceived as a composite phenomenon corresponding to the collection of aggregates. Only the five Saṃmitīya sub-schools of the Vaibhāṣika School ever held the subtle belief in an ego; no Buddhist school ever held the belief in a coarse one.

The division into a “coarse” and a “subtle” belief in the true existence of phenomena that are not human beings, and the proclamation of two types of absence of an independent self-nature or emptiness of phenomena that are not human beings, corresponding to the baselessness of these two beliefs, is exclusive to the Mādhyamikas. Since the Hīnayāna proclaims the selflessness of human beings but not that of the phenomena that are not human beings, no Hīnayāna school ever posited either of these two types of absence of an independent self-nature or emptiness. Since the Yogācāras belonged to the Mahāyāna, they posited the selflessness or emptiness of phenomena; however, although this system arose after that of the Mādhyamikas, their conception of the absence of an independent self-nature and their conception of emptiness were limited to what the Mādhyamaka called “coarse emptiness of phenomena other than human beings,” which this school defined as the baselessness of the belief that things exist apart from their being experienced: it understood emptiness merely in the sense of the nonexistence of phenomena as separate from mind, and failed to add that, as they are experienced, phenomena do not exist in the way in which we erroneously experience them as existing (i.e. that they do not exist inherently, absolutely and self-sufficiently). Therefore only the Mādhyamikas posited the subtle emptiness of phenomena other than human beings that corresponds to the baselessness of the subtle exaggerate belief in the existence of things and that consists in the fact that as they are being experienced things lack the self-existence, absolutely true existence, or inherent existence that we experience them as having.

⁶⁴ In his *Triṃśikāṭikā*, Vinītadeva claimed that with the passing of time the Sarvāstivāda subdivided into Kāśyapīyas, Mahīśāsakas, Dharmaguptakas and Mūlasarvāstivādins; the Saṃmitīya subdivided into Kaurukullakas, Avantakas, and Vātsīputrīyas; the Mahāsāṃghikas subdivided into Pūrvaśailikas, Aparāśailikas, Lokottaravādas and Prajñāptivādas; and the Sthavira (i.e. adherents of Sthaviranikāya) subdivided into Jetavanīyas, Abhayagirivāsins and Mahāvihāravāsins. However, Damien Keown (2003, p. 84) questioned Vinītadeva as follows (ibidem):

“For example, the Sthaviras did not exist as a school separately from the three nikāyas mentioned in group (1), and the same was probably true of the Mahāsāṃghikas and Saṃmitīyas. In group (3), the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins were arguably the same school. The Dharmaguptas and Kāśyapīyas were probably not extant in India in Vinītadeva’s day, and the Mahīśāsakas only in a Mahāyāna / Sarvāstivāda influenced form. Mention of these three schools in earlier Sarvāstivādin works led Vinītadeva to classify them in this historically incorrect form. Too much reliance should therefore not be placed on the traditional classifications of the eighteen schools.”

⁶⁵ As stated in a previous note, though the Pāli School refers to this as the IIIrd Council and, making no reference whatsoever to the Council wherein there took place the division between Mahāsāṃghikas and Sthaviras, claims that this division was a consequence of the second Council, it is widely held that in truth the council in which the schism took place was the third.

⁶⁶ This is the opinion of the Kashmiri Vaibhāśikas, discussed in Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. Pruden (1989, pp. 120-122); Kongtrul (2007, p. 330, n- 323 by E. M. Callahan).

⁶⁷ The Sanskrit terms *svasaṃvedana* / *svasaṃvitti(h)*; their Tibetan translation, *rangrig* (Wylie, *rang rig*); and their Chinese translations, 自證 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìzhèng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-chēng⁴*) and 自覺 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìjué*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-chüeh²*), can refer to:

(1) A nondual awareness that could be compared unto a mirror or a LED computer or TV screen, in which either (a) a dualistic consciousness of objects having an illusory mental subject as its core may arise as a delusive phenomenon by virtue of the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure (Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. *khorsum* [Wylie, *’khor gsum*]; Ch. 三輪 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlùn*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*]), or (b) the dualistic consciousness in question, which is the most basic phenomenon of delusion, may dissolve possibly making the true condition of nondual awareness nondually patent. In the first case the result is *saṃsāra* (Tib. *’khor ba*; Ch. 輪迴 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lúnhuí*; Wade-Giles, *lun²-hui²*] or 生死輪迴 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shēngsǐ lúnhuí*; Wade-Giles, *sheng¹-ssu³ lun²-hui²*]), whereas in the second the result may be nonstatic *nirvāṇa* (Skt. *apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. *minepai myangdé* [Wylie, *mi gnas pa’i myang ’das*]; Ch. 無住涅槃 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúzhù nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p’an²*]).

(2) An awareness (of) consciousness of object that manifests when a (1a) dualistic consciousness arises in the awareness indicated as (1), like a reflection in a mirror or an image on the screen, so that one can speak of a nondual awareness (of) dualistic consciousness of object (where the preposition “of” is within parentheses because there is no dualistic relation of knowledge between the nondual awareness that is represented with the mirror or screen and the dualistic consciousness that manifests in it: the images in a mirror or screen are not known by the latter as something separate from them; they simply manifest in them, in a nondual way, as insubstantial, empty appearances).

(3) A self-awareness of the true condition of both awareness and the phenomena that manifest through it, which can only manifest when the dualistic consciousness that manifests in (2) or (1a) has dissolved, which as such may correspond to (1b)—provided that the dissolution of dualistic consciousness, rather than resulting in the neutral condition of the base-of-all (Tib. *kunzhi lungmaten* [Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*]), results in nonstatic *nirvāṇa*.

In *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.212-213 Dharmakīrti wrote (as rendered in Dunne, 2004, pp. 406 and 408; I made the changes within the brackets to adapt the translation to the terminology of this book):

“This part of awareness—namely the one that is established such that it seems external—[appears to be] different from the internal determination [which is the part of awareness that seems subjective and seems to apprehend that apparently external part]. Awareness is not differentiated, but its appearance is differentiated into two. This being the case, the dualistic appearance must be cognitive confusion.

“The nonexistence of one of the two in awareness eliminates the existence of both. Therefore, the emptiness of duality is the Suchness (*tattva*) of the awareness.”

Subcommentator Śākyabuddhi noted in his *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā* (adapted from Dunne’s [2004, pp. 406-407

n. 15] translation so as to fit my own understanding of the Sanskrit terms [my changes are indicated by bolds and explained in notes; the words and phrases within double brackets are my own addition]) that the ultimate pramāṇa—which in this case is an ultimately valid nondual Gnosis rather than a valid cognition—is not the yogipratyakṣa that I render as yogic preperception:

“...in terms of just what appears ([[Tib.]] gsal ba kho nar; [[Skt. (roughly)]] prabhāsa eva), awareness is dualistic. However, dualistic awareness is erroneous; rather, it is established ([[Tib.]] rna par bzhag pa = [[Skt.]] vyavasthita) through cognitive error because in conventional terms, real things are established in accord with the way in which they are imaginatively determined. If that were not the case, how could the duality in singular awareness be [[held to be]] real [[by the deluded]]?”

“Someone objects: ‘If the object and subject do not exist, then what would be left but the suchness of awareness itself?’ Cognitively myopic beings do not experience anything but the objective and subjective cognitive images. If they were to be aware (of) something else, they would See suchness. That being the case, beings would be effortlessly liberated. That suchness cannot be definitively determined through inference.

“...Therefore, there is ultimately no object that is distinct from awareness itself, and since that object does not exist [[and since subject and object are mutually dependent]], we say ‘the subject does not exist;’ in saying this we [[are referring to]] the subject that occurs in expressions of concepts that are constructed ([[Tib. Wylie]] rab tu brtags pa = [Skt.] prakalpita) in dependence on the [apparently external object], as in ‘This is the real entity ([[Tib. Wylie]] ngo bo = [Skt.] rūpa) that is the subject which apprehends that object, which is the real entity that cognizes.’ Since an agent and its patient are constructed in dependence with each other, these two [i.e., subject and object] are posited in dependence on each other. The expression ‘subject’ does not [[refer to the]] mere nondual awareness (of) awareness itself, which is the essential nature of cognition itself. The essential nature of cognition is established in mere nondual awareness (of) awareness itself. Since it is devoid of the above-described object and subject, it is said to be nondual.”

For an exhaustive explanation of svasaṃvedana / svasaṃvitti(h) / rangrig / 自證 in the three senses outlined above cf. Capriles (in press 1).

⁶⁸ E. M. Callahan (in Kongtrul, 2007, p. 332, n. 348) gives as the likely source of this Vasubandhu’s Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, Ch. 1, commentary to verse 43d.

⁶⁹ Although most Tibetan scholars deem ācārya Dignāga (who introduced the concept of awareness of consciousness) and Dharmakīrti (his indirect disciple, who further elaborated on his indirect teacher’s theories and became more widely known than the former) to have belonged to the Cittamātra School, certain scholars, both in India and in Tibet, have classed them as Mādhyamika-Svātantrika-Yogācāras. At any rate, the awareness of consciousness they posited (explained in note before last), upheld in Dzogchen teachings as well, was championed by Mādhyamaka-Svātantrika-Yogācārin and adherents of the inner, subtle Mādhyamaka (Tib. nang trawe uma [nang phra ba’i dbu ma]) of Uma Zhentongpa (Skt. reconstr. paraśūnyatā or pararūpaśūnyatā Mādhyamaka) / Uma Chenpo (Mahāmādhyamaka)—terms that since they began to be used in Tibet have been interchangeable, but which I myself use to designate two different systems upholding the emptiness of alien substances (with regard to the single condition of ourselves and the whole of reality).

For three different acceptations of the Skt. svasaṃvedana or svasaṃvitti[h] and the Tib. rangrig (Wylie, rang rig), cf. note before last.

⁷⁰ The forms of Mādhyamaka that Tibetans subsume under the label Uma (Mādhyamaka) Rangtongpa (dbu ma rang stong pa), based on Nāgārjuna’s Collection of Mādhyamika Reasonings (Skt. Yuktikāya; Tib. Uma Rigtsog [Wylie, dbu ma rigs tshogs]), groups those Mādhyamikas who understand emptiness in the sense of the absence of inherent existence of entities, and includes what later on Tibetans identified as the two great Indian sub-schools, which they named Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika.

The term Uma Rangtongpa is defined in contrast to the term Uma Zhentongpa (Wylie, dbu ma gzhan stong pa), which refers to the understanding of emptiness as the nonexistence of anything extraneous to the Buddha-nature, the dharmakāya, the dharmatā, the dharmadhātu, or however one calls the single true condition of the whole of reality. A brief discussion of the various sub-schools of Mādhyamaka would appear in the upcoming, definitive version in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004)—in case I finally decide to prepare it and publish the version in question.

It must be remarked, however, that in his Collection of Eulogies (Skt. Stavakāya; Tib. **Töshog** (Wylie, bstod tshogs) and in particular in the Eulogy to the Expanse of the True Condition (Skt. Dharmadhātustava; Tib. chos dbyings bstod pa), Nāgārjuna expressed views that correspond to that which Tibetans call the Uma Zhentongpa. I use the term Mahāmādhyaṃaka to refer to a form of Mādhyaṃaka encompassing and harmonizing the views of the Uma Rangtongpa and the Uma Zhentongpa, in perfect agreement with the Prāsaṅgika viewless view.

⁷¹ The Mādhyaṃaka School offers an interpretation of the canonical sources of the Second Promulgation. It will be discussed throughout the book, but the reader who wants precise technical information about it is directed to Capriles (in press 1) and Chöphel & Capriles (in press).

⁷² The term “phenomenon” is derived from the Greek phainomenon (φαῖνόμενον), meaning, “that which appears.” Some translators use the term regarding objects only, on the one hand perhaps because they do not realize that although the mental subject appears in a way that has been categorized as “implicitly and indirectly,” it nonetheless appears, and on the other hand because they are conditioned by common sense, Judeo-Christian religions or Western metaphysics (or even a phenomenological philosophy such as Husserl’s), according to which what appears are the objects, which appear to the subject, which is taken for granted as a substantial and subsisting entity rather than been realized to be no more than a baseless appearance. In fact, according to the philosophies of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, to the higher forms of Buddhism, to the philosophies of David Hume and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, and to the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, among other systems, the mental subject and the dualistic consciousness associated with it are mere appearances that exist only insofar and so long as they appear (ācārya Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, Mahāmādhyaṃaka, Dzogchen, and Sartre’s philosophy, acknowledge that they manifest in a nondual awareness). In fact, in the Introduction to Sartre (1980/1969), the author rejects Husserl’s subtle assertion of the Cartesian cogito, and notes that:

“Consciousness is not to any extent substantial; it is a mere ‘appearance,’ in the sense that it only exists to the extent that it appears.”

Bhāvaviveka, creator of the initial form of Mādhyaṃaka-Svātantrika philosophy, was the first Buddhist thinker to insist that consciousness was part of the phenomenal world, and to substantiate this view with a plethora of arguments. In fact, consciousness and the mental subject, which manifest only in saṃsāra when the subject-object duality is functioning, are phenomena, even though they do not appear directly and explicitly as objects, but in a much more subtle way, which in the case of the mental subject has been referred to as “indirect and implicit.”

⁷³ Both similes are defective: that of the mirror, because it suggests the idea of something hypostatically / inherently external to awareness that reflects itself in it and which is required for forms to manifest in the mirror of awareness; the LED screen, if it belongs to a computer, depends on both a system and a program to manifest forms. This will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this book. (Moreover, the simile of the mirror should not be taken to imply an Aristotelian or Leninist, passive interpretation of cognition and perception.)

⁷⁴ This delusion involves all of the aspects that the Dzogchen teachings distinguish in the unawareness cum delusion that the Buddha and other Indian mystics have referred to by the Sanskrit term avidyā, the Pāli avijjā, the Tibetan marigpa (Wylie, ma rig pa), the Chinese 無明 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúmíng; Wade-Giles, wu²-ming²), etc. and which will be discussed below in the regular text of this book: it involves all three aspects or types of avidyā listed in the most common Dzogchen classification: it involves the first aspect or type of avidyā because the true condition of ourselves and the whole universe, which is the Base of Dzogchen, is obscured; it involves the second aspect or type of avidyā because singled-out sensa are perceived as being other than the knower and as a rule as an external reality; it involves the third aspect or type of avidyā because it involves the erroneous cognition referred to by terms such as the Skt. bhrānti and the Tib. ’khrul as understood by Dharmakīrti (i.e., as the error or delusion of taking an abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics [Skt. sāmānyalakṣaṇa; Tib. shitsen {Wylie, spyi mtshan}; Ch. 共相 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, gōngxiàng; Wade-Giles, kung⁴-hsiang⁴}] for a **particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics** [Skt. svalakṣaṇa; Tib. rangtsen {Wylie, rang mtshan}; Ch. 自相 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, zìxiàng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsiang⁴}]; note that in Āryadeva the term simply refers to the error or delusion inherent in avidyā). And it involves the third aspect or type of avidyā in the alternative classification because we take an erroneous, deluded perception or an erroneous, deluded interpretation of reality for a correct one.

Therefore, altogether it involves four aspects or types of *avidyā*.

The basis of the delusion in question was expounded by Gregory Bateson (1979, p. 49) as follows:

“Numbers are the product of counting. Quantities are the product of measurement. This means that numbers can conceivably be accurate because there is a discontinuity between each integer and the next. Between two and three, there is a jump. In the case of quantity, there is no such jump; and because jump is missing in the world of quantity, it is impossible for any quantity to be exact. You can have exactly three tomatoes. You can never have exactly three gallons of water. Always quantity is approximate.

“Even when number and quantity are clearly discriminated, there is another concept that must be recognized and distinguished from both number and quantity. For this other concept, there is, I think, no English word, so we have to be content with remembering that there is a subset of patterns whose members are commonly called ‘numbers.’ Not all numbers are the products of counting. Indeed, it is the smaller, and therefore commoner, numbers that are often not counted but recognized as patterns at a single glance. Card players do not stop to count the pips in the eight of spades and can even recognize the characteristic patterning of pips up to ‘ten.’

“In other words, number is of the world of pattern, gestalt, and digital computation; quantity is of the world of analogic and probabilistic computation.”

Who can doubt that conceptual perception is digital and *sensa* are analog and that hence the former cannot correspond exactly to the latter? At any rate, whoever still doubts it can consult the following two endnotes, which discuss the matter in detail.

⁷⁵ Sellars’ (1997, p. 15; McClintock, 2003, p. 126) definition of the myth he denounced reads: “...the point of the epistemological category of the given is, presumably, to explicate the idea that empirical knowledge rests on a ‘foundation’ of noninferential knowledge of matter of fact.” McClintock (*ibidem*) comments on this as follows, “In other words, an entity plays the role of the given as long as that entity is understood to meet two conditions: a) that it provide a foundation for empirical knowledge, and b) that it do so noninferentially.” As Sellars (1997, p. 14; McClintock, 2003, p. 126) noted, one of the things that has at times been held to be given is sense contents. In the following endnote this matter is discussed in great detail, so as to leave no doubts in the minds of the readers as to the fact that *sensa* may be regarded as given with regard to our conceptual perception of them, and that asserting this is does not imply falling into the myth of the given as defined by Sellars.

⁷⁶ In order to show how *sensa* are constructed by neurological and mental processes and how, if there were a given reality that *sensa* would convey to us, it would not resemble the reality in question in any way, below I paraphrase, in the terminology of this book, paragraph 8 of bishop Berkeley’s (1963) *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*:

“You could reply that... outside the mind [or human experience]... there could be things that are similar to the phenomena or representations of our experience, but existing outside the mind in a nonthinking substance, of which the phenomena or representations of our experience would be copies or likenesses. I reply that a phenomenon of our experience cannot be something other than a phenomenon of our experience; a color or figure cannot resemble anything but another color or figure. If we observe a bit the phenomena or representations of our experience (whether in perception, reminiscence or fantasy), we shall find it impossible to conceive a similitude except between [various] phenomena or representations of our experience. Again, I ask whether the supposedly original or external things, of which [according to the realist] the phenomena or representations of our experience would be images or representations, would themselves be perceivable or not be so. If they were, then they would be phenomena or representations of experience [rather than the originals posited by the realist] and we would be right; if you say they are not, I will ask anyone whether it makes sense to assert that a color resembles something that is invisible; whether the hard and the soft [may resemble] something that is intangible; and so on and on concerning the rest [of the qualities we perceive].”

Berkeley’s point that if there were a reality external to our experience and independent from it, it could not have form, color, sound, taste, odor, texture and all the qualities we perceive through the senses, was later on confirmed by modern physics. In order to show how this is so, let us ponder on the words Bertrand Russell (1925) wrote in *The ABC of Relativity*:

“Common sense imagines that when it sees a table it sees a table. This is a gross delusion. When common sense sees a table, certain light waves reach its eyes, and these are of a sort that, in its previous experience, has been associated with certain sensations of touch, as well as with other people’s

testimony that they also saw the table. But none of this ever brought to us the table itself. The light waves caused occurrences in our eyes, and these caused occurrences in the optic nerve, and these in turn caused occurrences in the brain. Any one of these, happening without the usual preliminaries, would have caused us to have the sensation we call ‘seeing the table’, even if there had been no table. (Of course, if matter in general is to be interpreted as a group of occurrences, this must apply also to the eye, the optic nerve and the brain.) As to the sense of touch when we press the table with our fingers, that is an electric disturbance on the electrons and protons of our finger tips, produced, according to modern physics, by the proximity of the electrons and protons in the table. If the same disturbances in our finger-tips arose in any other way, we should have the sensation, in spite of there being no table. The testimony of others is no doubt a secondhand affair. A witness in a law court, if asked whether he had seen some occurrence, would not be allowed to reply that he believed so because of the testimony of others to that effect. In any case, testimony consists of sound waves and demands psychological as well as physical interpretation; its connection with the object is therefore very indirect. For all these reasons, when we say that a man ‘sees a table,’ we use a highly abbreviated form of expression, concealing complicated and difficult inferences, the validity of which may well be open to question.”

Thus it is a fact that, if there were a world existing independently from our experience and externally to it, we would be utterly unable to know it as it is in itself. The purported particle-waves we call photons are supposed to produce alterations in the eye, which are supposed to produce electromagnetic disturbances in the optic nerve, which are supposed to produce the phenomena in our brains that cause us to see light. However, there is no reason to believe that this experience of light is in any way similar to the photons that purportedly hit the eye: these photons never entered our experience, and in themselves the particle-waves that we call photons surely may resemble other particle-waves, but it seems most unlikely that they should resemble in any way our experience of light. Moreover, in dreams and hallucinations we also see light, and the same will occur if we apply pressure on our eyelids, but this light does not arise in response to any supposedly external particle-waves touching the eyes. Scientists would assume our experience to be a product of the brain’s workings, but since there is no way for us to perceive anything other than our experience, the very idea that there is a brain that is not a mere experience (such as the experience we have in the dissection of the corpses of others, from which we “validly” infer that we also have a brain) is clearly open to question. Thus it is easy to be tempted to conclude that all that that appears is a product of mind, or of the process of experiencing, etc. Though this conclusion would be sound, it does not imply that there is nothing different from our sensations that is conveyed by them. In fact, since it is just as impossible to demonstrate that there is nothing different from and external to our sensations that they convey to us, as it would be to demonstrate that there is something different from them and external to them that they convey to us, twentieth century phenomenology decided to suspend judgment in this regard in what it referred to as the phenomenological epoché, and yet act in all regards as though there were.

Finally, does the above reasoning by Russell mean that we do not see the table? Semanticist Alfred Korzybski (1973) stated that “the pattern is the thing”—a statement that at first sight might seem to be somewhat similar to the views of those Cittamātrins and Yogācāra-Svātantrikas Who Take the Aspect to be True (Skt. Satyākāravādin; Tib. Namdenpa [Wylie, rnam bden pa]). However, the fact that one accepts that what an entity’s name refers to is merely an image in our awareness does not mean that one has to take that entity to be true qua mere image in our awareness. In fact, what it actually substantiates is the genuine Prāsaṅgika viewless view, which (contrarily to Tsongkhapa’s interpretation) has never involved positing a reality external to awareness having the aspects that each of the six classes of beings perceives it as having, but, quite the contrary, most appropriately suspended judgment as to whether there is or there is not such external reality or substance, while setting out to deconstruct the illusion of substantiality that is the root of suffering. Therefore, very much like twentieth century phenomenology, Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka placed the hypothetical external reality in parentheses, while nonetheless accepting it nominally because the world takes it for granted—Candrakīrti said, “we don’t argue with the world”—and beings are to be respected. Those who negated it—though they did so only the context of the practice of mental yoga, for this negation was not intended to become an absolute tenet—were the Cittamātrins and Svātantrika-Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas, although they are at odds as to whether what appears is true or false qua image in awareness (as just implied, they are divided into the ones who posit the falseness of aspects [Skt. Alīkākaravādin; Tib. Namdzunpa {Wylie, rnam rdzun pa}] and the ones

who posit the truth of aspects [Skt. Satyākāravādin; Tib. Namdenpa {Wylie, rnam bden pa}]—those who posit the falseness of aspects being held to be philosophically superior to those who posit their truth).

Thus it is clear that if there were a universe independent from and external to our *sensa* that these *sensa* conveyed to us, it would not resemble those *sensa* in any way. And therefore it is equally clear that our *sensa* are not given in the sense of not depending in any way from our mechanisms of sensation and perception and our mental functions: according to contemporary science *sensa* are the product of a most complex physio-psychological processing and therefore they could not be given in the sense of not depending on human processing. (Of course there is no way to prove that the organs that science sees as taking part in the processing in question are more than sense contents and perceptions and inferences produced on the basis of those contents, yet there is no way to prove that they are no more than sense contents either.) However, our *sensa* may be said to be given with regard to our conceptual perception of them, if only in the sense that the perception in question distorts them. In fact, the sensory continuum is an analog and hence continuous territory that is distorted when it is perceived through the filter of digital and as such discontinuous thought, and taken to have in itself the latter's characteristics. In fact, our sense fields are analog and as such continuous, for no layer of lack of *sensa* separates the segments of the sense fields we perceive as separate entities from their environment. And according to physics the same is the case with the universe, which is held to be an energy continuum that does not involve layers of nothingness or of some substance other than energy that would separate the segments of the energy field we perceive as separate entities from their environment.

Therefore, as used in my works, the term given refers to the continuum of sensation or the continuum that according to current physics the universe (is), which are distorted by the superimpositions which give rise to something that, with regard to that on which the superimpositions are projected, is in all lights put, and which distorts that on which those projections are superimposed by making us perceive it as being in itself discontinuous—even though, as shown above, this does not mean that the *sensa* that are thus distorted must be either true or false.

The problem is that following the publication of Wilfrid Sellars' *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (1956) and *Science, perception and reality* (1963), the term given became taboo in philosophy, and thereafter it gradually became objectionable in different sciences and disciplines, in which its users are now routinely dismissed as upholding the myth of the given. At some point this taboo extended to transpersonal psychology (Ferrer, 2002) and studies on religion, spirituality and mysticism (Ferrer, 2008; Ferrer & Sherman, 2008a, 2008b)—rapidly extending itself to Buddhist philosophy, Tibetology and Buddhology (McClintock, 2003).

In fact, Sellars wrote (1997, p. 15; McClintock, 2003, p. 126): "...the point of the epistemological category of the given is, presumably, to explicate the idea that empirical knowledge rests on a 'foundation' of noninferential knowledge of matter of fact." McClintock (*Ibidem*) expands on this as follows, "In other words, an entity plays the role of the given as long as that entity is understood to meet two conditions: a) that it provide a foundation for empirical knowledge, and b) that it do so noninferentially." As Sellars (1997, p. 14; McClintock, 2003, p. 126) noted, one of the things that has at times been held to be given is sense contents. Since what I am referring to as the given is the basis of all imputations, which could be conceptualized as the "continuum of sense-data of all sense-fields" (including the sense-field where according to Buddhism we perceive mental contents), this note seemed necessary in order to clarify my understanding of the positionless position of the higher Buddhist systems.

With regard to the distinction between the bare continuum of sensation, and perception of the segments we single out in that continuum in terms of supersubtle and subtle thought-contents (cf. the section of the Introductory Study called "Can the Ultimate be an Object Appearing to a Subject?"), Dzogchen practice makes it evident that one thing is the raw continuum of sensation and quite another the recognition / perception of segments of the continuum of sensation as being in themselves separate from the rest of the sensory field and as being inherently this or that. It is in order to distinguish our digital and as such discontinuous perceptions of *sensa* from the analog and as such continuous sensory territory that they interpret and utterly, most radically distort that I assert the territory to be given with regard to our perceptions of it—even though both those digital, discontinuous perceptions and that analog, continuous territory are constructed by experience-constructing mechanisms. However, this very purpose shows

very clearly that the given is not posited as a justification of truth, which is what according to Wilfrid Sellars the so-called myth of the given is expected to do.

In fact, according to the Dzogchen teachings, perception is preceded by an instant of bare, uninterpreted sensation that in ordinary beings is an instance of what the Dzogchen teachings call the base-of-all (Tib. kunzhi [kun gzhi]; Skt. ālaya; Ch. 来源 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, láiyuán; Wade-Giles, lai²-yüan²]). Suppose that you are kidnapped, then blindfolded and taken to a place you don't know, where the blindfold is taken off your eyes: the first appearance that will be available to your visual field would be a continuum of visual sensation, which would be an instance of pure sensation, in the sense of being uninterpreted, unrecognized, unperceived sensation. Immediately, a preconceptual activity will search for potential patterns / configurations / collections of characteristics of interest in the field; in this case, your interest might be to find a pattern / configuration / collection of characteristics in the sensory continuum that may be identified as a way out or a possible way out. Imagine that, in order to make sure it was already locked, the first pattern / configuration / collection of characteristics I single out is the door: the instant I single it out, before I actually perceive it in terms of the subtle concept of door (in the terminology of both the Dzogchen teachings and the pramāṇa tradition, the subtle concept in terms of which this perception occurs is an abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics [Skt. sāmānyalakṣaṇa; Tib. chitsen {Wylie, spyi mtshan}; Ch. 共相 {Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, gòngxiàng; Wade-Giles, kung⁴-hsiang⁴}], which in this case is of the type that here I am designating as universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] [Skt. arthasāmānya; Tib. dōnchi {Wylie, don spyi}; Ch. 總事 {Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zǒngshì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-shih⁴} or 總義 {Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zǒngyì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-i⁴}]), there is an instance of that which the Dzogchen teachings refer to as the consciousness of the base-of-all (Skt. ālayavijñāna; Tib. kunzhi namshe [Wylie, kun gzhi rnam shes; Ch. 阿賴耶識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, àlāiyē shí; Wade-Giles, a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴] or 藏識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zàngshì; Wade-Giles, tsang⁴-shih⁴])—a term that in this case I use in one of the metaphenomenological senses it has in these teachings, to refer to a preconceptual cognition. It is in the immediately following instant that full, proper recognition / perception of the door takes place, for at that point the sensory configuration is properly recognized / perceived as a door, and taken to be in itself a separate entity, and to be in itself a door—an absolute delusion, for it is a door only for civilized human perception, on which it depends in order to be a door. (The same process that was illustrated with this example occurs in ordinary situations, but the example allows the reader to develop certainty as to the fact that these are the steps leading to perception.)

So first the base-of-all manifests beyond the subject-object duality. Then a subject arises that knows the seeming totality as object, giving rise to a samsaric formless condition. Next, when a segment of the continuum is singled out, this is the consciousness of the base-of-all. Then the form is fully, properly recognized in terms of a concept. And this concept, due to its being associated with a positive, negative or neutral judgment, elicits an emotional reaction, giving rise to the consciousness of the passions (Skt. klišṭamanovijñāna; Tib. **nyōnyikyī namshé** or **nyōnmongpa chengyi yikyī nampar shepa** [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa can gyi} yid kyi rnam {par} shes {pa}); Ch. 末那識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, mònà shì; Wade-Giles, mo⁴-na⁴ shih⁴]). Finally, we take birth in the corresponding samsaric realm among the six that pertain to the realm of sensuality—in a psychological sense, for this description does not apply to physical birth: it explains how, during the lifetime of a physically human individual, he or she takes psychological birth in different realms. (Note that a coincidence of karma and contributory conditions may make the process stop at any fully samsaric stage: if it does so when the formless condition manifests, we take birth in the formless realms; if it did so when the figure is singled out—provided that it is perceived beyond emotional involvement—we would take birth in the realm of form [which, however, is most unlikely to happen].)

Thus it is clear that the Dzogchen teachings altogether negate the existence of self-existing, inherently separate entities of the kind that the Pramāṇa tradition calls **particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics** (Skt. svalakṣaṇa; Tib. rangtsen [Wylie, rang mtshan]; Ch. 自相 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìxiàng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsiang⁴]), which would be inherent bases of imputations that would then be grasped and perceived in terms of a mental, abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics (Skt. sāmānyalakṣaṇa; Tib. chitsen [Wylie, spyi mtshan]; Ch. 共相 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, gòngxiàng; Wade-Giles, kung⁴-hsiang⁴])—and which, if they existed, could be potentially used as a basis of truth and hence would be a given in Sellars' sense. In fact, what

there is in the first moment, is a sensory continuum having no inherent separations, and that which introduces separations in it is our perception; therefore, there are no inherently separate bases of imputations that may be regarded either as the hypostatic particulars posited by the Pramāṇa tradition, or as that which both the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas and Je Tsongkhapa called mere existents or merely existent entities and that according to their respective systems must not be negated in the analysis that both systems teach (cf. Capriles, in press 1, and Chöphel & Capriles, in press). Moreover, I could have singled out the doorknob rather than the door—which shows that the door is not inherently a unity. In fact, the arguments in Candrakīrti's sevenfold reasoning, for example, call attention to the fact that whatever I perceive as a unity is actually a sum or collection of parts, and that the same happens to each of the parts, so that at the end we do not find anything at all—at which point either the mind collapses with the whole realm of conceptuality, so that absolute truth manifests, or else one finds a conceptual no-thing-ness manifesting as object, which would sustain delusion and, if taken for the absolute truth, would take one into the extreme of nihilism while one mistakenly believes to have achieved realization. (It could be thought that a third possibility would be that at that point one found a limitless continuum that one would interpret as being the sensory continuum or as being the energy continuum that according to contemporary physics the universe is; however, on the one hand what one finds depends on what one seeks, and on the other, just as was the case with Aristotle's prima materia, this continuum cannot really be perceived as such, as it can only be arrived at through inference—although its perception is mimicked by the lowest of the four formless realms and the four formless contemplations. In fact, just as for Aristotle the prima materia could not be perceived as such, for only the forms it adopts are perceivable, the limitless cannot be perceived, for only what has limits is perceivable; therefore, in the formless realm and the formless contemplation in question what one perceives is not really limitless—firstly because all concepts are defined by exclusion of other (Skt. apoha; Tib. selwa [Wylie, sel ba]; 除 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chú; Wade-Giles, ch'u²] or 遮除 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zhēchú; Wade-Giles, che¹-ch'u²])—and secondly because what is known will always exclude part of the sensory continuum (e.g., the mental subject will be excluded, as will also be all that is behind the perceiver's body, etc.).

The argument shows that whenever one perceives something as a unitary entity that is in itself this or that entity (e.g. the door), one is under delusion, for one may then do the same with each of its parts, until one realizes that neither the entity (the door) nor any of its parts are a unitary entity that is in itself this or that entity: in terms of the pramāṇa tradition, that which has revealed itself is the nonexistence of hypostatic, self-existing, inherently existing extended **particulars, specifically characterized phenomena, self-configurations or self-collections of characteristics** (Skt. svalakṣaṇa; Tib. rangtsen [Wylie, rang mtshan]; Ch. 自相 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìxiàng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsiang⁴]); in terms of the systems of the Svātantrikas and Je Tsongkhapa, that which has revealed itself is the nonexistence of the mere existents or merely existent entities that they posited. However, whereas this could make Svātantrikas happy because it takes the meditator to the verge of realizing the true absolute truth that they referred to as the nonfigurative absolute truth (Skt. aparyāyaparamārtha; Tib. namdrang mayinpa'i dōndam [Wylie, nam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam]), followers of Je Tsongkhapa would probably panic in the false belief that they have fallen into the extreme of nihilism by taking as object of analysis a basis of analysis that, as such, according to their system must not be turned into an object of analysis to be negated.

Thus it is clear that, regarding ordinary samsaric experience, I use the term given to refer to whatever appears in the initial instant of bare sensation, before the processing that leads to singling out a figure and then perceiving it in terms of a concept has been activated, and that rather than using it to uphold the purported truth of the perceived, I use the concept in order to show its untruth. In particular, my use of the term does not imply the existence of two separate substances: one that is interpreted in perception (whether it is conceived as grossly configured, like Descartes' res extensa; as non-phenomenal, such as Kant's Ding-an-sich; or somewhere in between, such as David Bohm's implicate order), and one that interprets it (no matter whether it is Descartes' res cogitans, Kant's empirical consciousness [founded on a transcendental consciousness], or Bohm's mind [which, anyhow, unlike the two aforementioned philosophers, the noted physicist did not posit as a separate substance]). Perceiver and perceived arise coemergently in Dzogchen-qua-Base when delusion is active, by means of a processing that cannot be ascribed to any of the resulting parts, for previously to their arising there are no such parts. (This is not a mere theory, but a fact that any Dzogchen practitioner can witness and corroborate in her or his practice). Nevertheless, once both illusory aspects have arisen, it may be said to be the interplay of the

two of them—which, however, in reality continues to be the play of Dzogchen-qua-Base—that creates the delusive reality of saṃsāra. (An alternative to the views of Descartes, Kant and Bohm was posited by Third Promulgation sūtras and the philosophical schools based on them—namely that there is a mental basis of experience that is not always itself experience: the ālayavijñāna or kunzhi namshé [Wylie, kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}]. However, also in this case our sensa would be constructed by neurological and mental processes.)

The reader could object that he or she never experienced the moment of pure sensation posited above, and that Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka has explicitly rejected the existence of such a moment.

To the first objection I would reply that in ordinary experience it is as a rule undetected, for as noted above it is an instance of the base-of-all involving the presence (of) the sensory continuum, and since the base-of-all does not involve awareness (of) consciousness of object, it cannot be self-consciously, reflexively remembered: consciousness, attention and interest (which as noted above is what drives attention) have not yet arisen. And then I would advise she or he to practice pacification meditation (Skt. śamatha; Pāli: samatha; Tib. zhine [zhi gnas]; Chinese 止 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, zhǐ; Wade-Giles, chih]; Jap: shi) in order to slow down the process of perception and be able to clearly detect the moment of pure sensation, which then may come to last for a long time: though in the moment in question there will be no awareness (of) consciousness of object, the instant consciousness arises one will most clearly realize that the preceding moment there was bare sensation.

To the second objection I would reply that what Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka does refute is the same it refutes concerning the whole of relative truth: just as Mipham and many other Prāsaṅgikas throughout history noted with regard to concepts such as that of svasaṃvedana / svasaṃvitti or that of ālayavijñāna in the sense it has in Third Promulgation sūtras, that what the Prāsaṅgika rejects is the inherent, hypostatic or absolute existence of the referent of such concepts, what Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka does refute regarding the thesis that a moment of pure sensation precedes perception is that the moment in question may be found as separate from the ensuing perception, and hence the inherent, hypostatic or absolute existence of the referent of this concept, or of the given that manifests in that instant. (This, of course, differs from the interpretation of Je Tsongkhapa.)

In the fields of philosophy or religion and transpersonal psychology Jorge Ferrer (2002, p. 146) gave to understand that the sensory continuum, instead of an analog continuum, is a sum of discrete, digital substances. He illustrates this with the distinctions among flavors and among colors, affirming that they are independent from our perception of them. Taking as an example the distinctions between the flavors of mustard, cheese and chocolate, he claims that they exist independently of any concept we may apply to them. He also refers to experiments that show people to be able to distinguish different colors even if they lack the respective concepts. For the sake of clarity, rather than outright discussing whether or not there are distinctions in sensa, I will briefly discuss whether or not there are separations in it.

Well, it seems to be true that, as Plato noted, the sensory basis of perception is articulated: an articulation allows our perception to separate the forearm from the arm, another one allows it to separate the hand from the forearm, and so on, and on the basis of these articulations different concepts arise that we can apply to our experience. However, articulations are not separations, for as Einstein's noted Field Theory and post-Einsteinian physical systems acknowledge, they are not discontinuities in the continuum that in their view the Universe is—and the same in all lights applies to what I have called the “basis of the imputation of the term sensory continuum,” which common sense assumes to be our way to have access to an external universe: that basis of imputations is an analog continuum in which separations arise only when our perceptual mechanisms sharply cut it on the basis of its articulations. For example, first the illusory subject-object split or chasm is introduced. Then a sharp figure-ground division is introduced, and the figure is perceived in terms of a sharply defined concept that contrasts with other concepts. In short, though the sensory continuum has some kind of articulations in Plato's sense, I refer to it as a continuum because it is itself undivided—divisions being introduced by human perception, which cuts it on the basis of digital, discontinuous concepts. And this signifies that the perception of the continuum of sensa in terms of concepts always involves a delusion (this delusion being, indeed, the combination of aspects or types [2] and [3] of avidyā in the most widespread classification [the senses or aspects of avidyā in the Dzogchen teachings were explained at the beginning of the Chapter on the Mahāyāna Version of the Second Noble Truth]).

The above is most clear in the case of the examples Ferrer (ibidem) gives, for in the color spectrum there is

no precise division at which the gradation of color ceases to be red and begins to be orange, or at which orange ceases to be orange and begins to be yellow—the continuity of the spectrum attesting to the fact that not only separations, but also distinctions, rather than lying in a given, depend on singling out specific segments of the sensory continuum and understanding them in terms of the respective concept.



In fact, it is only when distinctions have been made by human perception as described above, that we have the experience of colors, flavors and so on as different from each other; before that, properly speaking there are no distinctions: what there is, is utterly inconceivable flavoredness, coloredness, and so on (according to the sense involved)—this being the reason why in Verse XII of the *Dào dé jīng* (Ch. 道德經; Wade-Giles Tao⁴-te²-ching¹ Lǎozǐ (Ch. 老子; Wade-Giles, Lao³-tzu³) wrote: “The five colors blind the eye. The five tones deafen the ear. The five flavors dull the taste.” In brief, the fact that the given is formed and colored and so on does not imply that it involves either separations or distinctions: both of these are made by our singling out segments of the continuous gradation of the spectrum of the given and understanding them in terms of the digital contents of thought. Paradoxically, what Ferrer is claiming is that sensory differences are given, and is using this claim to negate the viewless view of all the higher forms of Buddhism, implicitly validating the perceptions of common sense—thus falling into the myth of the given right as Sellars defined it.

The point under discussion may be proven as well by the Ancient Greek perception of colors, among which I originally had in mind the color *glauko* (γλαυκός)—which was the color of the sea, but which included a wide range of what nowadays we see as quite different, distinct colors. However, in the Internet I found a text that offers a series of quite precise examples of what I had in mind, clearly showing how different from our own was the ancient Greeks’ perception of colors, and I decided that it was easier to quote its initial paragraphs (in spite of the fact that the author explains the radical differences between the ancient Greeks’ classification of colors and our own by wrongly asserting the retina of the ancient Greek not to have evolved to its present degree of evolution). The text goes as follows (Triulzi, 2006):

“Ancient Greek Color Vision

“As seen through the eyes of the Ancient Greeks, color perception is a very different thing than our own color perception. Why is this, what is it about our eyes and brains that causes this difference of visual perception from person to person and culture to culture?

“In his writings Homer surprises us by his use of color. His color descriptive palate was limited to metallic colors, black, white, yellowish green and purplish red, and those colors he often used oddly, leaving us with some questions as to his actual ability to see colors properly (1). He calls the sky ‘bronze’ and the sea and sheep as the color of wine, he applies the adjective *chloros* (χλωρός, meaning green with our understanding) to honey, and a nightingale (2). *Chloros* is not the only color that Homer uses in this unusual way. He also uses *kyanos* (κύανος) oddly, ‘Hector was dragged, his *kyanos* hair was falling about him’ (3). Here it would seem, to our understanding, that Hector’s hair was blue as we associate the term *kyanos* with the semi-precious stone lapis lazuli, in our thinking *kyanos* means cyan (4). But we cannot assume that Hector’s hair was blue, rather, in light of the way that Homer consistently uses color adjectives, we must think about his meaning, did he indeed see honey as green, did he not see the ocean as blue, how does his perception of color reflect on himself, his people, and his world.

“Homer’s odd color description usage was a cultural phenomenon and not simply color blindness on his part, Pindar describes the dew as *chloros*, in Euripides *chloros* describes blood and tears (5).

Empedocles, one of the earliest Ancient Greek color theorists, described color as falling into four areas, light or white, black or dark, red and yellow; Xenophanes described the rainbow as having three bands of color: purple, green/yellow, and red (6). These colors are fairly consistent with the four colors used by Homer in his color description, this leads us to the conclusion that all Ancient Greeks saw color only in the premise of Empedocles' colors, in some way they lacked the ability to perceive the whole color spectrum." (Submitted by Ananda Triulzi on Mon, 11/27/2006, 11:18 AM: Biology. The strange syntax was in the text and is not my responsibility.)

The fact that the interpretation of color in digital terms is always imprecise, precisely because the digital and discontinuous can never match the analog and continuous, is proven by the fact that systems and programs for digital computers, in order to give the impression that the images they produce approach to some extent the *sensa* they reproduce, must have millions of colors—and even then there is always a mismatch between the image and the *sensa* it reproduces.

Now let us ponder on the myth of the given as part of a foundationalist theory of justification. In this regard, Sara McClintock (2003, p. 128) writes:

"When the given is understood as part of a foundationalist theory of justification, as it almost invariably is, the given provides the warrant for the basic beliefs that themselves ground further empirical knowledge. The given is thus [taken to be] that which prevents an infinite regress in the process of justification of true beliefs."

Then, on discussing whether or not the Buddhist *Pramāṇavāda* tradition that was founded by Dignāga, given continuity by Dharmakīrti and then taken up by the *Svāntarikas*, could validly be viewed as a foundationalist theory of justification, McClintock (2003, p. 129) wrote:

"...even though Buddhist epistemologists understand perception as nonerroneous, nonconceptual awareness—as a kind of direct and full-blown encounter with the real—there are good grounds for caution in referring to the contents of perception as the given, since perceptual awareness alone seems unable to ground or justify basic beliefs."

I have some reserve with regard to the above statement, but this is not the place to discuss it. At any rate, that which in this book is referred to as an instant of bare sensation is not perception, but something that precedes perception, and, moreover, it is not asserted to constitute the truth, or the basis on which truth may be inferred, but it is acknowledged to constitute a condition that normally involves one of the senses or types of *avidyā* (for it ordinarily manifests as the condition of the base-of-all, which involves *avidyā* in the first sense in all Dzogchen classifications) and which, when used as raw material of perception, is distorted by the latter—because perception is digital whereas sensation is analog, and perception always involves the three senses or aspects of *avidyā* in all Dzogchen classifications. On the other hand, when the true condition of the whole universe and ourselves becomes patent, bare sensation is not distorted by perception, as neither the latter nor *avidyā* enter the picture at that point. (As noted above, the senses or aspects of *avidyā* in the Dzogchen teachings were explained at the beginning of the Chapter on the *Mahāyāna* Version of the Second Noble Truth.)

Then, with regard to Tsongkhapa's objection to the *Svāntarika* use of the *Pramāṇavāda* justifications of relative, conventional, supposedly "correct" knowledge and "correct perception," McClintock (2003, pp. 131-132) writes:

"Tsong kha pa maintains that the *Svāntarikas* go wrong as *Mādhyamikas* when they allow the given to play a role in conventional awareness and in the conventional ascertainment of right and wrong. *Prāsaṅgikas* like Candrakīrti, in contrast, get it right when they insist that even the conventional is devoid of the given, that perceptual awareness (at least in the case of unenlightened beings) is not free from the imputations of beginningless ignorance, and that any attempt to ground conventional judgments in the given is futile and misguided. In other words, as the best kind of *Mādhyamikas* recognize, entities do not appear to the mind of an ordinary being "just as they are." Rather, such appearances are already shaped by the primordial erroneous presuppositions (i.e., the ignorance) of that being's mind, and as such, they are unsuited to ground empirical or any other sort of knowledge."

I will not stop to discuss the fact that, since Tsongkhapa acknowledges the above, when he insists that there are mere existents or merely existent entities that are bases of analysis but not objects of analysis and that therefore must not be refuted, he is consciously asking followers to let erroneous presuppositions and ignorance (i.e. *avidyā*) be, and since *avidyā* is the cause of *samsāra*, he is asking his followers to let *samsāra* be rather than proceeding on the Path to Awakening.

That which concerns us here is the fact, which must be clear by now, that both the Dzogchen teachings and my own interpretation of Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka claim that an instant of pure sensation precedes superimpositions, and whether or not the Dzogchen teachings and my own interpretation of Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka incur in the error Tsongkhapa denounces. In analysis seeking the absolute the moment of pure sensation preceding perception is certainly not found; however, in the relative realm it is an undeniable experience. Why then do the Dzogchen teachings and my interpretation of Prāsaṅgika posit that moment of pure sensation preceding perception, and why have I been referring to a given (which at any rate is not totally given, for it is given only with regard to what is conceptually put)? Certainly not in order to validate ordinary knowledge; on the contrary, the purpose of so doing is to show ordinary knowledge to be by its very nature deluded and delusive, and to show how does delusion arise, for this is important in order to undo delusion. And, by the same token, to make it clear that truth lies in not taking any perception, thought or element of human experience to be absolutely true. In other words, no myth of the given is posited, but if it is still claimed that it is, then the opponent who claims that this is the case must acknowledge that such myth is introduced in full awareness that all that we humans think and believe is myth.

In fact, it is enough to apply the refutations employed by the so-called Mādhyamikas of the model texts, those used by Candrakīrti, and even those by other Mādhyamikas—as well as those by the Greek and subsequent European Skeptics—in order to show that what we perceive as given facts is no more than illusions (so that there are no true things in our own experience either), and that hence our belief that there is such a thing as facts, as well as all our theories, are no more than myths. This is the reason why in a recent book (Capriles, 2012a) and previous papers, following George Sorel (1922, 1906, 1908), I asserted progress to be a myth, science to be a myth, the so-called scientific character of Marxism to be a myth, and in general all of our assumptions about reality to be myths. This agrees to some extent with Nietzsche’s “On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense” (Nietzsche, 1873; this English Ed. Undated 1—a paper that remained unpublished for very long time), which identifies as metaphors what most people take to be truths: rather than knowing things in themselves as they truly are, we know them through a series of metaphorizations—from thing-in-itself to sense-data, to mental image, to word, to mediation in a cultural sphere of meaning, and back to reference to the thing. However, since thing-in-itself is itself a metaphorization, each transformation is a metaphor of what it transforms, without relatedness to an origin or foundation: there are only metaphoric transformations. In the same work Nietzsche wrote:

“What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions—they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.”

In this way, what is normally taken to be facts is shown to be no more than illusions, whereas all that is normally taken to be correct knowledge is shown to be no more than myth built on the basis of the processes of erring. In the same vein, in the *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche (1999) went on to assert facts not to exist, and to assert all that we assume to be so, to be mere interpretation. On these bases, Gianni Vattimo (1995, p. 50) correctly writes: “Nihilism means in Nietzsche ‘de-valorization of the supreme values’ and fabulation of the world: there are no facts, only interpretations, and this is also an interpretation.”

The above seems very similar to the way Mahāyāna and other, even higher forms of Buddhism view what we regard as facts and truths. However, Nietzsche does not seem to contemplate a “real Truth” that would lie in Seeing through the errors hitherto taken as truths—such as the Heraclitean *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια) as understood in other works of mine (Capriles, 2007a Vol. I and minor works) or the Buddhist Awakening, which, rather than lying in the experience of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized concepts that we wrongly take to be absolutely true (as is the case with the pseudo-truths accepted by metaphysics, religion, science or common sense, regardless of whether they are understood as *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, as *clara et distincta perceptio*, in terms of Heidegger’s misinterpretation of Heraclitus’ *aletheia* [ἀλήθεια], or whatever else), lies in the spontaneous liberation of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized concepts—including the ones that take part in perception—which shows these concepts to be no more than fictions. And since it is the contents of thought that constitute the

built / produced / contrived / conditioned (Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli: *sāṅkhata*; Tib. *düche* [Wylie, 'dus byas]; Ch., 有為 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²]) pseudo-reality that conceals our true, unproduced / uncontrived / unconditioned / unmade (Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asāṅkhata*; Tib. *dümache* [Wylie, 'dus ma byas]; Ch. 無為 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²]) condition, this instantly results in the patency of the true, unproduced / uncontrived / unconditioned / unmade condition in question. Failure to acknowledge this “real Truth,” as in the case of Vattimo during his “postmodern” period, can only give rise to a most harmful type of nihilism, which would doom humankind to despair and ultimately result in our self-destruction.

Now, does positing a real Truth, or a true, unproduced / uncontrived / unmade / unconditioned condition that is concealed by superimposition of thought-contents, represent a reintroduction of the myth of there being a foundation? To begin with, let me note that, if all is myth, then there are at least two types of myths: those that are viable and wholesome, and those that are unviable and pathological. This naturally follows from the criterion of Truth qua absence of delusion amply discussed in this and other books of mine (quite at length in Capriles, 2013b, Chapter I).

In the discussion in question it was shown that myths such as those of substantiality and self-existence, of inherent duality, of inherent plurality and so on are proven erroneous by their effects. If one who believes to be going north discovers that she or he is heading south, this proves her or his belief to have been erroneous: the myths in question are erroneous in the sense that they fail to achieve the aim they were intended to achieve and, contrariwise, achieve the very opposite, thus proving themselves to be unviable and pathological. Therefore, finding them to be erroneous means discovering that they must be cast off. Moreover, in the case of the just mentioned myths, if they are not abandoned in the very near future, they will bring about the self-destruction of our species. (I explain the distortion involved, in part by saying that the world of *sensa* and that which Freud [trans. J. Strachey, 1954] called primary process are analog and thus continuous, as well as holistic in nature, whereas the way in which that world and that process are experienced and understood by secondary process is digital and as such discontinuous, as well as fragmentary in nature: this is a key reason why this way of experiencing and understanding the world of *sensa* and primary process necessarily distorts them. Some of the other reasons why this is the case were listed in others of my works [e.g. Capriles, 1994].)

I also note that good myths are posited in full awareness that they are myths, whereas bad myths are posited in the belief that they are the Truth and therefore involve the basic confusion that constitutes the third sense of *avidyā* in the second Dzogchen classification. In fact, so long as one takes secondary process interpretations for what they interpret, or as precisely corresponding to the latter, one is under the influence of all three senses of *avidyā* in all Dzogchen classifications, and hence one necessarily takes one's myths to be either facts of truths about facts—rather than realizing them to be no more than myths.

By implication, my explanation and use of the concept of the given in full awareness that it is a myth, yet also in full awareness that Truth qua lack of delusion lies in the disclosure of Dzogchen-qua-Base that constitutes both Dzogchen-qua-Path and Dzogchen-qua-Fruit and that goes along with the spontaneous liberation of all thoughts, may provide a foundation for Dzogchen theory and practice—just as the awareness that the Absolute Truth of the Mahāyāna is realized when interpretations in their totality dissolve in the patency of the absolute expanse of the true condition (of all phenomena) may provide a basis for Mahāyāna practice.

Have the concept of Truth and, by implication, that of a given—in this case the Base of Dzogchen or the absolute expanse of the true condition (of all phenomena)—been introduced once more at this point? The reader is free to make her or his own conclusions. At any rate, here Truth refers to the collapse of all interpretations and the dissolution of all of the senses or aspects *avidyā* has in all Dzogchen classifications, as the absolute expanse of the true condition (of all phenomena) and Dzogchen-qua-Base simply cannot be interpreted or conceptually and dualistically known in any terms. When this truly happens, the sensory continuum that in the process leading to ordinary perception appears in the initial instant of pure sensation, continues to appear, yet does so without the veil constituted by the first aspect or sense of *avidyā*, and of course without the superimposition of the subject-object duality or any other conceptual projection—and hence at this point no sense or aspect of *avidyā* is manifest to blur the true condition and character of what appears. And, most important, the concept that this is a foundation, something rock-solid on which to build anything, simply cannot arise in this condition, as all concepts

have collapsed together with the illusion of substantiality: myths cannot be mistaken for facts in the condition that dissolves all hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts (the all-liberating single gnosis), even though alternative myths can be posited in the way that Candrakīrti called “other-directed” or “exterior-directed” assertions (Tib. zhen ngo kelen [Wylie, gzhan ngo khas len]: cf. the section of the Introductory Study that bears this name in its title): assertions that the propounder does not believe, and which she or he makes as skillful means to lead others on the Path. What is central to me is, thus, that this puts an end to all of the evil effects of delusion, so that if achieved by an individual it will fully resolve the “problem of life” for him or her, while by the same token enabling her or him to achieve the benefit of others—and if achieved by a sufficient number of people so that, metaphorically speaking, “critical mass is reached,” it may be the condition of possibility of the survival of our species and the beginning of a new era of Communion, equality, ecological balance and individual fulfillment.

I assume that on the basis of the above it could still be claimed that I am using bare sensation as part of a foundationalist theory of justification, whereby what is justified is Awakening (which, however, if justified at all in this book, is so because of its being free from all aspects and senses of avidyā rather than in terms of a theory of adæquatio, as I asserted the latter to be impossible). And if so, then the reader is free to see this book as upholding the myth of the given, or, because it asserts what we take for facts and truths to be no more than myths, to view it as an attempt to help all of us humans see our myths for what they are: I myself do not care whether it is seen one way or the other, and will continue to use “good myths” as a means to help both self and others go beyond myths—just as the Buddhist sage Aśvaghōṣa noted that we must use words in order to go beyond words.

Contrariwise, those who assert that the given is always a myth and that all that arises is co-created, since co-creation means that two different agents are involved in creation, take the myth that there is no given and that there are at least two different substances that participate in creation as Truth and as given. Therefore, they are upholding a myth that they take not to be a myth and that is a myth of the given which is not any less dangerous than the myth of the given that they abhor and deride. Does not one have to assume the given character of at least two substances in order to posit co-creation and hence a participative view of spirituality? If the viewless view that is other-directedly expressed in this book could be viewed as a case of the myth of the given, at least it could not be viewed as a substantialistic, dualistic myth of the given like the ones that are at the root of the current ecological crisis, and like the one upheld by those who posit co-creation and hence a participative view of spirituality.

⁷⁷ This is why Ju Mipham Gyamtso (’ju mi pham rgya mtsho: 1846–1912) asserted the Prāsaṅgika School to be “suddenist” and the Svātantrika School to be “gradualist.” Cf. Capriles (in press 1).

⁷⁸ Even though the classification into Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika is known in the West by the Sanskrit names of these two subschools, in Indian literature the distinction in question seems to be nonexistent. In fact, the only occurrence of one of these terms that has been detected in an Indian text is that of Svātantrika a couple of times in the *Madhyamakāvataṅkā* by Jayānanda, which this Indian interpreter of Candrakīrti used to refer to advocates of a position that he saw Candrakīrti as opposing (Cabezón, 2003, p. 292. It must be noted, however, that Jayānanda spent a long time in Tibet, and that Cabezón consulted the text just referred to in its Tibetan translation). At any rate, scholars as a rule assume the classification and terminology to have arisen in Tibet in the eleventh or twelfth century CE—the most ancient known texts in which it appears being the translations of works by Candrakīrti by Tibetan translator Patsab Nyima Drak (pa tshab nyi ma grags), who, in spite of Jayānanda’s previous use of the term Svātantrika, is thus regarded as the probable originator of the terminological distinction (Dreyfus & McClintock, eds. 2003, passim; a longer discussion of this subject is available in Capriles, in press 1).

Note that, since Prāsaṅgikas circumscribed themselves to drawing unwanted consequences from the theses put forward by others and the syllogisms used by others (although they were permitted to put forward theses and syllogisms so long as they themselves did not take them to be the truth and their opposites to be false—this being what is referred to as inferences based on reasons acknowledged by the opponent only [Skt. praprasiddhānumāna; Tib. gzhan grags kyi rjes su dpag pa / gzhan la grags pa’i rjes dpag]), Jeffrey Hopkins rendered the label in question as Consequentialists; likewise, since Svātantrikas posited autonomous theses and syllogisms, he rendered this label as Autonomists.

⁷⁹ It must be noted, however, that Jayānanda spent a long time in Tibet, and that Cabezón consulted the text just referred to in its Tibetan translation.

- ⁸⁰ According to Tibetan tradition it was Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, who inspired Asaṅga after the latter did intense devotional practice having Maitreya as its object; however, nowadays all (or nearly all) Western scholars and many Tibetan Masters agree that the one who inspired Asaṅga was the philosopher and Buddhist teacher, Maitreya or Maitreyaṅgā, also called Ajita (meaning “Invincible”). Note that the name Maitreya derives from the Skt. *maitrī*, meaning benevolent love or loving kindness.
- ⁸¹ Tradition has it that Vasubandhu (author of Sarvāstivādin texts such as the famous *Abhidharmakośa*, of Yogācāra texts like the *Viṃśatikā*, of the poetic work *Triṃśikā*, and of various commentaries) had been a Hīnayāna Sarvāstivādin until his conversion to the Mahāyāna (particularly to the Yogācāra School) by influence of his elder brother, Asaṅga. Erich Frauwallner has proposed the alternative theory according to which the Vasubandhu who was the author of Yogācāra texts and brother of Asaṅga (who, according to the *Sūtra of Hui-neng* [Wong Mou-Lam and A. F. Price, translators, 1969], was the twenty-first link in the transmission of Chán or Zen) lived in the fourth century CE, but the Vasubandhu who was the author of Sarvāstivādin texts was another individual, who flourished in the fifth century. However, this alternative theory has not been well received by current scholarship. (According to Tibetan chronology, Asaṅga was born approximately on 420 CE; if this were the correct chronology, both Asaṅga and his brother Vasubandhu would have lived in the fifth century CE.)
- ⁸² The terms Yogācāra and Cittamātra are most often used as precise synonyms; however, according to some interpretations (e.g. Lipman, 1983 / 1986), the term Cittamātra refers to a more reductionist understanding of the canonical sources of the Third Promulgation, and the term Yogācāra to a more sophisticated comprehension of the same sources. For a discussion of this cf. Capriles (2014).
- ⁸³ The idea that nirvāṇa involves a “pure dependence” is an obvious error of this school, for in nirvāṇa there is no subject-object duality and no illusion of a multiplicity of phenomena, and therefore there can be no (mutual) dependence whatsoever. It is in *saṃsāra* that there are subject and object, and that the mutual dependence of these—and indeed of all phenomena—is to be asserted.
- ⁸⁴ That which was later called “emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*; Tib. *tongpanyi* [stong pa nyid]; Ch. 空 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, kòng; Wade–Giles, k’ung⁴) of alien substances” (Tib. *zhen*[gyi ngōpo] *tong*[panyi] [Wylie, *gzhan* (gyi dngos po) *stong* (pa nyid)]; Sanskrit reconstruction, *paraśūnyatā* or *pararūpaśūnyatā*) is present in Mahāyānasūtras of the Second and Third Promulgations. Among the former, the important *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in Twenty-Five Thousand Lines, also called the *Intermediate Mother*, states: “In this context, if you ask what is the emptiness [or absence of the purported existence] of other substances, [it must be noted that] it applies whether the Tathāgatas have appeared or not. As the abiding, [true] nature of [all] reality (*gnas lugs*: the *dharmakāya*’s primordial emptiness), as [the true condition of] reality itself, [as] the absolute expanse of the true condition (of all phenomena), [as] the faultlessness of [the true condition], [as] the nature of isness, and as the genuine goal, it abides as isness. Therefore, this [true condition of all] reality, which is empty of extraneous entities, is called the emptiness of other substances. *Subhūti*, this is the greater vehicle of the Bodhisattvas, great spiritual warriors.”
- Third Promulgation sūtras expressing the view of “emptiness of alien substances” are many; for example, the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, one of the sources that abound in elements of that view, is worth quoting: “If you ask what is the emptiness that is [inherent in] the absolute reality of all things, [or, in other words, the emptiness that is inherent in] the great primordial gnosis of the sublime beings, it is as follows: The attainment of the primordial gnosis of the sublime beings, which is one’s own nondual self-awareness, is empty of the propensities of all views and faults. This is called the emptiness that is [inherent in] the absolute reality of all things, [the emptiness that is inherent in] the great primordial gnosis of sublime beings.”
- Also various Tantras express that view. Among Mahāyāna treatises and commentaries, it is worth noting Nāgārjuna’s *Collection of Eulogies* [Skt. *Stavakāya*; Tib. *bstod tshogs*], among which most eloquent is the *Eulogy to the Absolute Expanse of the True Condition [of Phenomena]* [Skt. *Dharmadhātustava*; Tib. *chos dbyings bstod pa*]; Asaṅga’s *vyākhyā* commentary to the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and other of his texts; some works by Vasubandhu, and then—oddly enough—some works by Bhāvaviveka/Bhavya (who in the *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa* [Tib. *bdu ma rin chen sgron ma*], like the *Zhentongpas* and the *Mahāmādhyaṃikas*, used the terms “coarse, outer *Mādhyamaka* [*phyi rags pa*]” and “subtle, inner *Mādhyamaka* [*nang phra ba*]” and established the superiority of the latter).

However, the first scholar-yogin to have articulated the view of emptiness of alien substances as a separate system of tenets is believed to have been Kashmiri scholar Somanātha's eleventh century disciple, the Kālacakra yogin Yumo Mikyo Dorje (yu mo mi bskyod rdo rje [b. 1027]). From Yumo Mikyo Dorje onwards, the Dro lineage of the Kālacakra passed on through various lineage-holders to Kunpang Thukje Tsöndrü (kun spangs thugs rje brtson 'grus, 1243-1313), who settled in the meditation caves on the mountains of Jomonang in present day U-Tsang, South Central Tibet. It is from this place that the term Jonang was taken, as the name of the school that arose on the basis of this transmission and teachings, and the term Jonangpa was used to designate the adherents of this school.

However, Dölpopa further developed the Jonang interpretation and it was him (and later on also Tāranātha [1575–1634]) who elaborated it to its current degree of sophistication and made it so well known as to gain a high number of followers and detractors. The School was suppressed by the Fifth Dalai Lama for political reasons, as the Jonangpas, like the Kagyūpas, had close connections with the royal family of the province of Tsang (gtsang), which was contending with the Dalai Lama and the Gelug School for the control of Central Tibet or U (dbu)—which finally merged with Tsang to form the province of Utsang (bdu gtsang)—yet in the case of the Jonangpas there was a further problem: the incarnation of Tāranātha was a boy who descended from the royal lineage of the Mongols, who had already been named as the spiritual leader of the whole of Mongolia and who could have become troublesome in Tibet, as he could have tried to be recognized as Khan.

⁸⁵ Dölpopa wrote in Tibetan, and the term he used to categorize the true condition, which was rangzhin (Wylie, rang bzhin) need not be rendered as self-existent. In fact, Candrakīrti himself characterized the true condition of all entities (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chönyi [Wylie, *chos nyid*]; Ch. 法性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fǎ³-hsing⁴*]) as *svabhāva* (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, *rang bzhin*]; Ch. 自性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng*; Wade-Giles, *tz'u⁴-hsing⁴*; Jap. jishō]), which is as a rule rendered as self-existent and which Gelug translators render as hypostatically / inherently existent, but which he used in the sense of intrinsic nature: that which (is) the true condition both of all entities and of the awareness whereby all entities appear, which may be said to (be) a self-nature in that as a nature it does not depend on anything else to (be) what it (is). In fact, Candrakīrti was a most consistent philosopher who rejected the four extremes with regard to all relative entities and thus by no means would he have asserted the absolute to fall into one of the four extremes—that of existence—and to fall into it hypostatically / inherently, for the absolute obviously has neither *genus proximum* nor *differentia specifica* and thus is more evidently free from the extremes than any particular relative entity.

In his discussion of self-nature / intrinsic condition (Skt. *svabhāva*; Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin]) in *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* (dbu ma la 'jug pa'i bshad pa / dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rang 'grel), Candrakīrti categorized the true nature of all entities by the term *bhava* (Tib. yöpa [Wylie, yod pa] or ngöpo [Wylie, dngos po] according to context; Ch. 有 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒu; Wade-Giles, yu³; Jap. yū {ゆみ }]), which is usually rendered as either being or existence, but which he was using in the sense of nature—i.e., of that which everything (is). This is why he wrote in the book in question:

“Does a nature, as asserted by the Master [Nāgārjuna], that is characterized in such a way [as in Nāgārjuna's (*Prajñānāmamūlamadhyamakakārikā*) XV.2cd, which Candrakīrti has just cited] exist? The absolute nature of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. chos nyid) put forward by the Supramundane Victor—‘Whether the Tathāgatas appear or not, the absolute nature of phenomena just abides’—exists. Also, what is this absolute nature of phenomena? It is the self-nature (Skt. *svābhāva*; Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin]) of these eyes and so forth. And, what is the nature of these? It is their non-fabricatedness, that which does not depend on another, their thusness that is realized by wisdom free from the dimness of unawareness. Does it exist or not? If it did not exist, for what purpose would bodhisattvas cultivate the Path of the *pāramitās*? Why would bodhisattvas initiate hundreds of difficulties for the sake of realizing the absolute nature of phenomena?”

Adapted from the edition prepared by De La Vallée Poussin (1970), 305.19-306.12 and from Tsongkhapa's citation of it in the *Lamrim Chenmo* (Dharamsala edition, 416b.6-417a.2; translation in Wayman [1979, p. 256] cited in Napper [2003, pp. 128-129]; alternative trans. in Tsong kha pa [2002, Vol. III, p. 198]).

As to my use of the term *Mahāmādhyaṃaka*, it must be noted that there are at least three usages of the Skt. term and its Tibetan equivalents.

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- (1) As noted in the regular text, Dölpopa used it as a strict synonym of the Tib. Uma Zhentongpa (Wylie, dbu ma gzhan stong pa, which could be rendered into Sanskrit as Paraśūnyatā or Pararūpaśūnyatā Mādhyamaka—where Paraśūnyatā or Pararūpaśūnyatā would render the Tibetan term zhengyi ngöpo tongpanyi [Wylie, gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid]).
- (2) For his part, Ju Mipham, in his commentary to the Bodhicaryāvatāra and in many other texts, approvingly employed the term Mahāmādhyaṃmaka repeatedly (cf. e.g. Williams, 1998, pp. 99 note 11, and 196), yet what he meant by the term was not at all the same as in the case of Dölpopa, for most of the time he used it to refer to an interpretation of Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka that, unlike that of Je Tsongkhapa and the Gelug school, did not negate the key concepts of Third Promulgation Canonical Sources, and did not shun Third Promulgation terms. However, in one specific text he argued in favor of Mahāmādhyaṃmaka in the sense Dölpopa had given the term—i.e. as a synonym of Uma Zhentongpa: the one he wrote by command of his teacher Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who insisted that in at least in one book he should defend the view his teacher adhered to. In fact, he declared himself a Prāsaṅgika* and, unlike the followers of Je Tsongkhapa and like most Prāsaṅgikas in Red Hat Schools (all schools except for the Gelug, which uses Yellow Hats), he decidedly upheld and defended the existence of svasaṃvedana or svasaṃvitti (Tib. rang rig) by declaring it to be a conventional existent that, being true for the world, as such should not be an object of refutation for Prāsaṅgikas. In fact, Mipham defended svasaṃvedana in purely Prāsaṅgika terms, as something that should not be rejected by the Prāsaṅgikas because the latter accept the conventional existence of conventional reality, and their refutations are concerned with the alleged ultimate existence of the conventional, which is always erroneous (see William, Paul, 1998). However, Mipham seemingly defended the existence of svasaṃvedana conceived in Yogācāra and Mādhyamaka-Svātantrika terms, rather defending the Mahāmādhyaṃmaka interpretation of it—which to me makes no sense unless he was trying to validate it in the eyes of the Gelugpa, who do not contemplate the existence of the inner, subtle Mādhyamaka (Tib. nang phra ba'i dbu ma), to which Mahāmādhyaṃmaka belongs. For a lengthier discussion of this, see the possible upcoming definitive publication in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004).
- (3) I have not adopted Ju Mipham's strategy, for Mahāmādhyaṃmaka in the sense in which Dölpopa used the term privileges the Zhentong view of emptiness as the nonexistence of substances other than the single true condition of all reality, which is in agreement with the Dzogchen teachings, which negate that there is anything other than the Base (Tib. zhi [Wylie, gzhi]) of Dzogchen—yet it does not exclude the view of emptiness as emptiness of self-existence (Skt. prakṛtiśūnyatā / svabhāvaśūnyatā; Tib. rangzhin tongpanyi or rangzhangyi tongpanyi (Wylie, rang bzhin [gyi] stong pa nyid) exactly as interpreted by Prāsaṅgika philosophy, which is the highest of all Mādhyamaka Rangtongpa views. The only difference between my usage of the term Mahāmādhyaṃmaka and most interpretations of Dölpopa's usage is that insist that the Base of Dzogchen, of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. dharmatā; Tib. chönyi [Wylie, chos nyid]: Ch. 法性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, fǎxìng; Wade-Giles, fa³-hsing⁴]), or the dharmakāya, etc. may not be said to be either existent or nonexistent, and hence even less so could it be absolutely or ultimately existent. (However, in a noted passage that I cite and comment upon in another endnote to this volume Candrakīrti asserts the absolute truth to be svabhāva—which I interpreted in the sense of self-nature [i.e. of not being dependent on anything other than itself] rather than as implying self-existence, and which I accept if interpreted in this way.)

*It is generally acknowledged that the View of Dzogchen corresponds to that of the Mādhyamaka Prāsaṅgika because both agree that (in the words of Tibetan Text 5, an extremely important Tantra of the Dzogchen Menngagde), “the sense of the view is not to take a (conceptual) position.” Moreover, we have seen that, according to Tibetan Text 8 (Ms. A, p. 568), Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva were links in the transmission of Dzogchen, and that this led Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (1988, p. 27) to suggest that the view of Mādhyamaka-Prāsaṅgika could have had its source in Dzogchen. However, as shown in Capriles (electronic publication 2004, which I deleted from my Webpage because it contained too many errors and imprecisions, and of which I might prepare a revised version in the future), though the Mahāmādhyaṃmaka view encompasses that of Mādhyamaka Prāsaṅgika, it is far more comprehensive than the former; furthermore, it has features that make it compatible with essential Dzogchen tenets other than the mere nonconceptuality of the View—such as the continuity of Base, Path and Fruit, the conception of the conditioned and unconditioned and of what the Mahāyāna refers to as “ultimate truth,” and the usage it makes of concepts such as that of kunzhi (Wylie, kun gzhi), kunzhi namshe

(Wylie, kun gzhi nam shes) and svasaṃvedana (with regard to the concepts of kunzhi namshe and svasaṃvedana, it must be reiterated that neither the Dzogchen teachings nor Mahāmādhyaṃaka has an understanding of them that corresponds to that of the Yogācāras or that of Mādhyaṃaka-Svātantrika-Yogācāras). For further details, see Capriles, Elías, electronic publication 2004.

⁸⁶ According to Prajñāpāramitā literature, prajñā or wisdom can be relative or absolute.

The relative, which is developed progressively in the gradual Mahāyāna, and which is an intelligence that permits the correct comprehension of the teachings, is one of the fifty-one (51) mental factors or events (Skt. caitta or caisatika; Pāli cetasika; Tib. semjung [Wylie, sems byung] Ch. 心所 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, xīnsuǒ; Wade-Giles, hsin¹-so³]) listed in literature associated with the Abhidharma (one of the “three baskets” or piṭakas that constitute the Tripiṭaka), which manifest in the conditioned sphere marked by active avidyā or delusion (i.e. by the second and third of the types of avidyā posited by the Dzogchen teachings and explained in the regular text of this volume). In particular, it is one of the five object-determining mental factors or mental events (Tib. yül sosor ngepa nga [Wylie, yul so sor nges pa lnga]).

In the Prajñāpāramitā texts, absolute prajñā is the wisdom that apprehends absolute truth, beyond the made and conditioned, beyond the unawareness and the delusion corresponding to the different types of avidyā in the threefold Dzogchen classification adopted here, beyond saṃsāra. This type of prajñā may manifest at some moment in the gradual Mahāyāna, mainly in the framework of the training in the transcendence of wisdom (Skt. prajñāpāramitā; Tib. sherab pharpin (Wylie, shes rab phar phyin); Ch. 般若 (波羅蜜) (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, bōrě bōluómì; Wade-Giles, po¹-je³ po¹-luo²-mi⁴)) and of the practice of insight (Skt. vipaśyanā; Pāli vipassanā; Tib. lhangthong [Wylie, lhag mthong]; Ch. 觀 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, guān; Wade-Giles, kuan¹]; Jap. kan); for its part, the sudden Mahāyāna has as its pivot the application of numerous methods in order to permit its sudden manifestation.

⁸⁷ Several of these sūtras are listed, and some quoted, in the section on the Sudden Mahāyāna in a subsequent chapter of this book.

⁸⁸ A classical text on Japanese Buddhism used to be Takakuso (1947), which was also used for the study of Chinese Buddhism, since with the sole exception of the Nichiren schools and their ramifications, and other new Buddhist and para-Buddhist sects, all Japanese Schools give continuity to Chinese schools. However, I disagree with professor Takakuso’s terminology, explanations and way of classifying the schools he deals with in his book. For their part, most contemporary Japanese scholars deem this text to be deficient and outdated (it was Professor Tetsu Nagasawa, Associate Professor at the Department of Human Sciences at Kyoto Bunkyo University, who, when in the course of a conversation I commented that Professor Takakuso’s classifications of schools and his use of language seemed to me highly flawed, replied that contemporary Japanese scholarship views his text as defective). Therefore, I resorted to other, newer sources—even though, since Chinese Buddhism is not the focus of this book, in this section I circumscribe myself to enumerating the Chinese schools and offering an extremely brief account of their tenets or orientation. The reader interested a more thorough analysis of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism is advised to consult as many different works as possible, including the following: Chen (1964), Dumoulin (2005), Faure (1998), Hodus (1923), Welch (1967), Green (2013), and various dictionaries and encyclopedias on Buddhism (including Keown & Prebish, Eds., 2010; Buswell & López, 2014; Keown, 2003; Cornu, 2001; etc.).

⁸⁹ In particular, Takakuso (Chan & Moore, eds. 1947), which as noted is largely based on the Hasshu-koyo, meaning “A Summary of the Eight Sects,” considers the respective scions of the Indian Mādhyaṃaka and Yogācāra Schools to be quasi-Mahāyāna, and yet classifies the Vinaya School as a fully-fledged Mahāyāna tradition. This is clearly a flaw of Takakuso’s text and of the traditional views it conveys.

⁹⁰ Robert Buswell Jr. and Dónald López (2014, p. 169) speculate that the Śata[ka]śāstra or Treatise in One-hundred [stanzas] might have actually been Kumārajīva’s interpretation of the Catuḥśatakaśāstrakārikā or Treatise in One-hundred [stanzas], which is extant in Sanskrit and is the most famous treatise by Āryadeva (the only direct disciple of Nāgārjuna).

⁹¹ It must be noted that the major works of both Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva were translated into Chinese, but none of the works by Buddhapālita and Chandrakīrti were translated into this language. Among those by Bhavya, only the Prajñāpradīpa (Tib. Sherab drönme [Wylie, shes rab sgron me]) was rendered into Chinese. Cf. Robinson (1967, pp. 26-39).

At any rate, the importance of this school diminished as a result of the introduction of the Fǎxiàng School.

⁹² Allegedly, because of its doctrine according to which the icchantikas (Tib. *döchen* [Wylie, 'dod chen]; Ch. 一闍提 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, yīchǎntí; Wade-Giles, i¹-ch'an³-t'i²]) could never attain Buddhahood.

⁹³ In contrast to the Indian Tripiṭaka, which contained only the teachings reputed to have originated directly from the Buddha Śākyamuni's *nirmāṇakāya* form, the Chinese Tripiṭaka also contains the *sāstras* or commentaries written by the great Chinese Masters.

For their part, Tibetans distinguish between (1) the Kangyur (Wylie, *bka' 'gyur*), containing, on the one hand, the texts of the Three Baskets (Tripiṭaka) attributed directly to the teachings given in this earth by the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni, and on the other hand, the root Tantras, and (2) the Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*), which contains the whole of the commentaries by the great Indian Masters extant in Tibetan.

⁹⁴ In general, the Sanskrit term *śamatha* (Pāli, *samatha*; Tib. *zhine* [zhi-gnas]; Chinese 止 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhǐ; Wade-Giles, chih³; Jap: shi]) refers to different types of mental pacification practice that in the long run may lead all movements of the mind to stop—even though generally this is not their ultimate aim. The Sanskrit term *vipaśyanā* (Pāli, *vipassana*; Tib. *lhangtong* (Wylie, *lhag mthong*); Chinese, 觀 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, guān; Wade-Giles, kuan¹; Jap. kan] as a rule refers to different types of practice dealing with the movements of the mind and with insight (which, among many other things, may be related to the discovery of the emptiness of thought, with the use of thought as a means to discover the emptiness of entities, with questioning one's experience in order to overcome dualism, etc.).

Whereas in the Indian gradual *Mahāyāna* the practices of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* were applied sequentially, and only when the path of preparation or application (Skt. *prayogamārga*[h]; Tib. *jorlam* [Wylie, *sbyor lam*]; Ch. 加行道 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, jiāxíng dào; Wade-Giles tzu¹-liang² tao⁴; Jap. *kegy ōdō*; Kor. *kahaeng to*) was attained an union of mental pacification and insight (Skt. *śamathavipaśyanāyuganaddha*; Tib. *zhine lhangtong zungjug* [Wylie, *zhi gnas lhag mthong zung 'jug*]; Ch. 止觀雙運 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhǐguān shuāngyùn; Wade-Giles, chih³-kuan¹ shuang¹-yün⁴]) was attained, the Tiāntái School instructed disciples on the two practices as inseparable and as a circle, for each reinforced the other (cf. Green, 2013, p. 117. In Emmanuel, 2013).

⁹⁵ Furthermore, in Suzuki, D. T. French 1940/1943, 1972, vol. 2, pp. 146-148, we read (adapted the names to Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn):

“One of the first Zen (Hiragana ぜん; Ch. 禪; Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Chán; Wade-Giles, Ch'an²) masters who introduced the idea of the *nembutsu* (recitation of the sacred name of Amitābha: Skt. *buddhānumṛti*; Ch. 念佛 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, niànfó; Wade-Giles, nien⁴-fo²]) was [Master] Yǒngmíng Yánshòu (永明延壽; Wade-Giles, Yung³-ming² Yen²-shou⁴; died 975 CE). He attached great importance to the Zen yogins devoting themselves to the practice of *nembutsu*, to the extent of declaring that among those who followed Zen without *nembutsu* nine out of ten would miss the final goal, whereas those who practiced the *nembutsu* would achieve realization all without exception; but the best are those, he used to say, who practice Zen and the *nembutsu*, for they are like a tiger with two horns...

“(For his part.) Kōnggǔ Jǐnglóng (空谷景隆; Wade-Giles, K'ung¹-ku³ Ching³-lung²), teaching at the beginning of the fifteenth century... said:

“Those who practice Zen devote themselves exclusively to it, thinking that they are striving to achieve calm and nothing else; concerning the invocation of the name of Buddha in order to be reborn in the Pure Land, worshipping him and reciting the sūtras morning and evening, they practice none of this. Regarding these faithful, it may be said that they have Zen but no *nembutsu*. However, in truth these Zen disciples are not of the good kind; they are only good at preaching the exercise of *kōan* (Ch. 公案; Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, gōng'àn; Wade-Giles kung¹-an⁴), they are like staffs, stones or bricks. When they are affected by this kind of mental illness, they cannot be saved, except perhaps one among ten. Zen is a living spirit; it is like a gourd floating on water, which upon being touched dances wonderfully. It is also said that one should pay homage to the living spirit of the masters rather than to their dead words'...”

Suzuki comments concerning the above (p. 148):

“There is something lame in this interpretation, but the fact cannot be denied that the *nembutsu*, at that time, was sapping the doorways of Zen, and we are going to see that in the psychology of *nembutsu* there is a factor that could easily ally itself with the exercise of *kōan* in its mechanical phase. For, despite his attitude towards the *nembutsu*, which he considered like some kind of practice for the

śrāvaka, Kōnggū kept on preconizing it as being as effective as the kōan in the realization of the true way of Buddha.”

⁹⁶ For this reason, many Chinese Mahāyāna Masters consider it to be heterodox—just as, owing to its presentation of the Awakening principle in terms that in their view seemed to identify it with an eternal and substantial self, many Tibetan Masters (especially within the Gelugpa [Wylie, dge lugs pa] school) considered the Jonangpa (Wylie, Jo nang pa) school of Buddhism that developed in their country as being heretical. And, in fact, the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra holds that there is an absolute self, and that the term no-self refers to the conditioned, relative phenomena produced by delusion, which have no existence whatsoever, as the only truth is the true self that is permanent and so on. In other words, it teaches a doctrine of emptiness of the kind that Tibetans refer to as Zhentong (Wylie, gzhan stong; in full, gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid), which may be rendered into Sanskrit as paraśūnyatā—which is exactly the doctrine taught by the Jonangpas and which caused them to be regarded as heterodox and to be banned by the Gelugpas.

⁹⁷ Tib. dō chenpo (Wylie, 'dod chen po), meaning “great desire.”

⁹⁸ Tibetan traditions also have specific practices for healing, obtaining financial gain and other worldly aims, but they are very secondary practices to be applied when a problem arises that makes it necessary. For example, if a temple needs to be repaired, the practice of Yellow Jambhala may be applied; if one is ill, one may do practice with Amitāyus, etc. And there is no problem with doing practice if one has to pay one’s debts. The problem is having financial interests as the main aim of one’s practice in general.

⁹⁹ The Sōka Gakkai, founded by schoolteacher Tsunesaburō Makiguchi (牧口常三郎), has effectively extended itself throughout the world, to such an extent that in 1995 it was present in 115 countries and counted 1.260.000 members outside Japan (330.000 in North America, 10.000 in Central America, 190.000 in South America, 709.000 in non-Japanese Asia, 15.000 in Europe and 5.000 in the Near East) (Gardini, 1995). Just like the rest of present day Nichiren schools, this group centers its practice on the veneration of Nichiren and the so-called “Three Great Mysteries.”

The sect’s co-founder, Jōsei Toda (戸田城聖), succeeded to Makiguchi. In October 1954, he gave a speech to over 10,000 Gakkai members while mounted on a white horse, proclaiming: “We must consider all religions our enemies, and we must destroy them” (Kisala, 2004). When the Religious Corporation Law came into effect in August 1952, the Sōka Gakkai legally registered as a religious corporate body. The same year, Toda was required to deliver a statement to the special investigations bureau of the Department of Justice to the effect that Sōka Gakkai members would refrain from the illegal use of violence or threats in their proselytizing (Heine, reprint 2003). In 1960 Daisaku Ikeda (池田大作) assumed leadership of the sect, and later on he founded a political party, which supposedly intended to found “the type of democracy that would harmonize with Buddhism,” which should establish a “humanitarian socialism,” and which would try to achieve world peace and general welfare (aims that seem quite at odds with the internal practices of the sect and the accusations below). However, Ikeda’s writings against the traditional forms of Buddhism, his ruthless criticism of the Christian religion and his intransigence gained him the strong reprehension of his own country’s National League of Religions, made up of Buddhists and Christians. Moreover, in 1960 Ikeda declared that he would continue to seek the annihilation of “heretical” religions (i.e. of the orthodox forms of Buddhism, as well as of the rest of world religions) and kept on reinforcing the practice of what Walter Gardini called “a totalitarian exclusivism” (Gardini, 1995, p. 151). In reaction to the orientation of this sect, in 1969 University Professor Hirotatsu Fujiwara (1970) published the book mentioned in the regular text of this book, in which he severely criticized the Gakkai, calling it “fascist” and comparing its political methods to those of the early Nazi party (Fujiwara, 1970; Gardini, 1995, p. 151). The Sōka Gakkai and the Kōmeitō Party used their political power to try to suppress its publication. When Fujiwara went public with the attempted suppression, the Sōka Gakkai was harshly criticized in the Japanese media. To save face, Ikeda announced that “Kōmeitō [Party] members of national and local assemblies will be removed from Sōka Gakkai administrative posts” (Nakano, 1996). After this scandal, both Kōmeitō and the Gakkai were weakened and their constant postwar growth came to an end (McLaughlin, 2012, p. 295). The same year, the Sōka Gakkai was also embroiled in a separate scandal: it was discovered that the sect had been wiretapping the home of Kenji Miyamoto (宮本顕治), leader of the Japanese Communist Party. The illegal operation had been headed by Masatomo Yamazaki, then legal advisor and vice chairman of the Sōka Gakkai (Shimbun Akahata [The Newspaper Red Flag], Thursday March

11, 2004). However, in the General Assembly of May 3, 1970, Ikeda presented a restructuring of the program, promising “...an absolute separation between politics and religion, freedom for all members of the Sōka Gakkai to vote for whichever party [they would choose], opening of the Komeito to all, respect for the religions hitherto regarded as ‘heretical,’ giving up the method of forced conversions ‘even if this implies losing one half of our members’” (Ibidem, p. 151).

In Powers (2000), we read concerning the latest schism among Nichiren followers: “After an acrimonious battle between the priesthood (of the monastic Nichiren-Shōshū [日蓮正宗]) and the lay leadership (of the Sōka Gakkai), in 1991 the high priest of the Nichiren-Shōshū, Nikken Abe (阿部日顕), officially ‘excommunicated’ the lay Sōka Gakkai International (創価学会). He declared that only the priesthood of the Nichiren Shōshū represented the true tradition of Nichiren, and further claimed that only its gohonzon is an authentic basis for chanting and worship. The priests of the Nichiren Shōshū assert that the practice of chanting the daimoku (“Namu Myoho-enge-kyo,” “Praise to the Lotus Sūtra”) requires that the practitioner perform it in front of an authentic gohonzon and that those used by the Sōka Gakkai are ineffective for worship.” Following this, the lay organization engaged in violence against the monastic organization; in one incident, Sōka Gakkai members broke into a Shōshū temple during a religious service and beat a defector into unconsciousness (Kunii, 1995).

The Sōka Gakkai entry of Wikipedia offers lots of information on the wrongdoings of the sect in question.

¹⁰⁰ Note that the foremost of the three most important teachers of Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna also lived in Java, and that the Tibetan School founded by Atīśa’s disciples—that of the Kadampas (bka’ gdams pa, not to be confused with the demon-worshippers called the New Kadampas)—was, among the ones established in the “land of the snows,” the one that did not emphasize on the practice of inner Tantra.

¹⁰¹ Śubhakarasiṃha (Ch. 善無畏三藏; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Shàn wú wèi sāncáng; Wade-Giles, Shan⁴-wu²-wei⁴ San¹-ts’ang²; Jap. Zenzui-Sanzō) was born to the royal family of Oḍḍiyāna, and took over the throne at the age of 13. Fed up with the battle and struggles among the brother-princes, he resigned the position of King and became a monk. He studied at Nālandā University and also studied Tantra. Following the advice of his guru, he visited China arriving in Xi’ān (西安; Wade-Giles, Hsi¹-an¹), the capital of Táng (Ch. 唐; Wade-Giles, Tang²) China, in 716. There he started to teach and also translated many Tantric scriptures. He asked for permission to return to India in 732, but the emperor wouldn’t let him go. The most important text he translated is the Mahāvairocana Tantra in 7 volumes, the main Tantra of the Ubhayatantra.

¹⁰² Vajrabodhi/669-741) was born to a royal or a Brahmin (Brāhmaṇa) family in South India. He took the vow at age 10 in Nālandā. After studying Vinaya, the Abhidharmakośa, Cittamātra and Mādhyamaka, and spending some time studying logic and epistemology under Dharmakīrti, he moved to South India and studied Tantra, mainly the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha Tantra* (Ch. 金剛頂經; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Jīngāng Dǐngjīng; Wade-Giles, Chin¹-kang¹ Ting³-Ching²; Jap. Kongōchōkyō), a Tantra belonging to the Yogatantra class. After returning to Central India and then staying in Śrī Laṅka and in South India for one year or so, he traveled to China by ship and arrived in Luòyáng (洛陽; Wade-Giles, Luo⁴-yang²) in 720. He was offered an ashram (*āśrama*) and a special temple for initiation, and he taught and translated Tantra. The most important of the texts he translated was the main Tantra that he had studied the most: the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha Tantra*.

¹⁰³ Songtsen Gampo (Wylie, srong btsan sgam po), to the North had conquered a great deal of China (he came to the doors of the capital of the time, which he kept under siege), and to the South, of Nepal and India (reaching so far as the banks of the Ganges). In order to establish an alliance with the Tibetans and thus forestall further invasions, the Chinese emperor gave Songtsen Gampo his daughter (or, according to Chinese records, his niece), Princess Wénchéng Gōngzhǔ (Ch. 文成公主; Wade-Giles, Wen²-ch’eng² Kung¹-chu³) as wife, and the same did the Nepalese Licchavi king with his daughter, Bhṛkuti Devi—and together with both ladies their fathers sent Buddhist teachers as a strategy aimed at pacifying the Tibetans by trying to get them to adopt the Buddhist doctrine of *ahiṃsā* (Pāli: *avihiṃsā*) or nonviolence.

¹⁰⁴ Zhang Zhung was an ancient empire that, according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (2009, oral teachings; cf. 1992, 1996a, 2004 as well), comprised a vast tract of land that extended itself from Persia to Western Tibet, and which had its spiritual capital in the town of Khyun Lung, in Western Tibet, at the foot of Mount Kailāśā and near the shores of lake Mānasa Sarovar (or, properly, Mānasa Sarovar).

¹⁰⁵ After the death of Düdjom Rinpoche Jigdrāl Yeshe Dorje (Wylie, bdud ’joms rin po che, ’jigs ’bral ye shes rdo rje), in 1987, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (Wylie, dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che) was chosen

as his successor to this office. After Dilgo Khyentse’s death in 1991, Pema Norbu Rinpoche (Wylie, pad ma nor bu rin po che), whose name is abridged as Penor Rinpoche (Wylie, pad nor rin po che), was chosen to replace him. After Penor’s death Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche (Wylie, stag lung rtse sprul rin po che: 1926-2015) was elected, who dies in December 2015. At the time of writing this, to my knowledge Taklung Tsetrul’s successor had not yet been elected.

¹⁰⁶ Chapa Chökyi Sengge (Wylie, phy pa chos kyi seng ge [1109-1169]) belonged to the Kadampa (Wylie, bka’ gdams pa) tradition, founded by Prāsaṅgika teacher Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna—yet Chapa seems to have adhered to and championed the Svātantrika School.

¹⁰⁷ The Jonangpas, like the Kagyüpas, were allies of the Tsang clan, which had been contending with the Dalai Lama and the Gelugpas for the control of Central Tibet. Moreover, the boy recognized as the tulku (“reincarnation”) of the prominent Jonangpa Lama Tāranātha was a son of the prince Tūsheet Khan and therefore belonged to the Borjigin lineage—the imperial clan of Genghis Khan and his successors—and thus had birth rights for becoming Khan. Since Tibet was under Mongol power—the Fifth Dalai Lama had been appointed King by the Gushri Khan—this represented a grave threat for the Gelug. And the threat had become all the gravest when the boy was declared spiritual leader of all of Mongolia. Glenn Mulling (2001, p. 207) cites the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in this regard:

“These monasteries were closed for political reasons, not religious ones, and their closing had nothing to do with sectarianism. They had supported the Tsangpa King in the uprising, thus committing treason. The Great Fifth believed that they should be closed in order to insure the future stability of the [Tibetan] nation, and to dissuade other monasteries from engaging in warfare... The fact is that the Great Fifth passed laws outlawing sectarian skirmishes, and passed laws ensuring the freedom of religion. This freedom was extended to not only the Buddhist Schools, but also to the non-Buddhist ones. For example, he kept a Bönpo lama in his entourage to speak for the interests of the Bon movement. And on a personal level, he practiced so many non-Gelug lineages that the Gelugpas criticized him for straying from his roots.”

¹⁰⁸ According to Snellgrove (2010) the Nine Ways are:

- I. The Way of the Shen of Prediction (Tib. **chwasen thekpa** [Wylie, *phyva gsen theg pa*, often spelled *phywa gsen theg pa*]), describing the four methods of prediction: (a) mo sortilege; (b) astrological calculation (Tib. **tsi** [Wylie, *rtsis*]); (c) ritual (Tib. **to** [Wylie, *gto*]); (d) medical diagnosis (Tib. **che** [Wylie, *dpnyad*]).
- II. The Way of the Shen of the Visual World (Tib. **nensen thekpa** [Wylie, *snan gsen theg pa*]) explains how to defeat or placate divinities and demons; the various ritual practices and the recognition of the various natures of the spiritual beings are subdivided into four parts, namely (1) lore of exorcism, which describes various divinities (Tib. **thukkhar** [Wylie, *thug khar*], **perma** [Wylie, *ber ma*], etc.); (2) nature and origin of demons (Tib. **dre** [Wylie, *hdre*]) and “vampires” (Tib. **si** [Wylie, *sri*]), which describes the methods for eliminating these beings; (3) deals with all kinds of ransom; (4) deals with “fates” (Tib. **dre** [Wylie, *hdre*]), “furies” (Tib. **dre** [Wylie, *hdre*]), local divinities (Tib. **dre** [Wylie, *hdre*]) and offerings due to them.
- III. The Way of the Shen of the Illusion (Tib. **tulsen thekpa** [Wylie, *’prul gsen theg pa*]) sets out the rites for disposing of enemies: these rites are the same as in the Bön Tantras and very similar to those of the Buddhist *Hevajratantra*.
- IV. The Way of the Shen of Existence (Tib. **sisen thekpa** [Wylie, *srid gsen theg pa*]), devoted to beings situated in the ‘Intermediate State’ (Tib. bardo [Wylie, *bar do*]) between death and rebirth, and shows how to lead them to salvation.
- V. The Way of the Shen of the Virtuous Adherents (Tib. **genyen thekpa** [Wylie, *dge bsnyen theg pa*]) deals with the practice of the ten virtues and the ten perfections, and those who build and worship *stūpas*.
- VI. The Way of the Shen of the Great Ascetics (Tib. **tenrön thekpa** [Wylie, *dran sron theg pa*]) is devoted to those practicing a rigorous ascetic discipline: although the entire organization is based on Buddhism, many arguments seem to lead in a different direction.
- VII. The Way of the Shen of Pure Sound (Tib. **akar thekpa** [Wylie, *a dkar theg pa*]) deals with the highest tantric practices, illustrating the Tantric transformation through the maṇḍala.
- VIII. The Way of the Primeval Shen (Tib. **yesen thekpa** [Wylie, *ye gsen theg pa*]) (pp. 190-225) establishes a suitable teacher, partner and place; instructions are given on how to prepare the maṇḍala and an account is provided of the process of meditation.

IX. The Supreme Way (Tib. *lame thekpa* [Wylie, *bla med theg pa*]) describes the True condition; the Way is described as the mind in its absolute state, as pure bodhicitta.

These Nine Ways are internally classified into four ‘lower ways’ of ‘Cause bön’ and five ‘higher ways’ of ‘Fruit bön’: this qualitative distinction refers respectively to magic-ritualistic practices and to the Ways referring to morality and meditation.

¹⁰⁹ He was reportedly found in his quarters with a kata (ceremonial scarf) stuffed down his throat, and suspicions fell on some officials of the Dalai Lama’s entourage who wished him ill due to his rivalry with the Great Fifth. When lamas were killed, this was a frequent yet most absurd way to do it, because the killers feared the lama could be a Buddha, and drawing blood from a Buddha is one of the five worst possible actions, which yield the most dreadful consequences (they devised this method because they adhered to the letter rather than following the spirit, for the idea in making the drawing of blood from a Buddha a heinous crime was that to kill a Buddha was so terrible, that merely to draw blood from him or her is already one of the actions with the direst consequences).

¹¹⁰ This explanation of the basic craving called *trṣṇā* successively refers to the three types of *trṣṇa* explained in a previous section of this chapter: craving for pleasure (Skt. *kāmatrṣṇā*; Pāli *kāmatanḥā*; Tib. *döchagkyi sepa* [Wylie, ‘*dod chags kyi sred pa*]; Ch. 欲愛 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, yùài; Wade-Giles, yù⁴-ai⁴]), thirst-for-existence (Skt. *bhavatrṣṇā*; Pāli *bhavatanḥā*; Tib. *sidpai sepa* [Wylie, *srid pa’i sred pa*]; Ch. 有愛 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, yǒuài; Wade-Giles, yu³-ai⁴]), and craving for self-annihilation (Skt. *vibhavatrṣṇā*; Pāli *vibhavatanḥā*; Tib. *mepai sepa* [Wylie, *med pa’i sred pa*]; Ch. 有愛 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, yǒuài; Wade-Giles, yu³-ai⁴]).

¹¹¹ The reader should keep in mind that the meaning of the term “delusion” is different from that of the word “illusion.” By “illusion” I designate, for example, the perception of a falling hair by one who suffers from cataracts, the apprehension of a shell as yellow by one suffering from jaundice, the vision of a gigantic snow ball in the Sahara Desert, the perception of something bi-dimensional as being tri-dimensional, etc. On the other hand, “delusion” implies confusion and may consist in believing that an illusion, rather than being merely an illusion, is actual reality—or in taking the relative as absolute, the interdependent as independent, what we value as intrinsically valuable, etc.

¹¹² The Dzogchen teachings designate the state free from delusion by the Tibetan term *rigpa* (Wylie, *rig pa*), which corresponds to the Sanskrit *vidyā* (Pāli *vijjā*; Tib. *rigpa* [Wylie, *rig pa*]; Ch. 明 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, míng; Wade-Giles, míng²])—and which in this book I render most often as [nonconceptual and hence nondual] Awake Awareness, and sometimes as [nondual] Presence. *Rigpa* manifests when the nondual primordial gnosis of Awake Awareness recognizes its own face (Tib. *rangngo shepa* [Wylie, *rang ngo shes pa*])—that which is referred to as “its own face” (being) no other than the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake Awareness that is compared to a mirror that can equally reflect phenomena of *saṃsāra* or metaphenomena of *nirvāṇa* and that may be called *rigpa-qua-Base* or *Base-rigpa* (Tib. *zhi rigpa* [Wylie, *gzhī’i rig pa*] or *zhirnekyi rigpa* [Wylie, *gzhir gnas kyi rig pa*]), nature or essence of mind (Tib. *semnyi* [Wylie, *sems nyid*]; Skt. *cittatā* or *citta eva*); or mind of Awakening (Skt. *bodhicitta*; Tib. *changchubsem* [Wylie, *byang chub sems*]; Ch. 菩提心 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, pútíxīn; Wade-Giles, p’u²-t’i²-hsin¹; Jap. *bodaishin*]), etc.

The Skt. *avidyā*, the Pāli *avijjā*, the Tib. *marigpa* (Wylie, *ma rig pa*), and the Ch. 無明 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, wúmíng; Wade-Giles, wu²-míng²) are terms composed by (1) a privative prefix (the Sanskrit and Pāli *a*, the Tibetan *ma* and the Chinese 無 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, wú; Wade-Giles, wu²]) and (2) the words that in the context of the Dzogchen teaching I have been translating as [nonconceptual and hence nondual] Awake Awareness, [nonconceptual and hence nondual] Presence, instant Presence and so on (namely the Skt. *vidyā*, the Pāli *vijjā*, the Tib. *rigpa* [Wylie, *rig pa*], and the Ch. 明 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, míng; Wade-Giles, míng²]); in the case of instant Presence there are more specific Tibetan terms: *kechik rigpa* or *kechik mayi rigpa* [Wylie, *skad cig {ma yi} rig pa*] and *rigpa kechikma* [Wylie, *rig pa skad chig ma*]). This is due to the fact that the most basic manifestation of *avidyā* is the unawareness of the true condition and nature of the Base, in which Awake Awareness is obscured and which is the first of the three types of *avidyā* posited by the two main Dzogchen classifications of *avidyā* discussed in the regular text, but which also underlies the active delusion at the root of *saṃsāra* (consisting in the second and third types of *avidyā* in the best-known classification, which amalgamate to produce dualism and a confusion of categories—namely that which is referred to by the Skt. *bhrānti*, the Tib. *tul[pa]* (Wylie, ‘*khru[pa]*) and the Ch. 亂 (Hànǚ Pīnyīn, luàn; Wade-Giles, luan⁴) as the term is understood in the Dzogchen

teachings—but also involving the third in the least known classification, which consists in ignoring delusion to be such).

In the teaching of the Four Noble Truths (Skt. *catvāri āryasatyāni*; Pāli *cattāri ariyasaccāni*; Tib. phagpai denpa zhi [Wylie, 'phags pa'i bden pa bzhi]; Ch. 四聖諦 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sì shèngdì; Wade-Giles, *ssu⁴ sheng⁴-tī⁴*; Jap. *shishōdai*]) proper to the First Promulgation, associated with the Hīnayāna, the Second Noble Truth, which is that of the cause (Skt. and Pāli, *samudaya*; Tib. kunjung [Wylie, *kun 'byung*]; Ch. 集 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, jí; Wade-Giles, *chí²*; Jap. *jū*] [also 苦集滅道 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, kǔjímìèdào; Wade-Giles, *k'u³-chí²-mieh⁴-tao⁴*}) of suffering, is said to be *trṣṇā* (Pāli *taṇhā*; Tib. sepa [Wylie, *sred pa*]; Ch. 愛 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, ài; Wade-Giles, *ai⁴*]), which means “craving.” However, as shown in the regular text, some Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna, and Atiyogatantrayāna interpretations of the Four Noble Truths, according with the Pratyekabuddhayāna’s understanding of interdependent origination (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; Pāli *paṭīccasamuppāda*; Tib. tendrel or tenching drelbar jungwa [Wylie, *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba*]; Ch. 緣起 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yuánqǐ; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-ch'í³*]) as a temporal chain of causal origination consisting of a succession of twelve links (Pāli and Skt. *nidāna*; Tib. drel [Wylie, 'brel]; Ch. 尼陀那 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, nítuónà; Wade-Giles, *ní²-t'ó²-na⁴*]), have established that *trṣṇā* derives from *avidyā*—which here must be understood as involving the three main senses that the term has in the threefold classification adopted here and therefore as a delusion or error, the condition of possibility (Ger. Bedingungen der Möglichkeit; the term is being used in a nonKantian way) of which is the unawareness of the true nature or essence of all reality that is the first of the types of *avidyā* in the two Dzogchen classifications considered here. In fact, craving and desire issue from our illusion of lacking something that would be necessary for us to feel whole—or, in other words, from the *avidyā* that introduces an illusory cleavage into the plenitude and completeness of our true condition and that makes us experience a lack-of-plenitude-that-demands-to-be-filled or lack-of-completeness-that-demands-to-be-filled.

As stated in the regular text and then explained in an endnote, Tsongkhapa and Gorampa diverged in their respective understandings of the first link of the above temporal chain of causal origination: the former understood *avidyā* to refer in that context to the conception and experience of entities as truly existent (which according to the Dzogchen view depends on the previous and underlying unawareness of our true condition that is the first sense of *avidyā* in all Dzogchen classifications); for the second, the first link is passionate delusive obstructions (Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *kilesāvaraṇa*; Tib. nyöndrib or nyönmongpai dribpa [Wylie, *nyon {mongs pa'i} sgrib {pa}*]; Ch. 煩惱障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, fánnǎo zhàng; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³ chang⁴*]), whereas the conception and experience in question—which constitute cognitive delusive obstructions (Skt. *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *ñeyyavāvaraṇa*; Tib. shedrib or shejai dribpa [Wylie, *shes {bya'i} sgrib {pa}*]; Ch. 所知障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sūozhī zhàng; Wade-Giles, *so³-chih¹ chang⁴*])—are the cause of the twelve links. For Tsongkhapa, grasping at phenomena that are not persons is an instance of passionate delusive obstructions, and when viewed as the first link *avidyā* refers to passionate delusive obstructions. In *Sūnyatāsaptatikārikā* 64 we read: “Conceiving as true the entities that the Teacher taught to be [products of] delusion—it is from this that the twelve links arise.” As stated in another endnote, Je Tsongkhapa inferred from this that conceiving entities as true was an instance of passionate delusive obstructions. Gorampa objected that the verse, rather than asserting that conceiving entities as true is the first link, is most clearly and explicitly saying that conceiving entities as true is that from which the first link arises—so that conceiving entities as true is that which gives rise to *avidyā* in the sense of passionate delusive obstructions (i.e., to the first link) and it is the latter that gives rise to the other eleven links (Cabezón, 2007, pp. 145 and 315 n. 233). Conceiving entities as true is an aspect of the *avidyā* that is at the core of cognitive delusive obstructions and which, when the necessary propensities and the objects of the realm of sensuality meet, gives rise to passions—of which the *avidyā* that is the first link is held to be an instance.

The referents of the terms *trṣṇā* and *avidyā* may seem similar to two of the three main defilements that, according to general Buddhism, arise in *saṃsāra*, and that are designated either as the three roots of unwholesomeness (Skt. *akuśalamūla*; Pāli *akusalamūla*; Tib. migewai tsasum [Wylie, *mi dge ba'i rtsa gsum*]; Ch. 三不善 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sān bùshàn; Wade-Giles, *san¹ pu⁴-shan⁴*]) or as the three poisons (Skt. *triviṣa*; Pāli *tiviṣa*; Tib. duksum [Wylie, *dug gsum*]; Ch. 三毒 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sāndú, Wade-Giles, *san¹-tu²*]), which are (1) bewilderment and mental obfuscation (Skt. and Pāli *moha*; Tib. timug [Wylie, *gti mug*]; Ch. 癡 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, chī; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih¹*]); (2) avidity or strong desire (Skt. and Pāli

lobha; Tib. *chakpa* [Wylie, *chags pa*]; Ch. 貪 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tān*; Wade-Giles, *t'an*¹]; and (3) aversion (Skt. *dveṣa*; Pāli *dosa*; Tib. *zhedang* [Wylie, *zhe sdang*]; Ch. 瞋 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *chēn*; Wade-Giles *ch'en*¹]). In fact, at first sight (2) *lobha* may seem similar to *trṣṇā* and (3) *moha* may seem similar to *avidyā*, but in reality the relation between *moha* and *avidyā* is quite complex due to the reasons offered by Gorampa and Longchen Rabjam, which roughly distinguish between *avidyā* as the cause of the first link of the temporal chain of causal origination and *avidyā* as the first link—even though *avidyā* and *moha* are interchangeable in various contexts. At any rate, *avidyā* as the cause of the first link is the ultimate cause of all the passions, including all of the three roots of unwholesomeness or three poisons, the five root passions, the six passions that are the cause of the six realms of sensuality, up to the 84,000 passions. In the same way, *trṣṇā* has a far wider meaning than *lobha* even though in some particular contexts they may be used as synonyms or near synonyms.

¹¹³ Tsongkhapa insisted that emptiness, rather than being emptiness of existence, which in his view should not be refuted, was emptiness of a delusive mode of existence that appeared to us yet did not exist—thus distinguishing between what he called mere existence, which should not be refuted, and hypostatic or inherent existence, which should be refuted (for an exhaustive discussion of this, cf. Capriles, 2014).

Tsongkhapa also emphasized that according to Mādhyamaka Svātantrika, the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of the person and the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of phenomena other than persons are not exactly the same in nature. Furthermore, they make a distinction between the root of cyclic existence, which is the conception of a self in persons, and the final root of cyclic existence, which is the conception of a self in phenomena.

¹¹⁴ It is said that some forms of Buddhism are higher than others when their application allows individuals of greater capacity to obtain a most radical and complete realization in a shorter time. Therefore, they are higher in a relative sense: they are higher for the individual with the necessary capacity to practice them, and only while their practice works for the individual. For individuals of lesser capacity, “lesser” vehicles can be superior to “higher” ones, because they can be more effective. Likewise, at times, when the practice of “higher” vehicles does not work for individuals of higher capacities, “lower” ones may be more effective for them, and thus be temporarily higher than “higher” vehicles for them.

¹¹⁵ Damien Keown and other authors have noted that these two titles are the names of two different versions of the same noted text, Bodhicaryāvatāra seeming to be the title of a later version that is the one extant in Sanskrit, as the Tibetan versions unearthed from Dūnhuáng (敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun-huang; also known as 燉煌 [simplified Chinese, 炖煌]) were buried early in the second millennium CE and hence are likely to be in the most ancient form (obviously, all Nyingma Tibetan versions of the text are older than the Sarma Tibetan versions). At any rate, the current arrangement of chapters also seems to be a later arrangement, since in the earlier manuscripts chapters 2 and 3 form one single chapter.

¹¹⁶ Note that I wrote “may be illustrated with” because there is no way to know whether or not there is a physical reality external to our experience, so that if there were no such reality the finding of physics would refer to the structure of our experience rather than to an external reality that would be the basis of that experience (most recent substantiation of this in Chöphel & Capriles, 2014). Moreover, as I have shown in different pieces of writing, the sciences do not find truths (cf. most recent justifications of this in Capriles, 2012a; Capriles, 2013c; Capriles, in press 3; Capriles, in press 1, and Chöphel & Capriles, in press).

¹¹⁷ As will be shown below in the regular text, acceptance of one’s objects yields pleasure; rejection begets pain, and indifference gives rise to a neutral sensation. This may not be self-evident to the reader, but it will be substantiated below in the regular text.

¹¹⁸ We have a tropism to accept what is beneficial for the body, the species’ survival and certain spiritual needs, and reject what is harmful for the body, the species’ survival and the same spiritual needs. This is the reason why we automatically reject the sensation we have when we put our hand over the fire, and automatically accept the sensations produced by caressing, the tastes of some foodstuffs or erotic sensations (the latter being necessary for the continuity of the species and a skillful means that may be very valuable on the Path of Awakening).

¹¹⁹ Normally, both the quality and the quantity (intensity) of sensation enter into play, and as a result of the combination of them either we accept or reject our sensations right away; however, later on other elements can also enter into play and determine whether we accept or reject our sensations. For example, if a sensation we deem pleasurable and therefore accept, thereby experiencing pleasure, goes

on uninterruptedly for too long, at some point we will reject it, experiencing displeasure. Likewise, because of reasons different from the quality and quantity of the sensation, which have more to do with the habits the individual made during his or her upbringing, a masochist can accept a sensation having a combination of quality and quantity that would lead most people to reject it and thereby to experience pain.

¹²⁰ It is well-known that those masochists who ask their partners to whip them, often learned to enjoy as pleasure the sensation produced by whipping because during their infancy they were whipped on parts of their body having an erogenous potential, which resulted in erotic stimulation, which for its part made them associate the sensation of “pain” to the erotic sensation and experience it as pleasure—as a result of which they associated erotic stimulation and pleasure with being whipped. However, this cannot be properly understood out of the context of the type of relations that, mainly in early infancy, prevailed in the interaction between the individual and her or his most significant others, and may be related with having learned to adopt a humiliating position in relationships, for reasons that sometimes have to do with the following explanation of psychological masochism.

Within the framework of a psychological sense of the word “masochism” that is not restricted to sexual stimulation associated with physical pain and may even be wholly unrelated with it, it could be said that masochism has to do with an extremely poor self-image—and, according to the explanation in Sartre (1980/1969), with the fear of being rejected resulting from the imperviousness and/or spiteful attitude of the most important significant others, which leads the person to assume humiliation and rejection beforehand rather than to attempt to gain acceptance from others, because of fear of the risk of being rejected by those others.

It must be noted, however, that no explanation of physical masochism can be fully comprehensive if understood outside the context of the explanation proposed in the regular text of this book.

¹²¹ Some people abhor the intense tickling sensation in the belly induced by roller coasters, parachute jumping before the parachute opens, etc., and never again dare to repeat the experience, whereas others enjoy the sensation deeply—which clearly depends on whether or not the individual manages to accept it. Likewise, some people, on hearing rasping, grating sounds such as the one produced by the friction produced on a blackboard by a squeezed notebook paper or a chalk leaning in a certain angle, get goose bumps and experience a most unpleasant sensation, whereas others feel nothing at all—the difference lying, once more, on the individual’s reaction to the sound. In both cases, if the one who rejects the sensation manages to drop her or his rejection, the sensation in the belly or the goose bumps may persist, but the experience may become pleasant. In the same way, some people, as they are tattooed, simply feel pain, whereas others at some point stop rejecting the sensation and experience ecstatic pleasure (this is more likely to occur when the tattooing is made on erogenous zones, yet it can happen in all cases).

¹²² In Chapter 6 of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (chos mngon pa’i mdzod kyi bshad pa) Vasubandhu wrote (note that this is not a verse of the *Abhidharmakośa*) (translation my own on the basis of those by De la Vallée Poussin’s and Leo M. Pruden’s: Vasubandhu [1971] and Vasubandhu [1988-1990]):

“When one hair from the palm of the hand gets into the eye [one experiences] discomfort and suffering. Immature beings are like the palm of the hand: they do not feel the hair of the suffering of conditioned existence (i.e., of all-pervading suffering: Skt. *saṃskāraduḥkhatā*; Tib. *duchékyi dugngäl* [Wylie, *’du byed kyi sdug bsngal*]; Ch. 行苦 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíngkǔ*; Wade-Giles, *hsing²-k’u³*]. Lit. “distress inherent in being subject to habitual mental formations or impulses that move the mind” [Skt. *saṃskāra*; Pāli *saṅkhāra*; Tib. *duche* {Wylie, *’du byed*}; Ch. 行 {Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *xíng*; Wade-Giles, *hsing²*}). Higher bodhisattvas are like the eye: They are greatly disturbed by that hair.”

¹²³ “Energetic volume determining the scope of awareness” is one of the two main meanings of the Tibetan word *thig le* (Wylie, *thig le*), and its sense is similar to that of the Sanskrit word *kuṇḍalinī*. Herbert V. Guenther rendered the term as “bioenergetic input,” which was a great achievement, for the fact that the term *thig le* referred to the volume of energy entering the higher centers had not been emphasized in the West (however, Guenther’s translation implies both a biological origin of energy and the duality between a “higher bioenergetic center” in the brain, and an energy current entering that center—and seems to respond to von Neumann-like systems theories based on the concept of input/output, which Fritjof Capra and other so-called “New Paradigm” thinkers [cf. e.g. Anderson, W. T.; Callenbach, E.; Capra, F.; Spretnak, C.; Eds.; 1986] have deemed not to be truly holistic [these thinkers deem systems

theories based on the concept of self-organization to be more in harmony with the Buddhist worldview; however, it would be a grave mistake to identify the views of Buddhism with those of systems theories based on that concept]).

Furthermore, some of the most lucid exponents of the Dzogchen teachings (including rigdzin Changchub Dorje, who was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's root teacher) have noted that the system of subtle channels (Skt. *nāḍī*; Tib. *tsa* [Wylie, *rtsa*]) described by Tantric Buddhism in relation to practices for increasing the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness, conventionally may not be said to exist in an "objective," material manner (e.g. in the way that conventionally it may be said that the nervous system and the brain exist). In fact, in the different practices of yantra yoga / *adhisāra* (Tib. *thulkhor* [Wylie, 'phrul 'khor]) and *tsa-lung-thigle* (Wylie, *rtsa rlung thig-le*) associated with the stage of completion of the inner Tantras and involving the arousal of *kuṇḍalinī*, the energetic system is visualized in different ways according to the effects sought—which means that it does not have a prefixed form. Nonetheless, all of them produce the intended effects—which demonstrates that the energetic system exists in the Buddhist sense in which the criterion for existence is the production of effects.

The state of small time-space-knowledge, which is associated with a low energetic volume determining the scope of awareness, is a limited state wherein the focus of consciousness is circumscribed to only one fragment of the sensory continuum at a time, and has rather impermeable boundaries. This state is the condition of possibility of the functioning of delusion, for without it the fragmentary perception at the root of the illusion of substantial ontological multiplicity, the individual's illusion of separateness, and the concealment that Sartre called bad faith and that Freud designated as repression (these names being signifiers for slightly different signifieds [i.e. slightly different concepts], since they apply to not-so-divergent interpretations of the same phenomenon) would not at all be possible.

Nevertheless, in order to overcome delusion, it is not enough to enlarge one's space-time-knowledge: this will only produce illusory experiences of the type that Buddhists designate with the Tibetan term *nyam* (Wylie, *nyams*), the Chinese 魔境 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *mójiàng*; Wade-Giles *mo²-ching⁴*; Jap. *makyō*), which means demonic states, and which Ṣūfīs designate by the Arabic term *حال* (*ḥāl*; plural, *aḥwāl*: أحوال). Such experiences are dangerous because they may be mistaken for realizations, yet they may be either boons or obstacles on the Path—in both cases having value. For example, the Dzogchen teachings compare the nondual Awake, undistorted awareness called *rigpa* to a mirror, and the experiences of the practice (the most important of which are classified into those of nonconceptuality, those of clarity and those of pleasure) to reflections in the mirror that must be used for reGnizing the true condition of the latter (to this end, once the experiences of the practice manifest in a clear, vivid and powerful manner, specific instructions must be applied for using them in order to discover the true condition of the nondual Awake, undistorted awareness of which they are functions). When, in the practice of Dzogchen, such experiences manifest, if they are automatically interpreted delusively in terms of the contents of reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized thoughts (as often happens due to the propensities at the root of *saṃsāra*), a competent practitioner will reGnize these thoughts the way thoughts ought to be reGnized in that practice (as and through the *dharmakāya*, which is intrinsically all-liberating), and hence they will liberate themselves spontaneously, instantly disappearing in a natural way, like feathers entering fire.

The point is that, as noted repeatedly, Awakening cannot be produced, for it (is) unconditioned and unmade (Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. *dūmache* [Wylie, 'dus ma byas]; Ch. 無為 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*]). Therefore, in itself the increase of the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness resulting in an enlargement of space-time-knowledge cannot do away with delusion; all it can do is to give rise to conditions in which an individual who is prepared can apply the instructions that may serve as contributory conditions for the spontaneous dissolution of delusion, but which in the individual lacking preparation can give rise to attachment, terror, or even a psychotomimetic experience that, if the increase of the energetic volume is prolonged in time, may become a fully-fledged psychosis.

It happens that, as will be shown in the section dealing with the dynamics of the *maṇḍala* in Vol. II / Part III of this book, the expansion and permeabilization of consciousness may allow individuals to discover the insubstantiality, both of the entity that they believe themselves to be, and of the rest of the universe, and/or perceive ego-dystonic contents (i.e. contents that are incompatible with their own self-image)—all of which would threaten their ego functioning and sense of identity. Likewise, this expansion and permeabilization may cause one to experience in its nakedness the pain inherent in the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought—which may cause one to react to it with rejection

and thus activate positive feedback loops (i.e. systemic loops which cause processes to increase from their own feedback) of pain and anguish and so on.

¹²⁴ With regard to the sense the Tibetan term thigle (Wylie, thig le) has in the context of the Tantric Path of Transformation, it must be noted that it renders the Skt. terms bindu (seed-essence) and tilaka, yet as noted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu it also has a meaning similar to that of the Sanskrit term kuṇḍalinī—this sense being the one I translate as energetic-volume-determining-the-scope-of-awareness. This shows quite clearly that bindu and kuṇḍalinī are not two different things, but a single functional reality: kuṇḍalinī depends on bindu in the various senses of the latter term. For example, when the bindu of life, which dissolves after the total expiration of the air in the lungs in an individual’s last breath, is no more, there is no thigle energy whatsoever in the individual’s energy-system; likewise, when the sexual bindu is retained, thigle qua energetic volume and kuṇḍalinī rise; etc. In fact, the translation of the term thigle as “drop” in the context of the Tantric Path of transformation is due to the fact that it also refers to the fluid that drops upon ejaculation and/or to the ovum cum blood that drops in menstruation. Since energy is related to the male and female seed-essences, when the Tantras speak of white and red thigles that circulate in the energy currents (Skt. prāṇa or prāṇavāyu; Tib. lung [Wylie, rlung]) through the energy channels (Skt. nāḍī; Tib. tsa [Wylie, rtsa]), many translators render this as white and red drops—when in fact no drops whatsoever circulate through the energy channels.

In the context of the Atiyoga Path of Spontaneous Liberation, the term thigle is understood mainly in the sense of “sphere” and is a synonym of the term Dzogchen—so that it may be understood qua Base, qua Path and qua Fruit. Qua-Base it refers to the true condition of the totality of reality, which does not exclude anything: the term is used because a sphere has no angles or corners, which represent limits and, by implication, concepts. In fact, as noted repeatedly in the regular text and footnotes to it, all concepts are limits because by nature they have a *differentia specifica* (they exclude something, which is what the Pramānavāda refers to by the terms exclusion—Skt. *apoha*; Tib. selwa [Wylie, *sel ba*]; Ch. 除 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chú*; Wade-Giles, *ch’u²*] or 遮除 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēchú*; Wade-Giles, *che¹-ch’u²*—or exclusion of other—Skt. *anyāpoha*; Tib. zhensel [Wylie, *gzhan sel*]; Ch. seems to be 他感排除 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *tā gǎn páichú*; Wade-Giles, *t’ā¹-kan³ p’āi²-ch’u²*]) and a *genus proximum* (i.e., they are included in an ampler genus, which is also defined by the exclusion of other); since the true condition of reality has no limits, by nature it lacks both *differentia specifica* and *genus proximum*, and hence it cannot fit into any content of thought—this being the reason why it is said to be inconceivable (Skt. *acintya*; Pāli *acinteyā* or *acintiya*; Tib. samyé [Wylie, *bsam yas*] or samgyi mikhyabpa [Wylie, *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*]; Ch. 佛學辭彙 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxué cíhuì*; Wade-Gilles, *fo²-hsüueh² tz’u²-hui⁴*]) and inexpressible (Skt. *avācya*; Tib. marmepa [Wylie, *smrar med pa*]; Ch. 不可说物 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō wù*; Wade-Gilles, *pū⁴-k’e³-shuo¹ wu⁴*] / Skt. *anabhilāpya*; Tib. jómé or jödu mepa [Wylie, *brjod {du} med {pa}*]; Ch. 不可說 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō*; Wade-Gilles, *pū⁴-k’e³-shuo¹*]).

In the same context (that of the Dzogchen teachings), thigle qua-Path and thigle qua-Fruit is the direct, nonconceptual and therefore nondual realization of Dzogchen / thigle qua Base, in which the illusory limits introduced by concepts have dissolved—thus being free from conceptual fabrications (Skt. *niṣprapañca*; Tib. thödräl [Wylie, *spros bral*]; Ch. 不戲論 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *pū²-hsi⁴-lun⁴*] or Skt. *aprapañca*; Tib. töme or töpa mepa [Wylie, *spros {pa} med {pa}*]; Ch. 無戲論 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúxìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *wū²-hsi⁴-lun⁴*])—or, in properly Dzogchen terminology, Tib. la dawa (Wylie, *la bzla ba*).

In the context of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, the term may also be understood in the sense of potentiality. In Namkhai Norbu (unpublished ms.), we read that when we see someone approach, or when a plane first becomes visible over the horizon, the first thing we perceive is a thig le, which is the potentiality for the object to appear as a person or a plane, respectively, once it comes near enough. Likewise, subatomic particle-waves, while in their “particle” state (so to speak), would be thigles. As also noted in the regular text, the primary meaning of the term thig le chen po—total thig le or total sphere—understood qua Base, is that the whole of reality, since it lacks proximate genus and specific difference, cannot be precisely matched by any concept. Understood qua Fruit (and often also qua Path), it means that the direct, nondual realization of Dzogchen-qua-Base in the condition of Total Space-Time-Awareness is utterly concept-free. However, particularly relevant to us here is the fact that the term also implies that in the latter condition there is a total energetic volume determining the scope of awareness.

In fact, as noted in the section of the regular text to which the reference mark for this note was appended, there is a direct relation between the scope of an individual's space-time-knowledge and the height of that which Tantrism calls "energetic volume determining the scope of awareness" (Tib. thig le, which as noted repeatedly, in this case is similar to the Skt. kuṇḍalinī). Furthermore, as also noted, the terms thig le and bindu designate the luminous spheres that can manifest when one closes one's eyes in the dark, when one looks at the sky or, in a much more vivid and impressive manner, in practices like Thögel, where they are the condition for the swiftest methods to function—and the manifestation of these luminous spheres depends on the most extreme heightening of the energetic volume or thig le and hence of kuṇḍalinī. (It may be useful to relate the Dzogchen term "total sphere" to the statement by Saint Bonaventura, "the Seraphic Doctor," that was later reproduced by Blaise Pascal (1962), and which physicist Alain Aspect repeated after his experiments of 1982 at the University of Paris-Sud: "The universe is an infinite sphere the center of which is everywhere and the periphery of which is nowhere.")

The single continuum consisting in the energy or thukje aspect of Dzogchen-qua-Base is made up of the basic energy that the Tantric teachings call thig le; therefore, both the phenomena that in saṃsāra we experience as internal (which belong to the mode of manifestation of energy that the Dzogchen teachings call dang [gdangs]) and those that in saṃsāra we experience as external (which belong to the mode of manifestation of energy the Dzogchen teachings call tsel [rtsal]) are made up of the same basic thigle energy. In the Tantras in general, the circulation of this energy is referred to by the Sanskrit terms vāyu, prāṇa and prāṇavāyu (Tib. lung [rlung]); the patterns (or structural pathways) of this circulation are called nāḍī (Tib. tsa [rtsa]); and these two together are responsible for the manifestation of all phenomena on the basis of thigle energy.

The above applies both to the human organism and to the universe as a whole: in Tantrism the term "thigle" refers mainly to the energy-flow entering the higher centers (thus having the sense that is similar to that of kuṇḍalinī) and to the white or red bindu that must be kept for the flow to be high enough, as well as to the polarization of this basic energy as the white and red *bindus* that are used for the practices of the Completion or Perfection stage (Skt. *saṃpannakrama*; Tib. dzogrim [Wylie, *rdzogs rim*): it is this basic energy that circulates in a polarized form as *prāṇa* (Tib. sog [Wylie, *srog*]; Ch. 波那 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bōnà*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-na⁴*]; Jap. *hana*; Kor. *pana*), *vāyu* (Pāli *vāyu* or *vāyo*; Tib. lung [Wylie, *rlung*]; Ch. 風大 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fēngdà*; Wade-Giles, *feng¹-ta⁴*) or *prāṇavāyu* through the body's energy-channels or "structural pathways" called *nāḍī* (Tib. tsa [Wylie, *tsa*]), which may also be seen as energy configurations.

As noted above, since the energy and energetic volume determining the scope of awareness called thig le are directly related to retention of the thigles or *bindus* which are the ovum and the sperm, one pole of that energy is symbolically represented with the color of sperm and the other pole is represented with that of menstrual blood: this is the main reason why Western translators of the Tantric texts write that "the energetic winds carry red and white drops along the structural pathways called tsa (rtsa)," and that the ovum and the sperm are the gross referent of these "drops"—even though the thigle that circulates does not consist in drops, but in the colorless, polarized energy that rises and ebbs as energetic volume determining the scope of awareness or as kuṇḍalinī. (It may be relevant to note that some particular experiences associated with the colors red and white are directly related to the subtle energetic winds, which is part of the reason for the use of the symbolism in question.)

However, the lung is not only the circulation of thigle through some "channels" in the human organism, and the tsa does not consist only in the configuration of these "channels" in the human organism: the former includes all manifestations of circulating energy, and the latter includes the configurations of this circulating energy that make of the plethora of phenomena. In fact, the term "total thigle" may also be taken to refer to the fact that the whole of reality is pure energy—in which, as is well-known, the Tantras coincide with contemporary physics, which represents the basic stuff of all phenomena as energy. (However, Einstein's theory—though not necessarily so more recent theories—assumes there is an objectively existing universe external to the individual, which is not the case in the Dzogchen teachings: though they also posit the Base as an objective reality, they do not assert the universe to exist objectively as a reality that is external to the individual; furthermore, this energy continuum includes both what we view as mental and what we view as physical, and upon disclosing itself in nirvāṇa as it truly is, it shows itself to be a single continuum not divided into two different dimensions.)

Likewise, it is useful to keep in mind that some of the most lucid exponents of the Dzogchen teachings—such as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s root teacher, rigdzin Changchub Dorje—have noted that the system of subtle channels [nāḍī or rtsa] described by Tantric Buddhism in relation to practices for increasing the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness, even from the standpoint of relative truth, may not be said to exist in the material, seemingly “objective” manner in which the nervous system and the brain exist. In fact, in different practices of yantra yoga and tsalung-thigle [rtsa lung thig le] of the stage of completion or perfection (Skt. niṣpannakrama; Tib. dzogrim [rdzogs rim]) of the inner Tantras involving the arousal of kuṇḍalinī, the energetic system is visualized in different ways according to the effects sought. However, all of them produce the intended effects—which shows the energetic system to exist in the Buddhist sense in which the criterion for existence is the production of effects.)

¹²⁵ In systems theory, an autocatalytic or positive feedback loop is a systemic loop whereby a dynamics grows from its own feedback.

¹²⁶ As Jean-Paul Sartre (1980/1969) points out well, this denial—which he called bad faith—despite being carried out in a single act, can be explained as a double negation, for in one and the same operation, we negate what experience has taught us and we deny that we have denied something. (This double negation is phenomenological rather than logical, for a double logical negation undoes the first negation, but this is not the case with a phenomenological one. Furthermore, it is equally plausible to explain it as an infinite negation, for in the same operation we also deny that we have denied that we have denied something, and that we have denied that we have denied something—and so on ad infinitum.) For further detail, see Sartre (1980/1969), and Capriles (1994, electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.); etc.

¹²⁷ It is in this way that we give rise to what Heidegger called *wertverhaftete Dinge* or “value-endowed things.” In fact, we attribute value to possessions, lovers and so on to the extent that we fancy that they will fill our sense of lack, which issues from our illusion of being separate and at a distance from the absolute wholeness and plenitude of our true condition. Because of this fact, we could consider the true condition as absolute value, and say—like Sartre (1980/1969) in *Being and Nothingness*—that our being qua individuals (which Sartre designated as “being-for-Self”) is being-for-value: qua individual entities, we are doomed to experience a lack-of-plenitude / value that compels us to constantly try to attain value / plenitude, yet we are compelled to do so without losing ourselves—i.e. without dissolving as individual entities. This is a contradiction because the lack of plenitude and value stems precisely from our illusion of being individual entities at a distance from the plenitude of our true condition. And this contradiction prevents the overcoming of the *duḥkha* inherent in the delusion that, as we have seen, is at the root of our illusion of being an individual entity.

The philosophy Sartre developed in *Being and Nothingness* differs from Buddhist philosophies principally in that, for the French philosopher, there is no way that being-for-Self can dissolve, and do so in an irreversible way, while the human organism is alive, and hence absolute plenitude is barred to us—whereas the very aim of Buddhism is to achieve the dissolution of the illusion of individuality and of the *duḥkha* inherent in it, in the plenitude of the given. Of course, this plenitude will not be realized by the supposedly individual entity that we always thought we were (which, as Sartre was right in noting, can never attain the value/plenitude which it constantly longs for), but our true condition, which, as it has been noted, is in itself absolute plenitude. It is for this reason that Buddhism distinguishes Buddhas from “sentient beings” and asserts that Buddhahood involves the extinction of the illusory entity designated as “sentient being.” Cf. *Teoría del valor: Crónica de una caída*, in Capriles (1994); also Capriles (2012a).

(Note that Hazel Barnes [Sartre, 1969] rendered the French *être-pour-Soi* as *being-for-itself* rather than as *being-for-Self*, which is how it was rendered here. Her translation is wrong because that which being-for-Self yearns to attain is the Self, which could only be attained if being-for-Self died existentially; to say that what it yearns to attain is itself amounts to saying that being-for-Self yearns to attain being-for-Self, which is utterly absurd.)

¹²⁸ In the field of economics, most ordinary theories emphasize scarcity (oil because cheap in 2015 because fracking created an over-supply), environment (an air conditioner would have no value in Antarctica) and so on as key elements in determining the value of an object, a commodity or a service, obviating the deepest psychological reasons. However, the determinant element is to what extent we feel and believe

that acquiring the object will fill our inner sensation of lack. Cf. *Teoría del valor: Crónica de una caída*, in Capriles (1994); Capriles (2012a).

- ¹²⁹ In the social group of criminals, it can happen that the more violent and ruthless an individual is, the more the rest will value him or her; conversely, the activities that “decent” people have traditionally valued may be a source of disgrace. In *Stigma*, Ervin Goffman tells us how an ex-convict who enjoyed good reading, before leaving the public library, used to look up and down the street to make sure that none of his criminal friends would see him leaving such a shameful place. Likewise, under some circumstances the fear or hatred that those who are not criminals can feel toward a criminal can induce in him or her shame or conflict (we often see criminals in the news covering their faces, which to some extent may be aimed at avoiding notoriety that may hamper their career, but to some extent may be aimed at avoiding being the object of general opprobrium), but under other different circumstances it can also serve as a source of pride (for example, by letting other criminals see how much he or she is feared and hated, and therefore how valuable he is in terms of “criminal” values): it is well known that public enemy number one may be very proud of being number one in his or her field—and, in fact, the more one is hated and despised by many, the more pronounced an illusion of self-existence one will obtain. The Greeks understood negative values as the mere lack of positive ones; for example, evil was for them merely the absence of good. However, Kant was very correct in explaining evil (and in general all negative values) to be a value and an active force, but with a minus sign (so that evil and other negative values, rather than being merely an absence of value, were anti-values and negative active forces).
- ¹³⁰ I am using the terms in the senses given them in Sartre (1980/1969); in Capriles (1977), I discussed from a Buddhist standpoint Sartre’s interpretation of the sadist and the masochist, and outlined a theory of the genesis of these “deviations.”
- ¹³¹ According to context, someone’s stupidity, bad manners, bad taste, ugliness and so on may also cause us to dismiss the person as a source of value, for being appreciated by someone who lacks the value that we want to embody will not endow us with value in the eyes of others: they will think that the person who appreciates us has no value and that hence that person may be ready to value anyone who accepts him or her in spite of his or her stupidity, bad manners, bad taste, ugliness, etc.
- ¹³² Since what attracts us depends in great measure on our karma (a concept that will be explained in greater detail further on, and which includes the one produced in past lives), individuals often find successive partners who allow them to repeat the same dramas. This, for its part, can be related in greater or lesser measure with what R. D. Laing (1972) called “family mapping:” the replication, in the family-of-reproduction, of relationship systems internalized in the family-of-origin.
- ¹³³ For an exhaustive explanation of the impossibility of obtaining plenitude through falling in love and having a love affair or a lasting passional relationship, see Sartre (1980/1969). For a Buddhist use of the explanations by Sartre, see (1) Capriles (1977, 1986).
- ¹³⁴ The fact that some times celebrities try to go incognito does not contradict their addiction to notoriety; on the contrary, it shows that, in spite of this addiction, fame entails great inconvenience insofar as it invades private life and curtails individual freedom. Moreover, although celebrities may go incognito when they want to be ignored by the public—i.e. when recognition by crowds could be bothersome—they would be terrified of being ignored by the crowds when they are not going incognito, since that would imply that they have lost their fame and appeal, and with it they have lost the illusion of value that these used to afford them. In the same way, it is even possible that less famous individuals pretend going incognito only to make others believe (and thereby make themselves believe also) that they have reached a high degree of notoriety.
- ¹³⁵ Of course, for our part we value those who value precisely what we value, and consequently we are concerned as to whether or not they have a positive opinion of us; conversely, we despise those who despise what we value, and consequently we have little regard for their opinion of us. Nevertheless, in this way we put ourselves in the hands of those whose opinion we value, for if they come to despise us or ignore us, they will succeed in harming us to the extent that we have valued them and made our own value depend on their opinion of us. Furthermore, we can never succeed in completely ignoring or dismissing the judgments of even those we care for the least, and so we are to a certain extent exposed to their judgments.

Most people may value those who belong to the “highest” social class, but this is not universal, for leftists, hippies, criminals and so on may either despise them or be indifferent toward them. Though some value prestigious academics, others find them a bore or are indifferent toward them. Though some value the Masters of some spiritual tradition, others think they are weirdoes or cheaters, or are indifferent toward them. And so on.

¹³⁶ The states in which sensual pleasure is enjoyed in a stable and relatively durable manner belong to the lower regions of the realm of the gods (Skt. and Pāli *devagati / suragati / devaloka / devagati*; Tib. lha drowa [Wylie, *lha 'gro ba*]; Ch. 天趣 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien¹-ch'ü⁴*]: the “highest” of the six psychological states or “realms of samsaric existence” posited by Buddhism), consisting in the higher regions of the sphere of sensuality (Skt. *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. döpai kham [Wylie, *dod pa'i khams*]; Ch. 欲界 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *yù jiè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*]: the “lowest” of the three samsaric spheres posited by Buddhism).

It must be remarked that despite the fact that the term “Dionysian pleasure” is often applied to all kinds of sensual enjoyment, there is evidence suggesting that the cult of Dionysus may have comprised a Path of spiritual liberation featuring methods analogous to those taught by the various forms of Tantrism, which seems to have been genealogically connected with a common ancestor of the latter, and even might have featured methods based on the principle of Dzogchen. In Daniélou (1984), it is claimed that the cults of both Śiva and Dionysus, as well as the Egyptian cult of Osiris, were manifestations of one and the same transnational tradition, which was disrupted by the Indo-European and Semitic invasions (and, in fact, it is a well-known fact that one of the aims of Alexander the Great in his thrust toward the East was to find the origins of dark-skinned Dionysus in the Himalayas and India, for in ancient Greece it was well-known that the origins of this deity were related to those regions). Likewise, in Capriles (2000b, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a), and in greater detail in Capriles (2011a and work in progress 3); I referred to the probable genetic connections between Śaivism, the cult of Dionysus, Persian Zurvanism, and the Bön tradition of Zhang-zhung.

¹³⁷ There is a clear analogy between those states in which aesthetic pleasure is enjoyed in a stable and relatively durable manner, and the sphere of form, rūpa loka or rūpadhātu (the intermediate of the three samsaric spheres posited by Buddhism), which corresponds to the middle regions of the realm of the gods (Skt. and Pāli *devagati / suragati / devaloka / devagati*; Tib. lha drowa [Wylie, *lha 'gro ba*]; Ch. 天趣 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien¹-ch'ü⁴*]: the “highest” of the six psychological states or realms of samsaric existence posited by Buddhism).

In the case of aesthetic pleasure, what happens is the following: since a single consciousness cannot adopt two different attitudes at the same time, when we admire the object of aesthetic appreciation and hence accept it, by so doing we are accepting the totality of our sensory continuum, which includes the mental factor or mental event (Skt. *caitta* or *caitasika*; Pāli *cetasika*; Tib. semjung [Wylie, *sems byung*]; Ch. 心所 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *xīn suǒ*; Wade-Giles, *hsin¹-so³*]) that the Abhidharma designates as feeling tone (Skt. and Pāli *vedanā*; Tib. tsorwa [Wylie, *tshor ba*]; Ch. 受 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou⁴*]): here, in this particular case, the term refers to the so-called “mental” sensations that accompany all perception and that manifest principally in the center of the trunk at the level of the heart. Since, as it will be shown below in the regular text, what we call “pleasant” sensations are whatever sensations that are accepted by consciousness, the acceptance of “mental” sensations which takes place when we accept the object of consciousness causes us to experience a sensation (feeling-tone) of pleasure, which then we interpret as irrefutable proof of the inherent (rather than culturally conditioned) beauty of the object— which is an instance of delusion, not only because it is based on the subject-object duality and other products of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought, but also because so many of the usual instances of aesthetic appreciation are culturally conditioned rather than being determined by a form’s supposedly inherent harmony (as posited by Western, pre-Kantian aesthetics), or by a form’s adequation to *a priori* principles of the faculty of judgment (as Kant believed), etc. For a far more detailed discussion of this and a succinct critique of Kantian aesthetics, see Capriles (2000) or the forthcoming second, revised and enlarged edition of this book; a more thorough, provisional critique of Kantian aesthetics was made by this author in a work produced when he was a student of philosophy.

¹³⁸ The states in which transpersonal pleasure, albeit subtle (for coarse pleasure arises from passions based on acceptance, which manifest in the realms of sensuality), is enjoyed in a stable and relatively durable manner belong to the sphere of formlessness (Skt. *ārūpyadhātu* [also *arūpaloka* or *arūpyāvacara*]; Pāli,

arūpaloka; Tib. **zukmepai kham** [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i khams*]; Ch. 無色界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*]): the highest of the three samsaric spheres posited by Buddhism), which corresponds to the higher regions of the realm of the gods (Skt. and Pāli *devagati* / *suragati* / *devaloka* / *devagati*; Tib. *lha drowa* [Wylie, *lha 'gro ba*]; Ch. 天趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t'ien¹ ch'ü⁴*): the “highest” of the six psychological states or realms of samsaric existence posited by Buddhism).

In the case of yogic-transpersonal pleasure, the general dynamics are similar to those of aesthetic pleasure, the difference being that the acceptance and ensuing pleasure are subtler and far more lasting, and that what induces consciousness' acceptance of its object, rather than being the judgment that establishes its beauty, is the judgment that establishes its apparently limitless / absolute / total character—and hence it more similar to the aesthetic admiration of what is established as sublime than to the appreciation of what is established as beautiful. As stated in the preceding note, since a single consciousness cannot adopt two different attitudes simultaneously, when we admire—and thus accept—the pseudo-totality that in this case is our object, our consciousness is accepting the totality of the universe, which includes the so-called “mental” sensation accompanying perception. Since “pleasant” sensations are nothing more than sensations accepted by consciousness, by accepting the totality of the continuum-of-sense-data-out-of-which-objects-can-be-singled-out as though it were a single, limitless entity, we obtain an extremely subtle feeling-tone of pleasure, which we interpret as irrefutable proof of the marvelous and supposedly absolute character of the pseudo-totality which is the object of our contemplation, and with which the mental subject associated with dualistic consciousness—even though it is still functioning as a subject apparently at a distance from its object—identifies (or, in more correct, Sartrean terms, which it becomes). As the mental subject identifies with (or, more correctly, becomes) the pseudo-totality appearing as object, it gains the illusion of having surpassed the subject-object duality and achieved totality—which then may be wrongly understood as “having attained Awakening.”

¹³⁹ In fact, as will be shown in a subsequent note, while the common teachings of the Sūtrayāna place the sphere of formlessness (Skt. *ārūpyadhātu* [also *arūpaloka* or *ārūpyāvacara*]; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. **zukmepai kham** [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i khams*]; Ch. 無色界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*]) at the top of *samsāra*, the symbolism that in the Tantrayāna or Vajrayāna is represented by the structure of the hat of a Vajra Master (Skt. *vajrācārya*; Tib. *dorje lopön* [Wylie, *rdo rje slob dpon*]; Ch. [lit.] 金剛阿闍梨 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāng āshé lí*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹ a¹-she²-li²*] or [lit.] 金剛師 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngāngshī*; Wade-Giles, *chin¹-kang¹-shih¹*]) inverts this order, representing the sphere of sensuality (Skt. and Pāli *kāmadhātu* or *kāmaloka*; Tib. *dōpai kham* [Wylie, *dod pa'i khams*]; Ch. 欲界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yùjiè*; Wade-Giles, *yü⁴-chieh⁴*]) at the top.

¹⁴⁰ An interaction in which the increase of the activity of one party elicits an increase in the activity of the other, which elicits an increase of activity in the first, and so on, in such a way that the activity of both parties increase interdependently.

¹⁴¹ I avoided using the term *orgasm* because there does not seem to be universal consensus with regard to the concept's definition—which, in the case of the male, common folk understand as a synonym of *ejaculation*. Some of the Eastern traditions preconizing the retention of the seed-essence and many contemporary sexologists regard the copious emission by the woman of a water-like fluid in moments of vaginal climax as an *ejaculation* partly equivalent to that of the man, and thus some of these Eastern traditions teach women to retain this liquid in order to keep their energy and vitality at a peak. However, some specific Tantric Buddhist traditions remark that it is the loss of the ovum in menstruation that is comparable to the emission of spermatozoa by the man, for just as in the man it is the spermatozoa that are the coarse physical correlate of the specific aspect of the seed-essence (Skt. *bindu*; Tib. *thigle* [Wylie, *thig-le*]) that is to be retained for the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness (Skt. *bindu*; Tib. *thigle* [Wylie, *thig-le*])—which in this case have a meaning that is extremely close to that of the Skt. *kuṇḍalinī*) to peak, in the woman it is the ovum that is the coarse physical correlate of this aspect of the seed-essence and that therefore must be retained (hence the use by women of a specific medicine in combination with practices of *tsa-lung-thigle* [Wylie, *rtsa-rlung-thig le*] in order to stop menstruation). Since I have not at all specialized in the conceptions different categories of Ancient or Nyingmapa and New of Sarmapa Tantras express in this regard, I believe it may be better not to explore the matter further in this book.

¹⁴² It is not possible to give a comprehensive explanation of human eroticism and sexuality in a few short paragraphs. The theory in Sartre (1980/1969), is that an essential aspect of erotic desire is the wish for our consciousness to become flesh and qua consciousness-made-flesh somehow possess the Other's-consciousness-made-flesh, which we intend to achieve through the contact between our flesh and the other's flesh (in the case of both lovers, consciousness becomes flesh in the one who is experiencing sensations through the flesh, and for the Other who is touching the flesh in which consciousness has incarnated—and thus through the contact of fleshes both parts attempt to achieve some kind of full, direct contact of consciousnesses). Sartre notes, however, that one does not wish to possess the Other's consciousness in the manner in which one possesses an object, for what one wishes to possess is the other's consciousness qua freedom and spontaneity made flesh (and as recognizing our consciousness qua freedom and spontaneity made flesh).

However, this is to be placed in the ampler framework of Buddhist philosophy, which roughly corresponds to the ampler framework of Sartre's (1980) Being and Nothingness—except in that the rough equivalent of Awakening in the latter (which is the Soi or Self, provided that it is redefined as done in Capriles [2012a] and as will be done in the definitive edition of Capriles [2007a Vol. I], corresponds to nonstatic nirvāṇa [Skt. *apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. *minepai myangdé* {Wylie, *mi gnas pa'i myang 'das*}; Ch. 無住涅槃 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúzhù nièpán*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²*}) Sartre asserts to be absolutely unattainable. All human acts ultimately aim at attaining absolute plenitude, which can only be achieved if the illusion of inherent separateness and individuality dissolves; in the case of erotic relationships, both parties wish to attain absolute plenitude through absolute pleasure, which necessarily would entail the dissolution of the illusion of separateness and individuality in both partners. However, neither party is ready to accept this dissolution, for each wants to experience and enjoy as a separate conscious entity the pleasure ensuing from union, and each wants to “touch” the Other's consciousness and “be touched” by the Other's consciousness through incarnating as flesh and causing the Other to incarnate as flesh, and then pressing their naked bodies against each other—which implies that neither party is willing to accept its own dissolution as an apparently separate, individual consciousness. Furthermore, as noted in Laing (1961), in a subsequent stage of the erotic relationship each party as a separate individual may wish to mark the other qua separate individual with the most intense experience of pleasure—which also implies that each wishes to remain as an apparently separate individual. (This is not always so to both parties, for in many cases one party—most often the female—may not be willing to give the other the satisfaction of being satisfied by him or her; however, also to this end the person has to remain as an apparently separate individual.)

Nevertheless, in the practice of the inner Tantras, erotic relationships are employed as a means for attaining absolute plenitude through absolute pleasure in a temporary dissolution of the illusion of separateness and individuality in both parties. When this is achieved, there is communion in the single nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness that is the common nature of both consciousnesses, which is incomparably deeper than the contact of two consciousnesses made flesh, and which allows both parties to achieve through the Other the most intense pleasure and the most perfect plenitude, precisely because neither remains as an apparently separate individual.

I dealt with the drives and contradictions inherent in human sexuality in Capriles (1977), where I quoted many pages of Sartre's reflections in the framework of a comprehensive explanation of human sexuality in terms of the views characteristic of the Tantras (largely based on the information made available in Guenther, 1952). I dealt with the subject again in Capriles (1986), in which I excluded most of the long extracts from Sartre's work. And then in a more seminal way in Capriles (2012a).

¹⁴³ In truth, in this case the object is not an infinitude, for since it excludes the subject, the object is finite. Moreover, the purported infinitude is perceived through the concept of infinitude, which is defined by differentia specifica / exclusion of other (Skt. *apoha*; Tib. *selwa* [Wylie, *sel ba*]; 除 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chú*; Wade-Giles, *ch'u²*] or, more precisely, Skt. *anyāpoha*; Tib. *zhensel* [Wylie, *gzhan sel*]; Ch. 他感排除 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *tā gǎn páichú*; Wade-Giles, *t'a¹-kan³ p'ai²-ch'u²*]). I do not know whether or not this was the reason why the Mahāsāṃghikas asserted the purportedly “formless” object to involve form in a subtle sense.

¹⁴⁴ For some time, instead of “conveys a meaning,” following Alex Berzin, I used “is a meaning category.” However, the term “meaning category” never felt precise to me and, moreover, that term has been used to render the key concept of Husserl's philosophy that he expressed with the term *Bedeutungskategorie*,

which does not correspond to the sense in which Berzin, and then myself, used it. Therefore, I decided to modify my expression.

¹⁴⁵ The nature of our actions is reflected on our feeling-tones: when we find our actions acceptable in terms of the criteria we internalized during our upbringing, we accept ourselves and thus experience a pleasant feeling-tone. When we find our actions blameworthy in terms of the criteria we internalized during our upbringing, we reject ourselves and thus experience an unpleasant feeling-tone. When we do not find our actions either acceptable or reprehensible in terms of the criteria we internalized during our upbringing, we do neither accept nor reject ourselves and thus experience a neutral feeling-tone.

However, not all depends on the criteria we internalize. Even if we have been told consistently that an act harmful to others is OK, upon carrying it out our innate sensibility will reveal to us that the act is not really OK, and thus we will reject ourselves upon doing it, no matter how subtly. Since in the long term pleasant, unpleasant and neutral states (involving the respective feeling-tones) are the maturation of positive, negative and neutral karmas (because the acts [karmas] that begot the potentialities [karmas] that matured as those states involved acceptance, rejection or indifference, thus creating the propensity for experiencing pleasure, pain or neutral feelings, respectively), the nature of karmas does not depend on our conditioning but on laws that are in a sense objective. Hence the Buddhist explanation of the law of karma as being objective rather than depending on different internalized criteria of good and evil.

¹⁴⁶ As will be shown in a subsequent note, the stage in the development of saṃsāra that the Dzogchen teachings call “consciousness of the base-of-all” (Skt. ālayavijñāna; Tib. kunzhi namshé [Wylie, kun gzhi nram shes] or kunzhi nampar shepa [Wylie, kun gzhi nram par shes pa]; Ch. 阿賴耶識 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, ālāiyē shí; Wade-Giles, a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴] or 藏識 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, zàngshí; Wade-Giles, tsang⁴-shih⁴])—which involves a preconceptual interest that tends to single out and take as figure structures that maintain their pattern within the total change of the totality of sense data—is immediately followed by an extremely brief experience of the realm of form (Skt. rūpadhātu; Pāli, rūpa loka; Tib. zugkham [Wylie, gzugs kham]; Ch. 色界 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, sèjiè; Wade-Giles, se⁴-chieh⁴]). If one rests either in the consciousness of the base-of-all or in the experience of the realm of form, one creates karma to be reborn in the realm of form. Otherwise, the consciousness of the base-of-all becomes the basis for the activity of the next “consciousness,” which is that of the passions (Skt. klišṭamanovijñāna; Tib. nyönyikyī namshé or nyönmongpa chengyi yikyī nampar shepa [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa can gyi} yid kyī nram {par} shes {pa}]; Ch. 末那識 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, mònà shí; Wade-Giles, mo⁴-na⁴ shih⁴]), and one enters the realm of sensuality (Skt. kāmadhātu or kāmaloaka; Tib. döpai kham [Wylie, dod pa'i kham]; Ch. 欲界 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, yùjiè; Wade-Giles, yu⁴-chieh⁴]).

However, what this note was intended to clarify was the reason why the dynamics of the sphere of form are a key catalyst of the most advanced Dzogchen practices. We read in Padmasambhava and others (1973, Italian, 1977, p. 15):

“The sphere of form is an ocean of vibration that becomes ever more turbulent as one moves away from its peaceful profundities; sensitive to the slightest tremor of pain or displeasure, the impulses [that are proper to this sphere] formulate their own antidote to disharmony.”

In fact, the consciousness of the base-of-all and the realm to which it may give access are key catalysts of the highest practices of the Series of pith instructions (Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde [Wylie, man-ngag-sde]) series of Dzogchen teachings, which depend on the activation of aversion (Tib. zhedang [Wylie, zhe sdang]; Skt. dveṣa; Pāli dosa; Ch. 瞋 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, chēn; Wade-Giles ch'en¹]) in reaction to those peculiar manifestations of luminosity / clarity which are the luminous forms of the tsel mode of manifestation of energy stably appearing as object for long periods in an apparently external dimension.

If the aversion in question manifested as a reaction to bodily sensations rather than to apparently external forms and therefore did so in experiences of the realm of sensuality, one would develop a strong reticence to practice, the dynamics of the realm of form described above in terms of a quotation from Padmasambhava and others would not manifest, and the practice would not lead to the integration of the external and the internal dimension or ying (dbyings) and the concomitant overlapping of the tsel and rölpa modes of manifestation of energy—and hence it would not lead to the realizations resulting in the special modes of death characteristic of the Dzogchen teachings. All this will be discussed in Part Two of this book.

Finally, it may be noted that when the practice with the sphere of form is successful, this sphere manifests as the sambhogakāya—just as in successful practice with the sphere of formlessness, the latter must

manifest as the dharmakāya, and in successful practice with the sphere of sensuality, the latter must manifest as the nirmānakāya.

¹⁴⁷ J. Krishnamurti did not distinguish between the identification in terms of concepts of the group to which we belong, which may be indispensable for contemporary human beings—for example, upon crossing an international border we have to be able to say what our nationality is and show the corresponding passport or required document—and the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of that identification, which makes us feel that inherently and absolutely we are what we have thought or said we are. Consequently those who follow his teaching might think that they should avoid certain particular thoughts—some of which are indispensable for life—instead of understanding that what must be eradicated is the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of all thoughts. And, even if they spontaneously understood it, in Krishnamurti’s teachings they would not find methods leading to the spontaneous liberation of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts.

¹⁴⁸ According to Buddhism, pride is both a mode and a transformation of aversion, and envy and jealousy are modes and transformations of desire. In fact, trying to climb in samsāra by pushing others down is a function of aversion, and wanting what others have (whether objects, as in envy, or the appreciation of people, as in jealousy) is a function of desire. Furthermore, each passion begets other passions; for example, envy and jealousy beget aversion toward those whom we envy or are jealous of. And so on.

¹⁴⁹ In fact, in the decade of the 1950s experiments demonstrated that pleasant experiences are remembered more easily than unpleasant ones, and the conclusion was that pleasing, self-satisfying experiences that enhance prestige are often relived mentally, thereby becoming fixed in memory, whereas, contrariwise, we are compelled to repress painful, humiliating experiences, thrusting them out of consciousness or, which is the same, making them unconscious; however, it was also shown that even though rarely recalled, those negative memories remain active and are often at the root of a great deal of unexplained anxiety. All this is so well-known today that it is redundant to point it out.

¹⁵⁰ In Sartre (1980/1969), these mechanisms were explained in terms of the concept of “bad faith” or self-deception by the individual consciousness, whereas the first Freudian topic interpreted it as “repression” or concealment carried out by the “preconscious.” Although the two interpretations are not so divergent as Sartre seems to have believed (for the preconscious, agent of repression, works in secondary process, which is the language of the conscious, and as such it may be seen as an aspect of the conscious rather than as an agent of repression alien to the conscious, which is how Sartre seems to have understood the Freudian explanation of *Verdrängung* / *refoulement* / repression), the Sartrean concept seems to me to be closer to the Buddhist explanation of such phenomena than the Freudian one.

¹⁵¹ In other works, on the basis of the theories developed in Bateson (1972, and to some extent 1979), I have explained this in terms of the relationship between the two brain hemispheres and the two types of mental process (primary and secondary) described in Freud (trans. J. Strachey, 1954). See, among other of my works: Capriles (1994, Chapter Two, and electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.).

¹⁵² The root of this term (Wylie, khor) literally means “wheel.”

¹⁵³ Among other things, it is because we perceive what is unoriginated, unmade and uncompounded as originated, made and compounded, that many of us justify the widespread belief in a creator of the universe. There are many other reasons for the arising of this belief, which were partly discussed in Capriles (2000b) and discussed in far greater detail in Capriles (2012a); cf. also the possibly upcoming revised edition of Capriles (1994). At any rate, this is not the place to discuss this matter in depth.

¹⁵⁴ As explained repeatedly, the reason why I had to coin the neologism “reGnition” in order to refer to an occurrence that in the English translations of Dzogchen texts is often called “recognition,” was that this occurrence does not involve the mental event called “recognition” (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Tib. *duche* [Wylie, ’du shes]; Ch. 想 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, xiǎng; Wade-Giles, hsiang³]). Contrariwise, that occurrence represents the very dissolution of recognition in the patency of nondual Awake awareness’ own face that is the manifestation of rigpa-qua-Path and rigpa-qua-Fruit.

¹⁵⁵ In Pascal (1962 [posthumous edition, 1669], section “Annoyances,” thought 167), we read:

“Nature makes us miserable in every state; our desires make us imagine a blissful state, because they attribute to a state in which we do not find ourselves [all that in] the state in which we find ourselves [we fancy as the greatest] pleasures; but we would not be blissful upon attaining those pleasures because we would have other desires according to the [characteristics and lacks of the] new state. It is necessary to particularize this general proposition.

“We never keep to the present moment. We anticipate the future as if it were coming [too] slowly, in order to hurry its course; or we turn to the past to stop it, as [if it were escaping us] too rapidly: we go along wandering imprudently in times that are not ours, and we have no power in the only one that belongs to us [which is the now]; and we are so inane, that we think about those times that are nothing and run away without [dissolving ourselves in] the only one that subsists [which at any time is the now].

“The point is that the present usually hurts us. We hide it from our sight, because it distresses us; and if it is pleasant we mourn when we see it escape. We try to sustain it in the future, and we think about arranging things that are not in our power for a time that we have no certainty at all will arrive.

“Let everyone examine their thoughts and they will find them all busy with the past and with the future. We do not think almost anything about the present; and if we do think about it, it is only to shed light on arranging the future. The present is never our aim: the past and the present are our means; only the future is our aim. Thus we never live, but merely hope to live, and since we are making ourselves ready to be blissful, it is inevitable that we will never be so...

“The sensation of the falsity [and hollowness] of the present pleasures and the ignorance of the vanity of the absent ones cause inconstancy...

“Men busy themselves chasing a ball and a hare; it is the pleasure of kings themselves...”

Later on, Pascal will remind us that players of games of chance do not want the money from the bet but the self-forgetfulness that betting provides them as it allow them to totally turn their attention toward the external world while the roulette wheel spins, and that the same thing happens to the hunter, who would not want the hare if it were given to him as a gift, because what he wants is to chase after it in order to forget what goes inside himself and elude the boredom of monotony. However, in order to gamble, the gambler has to make himself believe that it is the prize money that he wants, and in order to chase after the hare the hunter has to make himself believe that it is the hare that he wants, for otherwise he would not be able to go after it.

The fear of boredom is such that men willingly go to war in order to escape it, although later on in war they long for the peace and tranquility of home and of life in times of peace; then when the war ends, they return home to enjoy peace, but they do not find such enjoyment, for what they find is boredom once again.

The entire section called “Amusement” in Pascal’s *Thoughts* is a marvelous description of the first Noble Truth of the Buddha, which inclusively points out the second Noble Truth. Pascal (1962) writes:

“Such is our true state: it is what makes us incapable of knowing with certainty and of ignoring absolutely. We drift in this vast middle, always uncertain and floating, pushed from one extreme to the other [back and forth]. Whichever point we intend to attach ourselves and secure ourselves to, moves and abandons us, and if we follow it, it escapes our movements, slipping away from us and fleeing in an eternal flight. Nothing is fixed for us. This is the state that is natural to us, and, nevertheless, the most contrary to our inclination. The desire to find a firm seat and a final constant base to build a tower that will rise to the infinite embraces us; but our entire foundation cracks, and the earth opens to the abyss.

“Therefore, let us not look for security or steadiness...”

With respect to Sartre (1980/1969), let me repeat that the problem with the book in question is that, although it is structured like a Buddhist teaching that would designate Awakening as *holon*, it negates the possibility of reaching the holon.

¹⁵⁶ The Dzogchen Tantras make the point that Atiyogatantra—i.e., Dzogchen qua Path or vehicle—is the most ancient of the teachings of Awakening and the source of all teachings of Awakening. However, it is impossible to establish whether Dignāga drew the concept and term from the Dzogchen teachings or whether the term was coined by Dignāga and then absorbed by the Dzogchen teachings to express one of its own characteristic concepts—or whether the word was independently coined by both of them because etymology commanded.

¹⁵⁷ With regard to the translation I use for rendering this term, see the immediately following endnote. What is important at this point is to place the different types of thought discussed in the regular text in a wider context. According to the Dzogchen teachings, and, in the context of the Sūtrayāna, to the Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophers Dignāga and his indirect disciple Dharmakīrti, there are two types of entity as such:

(1) The particular phenomena they referred to as particulars, specifically characterized phenomena, self-configurations or self-collections of characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*; Tib. rangtsen [Wylie, *rang*

mtshan]; Ch. 自相 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìxiàng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsiang⁴]), which are actual or effective in that they have the capacity to produce effects, yet are impermanent, and which pertain to what the Third Promulgation Sūtras refer to as dependent nature (Skt. *paratantra*; Tib. zhenwang [Wylie, *gzhan dbang*]; Ch. 依他起性 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yītā qǐxìng; Wade-Giles, i¹-ta¹ ch'i³-hsing⁴]) and the Mahāmādhyaṃaka school of tenets calls dependent patterns or dependent collections of characteristics (Skt. *paratantralakṣaṇa*; Tib. zhenwangi tsennyi [Wylie, *gzhan dbang gi mtshan nyid*]). Paradigmatic cases of these phenomena, and source of most other cases, are phenomena which are constituted by that which the Dzogchen teachings call the tsel (Wylie, *rtsal*) form of manifestation of energy; however, in the view expressed here, for reasons explained in the following paragraph, mere mental appearances—which as such pertain to the dang (Wylie, *gdangs*) form of manifestation of energy and that Tibetan epistemology (an extension of the Indian Buddhist *pramāṇa* tradition) refers to as reflections (Skt. *pratibimba*; Tib. zugnyen [Wylie, *gzugs brnyan*]) or aspects (Skt. *ākāra*; Tib. nampa [Wylie, *rnam pa*])—may also belong to this category (and, of course, so do appearances of rölpa [Wylie, *rol pa*] energy). It is also important to keep in mind that in the Dzogchen teachings the contents of the consciousness of the base-of-all (Skt. *alayavijñāna*; Tib. kunzhi namshe or kunzhi nampar shepa [Wylie, *kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}*])—when this term, rather than referring to a so-called storage-consciousness, refers to a phenomenon that is a key stage in the arising of saṃsāra from the base-of-all—are phenomena of this class, which appear as such for an instant as they are singled out for perception. And it is even more important to be mindful of the fact that, though these phenomena are said to be real and effective, this does not mean that they are self-existent; contrariwise, being dependently arisen phenomena—which depend on our perception to be singled out and separated from the rest of the sensory field, and even to have their form—they are empty of self-existence (the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra notes that phenomena of the dependent nature are empty of production because they do not arise from their own nature or by their own power, and empty of the absolute because when perceived as dependently arisen phenomena, they evidently conceal the absolute rather than revealing it; however, according to Mahāmādhyaṃaka [Tib. Uma chenpo {Wylie, *bdu ma chen po*}] and Uma Zhentongpa [Wylie, *dbu ma gzhan stong pa*; proposed Skt. transl. Para[bhava]śūnyatāvāda Mādhyaṃaka], which are school(s) mainly based on other Third Promulgation sūtras and some other sources, and according to the Dzogchen teachings as well, phenomena of the dependent nature are also empty of own nature / own being).

- (2) The synthetic mental phenomena that they named abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics (Skt. *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*; Tib. shitsen [Wylie, *spyi mtshan*]; Ch. 共相 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, gòngxiàng; Wade-Giles, kung⁴-hsiang⁴]), which are unreal and ineffectual, yet are permanent—and which pertain to that which Third Promulgation Sūtras call imaginary, imputational nature (Skt. *parikalpita*; Tib. kuntag [Wylie, *kun brtags*]) and which the Mahāmādhyaṃaka and Uma Zhentongpa philosophical school call imaginary or imputational patterns, or imaginary or imputational collections of characteristics (Skt. *parikalpitalakṣaṇa*; Tib. kuntagkyi tsennyi [Wylie, *kun brtags kyi mtshan nyid*]), the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of which is responsible for the third type of *avidyā* in the classification privileged in this book and by most Dzogchen Masters, and therefore for all defilements. Moreover, since phenomena of the imaginary, imputational nature are projected on particulars, specifically characterized phenomena, self-configurations or self-collections of characteristics and as such exist and subsist in the human mind only, they do not subsist by their own nature and thus, as even the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra makes it clear, they are empty of own-nature (as noted above, this canonical source in question asserts **dependently arisen phenomena not to be empty of own nature / own being**). Each abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics initially arises when an imprint is left by the initial understanding (i.e., the initial perception) of the preperception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*; Tib. ngönsum [Wylie, *mngon sum*]; Ch. 現量 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xiànlíang; Wade-Giles, hsien⁴-liang²]) of a particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics in terms of the concept of whatever the individual's society takes it to be—as such being a model, constructed by mental syntheses (Skt. *prapañca*; Pāli *papañca*; Tib. thöpa [Wylie, *spros pa*]; Ch. 戲論 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xīlùn; Wade-Giles, hsi⁴-lun⁴; Jap. *keron*; Kor. *hūiron*]; mental fabrication) of the particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics in question, rather than being merely the latter's mental image. In conceptual cognition (a term that Dharmakīrti applied to cognitions involving a phenomenal appearance

capable of being conjoined with a linguistic expression) a phenomenon of this kind, which is a mental representation (i.e. a *pratibhā* or nangwa [Wylie, *snang ba*] of the sixth sense, which perceives mental phenomena), is superimposed on a particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics of the same type as the one that initially served as its basis, immediately after the phenomenon in question is preperceived for an instant, and hence it becomes mixed and confused with the latter, in such a way that what is then perceived as that phenomenon is the abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics in question. It must be noted that the mental images that are the material basis of abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics pertain to the mode of manifestation of energy the Dzogchen teachings call dang (Wylie, gdangs), and as such may be compared to reflections of the phenomena surrounding a crystal ball that appear inside the latter in a somewhat dimmer way (however, this does not mean that phenomena of dang energy are always of this kind, for most often they are fully fledged thoughts of one of the two kinds discussed below): as implied above, mere mental appearances, which pertain to this mode of manifestation of energy, may be particulars, specifically characterized phenomena, self-configurations or self-collections of characteristics—the reasons for this being that [a] they can be apprehended in bare perception for an instant before being replaced by an abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics, and [b] in many cases they can produce effects—at least in the dimension to which they belong). Taking fire as an example of what was described in this paragraph, when upon perceiving a physical fire (i.e. a particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics of fire), one learns that this phenomenon is a fire, a generic image of fire arises that will take part in obscured perception each and every time one intends to perceive, cognize by means of thought, or imagine or visualize a fire.)

Among (2) abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics, we are concerned with two kinds, the first of which is based on the perception of the sound of words, whereas the second may be based on a perception of data of any sense whatsoever, namely:

(2A) Those coarse thoughts called word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings, which is my own translation of the Sanskrit term *śabdasāmānya* (Tib. drachi [Wylie, *sgra spyi*]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, lùnshēngzǒng; Wade-Giles, lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³])—a term which is used in the Dzogchen teachings, which Dignāga introduced to the Sūtrayāna and which Dharmakīrti did not use, but which is nonetheless widely used by Tibetan Buddhist epistemologists in general, as it was introduced into Tibet seemingly through two different avenues: Śāntarakṣita did so in the context of the Sūtrayāna (being assimilated by practically all Tibetan epistemologists, as they found it to be most important in their field), and shortly thereafter it was reintroduced upon the arrival of the Dzogchen teachings. The material basis of these sound patterns that convey meanings are the acoustic mental images of words, phrases and sentences that take part in discursive thinking and that as such are temporal rather than spatial, which are reproductions by the imagination, on the basis of memory, of models of the acoustic patterns of the sound of words, phrases and sentences (which as such have been divested of the characteristics of an individual's pronunciation—e.g. of an speaker's pitch, softness or raspiness of the voice, pronunciation, volume, and so on) that speakers of a particular language have adopted as conventions (Skt. *vyavahāra*; Tib. thanyé [Wylie, *tha snyad*]; Ch. 俗諦 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *súdi*; Wade-Giles, *su²-ti⁴*]; seemingly also 言語 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yányǔ*; Wade-Giles, *yen²-yü³*] is used as a translation) to designate phenomena or, in general, to communicate meanings (an exception to this understanding of the term seems to be the Sakyapa Master Sönam Senge [Wylie, *go rams pa bsod nams seng ge*, 1429-1489], who seems to have understood the term *śabdasāmānya* or drachi as referring to the description of an essence [Thakchoe, 2007, p. 82], and thus roughly as what in Western terms could be called a definition). (A. Berzin [2001] asserts that, since these models have been divested of the characteristics of an individual's pronunciation and thus are imputable on sounds made in a variety of voices, pitches, volumes, and pronunciations, they are categories—which he calls collection mental syntheses [Tib. *tsogchi*: *tshogs spyi*; reconstructed Skt. *samudāyasāmānya*, though one scholar has offered *saṅghasāmānya*] and class mental syntheses [Skt. *jātisāmānya*; Tib. *rigchi*: *rigs spyi*]). Thus according to Berzin, what I am calling word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings and that he calls word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that are meaning categories, rather than being imputed on the mere mental images of words, phrases, sentences and so on, are imputed on collection mental syntheses and class

mental syntheses, and thus we may conclude that they pertain to a logical type logical type wholly different than the latter—a view that, as shown in note after next, contradicts Gorampa, for the latter claims that class mental syntheses are not a category different from the universal concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings (Skt. arthasāmānya; Tib. dōnchi [don spyi]) discussed in the following paragraph of this note. Note that in Gelugpa epistemology—and according to Berzin [2001] also in the Dzogchen teachings—collection mental syntheses are the wholes imputed on spatial, sensorial, and/or temporal parts—such as the whole “material entity table” imputed on a sensory / spatial flat surface resting on four legs, or the whole “word table” imputed on the temporal sequence of phonemes that make up the sound pattern table, etc.—whereas class mental syntheses are the type of phenomenon that a specific individual item is an instance of—such as for example a material, spatial configuration being validly a table, or a temporal sound pattern being validly the word table. Gorampa’s objection lies on the fact that these imputations are made by the thoughts discussed in the next paragraph, which are the true source of the imputational or imaginary nature, for as shown below they are that which provides unity to collections of sensations and that understand the resulting unity as this or that entity with these or those characteristics. I am not sure whether or not Berzin’s claim that the Dzogchen teachings coincide with the Gelug view in this regard is right, and I have not found the sources that would allow me to assess his assertions, but it is curious that the Dzogchen teachings should coincide with the Gelugpa view on this point, for as a rule the understanding of categories in the Dzogchen teachings diverges from that of the Gelugpa, and in many cases agrees with Gorampa’s.)

(2B) Subtle thoughts, called universal concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings (Skt. arthasāmānya; Tib. dōnchi [Wylie, don spyi]; Ch. 總事 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, zǒngshì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-shih⁴] or 總義 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, zǒngyì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-i⁴]). In the view of non-Gelug schools and vehicles, abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics of this particular kind integrate the meaning that a given society attributes to the particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics they reproduce, and hence they subsequently serve to interpret and experience phenomena of the same kind—and hence as noted in the discussion of this type of phenomena the particular phenomenon (i.e. the particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics [Skt. svalakṣaṇa; Tib. rangtsen {Wylie, rang mtshan}; Ch. 自相 {Hànǚ Pīnyīn, zìxiàng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsiang⁴}) is no longer perceived directly after the initial instant of presentation (i.e. after preperception) so long as conceptual perception prevails, for that which is then perceived is the abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics in terms of which we interpret it, which in this case involves a meaning, for it is one of the subtle thoughts under discussion (i.e. a universal concept of an entity [resulting from mental syntheses] that is a meaning category) and as such it will necessarily convey a meaning. (However, understanding in terms of a universal concept of an entity [resulting from mental syntheses] that is a meaning category does not occur only in sensory perception [Greek, *aisthesis*: αἴσθησις] of particulars, specifically characterized phenomena, self-configurations or self-collections of characteristics, as it arises in discursive thinking, connecting the coarse discursive thoughts in order to establish meanings, or immediately after a mental image arising in fantasy in order to establish its identity, and so on [the mental image’s raw material being, according to non-Gelug Sūtrayāna understanding, what is being called a particular, particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics]. Note that in what regards mental appearances of dang energy, in conceptual cognition occurring in imagination, visualization, fantasy, visual memory and so on, they may be the reproduction of spatial, principally visual appearances that may be associated with the reproduction of appearances of the other senses, and / or temporal auditory appearances.) To conclude, and most important, among phenomena of the imputational or imaginary nature, the thoughts discussed in this paragraph are responsible for the activation of defilements, whereas discursive thoughts are responsible for feeding, increasing and giving continuity to those defilements. (It must be noted that in the Gelug view—which according to Berzin [2001] is also that of the Dzogchen teachings, though I have not verified this—spatial, mainly visual images must have been synthesized into collection mental syntheses and class mental syntheses, and that, as shown in note after next, for his part Gorampa claimed that class mental syntheses may not be regarded as different from universal concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings.)

(The explanation of perception and cognition in terms of the categories particular phenomena / particulars, specifically characterized phenomena / self-configurations / self-collections of characteristics, and the synthetic mental phenomena named abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics, may at first sight seem quite similar to the perceptual theories of British empiricism, and particularly to Hume's, according to which ideas [a concept Hume took from Locke and Berkeley, but which he modified for it to fit his own outlook], reproduce particular impressions [direct sensory perceptions of particular phenomena]. However, in what seems to be nearly an inversion of Berkeley's view [according to which a word becomes general by its relation to a particular but representative idea], Hume claimed that, with the passing of time, because of the resemblances an individual finds in his or her experience between the different patterns / configurations—whether impressions or ideas—indicated by the same word, and the contrast between these patterns and the similar patterns indicated by different words, through custom she or he forms that which he referred to as a concept or a general idea and which consists in the combination of an individual, particular idea with the appropriate associative dispositions, which allowed the individual to identify all of the patterns indicated by the same word. Although this means that Hume's ideas change after they are established—although even after successive syntheses they continue to be specific—this does not contradict Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's view that abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics are “permanent,” for what was essential to them and that set it in contrast with particular phenomena / particulars, specifically characterized phenomena / self-configurations / self-collections of characteristics, was that, unlike the latter, they do not change during cognition.

¹⁵⁸ The English terms I use for these thoughts (B) and the preceding ones (A) are adaptations from the ones devised by Alex Berzin in The Berzin Archives. However, my explanation of the terms in question is different from Berzin's. Moreover, Berzin overlooks the third type of thoughts (C), which he does not even mention. (At least this was the case years ago, at the time when I consulted his archives.)

¹⁵⁹ In reference to discursive thoughts, and in general to the use of language and its interpretation, as stated in note before last, the mere reproduction of the sound of words devoid of understanding would be mere mental images—i.e. reflections (Skt. *pratibimba*; Tib. *zugnyen* [Wylie, *gzugs brnyan*]) or aspects (Skt. *ākāra*; Tib. *nampa* [Wylie, *mam pa*])—which, as it is self-evident and as the Dzogchen teachings make it clear and (in the context of the *Sūtrayāna*) Dignāga made it clear, are insufficient for discursive thinking to be possible. Here the process is explained in terms of the Dzogchen teachings, which posit two categories indispensable for the thought process to be possible: (a) the category that they—as well as Dignāga in the *Sūtrayāna*—call word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings (Skt. *śabdāsāmānya*; Tib. *drachi* [Wylie, *sgra spyi*]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*]), and (b) the category that they—as well as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti in the *Sūtrayāna*—call universal concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings (Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* [Wylie, *don spyi*]; Ch. 總事 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-shih⁴*] or 總義 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*]). Since both categories were defined in the preceding note, here it is sufficient to add the following:

(a) With regard to word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings, it must be noted that unless one were talking to an orthodox Brahmin (*Brāhmaṇa*) holding the Vedic belief that meanings are inherent in the Sanskrit language, in our time it would be a truism to note that no meaning is inherent in mere mental aspects resembling the sounds of phonemes appearing one after another in sequence, and that when in audial, temporal cognition—whether in sensory perception or in discursive thinking—for meaning requires a conceptual mental cognition, which is the one in which a phenomenal appearance is conjoined with a linguistic expression and the understanding of the essence or meaning of the phenomenal appearance and the linguistic expression conjoined with it. Such cognitions involve the mental synthesis of the representation of words, phrases, and sentences, and the superimposition on them of audio categories of words, phrases, and sentences (which according to Berzin's explanation at this point would have become the material basis of what he renders as collection mental syntheses [Tib. *tsogchi* {Wylie, *tshogs spyi*}; most probable reconstructed Skt. seems to be *samudāyasāmānya*, though one scholar has proposed *saṅghasāmānya*] and class mental syntheses [Skt. *jātisāmānya*; Tib. *rigchi* {Wylie, *rigs spyi*}). Not that Gorampa objected to this, claiming that it is not possible to distinguish between these categories and universal concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings [cf. the immediately following note])—which seems to be the reason why

Dharmakīrti, the indirect disciple of Dignāga, did not include *śabdāsāmānyas* [Tib. drachi [Wylie, *sgra spyi*]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*] among his categories.

- (b) In this context, universal concepts of entities [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings may be said to be patterns of significance of a language sound pattern that has been adopted as the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence in a particular language by members of a specific society. As suggested above, in order to refute Mīmāṃsā and in general the Vedic belief that meanings are inherent in the Sanskrit language and that the latter is inherently sacred, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, just like the Dzogchen teachings, stressed the nowadays commonsensical fact that meanings are not inherent in sounds or words, but are conventionally coined, assigned to words, and used as categories by members of a society or social group for thinking and communicating—and that even within the same society different people may assign slightly different meaning to a particular word, using that meaning as a category when reproducing that word in discursive thinking.

Since most conceptual cognitions have a verbal support, as a rule they involve the superimposition of both audio categories and meaning categories onto mental aspects (Skt. *ākāra*; Tib. *nampa* [Wylie, *nam pa*]). However, as stated in note before last, conceptual cognition may also be nonverbal, in which case it superimposes onto mental aspects only a universal concept of an entity [resulting from mental syntheses] that conveys a meaning, such as when visualizing or remembering what someone's face looks like (according to Berzin [2001], in this case it also superimposes onto it collection mental syntheses and class mental syntheses [defined in the preceding note]; in the view of Gorampa, this is not the case). In discursive thinking, coarse thoughts of the kind called word sound patterns [resulting from mental syntheses] that convey meanings succeed each other, yet this would not be enough for a line of thought to be meaningful, or even for it to have its continuity; for the latter to be possible, the patterns / categories in question must alternate with subtle thoughts, or, which is the same, universal abstract concepts [resulting from mental syntheses] and corresponding to a meaning category, as the latter must provide the a more abstract understanding of the meaning of the former's concatenation.

¹⁶⁰ As shown in note 158, (B) subtle thoughts—and according to Dignāga also (A) coarse thoughts—are synthetic mental phenomena of those that Dignāga and Dharmakīrti called abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics (Skt. *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *chitsen* [Wylie, *spyi mtshan*]; Ch. 共相 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *gòngxiàng*; Wade-Giles, *kung⁴-hsiang⁴*]), which are unreal and do not change during cognition, and which pertain to what Third Promulgation Sūtras and the Cittamātra School call imputational or imaginary nature (Skt. *parikalpita*; Tib. *kuntag* [Wylie, *kun brtags*]; Ch. 遍計所執性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *biànjì suǒzhí xìng*; Wade-Giles, *pien⁴-chí⁴ so³-chih² hsing⁴*]) and the Mahāmādhyaṃyaka school call imaginary or imputational patterns / configurations / collections of characteristics (Skt. *parikalpītalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *kuntagkyi tsennyi* [Wylie, *kun brtags kyi mtshan nyid*]). These phenomena are contrasted with the particular phenomena the two Indian authors in question referred to as **particulars, specifically characterized phenomena, self-configurations or self-collections of characteristics** (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *rangtsen* [Wylie, *rang mtshan*]; Ch. 自相 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxiàng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsiang⁴*]), which they deem to be real and actual / effective (i.e. effect-producing) yet to be constantly changing, even during the smallest possible lapse—and which the Mahāmādhyaṃyaka school and the Dzogchen teachings acknowledge to be just as delusive as the abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics that pertain to what Third Promulgation Sūtras and the Cittamātra School call imputational or imaginary nature.

¹⁶¹ In fact, some of the most renowned Indian Mādhyamika Masters, which according to Dreyfus (1997, p. 430 and elsewhere) and other authors seem to include Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, and, following them, various early scholars in Tibet, classed Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttikakārikā* as a Mādhyamaka-Svātantrika text. Also Jikden Gongpo (Wylie, 'jig rten mgong po, 1143-1217), the first patriarch of the Drikungpa (Wylie, 'bri gung pa) branch of the Kagyū School classified the text in question in the same way (Dreyfus, 1997, p. 441). Moreover, in Napper (2003, p. 685, note 142), we read:

“Ngawang Palden in the Sautrāntika chapter of his Explanation of the Conventional and the Ultimate in the Four Systems of Tenets (*grub mtha' bzhi'i lugs kyi kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i don rnam par bshad pa legs bshad dpyid kyi dpal mo'i glu dbyangs*, New Delhi: Guru Deva, 1972, 39.5-39.6) says that some such as Prajñākaragupta, Sūryagupta, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, and Jetari interpret Dharmakīrti's Commentary on [Dignāga's] *Compendium of Valid Cognition* (Tib. *Tsema namdrel* [Wylie, *tshad ma*

rnam 'grel]; Skt. Pramāṇavārttika) as a Mādhyamika treatise.”

This is probably the reason why the contemporary Indian scholar Chandradhar Sharma (1987, p. 104) classified Dignāga and Dharmakīrti as Svātantrika-Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas: he was relying on ancient Indian authors such as the ones just cited.

¹⁶² This is explained in a subsequent section of the regular text. It is interesting that Alex Berzin does not mention the threefold directional thought-structure when he discusses the different types of thought posited by the Dzogchen teachings.

¹⁶³ In Guenther (1984, p. 219, footnote 9) we are told that the Sanskrit (and Pāli) term *ahiṃsā* (Ch. 不害 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùhài*; Wade-Giles, *pu⁴-hai⁴*])—meaning nonviolence—is rendered into Tibetan as *tsewa mepa* (Wylie, *'tshé ba med pa*) and that the rest of those terms that imply a categorical negation are translated by adding the term *mepa* (Wylie, *med pa*). The fact that *marigpa* (Wylie, *ma rig pa*) implies something definitely different from *rigpa-mepa* (Wylie, *rig pa med pa*) is something that Khenpo Nülden (Wylie, mkhan po nus ldan) emphasizes in his *Khechuk Chendrel* (Wylie, *mkhas 'jug mchan 'grel*), a commentary on the *Khechuk* (Wylie, *mkhas 'jug*) by Jamgön Ju Mipham Gyamtso (Wylie, 'jam mgon 'ju mi pham rgya mtsho). The same, however, does not occur with the Sanskrit term *avidyā*, which has the same structure as *ahiṃsā*—which shows that, as will be remarked in a subsequent chapter, translations produced during the earlier (Tib. Nyingma; Wylie, *rnying ma*) diffusion of the dharma are often more precise than the original texts on which they are based. (It must be noted that the text by Dr. H. V. Guenther in which this explanation is found makes the serious error of translating Dzogchen terminology with the one developed by Heidegger—as if the latter had arisen as a response to Dzogchen Awakening, when in truth it arose from extreme delusion and hence from *saṃsāra*. In a set of works I have refuted the use of Heideggerian terminology to translate terms that are unique to the Dzogchen teaching; in particular, see Capriles (electronic publication 2007, vol. I; and 2000b); I also dealt with this matter in several papers and will do so again in Capriles (work in progress).

¹⁶⁴ Below the terms *rigpa* (Wylie, *rig pa*) and *vidyā* will be explained in terms of the concepts of Base, Path and Fruit. If so understood, then *marigpa* (Wylie, *ma rig pa*) and *avidyā* do not refer to the negation of *rigpa* / *vidyā* qua Base (as suggested by their etymology), not only because *rigpa* / *vidyā* qua Base is as a rule rendered by terms such as the Skt. *cittatā* and *citta eva* and the Tib. *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*) and the Skt. *bodhicitta* and the Tib. *changchubsem* (Wylie, *byang chub sems*), but mainly because qua Base *rigpa* / *vidyā* cannot be destroyed or uprooted, but to (1) the nonmanifestation of *rigpa* / *vidyā* qua Path and qua Fruit as a result of the activation of the unawareness of the true condition of the Base that obscures the nonconceptual and hence nondual self-awareness inherent in *rigpa*, preventing it from making patent *rigpa*'s own face, and (2) the manifestation of active delusion in *saṃsāra*, which on the top of (1) involves the other aspects or types of *avidyā* / *marigpa* posited in the threefold classifications expounded in this book. (Keep in mind that, as stated elsewhere in this book, the Tib. term *rigpa* may also be a contraction of the Tib. *rangrig* [Wylie, *rang rig*], which renders the Skt. terms *svasaṃvedana* and *svasaṃvitti*[h].

For a complete understanding of the above, it is necessary to have a good grasping of the concepts of Base, Path and Fruit as used in the Dzogchen Atiyoga, in the Tantras and in the Mahāmādhyaṃyaka school of Mahāyāna philosophy. A more detailed explanation of the usage of the terms in the Dzogchen teachings is offered in Part Two of this book; an explanation of the usage of the terms in Mahāmādhyaṃyaka (and of some relations between this understanding and that of Dzogchen and of the Tantras of the Path of Transformation) will be provided in the definitive version of Capriles (electronic publication 2004), in case I have time to complete this book. At any rate, the concept of *avidyā* / *marigpa* is best known in the context of the Hīnayāna and the general Mahāyāna, which have an understanding of the concepts of Base, Path and Fruit very different from that of the Dzogchen teachings.

¹⁶⁵ As explained below in the regular text, the Mahāyāna's nonstatic nirvāṇa may fall short of the *rigpa* of the Dzogchen teachings.

¹⁶⁶ Note that the meaning of the term “primordial, profound base-of-all” or *yedön kunzhi* (Wylie, *ye don kun gzhi*) is completely different from those of the terms involving the words *kunzhi* (Wylie, *kun gzhi*) that were discussed in the regular text and that the Dzogchen teachings use in a [meta]phenomenalistic or [meta]phenomenological sense (for a definition of the latter two adjectives, cf. Capriles [2007, Vol. I; 2013a, Vol. I; etc.]).

In fact, yedön kunzhi, rather than referring to a phenomenon in human experience or a metaphenomenon in Buddhist metaexperience, refers to our Awake true condition—namely the Base (Tib. zhi [Wylie, gzhi]) as (a) primordially pure (Tib. katak [Wylie, ka dag]) and (b) spontaneously perfect and self-rectifying (Tib. lhundrub [Wylie, lhun grub]).

However, as noted in the regular text, this “primordial, profound base-of-all” has always been flowing with a contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction (Tib. mongcha [Wylie, rmongs cha]) that obscures its inherent nondual self-awareness, preventing it from making patent rigpa’s own face in the manifestation of rigpa-qua-Path and rigpa-qua-Fruit—which, as shown repeatedly, is (1) the first sense of avidyā in all Dzogchen classifications of it. It is when it is so obscured yet the aspects or forms of active delusion which are senses or aspects (2) and (3) in the various threefold classifications of avidyā in the Dzogchen teachings are not manifest, that there is a condition of the base-of-all in one of the senses the term has in Dzogchen teachings that I called [meta]phenomenalistic or [meta]phenomenological—e.g., those forms of the neutral condition of the base-of-all (kunzhi lungmaten [Wylie, kun gzhi lung ma bstan]) called dimension of the base-of-all (kunzhi kham [Wylie, kun gzhi khams]), base-of-all carrying propensities (bagchagkyi kunzhi [Wylie, bag chags kyi kun gzhi]), etc.

¹⁶⁷ The term in the most widespread classification (the one favored by Longchenpa) makes the point that this beclouding of primordial awareness is inborn and may seem to imply that it is teleonomically and perhaps teleologically or oriented to give rise to the illusion of single selfhood. In other words, it would be the basis for taking the true condition of reality to be a universal self, as in various Hindu schools.

¹⁶⁸ This mix-up makes us attribute to phenomena and events different degrees of value and importance, ranging from zero to infinite. The attribution to some phenomena of zero value and importance does not mean that thoughts are not being charged with an illusion of truth, value and importance, for it involves a subject’s indifference to those phenomena, thus being a function of the subject-object duality that arises as a result of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the super-subtle, threefold directional thought-structure that will be considered below in the regular text, and of the perception of an object as this or that which results from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of a subtle / intuitive thought (i.e., it involves the first and second types of avidyā in the alternative classification and all types of avidyā in the most widespread classification—i.e. in the one favored by Longchen Rabjampa and other Masters). Furthermore, the lack of value and importance we attribute to some object is relative to the different degrees of value and importance that we attribute to other objects.

¹⁶⁹ The Dzogchen teachings, the Inner Tantras of the Vajrayāna, and Third Promulgation Sūtras such as the Lañkāvatāra, coincide in positing this threefold directional thought structure (Skt. trimaṇḍala, meaning threefold maṇḍala; Tib. khorsum [Wylie, ’khor gsum], meaning threefold wheel or threefold circle but often rendered into English as the three spheres). In Dzogchen and the Vajrayāna it is explained as a supersubtle thought structure, in contrast with subtle and coarse thoughts.

¹⁷⁰ The term imaginative delusion (Tib. kuntu tagpai marigpa [Wylie, kun tu brtags pa’i ma rig pa]) used in the most widespread Dzogchen classification of avidyā, may seem to correspond to the third nature of the Third Promulgation canonical texts of the Mahāyāna and the Indian schools of tenets based on them—namely the imputational, imaginary nature (Skt. parikalpita: 遍計所執性 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, biànjì suǒzhí xìng; Wade-Giles, pien⁴-chi⁴ so³-chih² hsing⁴])—but as will be shown below, this is certainly not the case. Its relation to the third pattern / configuration posited by Mahāmādhyaṃaka—namely, the imputational, imaginary pattern / configuration (Skt. parikalpita-lakṣaṇa; Tib. kuntagkyi tsennyi [Wylie, kun brtags kyi mtshan nyid])—is much closer than the one to the imputational, imaginary nature of the Indian schools of tenets in question, yet is not the same as the latter.

In fact, when spontaneous illusion manifests, the sensory continuum becomes an object to a mental subject; then as imaginative delusion manifests, patterns are singled out in that continuum and taken as object to the mental subject (an operation that depends on the works of a divisive, hermetic focus of awareness), and that which has been singled out is instantly perceived in terms of hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized thoughts (thus involving the confusion of the digital, fragmentary maps of thought with the analog, holistic territory of the given that such maps are incapable of matching, and the mistaken belief in the perfect correspondence of the one and the other)—which gives rise to the illusion of there being a plethora of entities existing inherently, independently and disconnectedly, and to the illusion that each of those entities is inherently this or that kind of entity. The delusion under discussion also involves the

superimposition of the idea of an “I” on the illusory subject that is a pole of dualistic consciousness and the inherent drive to confirm that subject’s existence and gratify its acquisitiveness by means of contacts with the seemingly self-existing, seemingly external entities that are perceived at this stage. Therefore, this type of avidyā involves the confusion of categories proper to the conjunction of the second (2) and third (3) aspects of types of avidyā in the most widely used classification, which constitutes the second (2) type in the alternative classification—whereby the relative is taken to be absolute, the insubstantial is taken to be to be substantial, the dependent is taken to be inherently existing, and so on. In Dzogchen terms, this implies that spontaneous illusion involves an inverted cognition that consists in erroneously perceiving the three aspects of the Base, which are essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo]), nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin]) and energy or compassion (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]), as being inherently separate from each other: since the phenomena manifested by the thukje aspect seem to be substantial rather than empty, they seem to have an essence different from the ngowo aspect, which is emptiness and which is completely ignored.

The above also implies that spontaneous illusion involves grasping at appearances (Tib. chinchi logpar dzingpa [Wylie, phyin ci log par ’dzin pa]), and hence comprises the manifestation of the grasped and the grasper (Tib. zungdzin [Wylie, gzung ’dzin]), which introduces dualistic appearances, plus the perception of a plurality of seemingly inherently existent entities, and the perception of those seeming entities as being inherently one or another type of entity, among other delusions. Therefore, as will be clearly shown below, it involves a conjunction of what Second Promulgation canonical sources call the dependent nature and what they call the imputational, imaginary nature—both of which, as will also be clearly shown below, are equally delusive.

Note that Third Promulgation canonical texts of the Mahāyāna and the Indian schools of tenets based on them claim that the objects that are singled out as described above belong to the dependent nature (Skt. paratantra; Tib. zhenwang [Wylie, gzhan dbang]; Ch. 依他起性 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, yī tā qǐ xìng; Wade-Giles, i¹-ta¹ ch’i³-hsing⁴]), the emptiness of which in their view need not be realized. Contrariwise, they claim that the perception of that which has been singled out in terms of hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized thoughts that makes us experience each of the singled out objects as being inherently this or that type of entity, together with the superimposition of the idea of an “I” on the illusory mental subject and the inherent drive to confirm that subject’s existence and gratify its acquisitiveness by means of contacts with the seemingly self-existing, seemingly external entities that are perceived at this stage, constitute the imputational, imaginary nature (Skt. *parikalpita*; Tib. kuntag [Wylie, kun brtags]; 遍計所執性 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, biàn jì suǒ zhī xìng; Wade-Giles, pien⁴-chi⁴ so³-chih² hsing⁴]), which is the source of delusion and the emptiness of which must consequentially be realized. For its part, the perception of the emptiness of the imputational, imaginary nature is according to them the absolutely true nature (Skt. *pariniṣpanna*: 圓成實性 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, yuán chéng shí xìng; Wade-Giles, yüan²-ch’eng² shih²-hsing⁴]), the realization of which is the most essential element on the Path to Buddhahood.

The above view of the Indian schools of tenets based on the Third Promulgation is not precise, for in order to single out segments of the sensory continuum for perception it is indispensable to have the concept that those segments are inherently separate entities and that they are inherently this or that entity—and in order to take those singled out segments as being in themselves separate entities and the entities that conventions establish them to be it is even more evidently necessary to have the concept in question, and to have hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized it. Therefore, the dependent nature is simply indivisible of the imputational, imaginary nature—and its emptiness must be realized together with that of the latter.

Moreover, as noted repeatedly, entities are not in themselves separate from the rest of the sensory field, for the latter is a continuum that as such lacks inherent separations, and if one assumes the existence of an independently existent physical reality as the basis of perception (an assumption that, however, Third Promulgation texts and the schools of tenets based on them reject), then we must face the fact that according to contemporary physics that physical reality is also a continuum that as such involves no inherent separations—and therefore perceiving the plurality of entities that Third Promulgation texts and the schools of tenets based on them deem to pertain to the dependent nature is itself as delusive as perceiving those singled out objects in terms of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized concepts, ideas and judgments—and once more it must be emphasized that it is as imperative to realize the emptiness of dependent nature entities just as much as it is to realize the emptiness of the imputational,

imaginary nature.

Likewise, the absolutely true nature could not lie in an absence, for absences are delusive perceptions produced by the absolutization / reification / absolutization / valorization of negative concepts that are relative to the phenomena of which they are the absence—and, moreover, an absence is like a barren woman that as such cannot bear any of the phenomena of our experience. These are the reasons why the Mahāmādhyaṃaka (Tib. Uma Chenpo [Wylie, *bdu ma chen po*]) and the Uma Zhentongpa [Wylie, *dbu ma gzhan stong pa*; Skt. trans. Para[rūpa]śūnyatāvāda Mādhyamaka) school[s] of tenets, just like the Dzogchen teachings, assert the dependent nature to be as empty as the imputational, imaginary nature, and reject the belief that the absolutely true nature may be a mere absence (and, even more so, that it may consist in the absence of the imputational, imaginary nature only). (The Dzogchen teachings do not posit either two or three truths, as do the texts and schools of the Path of Renunciation and the Path of Transformation, but in discussing the texts and schools in question they can use their categories.)

¹⁷¹ (2) Second sense in the most widespread classification:

In Tibetan this aspect or type of *avidyā* is called **lhenchik kyepai marigpa** (Wylie, *lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*), which was rendered into English by early translators as “spontaneous illusion” (cf. Longchenpa, 1975a, p. 51; 1976, pp. 24 and 122 note 10 [the latter from Khandro Yangthik, part III, p. 117 of edition used by the translator], and Cornu, 2001, p. 62). In the arising of active saṃsāra from the base-of-all, it may manifest right after the shining forth of the primordial gnosis inherent in Dzogchen-qua-Base (in which the teachings distinguish five aspects), when this precious opportunity to reGnize the condition in question is missed because we fail to reGnize that condition and immediately thereafter the supersubtle thought I call threefold directional thought structure (Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. khorsum [Wylie, *'khor gsum*]; Ch. 三輪 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *sānlún*; Wade-Giles, *san¹-lun⁴*]) discussed below in the regular text of this section manifests and is automatically reified / valorized / hypostasized / absolutized—thus being charged with an illusion of truth, value and importance. In fact, once this happens, the subject-object duality arises, and that shining forth is taken to be an external reality rather than an expression of the Base. In terms of delusive obstructions, the one that arises at this point is the delusive obstruction of knowledge (Skt. *jñeyāvaraṇa*; Pāli *ñeyyavāvaraṇa*; Tib. **shédrib** or **shechai dribpa** [Wylie, *shes {bya'i} sgrib {pa}*]; Ch. 所知障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *suǒzhīzhàng*; Wade-Giles *so³-chih¹-chang⁴*]), which is thus the first to arise among the two types of delusive obstructions acknowledged by the Mahāyāna, and which is also the last one to be eradicated on the Path, for according to the gradual Mahāyāna it persists until the end of the tenth bodhisattva level (Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. sa [Wylie, *sa*]; Ch. 地 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*]), which is the one that immediately precedes Buddhahood (the eleventh bodhisattva level). As it manifests in human action, this delusive obstruction may be illustrated with an archer who, immediately before shooting, makes a conscious decision to shoot and undertakes the action of shooting: since this involves subtly taking his or her own self as object and knowing it as shooting, since the mental subject for an instant becomes that object, and since objects lack a capacity for action, this hinders the flow of spontaneity of the Base, giving rise to a slight jerk that deviates the arrow. This aspect of cognitive delusive obstruction, which as just noted arises first and persists for longer than the defilement of the passions, always underlies the latter so long as the latter persists.

(3) Third sense in the most widespread classification:

In Tibetan this aspect or type of *avidyā* is called **kuntu tagpai marigpa** (Wylie, *kun tu brtags pa'i ma ri pa*)—a term that earlier translators rendered as “imaginative delusion” (cf. Longchenpa, 1976, pp. 24 and 123 note 11, and Cornu, 2001, p. 62). As stated in the regular text, it involves the apparitional-imputational delusion (Skt. *vyabhīcāra* / *vyākūla*; Tib. *tuḥpa* [Wylie, *'phrul pa*]) that lies in experiencing all entities in terms of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized subtle concepts that establish what they are, and which is not manifest in the previous two types or aspects of *avidyā*. Hence it is related to the imputational, imaginative nature that is the third of the three natures posited by Third Promulgation Sūtras such as the Laṅkāvatāra (Suzuki, trans., 1999) and the Saṃdhinirmocana (Keenan, trans. 2000; Hopkins, trans., 2002), as well as Indian Buddhist philosophical schools based on them, such as the Cittamātra (wholly based on the Promulgation in question), the Yogācāra Svātantrika Mādhyamaka subschools, and the Tibetan school[s] called Mahāmādhyaṃaka and Uma Zhentongpa (based partly on the Promulgation in question)—which, however, is understood quite differently in these three schools (in case I manage to complete it, this will be discussed in greater detail in the definitive version of Capriles, 2004). Although this third type or aspect of *avidyā* coincides to a great extent with this third

nature, as explained in the preceding endnote, the nature in question is indivisibly amalgamated with the second nature of the same texts and schools—and hence both of them are indivisibly amalgamated in this third aspect or type of avidyā. (The Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese terms for these natures and the Wylie for the Tibetan school or school just mentioned are offered in the preceding note.)

As also stated, this imaginative delusion involves the arising of the fully-fledged illusion of selfhood in the individual and of self-existent plurality in the world, as the concept of an I is superimposed on the illusory mental subject that is one of the poles of dualistic consciousness and the idea of a self-existing entity is superimposed on the singled out object that is the other pole (which may be experienced either as being one with the mental subject [for example, when I experience my arm as being part of me] or as being alien to it [for example, when I experience the lamp or the cat, or in a more complex way when I try to move my arm and fail to do so because it is paralyzed]—which as just shown by the examples depends on what the object is and other circumstances). This produces an overpowering urge to confirm the existence of the I in question and gratify its acquisitiveness by means of contacts, driven by different types of emotional attitudes, with the singled out segments of the continuum of what appears as object that at this stage are erroneously experienced as self-existing, external entities. (Its acquisitiveness is an automatic consequence of the lack of wholeness and plenitude inherent in feeling separate from the undivided whole of our true condition, in interaction with the compulsion to sustain the illusion that the subject is a self-existing I and that its objects are self-existent entities by means of contacts between the former and the latter.) In terms of delusive obstructions, what arises at this point, when it manifests with greater strength, is passional delusive obstructions (Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Pāli: *kilesāvaraṇa*; Tib. *nyöndrib* or **nyönmongpai dribpa** [Wylie, *nyon {mongs pa'i} sgrib {pa}*]; Ch. 煩惱障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎo zhàng*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³ chang⁴*]), which as noted above is therefore the second to arise of the two types of delusive obstruction posited by the Mahāyāna, and the first one to be eradicated on the Path, for according to the gradual Mahāyāna it persists until the end of the seventh bodhisattva level (Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. *sa* [Wylie, *sa*]; Ch. 地 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tī⁴*]). When, in *bodhisattva* levels eight through ten, as a result of the gradual neutralization of delusion along the Path it manifests with little strength, it is deemed to be an aspect of the cognitive delusive obstruction briefly discussed above.

Passional delusive obstructions, which are defined as “any state of mind that when developed brings about uneasiness and suffering,” are subdivided into: intellectual or theoretical delusive obstructions (Tib. **kuntag nyönmongkyi dribpa** [Wylie, *kun btags nyon mongs kyi sgrib pa*]), defined as “any intellectual framework that justifies, gives rise to, or reinforces grasping and the manifestation of the passions,” and inborn delusive obstructions (Tib. **lhenkye nyönmongkyi dribpa** [Wylie, *lhan skyes nyon mongs kyi sgrib pa*]), which is the inborn tropism to charge the contents of thoughts with an illusion of truth, value and importance, and grasp at them with such strength and intensity as to give rise to the various defilements (such as the three poisons, the five passions, the six root delusions, etc.).

¹⁷² Or, alternatively, seemingly inexistent and unimportant—or else to some extent important.

¹⁷³ I dealt with self-deceit in detail in Capriles (2007a vol. I)—where I explained it in terms that are nearer to Sartre’s than Freud’s, yet taking Dzogchen concepts as the basis of the explanation. This aspect of avidyā depends on a particular class of the neutral condition of the base-of-all and on the hermetic focus of awareness that perceptually detaches from the rest of the sensory field whatever it singles out.

¹⁷⁴ For example, according to the Gelug School, the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka view in this regard is that the root of saṃsāra (i.e. cyclic existence) is the basic delusion called avidyā; that this delusion, consisting in the misconception and delusory experience of the nature and status of entities is twofold, as it applies both to human individuals and to phenomena other than individuals; that the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of the individual depends on the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of the aggregates (Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandā*; Tib. *phungpo* [Wylie, *phung po*]; Ch. 蘊 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yùn*; Wade-Giles, *yün⁴*])—which are phenomena other than the individual—that interact in the production of the former misconception and delusory experience; and that this does not imply that there are two roots of cyclic existence, for both misconceptions and delusory experiences are exactly the same in nature—which this school explains as a conception and experience of self-existence (Skt. *svabhāva* : Tib. *rangzhin* [rang bzhin]), where there is no such mode of existence.

However, according to the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas, the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of the person and the misconception and delusory experience of the nature of phenomena other than persons are not exactly the same in nature. Furthermore, they make a distinction between the root

of cyclic existence, which is the conception of a self in persons, and the final root of cyclic existence, which is the conception of a self in phenomena. For their part, non-Gelug Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas implicitly distinguish among the two misconceptions, for they often assert the emptiness of individuals to lie in the presence of an absence that results from the negation of their existence, and the emptiness of phenomena that are not individuals to lie in their being free from the four extremes which are being, nonbeing, both being and nonbeing, and neither being nor nonbeing.

At any rate, in terms of the interpretation of the Dzogchen teachings offered here, the misconception and delusory experience of all types of phenomena as self-existing is a function of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought (which I explain briefly below in the regular text), in interaction with a series of mental functions.

¹⁷⁵ In the Orphic tradition Λήθη was the name of the river that the soul had to cross after death, upon which it would forget its former life. I believe Heraclitus to have been a Dionysian—i.e. to have pertained to the tradition I deem to be the adversary of that of the Orphics—and to have employed the term in a way that radically differs from that of the Orphics and that might be the same or nearly the same as the use of avidyā.

¹⁷⁶ This contradicts most of the interpretations Western philosophers and historians of philosophy have made of the terms *lethe* and *aletheia*. In particular, it frontally contradicts both the interpretation Heidegger (1996) made in § 44B of *Sein und Zeit* and the one he made in the 1943 text called *Aletheia* (in Heidegger, 1975, 59-78). For a detailed explanation of this, cf. Capriles (2007a Vol. I).

¹⁷⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the concept of “hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization,” see the explanation of the phrase in Capriles (1994, 2000a, 2000c and, especially, 2007a vol. I).

¹⁷⁸ Both the Mādhyamikas of the Model Texts and the Prāsaṅgikas warned against different types of nihilism. The first, which it seems appropriate to call moral nihilism, lies in perceiving existing entities as existent (which, since the perception of existence is indivisible from that of substantial, inherent, hypostatic, true, absolute existence, signifies that they are perceived as truly, absolutely, substantially and hypostatically / inherently existent), and therefore being prey to the passions that this perception elicits, so that even when one is compelled to scream in pain when fire is applied to one’s skin, one nonetheless claims that nothing of what one perceives as existent—other beings, good and evil, pain and pleasure, happiness and suffering, and the totality of the entities of the world—exists at all—as a rule in order to justify acts that, seeking what one erroneously sees as one’s own benefit, harm others. This kind of nihilism results from superimposing a view of emptiness (Tib. *tongté gyedeb* [Wylie, *stong ltas rgyas ’debs*]) on substantialistic perceptions, thoughts and actions, thus adding an extra layer to the onion of delusion—and not just any layer, but an extremely toxic one. As a tenet, this nihilism is the opposite of substantialistic tenets and yet is based on the delusive substantialistic experience of hypostatic / inherent existence, with regard to which the individual incurs in a contradiction (experiencing the self and the whole of entities to be truly existing and to have a greater or lesser value and importance—for in the individual’s own experience and everyday view fire burns the chair and that there is a self that experiences pain when this happens—the individual decides that none of them exist, has importance or has value in order to give free rein to the impulses that follow from his or her own substantialistic experience). This first type of nihilism was denounced in Nāgārjuna’s *Rājaparīkathāratnavālī* (stanzas I.43/44/45/57) as follows:

“In brief the view of nihilism / is that the effects of actions do not exist. / Devoid of merit and leading to a bad state, it is regarded as a ‘wrong view.’

“In brief the view of existence / is that effects of actions exist. / Meritorious and conducive to happy migrations / it is regarded as a ‘right view.’

“Because existence and non-existence are extinguished by wisdom, / there is a passage beyond meritorious and ill deeds. / This, say the excellent, is liberation from / bad migrations and happy migrations.

“Followers of nonexistence follow bad migrations, / but happy ones accrue to the followers of existence. / However, those who know what is correct and true / do not fall into dualism and thus are liberated.”

A second type of nihilism is often called annihilationism, which is the opposite of eternalism yet is based on the experience of eternalism inherent in the belief in hypostatic / inherent existence, for whatever is hypostatically / inherently existing cannot cease, disintegrate or come to an end—so that those who hold this view incur in a contradiction with regard to their own experience and their own view, for their view

implies that existence cannot cease, yet they proclaim its cessation. This is what Nāgārjuna warned against in *Prajñānāmamūlamadhyamakakārikā* XV.11 (Cf. Napper, 2003, pp. 206-7 and throughout for the Gelug interpretation of this and of Candrakīrti's comment on the stanza):

“Whatever exists hypostatically / inherently is permanent, / for it does not become nonexistent. / If one says that what arose formerly is now nonexistent, / this entails [the extreme of] annihilationism.’

“Since the existent is not overcome, something that is said to be existent does not ever become nonexistent; in that case it follows that through asserting [something to be] existent one has a view of permanence.

“If so, through asserting the existence of entities when formerly they were abiding and then asserting that now, in a posterior moment, they are destroyed and thus come to no longer exist, it follows that one has an annihilationist view.”

This is the type of nihilism, which I would refer to as eternalistic annihilationism, consists in believing that at some time existents are extinguished, which implies that before extinction they were “truly existent,” and therefore implies the view of permanence inherent in the view of hypostatic or inherent existence which is self-contradictory in that it makes the existence in question be impermanent.

Still another type of nihilism is the one that lies in asserting the ultimate truth to be a mere nothingness that is made to appear by a purportedly absolute, nonimplicative, nonaffirming negative that is actually of the implicative, affirmative kind, and which is one form of emptiness qua nonexistence (Tib. *chiyang mepai tongpa* [Wylie, *ci yang med pa'i stong pa*]) or analytical emptiness (Tib. *chepai tongpa* [Wylie, *dpyad pa'i stong pa*). Cf. Capriles (in press 1) for a discussion of two of these forms of nihilism in the philosophy of Je Tsongkhapa.

¹⁷⁹ As will be stated more extensively in a subsequent footnote, references to contemporary physics made in this book are not intended to imply that in the twentieth century physics suddenly elucidated the definitive nature and structure of the material universe. In fact, as I have shown in quite a few works (e.g. Capriles, in press 3; in press 1 [endnotes]; 2013a Vol. III; 2012a; 1994, Ch. I; and other works), the “discoveries” and theories of the sciences are ideological in nature, and in the opinion of some thinkers they are more than ideologies, as they are the very matrix that make possible the existence of power (political, economic and so on). Therefore, there is no doubt that the theories of present day physics could change radically in the future with the progressive development of research and conceptual elaboration (just like those of nineteenth century physics changed radically in the twentieth century). And yet the coincidences between contemporary physics and the world views of Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna and Atiyogatantrayāna forms of Buddhism are too impressive to be overlooked. The coincidences between the views of Buddhism in general and in some cases of other Asian systems as well have been discussed in different works by Watts (1966), Capra (1983; 1st ed. 1975), Zukav (1979), Bentov (1977), Bentov & Bentov (1982), LeShan (1982), Ricard and Trinh Xuan Thuan (2004), and many others (including the author of this book: cf. Capriles, Elías, 1977; Capriles, Elías, 1986 and Capriles, Elías, 1994).

¹⁸⁰ This absolute completeness and plenitude is disrupted in our samsaric experience but not in the true condition of reality / the absolute truth. Moreover, it may be said to be disrupted by our experience, because the etymology of the term “experience” implies that it may refer solely to samsāra. In fact, this English term and its equivalents in many European languages derive from the Latin *ex-perire*, meaning “going out from inside” or “dying from inside,” and therefore there can be no doubt that it implies the subject-object duality.

The assertion according to which only in *samsāra* is there experience, is ratified in Thinle Norbu Rinpoche, 1997, pp. 3-4:

“...it is not said in Buddhism that Buddha “experienced” Awakening. Awakening is beyond experience. Experience occurs between the duality of subject and object, and there is no existence of subject and object in Awakening. Experience comes from feeling, and feeling belongs to sentient beings, not to fully Awake Buddhas. Awakening is completely beyond either feeling or numbness.

“From the point of view of the causal vehicle (Hetuyāna), it can be said that bodhisattvas, sublime beings who are on the Path of Awakening and have not yet attained Buddhahood, still have experience due to traces of the residue of previous habit. Therefore, it could be said that when Buddha took birth many times as a bodhisattva before attaining Awakening, he had experience, including the experience of suffering caused by the passions, which he later taught about when he attained the omniscience of fully Awake Buddhahood. But this explanation of experience can only be made from the point of view of the

causal vehicle, in which bodhisattvas are differentiated from Buddhas. According to the resultant vehicle (Skt. Phalayāna; Tib. drebui thekpa [Wylie, 'bras bu'i theg pa]), bodhisattvas are fully Awake manifestations of Buddhas effortlessly emanating for the benefit of beings and so they are also beyond experience, indivisible from the Wisdom-mind of Buddhas.

“According to the Buddhist point of view, experience is always connected with dualistic mind. Dualistic mind depends on the ordinary inner elements of sentient beings and ordinary outer elements of the [seemingly] substantial world, which are the basis of all that exists in duality. These ordinary elements are affected by inner root circumstances, such as the conditions of the [seemingly] substantial world, which always rely on each other and always change. The experience of sentient beings is to continually react to the circle of manipulation between subject and object, inner and outer elements, and root [cause] and contributing circumstances, which all continuously change because they are occupied by the habit of duality. The object is unreliable because the subject is unreliable, like a mental patient who depends on a schizophrenic psychiatrist. Sometimes he may feel worse and sometimes better, but he cannot transcend his situation, because of endlessly circling between the subjective problems of the self and the objective problems of the other.”

¹⁸¹ If we assume the realist's hypothesis, we can explain this in terms of twentieth century physics, and note that according to Field Theory the universe is a continuum of energy with no empty spaces in it, which therefore can be categorized as absolute plenitude. In terms of this hypothesis, the Buddhist view would have to be explained by asserting that, since human consciousness is not a substance separate from the rest of totality, it is part of the same continuum of plenitude. When the illusion that we are a consciousness separate from the energy field arises, there arises the illusion that we are not part of that plenitude, and thus we experience lack of plenitude.

However, this is merely one of the possible different hypotheses concerning reality. Below in the regular text I explain how the Buddhist view can be explained in terms of each of them.

¹⁸² Below in the regular text and, in greater detail, in endnote 236 to this book, it will be clearly shown that the sciences do not find “truths” and their results are ideological and more than ideological—so that the sciences have been compared to magic and sorcery. Nevertheless, physicists believe it has been demonstrated that the “physical universe” is not in itself divided—which has been used to substantiate the Mahāyāna and other “higher” forms of Buddhism that our true condition is undivided and that divisions are introduced by mental processes. In fact, for Albert Einstein, the universe is a single energy field; for David Bohm (who worked with Einstein but whose theory is far from being as widely accepted as Einstein's), at the dimensional level of Planck's constant the universe is an “implicate order” in which there is neither space nor time (which are indispensable for there to be separations, which for their part are the condition for there to be separate entities); etc. In terms of Bohm's theory, for us to perceive a spatio-temporal reality the implicate order has to be spatio-temporalized so as to produce an explicate order. Whether or not this is so, as shown in this book, once we have a spatio-temporal reality entities are separated by our own mental functions, which recognize those configurations that maintain themselves as time passes (however, according to Einstein's Field Theory, these configurations are not constituted by the same portion of “matter-energy” as time passes, and therefore may not be regarded as substances in one of the most important Aristotelian senses of the term*). Then our mental functions associate them with concepts related to their essence, and single them out from the rest of the energy field that the universe is, taking them as figure (as our figure-ground minds are always compelled to do)—in Sartrean terms, by “nihilating” their environment in order to perceive them as separate entities. (In this explanation the existence of an objective “physical” reality external to our experience was taken for granted because this is the way physics proceeds.)

In these terms, part of the delusion affecting us is related to the fact that, upon perceiving entities, we feel that they are in themselves separate (from us and from the rest of the single energy field), that they are in themselves the contents of the thoughts in terms of which we understand them (“this is a dog,” “this is a house,” and so on), and that in themselves they have a positive, negative or neutral value. It is this that makes us spin in a circle of acceptance, rejection and indifference, causing us to oscillate between *duḥkha*-pervaded pleasure, pain, and *duḥkha*-pervaded neutral feeling, and thus giving rise to *saṃsāra*.

*This Aristotelian concept is quite logical: If an entity exchanges with its environment the matter of which it is made, then it cannot be said not to depend on anything else than itself to be what it is, for it depends

on matter that presently is not part of itself in order to continue to be itself in the future. It must be kept in mind, however, that Aristotle developed different concepts of substance in different works.

¹⁸³ According to Descartes, there was one uncreated substance—namely god—and two created substances, which were: (1) the soul or *res cogitans*, which was not spatial and thus did not occupy any space, and (2) the extended (“physical”) universe or *res extensa*, which was the spatial reality in the midst of which the *res cogitans* found itself. This involved the problem of how could two substances having so utterly different natures and constituents communicate so that the soul would be able to perceive through the senses of the human body, move the body at will, and so on. In face of the impossibility of solving this problem, Descartes asserted that the pineal gland was the link between soul and body. However, the pineal gland is part of the *res extensa* or extended (physical) universe, and thus Descartes’ “solution” did not solve anything, as it would be necessary to explain how can a nonspatial soul communicate with the spatial pineal gland (and thus we would still face the same initial problem). Obviously, the only way it could do so, would be by magical means—which would unacceptable to scientifically minded people. In the Mahāyāna and the higher Buddhist vehicles, mind and body are segments of a continuum, of which the middle segment is energy / voice.

¹⁸⁴ Starting from Realism and Materialism, on the basis of early twenty-century physics, philosophers such as Alfred North Whitehead and the Austrian Empirio-Criticists (Richard Avenarius, Ernst Mach [who never met Avenarius] and Avenarius’ disciple Joseph Petzoldt) came close to developing a nondual conception of reality. In particular, Avenarius stated that the single stuff of which the universe was made could not be said to be either “mental” or “physical,” nor could it be considered to be a third substance different from matter and mind.

¹⁸⁵ Lenin (1977; also Internet 1998-2012: Ch. I, 6: The solipsism of Mach and Avenarius) writes with the aim of refuting the Empirio-Criticists:

“Of Avenarius, his disciple Carstanjen says that he once expressed himself in private conversation as follows: ‘I know neither the physical nor the mental, but only some third (*Ein Drittes*).’ To the remark of one writer that the concept of this third was not given by Avenarius, Petzoldt replied: ‘We know why he could not advance such a concept (*Begriff*). The third lacks a counter-concept (*Gegenbegriff*). . . . The question, what is the third? is illogically put.’” (*Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung [Introduction to the Philosophy of Pure Experience]*, Vol. II, p. 329).

For his part, Carstanjen (2014) writes:

“The hidden ground for this is to be found in the relinquishment of the natural concept of the universe, in the division of the one universe into an inner and an outer world, in the division of the one course of events into a physical and a psychical, and in the need of connecting and uniting what has been artificially separated, the need of finding a mediator between the universe of ‘Being’ and that of ‘Thought’.

Actually the last phrase is wrong, for being, rather than lying in matter or nature, is a delusive creation of the human mind and a vibratory activity that seems to have its source in the center of the trunk at the level of the heart (Capriles, 2007 Vol. I). Back to Lenin and the Empirio-Criticists, aware of Einstein’s theories, and hence unable to negate the nondualism of Avenarius and others, V. I. Lenin (Ulianov, 1977; also Internet, 1998-2012), who deemed the concept of matter to be indispensable for dialectical materialism, and materialism to be necessary for socioeconomic “liberation,” in order to maintain the concept of matter, sophisticatedly defined matter as a “philosophical category” and declared that by definition “mental” phenomena are excluded from this category.

“Avenarius, on the contrary, has succeeded in once more presenting a view of the universe as one, which corresponds to theoretical as well as to practical needs.”

¹⁸⁶ If theories of this kind were correct, then the unity of the universe revealed by twentieth century physics and universally accepted ever since would be in fact the unity of the psychic stuff of which all entities would be made: while believing that they are probing a physical universe, physicists would in truth be probing their own mental experience and mental stuff.

¹⁸⁷ As noted again and again, *definitio fit per genus proximum et differentiam specificam* (definition is made by proximate genus and specific difference)—concepts being relative because of their being defined by inclusion in a wider genre that contains them (*genus proximum*) and in contrast with the most important among those concepts within the same genre that are mutually exclusive with them (*differentiam specificam*). If both what we regard as physical and what we deem to be mental are made

of the same stuff, this stuff cannot have differentia specificam—and since both the terms “physical” and “mental” are defined by their mutual contrast or differentia specificam, it would be utterly absurd to claim that this stuff is either physical or mental.

¹⁸⁸ This is precisely the conclusion Avenarius reached on the basis of position (1) and of early twenty-century physics. See note before last.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. endnote 76 to this Volume for a comprehensive substantiation of this.

¹⁹⁰ As shown elsewhere in the regular text, what here is rendered as energy is the third aspect of what the Dzogchen teachings call the Base (Tib. zhi [Wylie, gzhi]): the first aspect is its essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo]), which is the emptiness that allows for manifestation to occur; the second aspect is its nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang-bzhin]), which is clarity or reflectiveness that allows for the uninterrupted process of manifestation; and the third aspect is its energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]), consisting in the unobstructed / uninterrupted (Tib. magagpa [Wylie, ma 'gags pa]) and all-pervasive (Tib. kunkhyab [Wylie, kun khyab]) flow of phenomena and the latter's functionality—phenomena which, as we have seen, are a single continuum (despite the fact that in saṃsāra these phenomena manifest as though they existed in two separate dimensions, one internal and the other one external).

Some great masters have noted that the energy aspect is not to be recognized in phenomena, but in the instant preceding manifestation, in which an openness and readiness to manifest, which is unobstructed / uninterrupted (Tib. magagpa [Wylie, ma 'gags pa]) and all-pervasive (Tib. kunkhyab [Wylie, kun khyab]), becomes clearly apparent. This may be the proper way to correctly identify the Base's energy aspect, yet it does not mean that phenomena are not part of the Base's energy aspect: there is absolutely nothing other than or external to the Base, and since phenomena are that which the energy aspect is at all times manifesting, they may be properly regarded as being part of that aspect. In fact, the Tantra called in Tibetan Rigpa Rangshar Gyü (Wylie, *rig pa rang shar rgyud*) reads (alternative translation in Tulku Thöndup, 1996 [original ed. 1989], p. 206):

“The appearances of [the Base's] energy [aspect] (are) limitless [and limpid] like the cloudless sky.”

Moreover, Longchen Rabjam writes in the *Dzogpa Chenpo Semnyi Rangdröl* (Wylie, *rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid rang grol*; alternative translation in Tulku Thöndup, 1996, p. 326):

“The essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo]) of appearances and mind is emptiness, and that is the meaning of [the Base] *dharmakāya*;

“the nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin]) [of appearances] is unceasing, and that (is) the appearance of *sambhogakāya*;

“the characteristics [of appearances] are various and that is the [Base] *nirmāṇakāya* [which is the energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]).”

The above quotations make it clear that phenomena are part of the Base's] energy [aspect] (note that the second quotation also shows that the terms essence, nature and energy have various acceptations and thus may be explained in different ways). And nonetheless phenomena are utterly nonexistent: since they are nothing at all, they may not legitimately be regarded as being existent manifestations of the Base's energy aspect.

The single continuum consisting in the energy or thukje aspect of the Base may be viewed as being made up of the basic energy that the Dzogchen and Tantric teachings call thigle (Wylie, *thig le*); therefore, both the phenomena that in saṃsāra we experience as internal (which, as will be shown later on, belong to the mode of manifestation of energy the Dzogchen teachings call dang [Wylie, gdangs]) and those that in saṃsāra we experience as external (which, as will be shown later on, belong to the mode of manifestation of energy the Dzogchen teachings call tsel [Wylie, *rtsal*]) are made up of the same basic thigle energy. Below in the regular it will be shown that the circulation of this energy is called lung (Wylie, *rlung*), that the patterns (or “structural pathways”) of this circulation is called tsa (Wylie, *rtsa*), and that these two aspects of energy are responsible for the manifestation of all phenomena. (In other words, according to some Tantric teachings the lung is not only the circulation of thigle through certain “channels” or “structural pathways” in the human organism, and the tsa does not consist solely in the configuration of these “channels” or “structural pathways” in the human organism: the former includes all manifestations of circulating energy, and the latter includes all the configurations of this circulating energy that make of the plethora of phenomena.)

This may immediately bring to mind Einstein's Field Theory. However, in these teachings the basic energy that we perceive as an external universe is explicitly stated not to be a self-existing “physical” reality

inherently different and separate from all that in saṃsāra seems to manifest inside ourselves as mental phenomena: as it has been noted, this continuum of energy includes both what we deem to be mental and what we deem to be physical, and upon unveiling in nirvāṇa as it truly is, rather than appearing to be divided into two different dimensions, it shows itself to be a single continuum.

¹⁹¹ In Part Two of this book the three forms of manifestation of the Base's energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]) aspect, which arise as the play or display (Tib. rölpa [Wylie, rol pa]) of the energy in question, will be discussed in greater detail. However, given the doubts raised by one of the readers of this Part One of the book, it may be useful at this point to offer an extremely brief explanation of how these three forms of manifestation of energy develop, of how they become the basis of saṃsāra, and of how they are the means for the transcendence of saṃsāra in the consolidation of nirvāṇa.

The first form of manifestation of energy is dang (Wylie, gdangs), which is transparent, pure, clear and limpid, and therefore features no forms that may be perceived vividly, as we perceive the phenomena that manifest through our senses. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu describes this energy as follows (Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1996b, p. 32):

“Dang is a type of energy that is characteristic of the primordial state, the state of Contemplation, the state of Samantabhadra. In this case we are not talking about an inner or an outer dimension, of subject and object, but about the condition as it is, an authentic condition like the dharmakāya. So the example used is that of a crystal ball that is pure, clear and limpid, in which there is nothing in particular: this is our true nature... This is dang energy, the [true] condition of [which is the] *dharmakāya*.”

The primordial purity (Tib. katak [Wylie, ka dag]) or essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo]) of the Base (is) free from all dualities, including the extremes of existence and nonexistence, for it is inconceivable (Skt. *acintya*; Pāli: *acinteya*, *acintiya*; Tib. samye [Wylie, *bsam yas*] or samgyi mikhyabpa [Wylie, *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*]; Ch. 佛學辭彙 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxué cíhuì*; Wade-Gilles, *fo²-hsiueh² tz' u²-hui⁴*]) and inexpressible (Skt. *avācya*; Tib. marmepa [Wylie, *smrar med pa*]; Ch. 不可说物 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō wù*; Wade-Gilles, *pu⁴-k³-shuo¹ wu⁴*] / Skt. *anābhilāpya*; Tib. jöme or jödu mepa (Wylie, *brjod {du} med {pa}*); Ch. 不可說 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *bùkěshuō*; Wade-Gilles, *pu⁴-k³-shuo¹*]). Since it (is) utter emptiness free from inherent apprehensible characteristics it is free from the extreme of existence and hence does not justify holding to the extreme of eternalism; and since the Base (is) spontaneously perfect / self-accomplishing / self-rectifying, and since it (is) self-effulgent, it is free from the extreme of nonexistence and hence does not justify holding to the extreme view of nihilism. It is also free from the alternatives of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, for it has the potential to manifest both possibilities—although it is in nonstatic *nirvāṇa* that its true condition becomes fully patent. The Tantra called in Tibetan *Rigpa Rangshar Gyü* (Wylie, *rig pa rang shar rgyud*) reads (alternative translation in Tulku Thöndup, 1996 [original ed. 1989], p. 206) reads:

“Primordial purity, the Base, (is) manifest as essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, *ngo bo*]), nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, *rang bzhin*]) and energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, *thugs rje*]; lit. compassion). The essence (is) the ceaseless, changeless inherent gnosis, and it is called the condition of the youthful vase body (Tib. zhönu bumku [Wylie, *gzhon nu bum sku*]). The nature is the ceaseless appearances of the five lights. The appearances of [the Base's] energy [aspect] (are) limitless [and limpid] like the cloudless sky. These are called the condition of primordial purity because they do not fall into dimensions of partialities [en hence are free from extremes].”

However, as we read in the terma revealed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu titled **Longchen ösel khandro nyingthik thigle tawa lode chenpoi ne changshik** (Wylie, *klong chen 'od gsal mkha' 'gro'i snying thig las lta ba blo 'das chen po'i gnad byang bshigs*), in the process of genesis of saṃsāra, “because of dualistic ignorance [and delusion], the natural dang of the Base, the innate and self-originated wisdom, is covered...” and it is this that gives rise to the eight saṃsāric consciousnesses. How does this happen? **Longchen Rabjam wrote in Tsikdön Rinpochei Dzö** (Wylie, *tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*):

“15a/2: Having broken the shell (Tib. gya [Wylie, *rgya*]) of the youthful vase body, the primordial Base of the originally pure, absolute sphere, by the flow (Tib. gyöpe [Wylie, *gyos pas*]) of the energy / wind of primordial gnosis, the self-appearances (Tib. rangnang [Wylie, *rang snang*]) of the nondual and hence nonconceptual Awake awareness called rigpa flash out (Tib. phag [Wylie, 'phags]) from the Base as the eight spontaneously perfect / spontaneously accomplished / self-rectifying doors (for an explanation of these doors cf. Tulku Thöndup, 1996, p. 206, footnote 1).”

From the appearances of the eight spontaneously perfect / spontaneously accomplished / self-rectifying doors everything that pertains to nirvāṇa and everything that pertains to saṃsāra arises as the forms of outer luminosity (Tib. *chisel* [Wylie, *spyi gsal*]) are projected by the inner luminosity (Tib. *nangsel* [Wylie, *nang gsal*]). According to the teachings, “as the appearances proper to each of the eight modes or doors of consciousness sequentially emerge in their natural order,” saṃsāra fully manifests, and as they are reabsorbed back into the consciousness of the base-of-all, they subside into the neutral condition of the base-of-all. All the appearances that thus arise and subside (are) no other than the Base, and are of one taste with the Base—even though, as shown elsewhere in this volume, one cannot say that the Base and phenomena are either one and the same, nor other than each other and different from each other.

Cosmologically speaking, after the manifestation of the inner luminosity of dang energy subtle luminous forms of rölpa (Wylie, *rol pa*) energy manifest, working as the condition of possibility of the subsequent origination of tsel (Wylie, *rtsal*) energy and of dualistic appearances in general. Speaking in the context of the practice of the Series of pith instructions, as briefly shown in the discussion of Contemplation (Tib. *gompa* [Wylie, *sgom pa*]) below in the regular text of this volume, and in greater detail in Vol. II of this book, the manifestation of rölpa energy is also the condition that later on, when the individual is in saṃsāra, will make it possible for the dualism inherent in tsel energy to be neutralized through practices such as those of Thögel (Wylie, *thod rgal*) and the Yangthik (Wylie, *yang thig*). It is when appearances seem to lie in a dimension (Tib. *ying* [Wylie, *dbyings*]) appearing to be external to the individual that the threefold directional thought structure has come into play, having been reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, and therefore dualistic appearances have arisen. It is at this point that, with regard to the apparently external dimension (Tib. *chiying* [Wylie, *spyi dbyings*]) produced by the manifestation of tsel energy, dang energy—which as we have seen is neither internal nor external, for it is not dualistic—appears to constitute an internal dimension (Tib. *nangying* [Wylie, *nang dbyings*]). Furthermore, when the phenomena of tsel energy are reflected by dang energy in the dimmer way in which forms manifest in this energy, they seem to lie in this internal dimension—just as occurs when the phenomena of the “physical” world are reflected in a crystal ball, and hence seem to lie inside the ball.

Furthermore, the thoughts that in saṃsāra are hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized—coarse, subtle or intuitive, and super-subtle (such as the directional threefold thought structure)—are not manifestations of tsel energy or of rölpa energy, but of the colorless, clear and limpid dang energy, and as such are as transparent, pure, limpid and clear as this energy. Once tsel energy arises and subsequently the three types of concepts are hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized, the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the directional threefold thought structure causes even phenomena of the dang energy such as thoughts to be perceived dualistically, as though they were objects to a mental subject lying at a distance from the latter—and rather than being realized to be dang manifestations of the primordial state, they conceal the true condition of dang energy, being taken to be self-existent concepts that either correspond to the phenomena of tsel energy (and thus are taken to be true) or fail to correspond to them (and hence are taken to be false).

It is at this point that we need a practice in order to overcome the basic delusion at the root of saṃsāra. In fact, Longchen Rabjam wrote in **Tsikdön Rinpochei** Dzö (Wylie, *tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*) 18a/3 (alternative translation in Tulku Thöndup, 1996, p. 20):

“At the very moment of the arising of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness called rigpa from the Base, the eight spontaneous appearances of the Base arise naturally. By not apprehending those appearances as other [than one’s own Awake awareness] and realizing them to (be) the natural glow or inherent radiance [of the awareness in question] with a pure awareness (Tib. *zuwoi lö* [Wylie, *gzu bo’i blos*]), the movements [in awareness] cease of their own accord. At the first movement, by realizing the very essence of the spontaneously arisen appearances, the realization [of emptiness] takes place... At the second movement, delusions are dispelled and the [self-perfection / self-accomplishment / self-rectification] of primordial gnosis [manifests and] develops. That is the development of the Base’s [self-realization] as the Fruit of Awakening. It is called re-Awakening (or spontaneous liberation of all delusions) through the realization of the essence, primordial Buddhahood. Once the self-appearances have dissolved into primordial purity [/ emptiness] and Awakening at the Base as [it was originally] has

occurred, it is called the Lord All-is-Viable [or All-Good Lord, the primordial Buddha: Samantabhadra / Kuntuzangpo].”

At to the practice, as shown below in the regular text, in the Upadeśavarga (Tib. Menngagde [Wylie, man ngag sde]) series of Dzogchen teachings, the first level of practice is that of Tekchö (Wylie, khregs chod) or that of the Nyingthik (Wylie, snying thig), which consists in reGnizing that which (is) the stuff and true essence or nature of whichever thought is manifest at the moment—upon which they liberate themselves spontaneously and dang energy manifests as it always (was) in truth: as the pure, clear and limpid dharmakāya. This shows that such was always the true nature of the phenomena of dang energy, which is that of all thoughts, and puts an end to the illusion of dualism, and in particular to the illusion of there being two different dimensions, one inside and the other one outside—until the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought manifests again, giving rise to dualism and to the illusion of there being two different dimensions.

When the above practice has thoroughly consolidated, it is appropriate to undertake the practice of Thögel or that of the Yangthik, so that the dynamic of rölpa (Wylie, rol pa) energy may catalyze the process of spontaneous liberation of delusion and in the long term put an end to the illusion of there being a self-existent physical world in a dimension external to the individual—which takes place when the Fruit has been attained, which involves the irreversible merging of the rölpa and tsel modes of manifestation of energy. It is only at this point that the illusion of dualism in general, and the illusion of there being two different dimensions in particular, arise no more.

¹⁹² Though mind and mental factors or mental events, being indivisible, are not a duality, the basic delusion that gives rise to saṃsāra may cause them to appear to be a duality.

Different schools list different numbers of “omnipresent” mental factors or events (i.e. those that are involved in all cognitions); however, all of them acknowledge contact (Skt. *sparśa*; Pāli *phassa*; Tib. regpa [Wylie, *reg pa*]; Ch. 觸 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *chù*; Wade-Giles, *ch'u⁴*]); feeling-tone (Skt. *vedanā*; Pāli *vedanā*; Tib. tsorwa [Wylie, *tshor ba*]; 受 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *shòu*; Wade-Giles, *shou⁴*]); recognition, conceptualization or perception (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. dushé [Wylie, *'du shes*]; Ch. 想 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang³*]); impulse (Skt. *cetanā*; Pāli *cetanā*; Tib. sempa [Wylie, *sems pa*]; Ch. 思 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sī*; Wade-Giles, *ssu¹*]), which propels attention toward a potential object that then is singled out (or propels the mind into action, etc.); and attention (Skt. *manasikāra*; Pāli *manasikāra*; Tib. yiché [Wylie, *yid byed*]; Ch. 作意 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *zuò yì*; Wade-Giles, *tsuo⁴-yi⁴*]).

Among the above, let me take impulse as an example. If I am a good Buddhist monk with heterosexual propensities and I set out to meditate by concentrating on a statue of Śākyamuni's, when I direct my attention toward the statue I get the impression that I am in control of the impulse that sets it on the object: there seems to be a duality between mind and this mental factor or mental event, but the mind seems to be in control of it. Then a very attractive girl dressed in a mini-skirt and a see-through blouse comes into the temple as a tourist and enters the periphery of my visual field. At this point impulse automatically tends to direct my attention away from the statue of Śākyamuni's and toward the girl, but since I am a good monk I struggle to keep it on the object: at the point when attention was automatically shifting toward the girl I was experiencing a duality between mind and this mental factor or mental event, but the mental factor or event was not felt to be fully under the control of the mind; contrariwise, it seemed to be behaving rather autonomously, and it almost managed to direct the mind toward the object against my wishes. However, then I managed to take control of the mental factor or event and concentrate on the statue, and therefore, though there was still the appearance of a duality between mind and the mental factor or event, again I felt that the mind was in control of the mental factor or event.

In other words, I believe the Abhidharmakośa and other books on the mind and the mental events describe impulse in such a way that there can be no doubt that it refers to that which impels attention toward its object, but that the wording of the descriptions is such that the event described would encompass both the fully intentional and the not-fully-intentional movements of attention toward objects. If this is so, then it is incorrect to render the Sanskrit term *cetanā*, the Pāli *cetanā*; the Tib. sempa (Wylie, *sems pa*) and the Ch. 思 (Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *sī*; Wade-Giles, *ssu¹*) as “intention” or “volition,” for those terms no doubt encompass intention and volition, but their meaning is wider than that of these terms.

¹⁹³ As stated in the preceding note, all Buddhist systems list recognition (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. dushé [Wylie, *'du shes*]; Ch. 想 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang³*]), which may also be translated into English either as “conceptualization” or as “perception,” among the omnipresent mental

factors or mental events, which are those that occur in all cognitions. The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (Tib. *Chöngönpa kunle tüpa* [Wylie, *chos mngon pa kun las btus pa*]; Ch. 大乘阿毘達磨集論 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *Dàshéng āpídámó jí lùn*; Wade-Giles, *Ta⁴-sheng² a¹-pi²-ta²-mo² chi² lun⁴*]) states (Guenther, Herbert V. and L. Kawamura, trans. 1975):

“What is the absolutely specific characteristic of recognition? It is to know by association. It is to see, hear, specify, and to know by way of taking up the defining characteristics (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Pāli *lakkhāṇa*; Tib. *tsennyi* [Wylie, *mtshan nyid*]; Ch. 相 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *xiāng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹*]) [of an object] and distinguishing them.”

For its part, Vasubandhu’s *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa* (Tib. *Phungpo ngai rabtu chepa* [Wylie, *phung po lnga’i rab tu byed pa*]; Ch. 大乘五蘊論 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *Dàshéng wǔyùn lùn*; Wade-Giles, *Ta⁴-sheng² wu³-yün⁴ lun⁴*]); says (Guenther & Kawamura, trans. 1975):

“What is recognition? It is taking hold of the defining characteristics of an object.”

Some schools explain this in terms of the simile of a screen in which figures are painted, and in which the figures are made up of conditioning reproductions of conceptions-impressions (Skt. *vāsanā*; Tib. *bagchag* [Wylie, *bag chags*]; Ch. 氣習 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *qìxí*; Wade-Giles, *ch’i⁴-hsi²*] or 習氣 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *xíqì*; Wade-Giles, *hsi²-ch’i⁴*]), which is interposed between the contact of the senses with their objects, and the perceiving consciousness. In particular, according to the *Pramāṇavinīścaya* (Tib. *Tsema nampar ngepa* [Wylie, *tshad ma rnam par nges pa*]) by Master Dharmakīrti and to the schools based on this text (on which Gelugpas and Sakyapas disagree), we only know the “real object” (which they call **particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics** (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *rangtsen* [Wylie, *rang mtshan*]; Ch. 自相 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *zìxiàng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsi⁴ang⁴*]) for an instant, and immediately thereafter we perceive the image of the object that, so to speak, was “photographed” on the screen in past experiences and associated with a given meaning or understanding (this image is what they call abstracted general configurations / collections of characteristics *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *chitsen* [Wylie, *spyi mtshan*]; Ch. 共相 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *gòngxiàng*; Wade-Giles, *kung⁴-hsi⁴ang⁴*]). (In Capriles, electronic publication 2004, I compared the images of objects posited by Dharmakīrti with Hume’s and Locke’s ideas; however, I also had to differentiate between these concepts.)

However, a “screen” could be interposed between consciousness and the potential object apprehended by my senses only if consciousness were inherently at a distance of its objects—which is not at all the case. In *samsāra* there is an illusory split between consciousness and its objects that causes them to appear to be at a distance from each other, but this split is a function of an even subtler instance of what the simile represents as a “screen”—namely the one produced by the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought-structure. Therefore, the simile is far from precise. In fact, if the simile of the screen is to be used, it cannot be circumscribed to the mental factor or mental event called recognition, which allows us as subjects to identify objects, but should be applied to all three kinds of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized concepts (Skt. *vikalpa*; Pāli *vikappa*; Tib. *nampar tokpa* or *namtok* [Wylie, *rnam par rtog pa*]; Ch. 分別 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *fēnbíé*; Wade-Giles, *fen¹-pieh²*): coarse, subtle or intuitive, and super-subtle. Since in terms of this view the subject-object duality is also introduced by one of the screens, the screens as a whole could not be said to interpose themselves between the consciousness and the contact of the senses with their objects, but would have to be said to introduce the illusion that there is a subject and an object at a distance from each other, and immediately thereafter to introduce the image of the object that resulted from past experiences, and give rise to the illusion that the object is this image.

At any rate, it is of utmost importance to distinguish between hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized conceptualization (Skt. *vikalpa*; Pāli *vikappa*; Tib. *nampar tokpa* or *namtok* [Wylie, *rnam {par} rtog {pa}*]; Ch. 分別 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *fēnbíé*; Wade-Giles, *fen¹-pieh²*] or Skt. *prapañca*; Pāli *papañca*; Tib. *thöpa* [Wylie, *spros pa*]; Ch. 戲論 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *xìlùn*; Wade-Giles, *hsi⁴-lun⁴*]) and recognition (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushé* [Wylie, *’du shes*]; Ch. 想 [Hànǚ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang³*]), which is an instance of the former. Furthermore, as remarked above, it is important to keep in mind that the interpretation of conditioned perception in terms of the screen is far from being perfectly accurate and faithful to reality.

¹⁹⁴ This tendency and the associated pre-conceptual interest are aspects of what the Dzogchen teachings call consciousness of the base-of-all (Skt. *ālayavijñāna*; Tib. *kunzhi namshe* / *kunzhi nampar shepa* [Wylie,

kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}). Third Promulgation canonical texts such as the *Lankāvatārasūtra* and the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (which according to Lindtner is posterior to the former) and related treatises such as the *Yogācārabhūmi* (which according to Schmithausen predated the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*) and the Tantric and Dzogchen teachings understand as referring to a receptacle consciousness—a kind of unconscious that, rather than being static and substantial, is described as an insubstantial stream of consciousness (Skt. *saṃtāna*; Tib. *gyün* [Wylie, *rgyun*] or *semgyü* [Wylie, *sems rgyud*]; Ch. 相續 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāngxù*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹-hsü⁴*]). However, this is not the sense of the term in this context, wherein it has the alternative meaning it has in the Dzogchen teachings: that of the presence of a segment of the sensory continuum that has been singled out, before the perception of that which was single out in terms of a subtle concept of the kind that the Dzogchen teachings (as well as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti in the Mahāyāna) called an *arthasāmānya* (and, according to the Gelug view, which Berzin [2001] asserts to be also that of the Dzogchen teachings, also a collection mental synthesis [Tib. *tsogchi* {Wylie, *tshogs spyi*}] and a class mental synthesis [Skt. *jāṭisāmānya*; Tib. *rigchi* {Wylie, *rigs spyi*}]). Below in the regular text of this book an extremely brief explanation of the stages in the development of *saṃsāra* according to the Dzogchen teachings will be offered; they were also considered in Capriles (2013abc). Note that the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* and the *Yogācārabhūmi* are at the root of philosophical schools of the Mahāyāna such as the Cittamātra and/or Yogācāra School, the Mādhyamika-Svātantrika-Yogācāra subschool(s)... However, the Uma Zhentongpa (Wylie, *dbu ma gzhan stong pa*; Skt. reconstr. *paraśūnyatāvāda* or *parabhavaśūnyatāvāda*) and/or Mahāmādhyaṃka (Tib. Uma Chenpo [Wylie, *dbu ma chen po*]) subschool(s) are based on other Third Promulgation sūtras, on some Mahāyāna treatises and on certain root Tantras.

After a segment of the continuum of *sensa* is singled out for perception or recognition (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushé* [Wylie, *'du shes*]; Ch. 想 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang³*]), yet before its recognition in terms of the content of a subtle thought of the kind that the Dzogchen teachings (as well as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti in the Mahāyāna) called an *arthasāmānya*, that which texts of the Pramānavāda refer to by the Sanskrit term *pratyakṣa* (Tib. *ngönsum* [Wylie, *mngon sum*]; Ch. 現量 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiànlíang*; Wade-Giles, *hsien⁴-liang²*])—which translators render as nonconceptual direct perception or as bare sensation, but which here I render as preperception—takes place. As to the reason for using this translation, it is that I am using the term perception as a synonym of recognition (Skt., Tib. and Ch. at the beginning of this paragraph)—i.e. the understanding of data of one or more of the six senses [as a rule, of a singled out segment of the sensory continuum] in terms of a concept—and the term sensation for the presence of *sensa*, independently of whether or not they are being perceived in terms of a concept—which does not correspond to that which Dharmakīrti called *pratyakṣa*, which is the bare, preperceptual patency of a segment of the continuum of sensation that is singled out by mental events. Since the process of singling out is always activated by a preconceptual¹⁹⁴ interest and the *pratyakṣa* of the singled-out segment is immediately followed by its conceptual perception or recognition, it is not bare sensation. Since perception has not yet occurred, it is not direct perception. Not being either bare sensation or direct perception, the best label to refer to it I have found so far is preperception. (As such, the phenomenon under discussion may seem to coincide—at least in part—with the referent of the term consciousness of the base-of-all [Skt. *ālayavijñāna*; Tib. *kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}*], when used in the phenomenal sense it is given in the Dzogchen teachings—for example, in discussions of the arising of *saṃsāra* from the base-of-all [Skt. *ālaya*; Tib. *kunzhi* {Wylie, *kun gzhi*}; Ch. 来源 {Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *láiyuán*; Wade-Giles, *lai²-yüan²*}); cf. Capriles, 2003, 2013abcd).

At any rate, that which drives us to single out a figure is explained in terms of concepts that will be defined in a subsequent note: (a) that we have what the Dzogchen teachings (and in the Mahāyāna Dignāga and Dharmakīrti) called an *arthasāmānya* of that which we single out, and (b) that interest is aroused at the moment for what the concept expresses. (Infants can learn to distinguish the segments of the sensory continuum that we regard as different entities because those segments maintain their configuration or pattern—from the visual standpoint, their color-form—in the mist of the constant change of the pattern or configuration of the sensory field, and because those who raise and teach them let them know that each of those segments is an entity in itself separate from the rest and that it is in itself this or that. Now, once infants have learned to distinguish entities, it is their interest for this or that which makes them single it out and take it as figure instead of singling out something else and taking it as figure—and

hence from then on our concepts are the driving power behind our singling out of the segments of the sensory continuum that we take as figure.)

¹⁹⁵ The Dzogchen teachings explain the arising of saṃsāra within the “Base” in a greater number of steps; however, in this Part One of this book we are concerned with giving a general idea of the arising and the dynamics of delusion and saṃsāra, rather than with explaining exhaustively how these come forth from an absorption in which neither nirvāṇa nor saṃsāra were active, and in which avidyā or marigpa has only manifested in the first of the three senses the terms has in the threefold classification adopted here. In the upcoming definitive version in print of *Capriles* (electronic publication 2004)—provided that I complete it—as well as in Part Two of this book, I will explain sequentially according to the Dzogchen teachings the principal stages of the arising of saṃsāra (and therefore of the second and third types of avidyā or marigpa posited in the threefold classification adopted here) from an absorption in which neither nirvāṇa nor saṃsāra were active.

Besides, it must be noted that, although the figures we perceive are singled out in the Base by our own mind and mental factors or mental events (Skt. *caitta* or *caitasika*; Pāli *cetasika*; Tib. *semjung* [Wylie, *sems byung*]; Ch. 心所 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīnsuǒ*; Wade-Giles, *hsin¹-so³*]), they can be thus singled out because in the realms of middle dimensions (though not at the subatomic level) these figures maintain a continuity of form through the passing of time, which allows us to identify them as entities. This is what Plato explained in terms of articulations: even though the arm, the forearm and the hand are segments singled out by our consciousness in the same undivided arm and even in the same undivided body, we can refer to them by different names because the arm’s articulations provide us with a valid reason to distinguish between them.

¹⁹⁶ First of all, we recognize the object in terms of an intuitive thought (i.e. of a thought that does not consist in the “mental pronunciation” of a series of words, but which consists in the mute knowledge that the segment of the continuum of sensation that has been singled out is a door, a dog, a tree, a car, etc.: Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* [Wylie, *don spyi*]; Ch. 總事 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-shih⁴*] or 總義 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*]); immediately thereafter, it may happen that we express this recognition in terms of a discursive thought (Skt. *śabdāsāmānya*; Tib. *drachi* [Wylie, *sgra spyi*]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*]) telling ourselves mentally “this is a door,” “this is a dog,” “this is a tree,” “this is a car,” etc. Both thoughts are hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized when they manifest; however, the first to manifest is the intuitive one.

¹⁹⁷ Of course, these thoughts have to be applicable to these aspects or “qualities”: for us to say correctly that a lemon is yellow it will have to be more or less yellow: it could not be altogether green. However, other qualities depend to a greater degree on the idiosyncratic tastes of the perceiving individual: one individual may think a salad dressing containing vinegar is delicious, while another one who detests vinegar may judge it to be really awful.

It may be noted that, since the sensory world can be seen from the temporal point of view as a process, the segments we single out in this world and interpret as static substantial and subsistent entities, can be seen as segments of the “universal process,” or as subprocesses within a single process. In terms of this way of seeing, qualities are our interpretation, on the basis of our own judgments, of aspects of these subprocesses.

¹⁹⁸ As noted elsewhere in this book, Śākyamuni’s realized that his immediate disciples in the Buddhist order were śrāvakas or “listeners” and thus were suited to the teachings of the Hīnayāna, but would have been frightened by the Mahāyāna teachings of the Prajñāpāramitā, which required a higher capacity and the related propensities, including greater spiritual courage, for they posited a far more thorough conception of the emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*; Tib. *tongpanyi* [Wylie, *stong pa nyid*]; Ch. 空 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *kòng*; Wade-Giles, *k’ung⁴*; Jap. *kū*]) of entities. Therefore, according to those sources, he left these teachings in the custody of the *nāgas* (Tib. *lu* [Wylie, *klu*]; Ch. 龍 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lóng*; Wade-Giles, *lung²*]; note that unlike the Tibetan translation of *nāga*, the Ch. 龍 also renders the English word “dragon”—the Tib. for dragon being *druk* [Wylie, *’brug*]), for them to be revealed over half millennium later by Mahāyāna mystic and philosopher Nāgārjuna, who according to most Western scholars, lived around the second century AD, but according to Tibetans may have lived from 80 BC to 480 CE.

¹⁹⁹ Mahāyāna Buddhism classifies grasping / conceiving a self or substance (Skt. *grāha*; Tib. *dzinpa* [Wylie, *’dzin pa*]) into grasping at / conceiving a self or substance in human beings (Skt. *ātmagraha*;

Tib. dagdzin [Wylie, *bdag 'dzin*]; Ch. 我執 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wǒzhí*; Wade-Giles, *wo³-chih²*])—which include the human beings we are as well as other human beings, who can cause us to experience ourselves as objects to them, causing us to feel good when they perceive us as having good qualities, or to feel bad and possibly have our subjectivity impaired when they perceive us as having bad qualities—and grasping at / conceiving a self or substance in phenomena that are not human beings (Skt. *dharmātmagraha*; Tib. *chökyi dagdzin* [Wylie, *chos kyi bdag 'dzin*]; Ch. 分別法我執 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fēnbié fǎwǒzhí*; Wade-Giles, *fen¹-pieh² fa³-wo³-chih²*])—i.e. grasping at things, which in our post-shamanic times we as a rule experience as objects, and so there is no risk that they will make us experience ourselves as objects to them, causing us to either feel good or feel bad).

When we grasp at phenomena that are not human beings, or when we grasp at another human being whom we are taking as object but who does not have the possibility to perceive us and who therefore cannot take as object, indirectly we are grasping at our own self: if I badly wish to eat that delicious, well prepared dish, I am directly grasping at the dish, and I am indirectly grasping at the supposedly true and important hungry self who wants to eat the dish.

Conversely, when we grasp at our own self, the latter is both the direct object and the indirect object of grasping: the direct object is a collection of characteristics that is supposed to be [part of] our own self (for example, our body or a part of our body, our speaking, one of our actions, etc), and the indirect object is our consciousness, equally supposed to be [part of] our own self.

In Mādhyamaka terms, grasping at human beings and grasping at phenomena that are not human beings implies taking both ourselves and the objects of our grasping as being self-existing entities. As part of the remedy against the evils of grasping, the subschools of Mādhyamaka posited the selflessness or emptiness of human beings and the absence of an independent self-nature or emptiness of those phenomena that are not human beings, each of which, as stated in an earlier note, was in turn divided into coarse one and a subtle one. The explanation of these was given in that note.

²⁰⁰ As I have remarked in *Capriles* (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.) and in a series of other works, Heraclitus seems to have referred to *avidyā* or *marigpa* (Wylie, *ma rig pa*) by the Greek term *lethe* (λήθη), which in the Orphic tradition meant forgetfulness (in their tradition, after death souls crossed the river of Lethe, forgetting their previous life), but which in the Dionysian tradition might have had the acceptations of “concealment” or “veiling”—which seems to be a great part of the sense of the term in the book of Heraclitus, for it seems to have referred to unawareness of the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena, and probably also to a distorted perception of the given (as is the case with *avidyā* in higher Buddhism and in particular in the Dzogchen teachings). He seems to have referred to the disclosure of the true condition of reality in the manifestation of *vidyā* or *rigpa* (Wylie, *rig pa*), by the term *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια), which means “unveiling.”

As to the claim that Heraclitus was a younger contemporary of Śākyamuni, that is what follows from the conventional dating and chronology of both the Buddha and the Ephesian, which as noted in the regular text above is currently called into question.

²⁰¹ The reasons why Hume refuted the supposed substantiality of the “T” probably were radically different from the ones that led Śākyamuni Buddha and a series of Buddhist philosophers to do likewise, but also seem to have been very different from those behind similar attempts by Western philosophers other than Hume.

In fact, the latter’s attempt to show substantiality to be a mere fiction was a consequence of his empiricism, according to which sense impressions necessarily had to be the direct or indirect basis of all knowledge: since the impression of substance did not exist, for it was simply impossible that there could be such an impression, substance necessarily had to be a fiction produced by the human mind, and therefore there was no reality whatsoever that could be referred to as substance. Furthermore, to Hume each and every different object, and every object consisting of parts, is distinguishable, and all that is distinguishable is separable. He concludes (Hume, David, this ed. 1978, Part I, sec. VI, p. 16):

“We have therefore no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it... The idea of substance,is nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection.”

Hume offers a nominalistic solution to the problem of substance. In fact, the word “substance” is nothing but a name that is applied to a bundle or collection of qualities, for there is nothing that be the support

of those qualities or that may contain those qualities: all there is, is the collection of particular qualities and nothing else.

Hume regards the problem of the identity of the “self” or “I” as a special instance of the problem of the identity of substance, quite different from that of the supposed substance of the entities appearing as object. In fact, in Hume (this ed. 1978, IV, V), he argues that the illusion that the “self” or “I” is substantial doesn’t derive from a sense impression, from the association of a series of impressions, or from the association of a series of ideas derived from previous impressions, for there is not even an impression or series of impressions that may correspond to the “self,” “I,” or “personal identity.” Therefore, the substantiality of this “self,” “I,” or “personal identity” should be considered to be even more fictitious than that of the entities that appear as object (for this to be correctly understood, we must keep in mind that he was not identifying the “I” with the sum of mind, voice, body, qualities and activities [for there can be no doubt that there are impressions corresponding to the voice, body, qualities and activities], but he was taking it to correspond to the mind understood as a substance and thought to be our innermost identity).

To conclude, Hume did not assert the absolute nonexistence of all instances of the “I;” what he did was to assert that the “I” — whether it is conceived as a metaphysical, psychological or epistemological entity — is not at all substantial, and to negate the existence of an “I” that would be simple and identical with itself, or identical throughout the whole of its manifestations. He stated that, upon entering what we call “I,” he always found one or another particular perception, and hence concluded that the “I” was nothing but a series of perceptions linked by associations.

Though Hume’s reasons for denying the substantiality of the “I” or “self” are different from those that led both Śākyamuni’s Buddha and Heraclitus to do likewise, at first sight the conception of the “I” as a bundle may seem somehow similar to the Buddhist explanation of it as an illusion produced by the interaction of the five aggregates (Skt. *skandha*; Pāli *khandha*; Tib. *phungpo* [Wylie, *phung po*]; Ch. 蘊 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *yùn*; Wade-Giles, *yün*⁴]). Hume tells us, in fact, that despite the fact that the so-called “selves” ...are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement... we imagine that there must be a support for these impressions which would be different from them and that would remain identical to itself under all of them: a soul or a mental “I” qua underlying substance. Furthermore, because Hume negated that any of these impressions responded to a substance, his conception was not that far from the Mahāyāna view according to which the *skandhas* are also insubstantial.

Like Hume, Nietzsche rejected the supposed substantiality of the “I.” However, unlike Hume, he did not elaborate an encompassing theory in order to explain its insubstantiality, which he accepted because it was implicit in the Dionysian religion, to which in theory he initially adhered—even though I am of the opinion that he contradicted it with his practice, and even though he rejected Asian Dionysism because he thought that it went too far.

²⁰² Lichtenberg asserted that to argue from sensations to an ego, self or soul as their bearer, as Descartes did, was not logically warranted, and in this regard insisted that to say cogito was to say too much, for as soon as it was translated into “I think” it seemed necessary to postulate an ego, self or soul. And in fact the crux of Descartes’ error was precisely that he was trying to prove that the fact that there was thinking demonstrated the existence of a thinking ego, self or soul.

In *Aphorismen, nach den Handschriften* (Lichtenberg, 1902/1908, Spanish 1989/1995, section “Causes,” p. 214) the idea we are concerned with is expressed roughly as follows:

“One should not say ‘I think’: one thinks like the sky flashes lightening.”

In turn, Koyré’s book (in the index of which the statement is attributed to James K. Lichtenberg rather than to Georg Christoph Lichtenberg) expresses the idea we are concerned with as follows (Koyré, 1973, p. 17; cited in Capriles, 1994.):

“It would be better to use an impersonal formula and, rather than saying I think, say “it thinks in me.”

Thus expressed, the statement would be far less precise than Heraclitus’. The point is that thinking is a function of the single true condition of all entities rather than an action performed by a purportedly separate, autonomous soul or mind, and that thoughts are made up of the dang form of manifestation of the energy of the single true condition of all entities. So it is correct to say that it is not the limited “I” (i.e. that which deluded beings wrongly consider to be their true identity)—whether conceived as a soul or substantial mind, as the whole entity referred to by one’s name—that thinks. However, that which

thinks is not something different from or external to ourselves (as Koyré's wording of Lichtenberg's statement seem to imply), but our true condition, and this condition does not think "in the I" (i.e. in the limited "I" that deluded beings wrongly consider to be their true identity), but in its own sphere, which encompasses everything. In Buddhist terms, thoughts are data of the sixth sense, which according to the Dzogchen teachings perceives phenomena of dang energy, and which presents those data to the mind (so to speak) so that it may experience them.

We cannot be absolutely sure of the original form of Lichtenberg's statements because by the time Albert Leitzmann edited *Aphorismen, nach den Handschriften*, many of the notes by Lichtenberg, which were extant when the *Vermischte Schriften* were edited between 1800 and 1803, had been lost.

²⁰³ These verses by the Mexican Nobel Prize awarded poet correctly implies that Descartes' intuition was delusive, for there is no separate "I" who thinks the thoughts: this "I" is an illusion produced by the thinking process, and this illusion is somehow like the shadow of the words that follow each other in discursive thinking (because the mental subject appears "indirectly and implicitly" in both cognitions and actions).

²⁰⁴ Seventeenth-century philosopher Blaise Pascal (1662 [posthumous edition, 1669]) presented all human attempts to elude boredom and uneasiness as movements away from authenticity. Nineteenth-century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (trans. W. Lowry, this ed. 1957, 3d impress. 1970; Kierkegaard, trans. W. Lowry, this ed. 1954) viewed similarly all our attempts to flee *Angst* (essential anguish/dread). Later on, in the twentieth century, Existential and Existentialist philosophers equated authenticity with facing anguish: the former would lie in ceasing to "flee" (so to speak, for in this context the term cannot be taken literally) the naked experience of being-in-relation-to-death (Heidegger, 1996 [original German 1927], § 45-53), the naked experience of the anguish that the being of the human individual is (Sartre, 1980), etc. In fact, in Sartre's words, the being of the human individual is anguish, and as such it reveals itself in the experience of anguish—as well as in others such as boredom, uneasiness, nausea.

Sartre (*ibidem*) distinguished between fear and anguish, noting that the former is fear that something undesirable may happen, and the latter is fear that our own actions may cause something undesirable. Experiments in the lab have proven the validity of this distinction, as they have shown that rats develop ulcers and cardio-vascular illnesses when subject to consistent punishments that depend on their own decisions, but do not develop the same illnesses when subject to consistent punishments that do not depend on their own decisions.

For a more detailed consideration of all of the above, see Capriles (1977; 1986; electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.).

(In the East, thousands of years ago Buddhist traditions asserted that, in order to move from *samsāra* to *nirvāṇa*, it was essential to train in awareness of the myriad sufferings and shortcomings of *samsāra*—the all-pervasiveness and constancy of *duḥkha* or "unhappy consciousness," the certainty of old age, illness and death, and so on—and implied that eluding awareness of these sufferings and shortcomings represented a movement away from authenticity. However, they never suggested that one should remain anguished or unhappy forever: anguish was merely the springboard from which it was possible to go beyond the illusion of being, into Awakening. In the West of Antiquity, both pre-Christian and Christian thinkers and ascetics insisted in the need to face the experiences that most human beings automatically flee; among the former, this was an outstanding part of the theory and praxis of Diogenes of Sinope and the Cynics, as well as of other individuals and schools; among the latter, this was done by desert anchorites and many other early religious men. However, in this case the idea also was not to remain in a state of anguish and unhappiness, but to use anguish go beyond anguish and beyond normal human experience.)

²⁰⁵ In fact, in the *Kaccāyanagotta Sutta*, pertaining to the *Samyutta Nikāya*, Śākyamuni says: "Everything exists: That is one extreme. 'Everything doesn't exist:' That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma via the middle..." (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, trans. 1997–2011b). Then in the *Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta*, pertaining to the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Muni rejected all of the positions presented to him regarding various subjects (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, trans. 1997–2011a). However, the first apparent usage of the *catuṣkoṭi* (Tib. mu bzhi or mtha' bzhi) or tetralemma occurs in *Khuddaka Nikāya*, III: Udāna, where the fourteen *avyākṛta* questions or *avyākṛtavastūni* are divided into four sets, the first one containing the four questions concerning the "origin of the universe," which are: (1) Is the world eternal? Is it not eternal? Is it both eternal and not eternal? Is it neither eternal nor

not eternal? The remaining three sets of questions are the following: (2) Is the world infinite? Is it not infinite? Is it both infinite and not infinite? Is it neither infinite nor not infinite? (3) Are the animating principle and the body identical? Are the animating principle and the body different? (4) Does the Tathāgata exist after death? Does the Tathāgata not exist after death? Does the Tathāgata both exist after death and not exist after death? Does the Tathāgata neither exist after death nor not exist after death? As we can see, this discourse of Buddha Śākyamuni prefigures the structure of Mādhyamaka refutations, which do no more than bring it into subtler philosophical subjects. (These questions recur in several places in the *Nikāyas*: twice in *Majjimanikāya*, I [sutta 72], once in *Samyuttanikāya*, III; once in *Samyuttanikāya*, IV; once in *Dīghanikāya* 9 [*Poṭṭhapāda Sutta*], and once in *Dīghanikāya* 29 [*Pāsādika Sutta*])—and part of the same argument refuting the four extremes appears in *Brahmajāla Sutta*, 2.27. Note that Nāgārjuna was fully aware of them, for he discussed them in *Mūlamādhyamakakārikāḥ*, XXVII and, if the Chinese were right that he authored the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*, also in the latter.)

Then in the Mahāyāna Sanskrit Canon, the *Vajracchedikā* asserts that the truth (is) neither being nor nonbeing (the latter being the presence of being’s absence), for these two are mutually relative: “The Tathāgata has said that truth is uncontainable and inexpressible. It neither is nor is not.” Similar assertions are found in Sūtras such as the *Mahāratnakūṭa* and the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, as well as in the canonical sources that explicitly reject all of the four extremes listed above, including the *Prajñāpāramitāsaṃcayagāthā* (I-13), the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (von Staël-Holstein, 1933, p. 56) and the *Samādhirājasūtra* (IX-27), among other texts, reject the four extremes of the *catuṣkoṭi* or tetralemma altogether (for a list of Mahāyāna texts that reject them cf. Ruegg, 1977, 2000, and other sources).

²⁰⁶ This delusion involves all of the aspects the Dzogchen teachings distinguish in the unawareness cum delusion that the Buddha and other Indian mystics have referred to by the Sanskrit term *avidyā*, the Pāli *avijjā*, the Tibetan *marigpa* (Wylie, *ma rig pa*), the Chinese 無明 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wú míng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-ming²*), etc. and which will be discussed below in the regular text of this book: it involves all three aspects or types of *avidyā* listed in the most common Dzogchen classification: (1) it involves the first aspect or type of *avidyā* because the true condition of ourselves and the whole universe, which is the Base of Dzogchen, is obscured; (2) it involves the second aspect or type of *avidyā* because singled-out *sensa* are perceived as being other than the knower and in most cases as an external reality; (3) it also involves the third aspect or type of *avidyā* because it involves the erroneous cognition referred by terms such as the Skt. *bhrānti* and the Tib. *’khrul* as understood by Dharmakīrti—i.e., as the twofold error or delusion of [1] taking a singled out segment of the sensory field for an inherently existing **particular, specifically characterized phenomenon, self-configuration or self-collection of characteristics** [Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *rangtsen* {Wylie, *rang mtshan*}; Ch. 自相 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxiàng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsiang⁴*}] and by the same token experiencing the singled out segment in terms of an abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics [Skt. *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *shitsen* {Wylie, *spyi mtshan*}; Ch. 共相 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *gōngxiàng*; Wade-Giles, *kung⁴-hsiang⁴*}], as being intrinsically the abstracted general configuration / collection of characteristics (note that in Āryadeva the term *bhrānti* simply refers to the error or delusion inherent in *avidyā*). (4) And it involves the third aspect or type of *avidyā* in the alternative classification because we take an erroneous, deluded perception or an erroneous, deluded interpretation of reality for a correct one. Therefore, altogether it involves four aspects or types of *avidyā*.

In endnote 75 I cited the following lines by Gregory Bateson (1979, p. 49) that illustrate a key aspect of the delusion in question:

“Numbers are the product of counting. Quantities are the product of measurement. This means that numbers can conceivably be accurate because there is a discontinuity between each integer and the next. Between two and three, there is a jump. In the case of quantity, there is no such jump; and because jump is missing in the world of quantity, it is impossible for any quantity to be exact. You can have exactly three tomatoes. You can never have exactly three gallons of water. Always quantity is approximate.

“Even when number and quantity are clearly discriminated, there is another concept that must be recognized and distinguished from both number and quantity. For this other concept, there is, I think, no English word, so we have to be content with remembering that there is a subset of patterns whose members are commonly called ‘numbers.’ Not all numbers are the products of counting. Indeed, it is the smaller, and therefore commoner, numbers that are often not counted but recognized as patterns at a

single glance. Card players do not stop to count the pips in the eight of spades and can even recognize the characteristic patterning of pips up to ‘ten.’

“In other words, number is of the world of pattern, gestalt, and digital computation; quantity is of the world of analogic and probabilistic computation.”

Who can doubt that conceptual perception is digital and *sensa* are analog and that hence the former cannot correspond exactly to the latter? An example in terms of colors was offered in note 77 in reply to a false argument used by Jorge Ferrer in order to demonstrate that differences lie in *sensa* rather than in human perception; whoever still has doubts in this regard may consult the note in question.

²⁰⁷ Cf. note 206.

²⁰⁸ Cf. note 206.

²⁰⁹ Beckwith (2015) claims that Scyntian thought was familiar with the simultaneous negation of all possible theses, as manifest in the above negation of four extreme views in different Buddhist sources, for it is also found in the Scyntian philosopher Anacharsis, whom the Greeks regarded as one of the Seven Sages of Antiquity. Thus in his view, as in that of Walter (2012), the teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni (who in his view would have been Saka-muni or the Sage of the Sakas or Eastern Scyntians) discussed in the above paragraph revealed the Scyntian origin of the Muni. However, the region where the Scyntians, and in particular the Sakas, lived, was within what at some time was the kingdom or empire of Zhang Zhung, and the Sakas, in particular, were not so far from the center of irradiation of the Dzogchen transmission of Zhang Zhung, the Dzogchen Zhang Zhung Nyengyü (Wylie, rdzogs chen zhang zhung snyen rgyud). Therefore, what Beckwith views as being characteristically Scyntian would rather be characteristic of Zhang Shung and in particular of the Dzogchen teachings of Zhang Zhung.

This can make one think of the theories of Bönpo (Wylie, bon po) teachers such as Lopön Tenzin Namdak, who not only posits a genetic link between Buddhist and Bönpo Dzogchen—he claims that Buddhist Dzogchen would have derived from Bönpo Dzogchen, for in truth Garab Dorje would have been the famous Bönpo Dzogchen Master Rasang Tapihritsa (Wylie, ra sangs ta pi hri tsa), who would have given transmission and teachings to a group of Buddhist Masters, thereby initiating the current Buddhist transmission of Dzogchen Atiyoga (other Bönpo teachers, whose views were quoted in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] 1997, p. 27, have identified Garab Dorje with Zhang-zhung Garab, the thirteenth link in the lineage of the Oral Transmission of Dzogchen of Shang Shung)—but has gone so far as to claim that Buddhism in general—or at least the higher forms of Buddhism—derived from Bön.

However, so far there is no evidence substantiating any of these Bönpo theories, which in the absence of such hard evidence may seem to arise from wishful thinking—since all traditions want to be the source of the teachings and transmissions of other traditions, rather than the recipients of the latter.

²¹⁰ As shown in the note in question, in this translation the terms “plenitude / completeness” respond to the *katak* (Wylie, ka dag) aspect of what is designated by the term *dzogpa*, whereas the term “perfection” responds to its *lhundrub* (Wylie, lhun grub) aspect. In fact, the *katak* aspect of the Base that is the true condition of ourselves and all phenomena, is its emptiness, corresponding to the lack of self-existence both of the totality of the Base and of all entities that may be singled out within it—and the direct realization of this lack of self-existence, not as a mere negation that begets an absence’s presence, but as a nonconceptual, nondual realization, puts an end to the basic human illusion that lies in experiencing oneself as being at a distance from the continuum of *sensa*; therefore, it dissolves the lack of plenitude and completeness that issued from this illusion—so that the realization of the *katak* aspect of the Base corresponds to the realization of absolute completeness and plenitude.

²¹¹ In Tarthang Tulku (1977a), there is reference to a condition of Great Space-Time-Knowledge. However, in this case, just like in the one discussed in the preceding note, the Tibetan term “chenpo” (Wylie, chen po) has an absolute rather than a relative meaning, and therefore I rendered it as “Total.” For my part, with regard to this Total condition I spoke of “Space-Time-Awareness” rather than of “Space-Time-Knowledge” because in some European languages the latter’s etymology implies dualism: in note 29 it was stated that poet Paul Claudel pointed out in his *Traité de la Co-naissance au monde et de soi-même* (in Claudel [1943]) that “knowledge” (*connaissance*) is the co-emergence (*co-naissance*) of subject and object (“la connaissance est la co-naissance du sujet et de l’objet”)—and in fact the term designates the dualistic cognitive function of the state of *avidyā* as the active delusion that manifests in *saṃsāra*, which involves the illusory subject-object duality. (In English, the term “knowledge” does not seem to have a

dualistic etymology, for it begins with the letters “kn” rather than with the prefix “co”—and the former might as well derive from the Greek combination of letters “gn,” as in the term “gnosis.”)

²¹² Descartes chose the pineal gland as the point of communication of the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa* probably because he felt that it was roughly where this gland lies that he had the impression that the mental subject had its seat.

²¹³ “Oneself,” “himself” and “herself” refer to the whole person; here I am referring to the mental subject, which I call “it” because it has no sex or gender.

²¹⁴ The attempt to achieve virtue issues from awareness that we have nonvirtuous drives, rather than giving rise to these drives. However, at the same time it confirms and potentiates the drives that this attempt is meant to check.

Alan Watts compared true virtue to the healing virtue of a plant: either the plant has the curative virtue or does not have it; if it possesses it, it is not necessary to do anything for the virtue to manifest; if it does not have it, no matter what one might do, it will not develop it. Watts pointed out that the sense of the Chinese word *dé* (Ch. 德; Wade-Giles, *te*²) in the title of the *Dàodéjīng* (Ch. 道德經; Wade-Giles *Tao*⁴-*te*²-*ching*¹) is precisely the one just described. Nevertheless, in this case virtue depends, not on the fact that the true condition of ourselves and all other entities (is) the *Dào* (道; Wade-Giles *Tao*⁴), but on the *Dào*’s disclosure. In fact, when the basic human delusion called *avidyā* or *marigpa* conceals the *Dào* (i.e. when it manifests in the first of the three senses the term has in the threefold classification adopted here), and then gives rise to the illusion of selfhood (i.e. when it manifests in the second and third senses the term has in the threefold classification adopted here), we are possessed by selfishness and become subject to the law of reverse effect that will be considered below in the regular text. Since these impede the flow of the virtue inherent in the *Tao*, nothing that we may do to generate the virtue inherent in it will make it manifest. Conversely, when the *Tao* unveils, the virtue inherent in it manifests spontaneously. (Although the most ancient known version of the *Dàodéjīng* is the one discovered in *Mǎwángdūi* (馬王堆; Wade-Giles, *Ma*³-*Wang*²-*Tui*¹), titled *Dédàoīng* [德道經; Wade-Giles *Te*²-*tao*⁴-*ching*¹] [Lao-tzu, English 1989; Lao-Zi, Spanish 1996], Thomas Cleary [Cleary, Thomas, 1991]) may be right when he says that the version in question, which is arranged differently than the traditional one and is more extensive than the latter, was a courtly adaptation of the original.)

²¹⁵ The institutions of justice themselves have prompted this. Cf. Foucault (1975).

²¹⁶ For a more extensive analysis of the mechanics that makes us distance ourselves from virtue as we try to possess it, and exacerbate evil by trying to destroy it, or miss pleasure by seeking it and trying to enjoy it and exacerbate suffering trying to halt it, cf. Capriles (1994; the topic is dealt with in the third essay of the book, called “Teoría del valor. Crónica de una caída;” cf. in particular the section on Ethical Value). Cf. also Capriles (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.) and in particular (1989), which is my restricted circulation book *The Source of Danger is Fear*.

In a nutshell, the essence of this mechanics may be abridged as follows:

It is well-known that one of the most powerful roots of evil is our perception of certain human traits and tendencies as evil and the hatred towards these traits and tendencies that ensues—which causes us to negate them in ourselves by seeing them as the innermost identity of some others, and to hate them in and as those others. Jung explained this in terms of his concept of the “shadow,” which in terms of the distinction of two kinds of fantasy allegedly introduced by Melanie Klein in an article written by Susan Isaacs, is unconscious phantasy (Isaacs expressed this distinction in terms of different spellings of the term: with an “f” in the case of “conscious fantasy,” and with “ph” in that of “unconscious phantasy;” cf. Isaacs, 1943, this folder Ed. 1989; Laing, Ronald D. 1961/1969; Hinshelwood, Robert D., 1991). Evil is potentiated by our hatred of those on whom we project it, and particularly by our attempts to punish or destroy evil by punishing or destroying those others.

Now, how do the shadow and our unconscious phantasies arise? This subject was discussed to some detail in Capriles (1977, 1986), and it is retaken, more briefly but probably with greater accuracy, in Capriles (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.; 2013b, pp. 118-121 [the reader may read beyond p. 121 if she or he desires to expand on the view expressed in that section]).

²¹⁷ Chögyal Namkhai Norbu often repeats the Tibetan proverb, “On someone else’s nose, one won’t fail to notice the presence of even something as small as an ant. But on one’s own, one won’t notice the presence of even something as big as a yak”—which is the same as Jesus’ saying that we see the straw in the other’s eye but don’t see the beam in our own eye. Ancient Asian spiritual systems lack the

psychological concepts that here I will use to explain this: Freud's concept of superego, Jung's concept of the shadow, and Susan Isaacs' Freud-rooted (yet Freud-diverging) concept of unconscious phantasy. In Vol. II of my book *The Beyond Mind Papers: Transpersonal and Metatranspersonal Theory* (Capriles, 2013b) I wrote (the text is cited with a slight methodological alteration):

“In fact, here it must be shown that, so long as we take that which Freud called the superego to be a conscience conceived as an inborn, abstract, absolute, metaphysical, nature-given or God-installed moral principle establishing what is right and what is wrong—and, in particular, establishing categorical imperatives (keep in mind that it is claimed that Freud's concept of superego has its roots in Kant's concept of categorical imperative, or in Schopenhauer's non-Kantian interpretation of the latter*)—we sustain the horrid, appalling unconscious phantasy Jung called the shadow, which is the ultimate source of evil and servitude, as well as a major source of suffering, and we are bound to continue to take the conventions (Greek, *nomos* [νόμος]) that prevail in our society to be by nature (Greek, *physis* [φύσις]) or, even worse, by divine power—and thus they will continue to have an absolute power to determine the quality of our experience (and, in particular, to induce unpleasant feeling tones in us) and our behavior (for they will make us incur in irrational ways of conduct that are harmful to both ourselves and others).

Moreover, maintaining the superego sustains the delusive subject-object, controller-controlled, mind-body split (which ... results from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the supersubtle threefold thought structure [Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. 'khor gsum] and constitutes the second sense of *avidyā* in the Dzogchen classification favored by Longchenpa—and thus is an essential element of the term's second sense in the classification favored here) which is at the root of the experience of the lack of the wholeness and plenitude of our true undivided condition, as well as of self-encumbering and, in general, of many of the defects of *saṃsāra*—which is all the more problematic when we are ruled by blind drives over which we have no control whatsoever, and in particular by the demonic impulses generated by the Jungian shadow that (though so far as I am aware Jung failed to point this out) arises coemergently and interdependently with the superego.

As shown in great detail in Capriles (2007a vol. II) and in lesser detail in other of my works, though we are made to believe that self-control with reference to the superego or conscience is the root of goodness, the paradoxical truth is that it exacerbates evil. The phenomenal basis of the superego is installed in infants when the original other—who normally is the mother—and other significant others reprimand them, seeing them as a monstrous entity, and causing them to become that entity—which is what Susan Isaacs (1989) designated as an unconscious phantasy. In fact, it is after this and because of this that then the original other and the other most significant others can offer the infant an alternative, positive identity he or she may consciously adopt and thus make the negative phantasy become unconscious (note that if the original other and the other most significant others are to lead an infant to develop a socially acceptable self-identity, they will allow her or him to embody this identity, seeing her or him approvingly as being it, and if they are to make her or him adopt a socially unacceptable self-identity, or to face problems developing a consistent identity, they will frustrate her or his attempts to embody the acceptable identity).

It is well known that Jung believed what he called the shadow to be a remnant of the aggression proper to our animal ancestors. This, however, is contradicted by the findings of paleopathology—which most convincingly suggest that mass violence (and apparently also individual violence) did not arise until relatively recent times (Lochouarn, 1993; Van der Dennen, 1995; DeMeo, 1998; Taylor, 2003, 2005; Capriles, 2000b, 2007a, 2012)—and other disciplines (Descola, 1986, 1996; DeMeo, 1998; Taylor, 2003, 2005; Capriles, 2000b, 2007a, 2012) that seem to have refuted the Swiss analyst's Darwinist, typically modern interpretation of the genealogy of violence and its roots. In fact, as suggested above, the shadow arises from a phenomenal basis, which is the unconscious phantasy that is implanted in infants as they are punished, and in general whenever they are perceived as blameworthy entities: it is in order to elude the hell of being the horrid unconscious phantasy that in our infancy the original other projected on us, causing us to become that phantasy, that we are compelled to project the phantasy on other people we perceive as exhibiting it in a more conspicuous way than we ourselves do. Not only does this give rise to the scapegoating that has produced a great deal of the evils arisen in the course of the history of our species—including so many wars, the Inquisition, the comfort women and related horrors, the holocaust, the Gulag, Sabra and Chatila, suicide bombing, 9/11, Abu Ghraib and so on—but

causes us to somehow feel that in the depths of ourselves lies a monster that has to be controlled, generating monster-like impulses that in one or another way condition our behavior. I have explained these dynamics in great detail in Capriles (2007a vol. II; cf. also Capriles, 1977, 1986, 1994).

* Though Kant's concept of the categorical imperative is supposed to be at the root of Freud's conception of the superego, the Oedipal complex and the moral of psychoanalysis (Roudinesco & Plon, 1997; Fine, 1987; Rodrigué, 1996, Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967; Gay, 1989; Jones, 1979; Vals, 1995; Gregory, 1995; Bloch, Postel & Others, 1996; Assoun, 1982a), and Kant's concept of moral consciousness is supposed to be at the root of the homonymous Freudian concept, Marta Gerez-Ambertin (1993, p. 39) and Ramón Sanz-Ferramola (2001) have asserted that Freud modified the Kantian sense of these concepts, whereas Paul-Laurent Assoun (1982b) has asserted that Freud understood them in terms of Schopenhauer's non-Kantian understanding of the concepts in question. Cf. Ramón Sanz-Ferramola (2001).

²¹⁸ This will be so, provided that we have gone beyond the stage or merely learning the activity we are carrying out. As Gregory Bateson noted (Bateson, 1972), one who is learning a new activity needs to concentrate the whole of his or her attention on it; once learning has been accomplished, the individual will have the capacity to carry out the activity automatically, while his or her attention occupies itself with other matters. However, in the case of the individual in saṃsāra possessed by basic human delusion, at some point circumstances can cause self-conscious attention to enter into play, which may impede his or her performance. This is not so in the case of a fully Awake one, for the propensities for hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized dualism to affect the individual have been fully neutralized.

²¹⁹ The human individual is often referred to as "the subject," but human individuals are not only subjects, for we often become objects as well.

In fact, in the experience that Jean-Paul Sartre (1980/1969) called being-for-others, consciousness becomes the object that another is perceiving as one's self. Sartre offers the example of one who is looking through a keyhole and suddenly realizes he or she is being perceived by another and hence becomes the shameful object that the other perceives as her or him: as the individual "feels touched in the heart by the other's look," a link of being is established between consciousness and the shameful object the other perceives as him or her, and hence consciousness experiences itself as being that object. (Sartre distinguishes this from identification with an object, but this distinction will not be discussed here.)

It is also significant that, when the second aspect or type of avidyā according to the most diffused threefold classification of avidyā in the Dzogchen teachings, which results from the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of what I am referring to as threefold directional thought-structure (Skt. trimanḍala; Tib. khorsum [Wylie, 'khor gsum]; Ch. 三輪 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sānlùn; Wade-Giles, san¹-lun⁴]), a mental subject arises that a great deal of the time seems to be the owner and master of the (co)Gnitivity and motility of awareness, and the individual feels that he or she is that subject, and hence the individual experiences her or himself as a separate, autonomous nucleus of consciousness.

The above interacts with the other four aggregates, which as a result of the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought-structure a great deal of the time may appear as object, even though the subject may become one or another one of them at different times, or identify with them, or feel to be a nucleus of consciousness that owns or moves them, etc.—all of this as part of the illusion of selfhood.

In fact, this illusory self is not always the same: at some times it is felt to be the configured matter (Skt. and Pāli rūpa; Tib. zug [gzugs]; Ch. 色 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sè; Wade-Giles, se⁴]) that we call "our body" (e.g. when being perceived by others, when seeing one's image in the mirror, when the body is hit by another, etc.) or one of its parts or aspects, yet at other times it feels not to be the body (for example, if the latter is paralyzed and one tries to move it)—and the same happens with sensation or feeling (Skt. and Pāli vedanā; Tib. tsorwa [tshor ba]; Ch. 受 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shòu; Wade-Giles, shou⁴]), for we tend to perceive pain as something external imposed on oneself (whether the pain is "physical" or "mental"), but one often feels one is a mental sensation that arises in the center of the body at the level of the heart; or with habitual mental formations or impulses that move the mind (Skt. saṃskāra; Pāli saṅkhāra; Tib. duche ['du byed]; 行 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, xíng Wade-Giles, hsing²]), which sometimes we experience as our volition and other times we experience as a force that moves our attention to an object against our will

(for example, when a good monk's attention is driven to the shape of the sexy girl who entered the monastery)...

²²⁰ One of the first authors to deal with this law was Lǎozǐ (老子; Wade-Giles, Lao³-tzu³) in his Dédào jīng (道德經; Wade-Giles Te²-tao⁴-ching¹). I myself dealt with it in *Capriles* (1989 [restricted circulation booklet]). Later on the nonrestricted parts of the booklet were refined into *Capriles* (2001), and then were even further refined into the Appendix “Loops from The Source of Danger is Fear” to *Capriles* (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols.).

With respect to Watts, it may be noted that inaccuracies and even some in depth errors are found in his work that may even have led some along false paths. By way of example: in *The Joyous Cosmology*, Watts (1962) went so far as to declare that psychedelic drugs could produce the state of Awakening that Chán or Zen and other “paths of liberation” of the East pursue—which is an extremely grave error because the essential characteristic of this state is that, being unproduced / uncontrived / unconditioned / unmade / uncompounded (Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. *dūmache* [Wylie, 'dus ma byas]; Ch. 無為 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu² wei²]), it cannot be produced. This and other similar assertions by Watts lent momentum to the psychedelic hedonism that characterized the hippies in the decade of the 1960's and the early 1970s and that, in spite of having inspired some to seek for genuine spiritual paths, in an immediate, direct way also gave rise to psychoses and suicides, and in a mediate, indirect way, produced a conservative and repressive dialectical reaction that manifested in the boom of spiritual groups based on dominion, manipulation and deception, in the popularization of highly toxic, physiologically and/or psychologically addictive, illegal ego-enhancing drugs, and in a political reaction to the far right. Therefore, that hedonism is something that young people who aspire to transform their consciousness and society ought to avoid.

Nevertheless, Watts played an inestimable role in the education and inspiration of a good part of those members of this writer's generation who later undertook one or another of the Buddhist paths. In particular, I deem *The Wisdom of Insecurity* to be one of the best books on spiritual matters ever written by a Westerner.

²²¹ I think it is advisable not to try to predict exactly when would the disintegration of human society or the end of human life on our planet take place if current trends were sustained. According to what seem to be the soundest interpretations of the prophesies related to the Kālacakratantra, we are still quite a few decades away from the Kālacakra wars—and hence those prophesies seem to foresee that human society will not disintegrate, and that human life will not come to an end, during the twenty first century. Contrariwise, after the Kālacakra wars they foretell the advent of a millennium of Awakening, harmony and peace.

The fact that scientific predictions have rarely been fulfilled with precision, is shown by the ones made in *The Ecologist* Editing Team (1971), which was supported in a document by many of the most notable scientists of the United Kingdom and by organizations such as The Conservation Society, the Henry Doubleday Research Association, The Soil Association, Survival International, and Friends of the Earth. The authors asserted that:

“An examination of the relevant attainable information has made us conscious of the extreme gravity of the global situation in our days. However, if we allow prevailing tendencies to persist, the rupture of society and the irreversible destruction of the systems that sustain life on this planet, possibly towards the end of the [twentieth] century, doubtlessly within the lifetimes of our children, will be inevitable.”

The same applies to the predictions by Michel Bosquet (in Senent, J. Saint-Marc, P. and others, 1973), who warned about three decades ago that:

“Humankind needed thirty centuries to gather momentum; there are thirty years left to brake before the abyss.”

More pondered, but perhaps still too tight in his dating, German-Ecuadorian ecologist Arthur Eichler pointed out in the late 1980s that it would have been an exaggeration to predict the total destruction of the systems that sustain life in the twentieth century, but also asserted that only an immediate total transformation of society, the economy, political systems and so on might perhaps make our survival possible beyond the first half of the current century (personal communication).

For his part, Lester Brown, from the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, D.C. (Brown, Lester, 1990), may have also been too precise in his predictions when he asserted at the Global Forum on the Environment and Development for Survival that took place in Moscow from January 15-19, 1990 that:

“If we cannot turn around some of the prevailing tendencies in the future, we run the very real risk that environmental degradation may produce economic ruin, as it has already done in parts of Africa, and that the two may begin to feed upon each other, making any future progress extremely difficult... ..by the year 2030, we will either have produced an environmentally sustainable world economic system or we will have clearly failed and, much before that, environmental degradation and economic ruin, feeding upon each other, will have led to social disintegration. We will do it by 2030 or we will have clearly failed.”

Nevertheless, this prediction is not at all far-fetched. At any rate, without announcing a “date of doom,” in 1998, a group of scientists comprising many of the Nobel prize winners of the planet warned against the irreversible destabilization and destruction of the ecosystem through the greenhouse effect—which beginning in 1997 and during 1998 produced the most extreme phenomenon “El Niño” ever recorded in history, and later on even more extreme occurrences of that phenomenon, which wreaked havoc around the world. Even James Lovelock, who previously had made fun of ecologists, pointed out that Gaia (the planet considered as a living organism) would be incapable of maintaining its homeostasis (health) and its life with an index of human incidence upon its systems such as the one that has characterized recent years and decades.

Though I refuse to make predictions concerning the time at which, if no radical change is achieved, society may be disrupted or humankind destroyed, there is no doubt that the effects of our modern scientific-technological project threaten the continuity of human society and life. Therefore it is imperative that we begin working right now toward the spiritual, psychological, epistemological, technological, social, economic and cultural changes that are the condition of possibility of long term survival: only thus will possibly come true the predictions in the Kālacakratāntra, according to which after the final wars of Kālacakra humankind will enjoy a millennium of peace and spiritual fulfillment.

²²² Buddhism does not claim that a god created the world in order to fulfill a preconceived purpose. Since the question as to how the world originated and how life manifested is irrelevant from the standpoint of attaining Liberation or Awakening, Śākyamuni’s remained silent when asked about it (just as he did when asked about other thirteen topics—or fifteen according to the Mahāyānasūtras). Furthermore, the question concerning the meaning of life only arises from the standpoint of dualistic delusion, as the latter causes us to feel that we are thrown into a world against our will and forced to have experiences in it, and then makes us ask what the meaning of being thus thrown is. However, upon Awakening we realize an inexpressible and unthinkable Meaning: as we are no longer caught within the boundaries of the dualism of self and other, person and world, experience and recipient of experience, etc. the flow of Time (which I capitalize because here I am referring to it in the context of Total Time-Space-Gnosis-Awareness) is itself nondual Meaning that makes it impossible for an Awake individual to ask questions concerning the purpose or meaning of life. In fact, we (are) what is happening, and when we do not feel different from it, what is happening is absolute, nonconceptual Meaning.

In this context, it is important to emphasize that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are two ways of functioning of the single Base or zhi (Wylie, gzhi) referred to in the Dzogchen teachings—the path of illusion (Tib. thullam [Wylie, ’khrul lam]) that has deluded mind (Tib. semchen [Wylie, sems can]) as its fruit, and the path of liberation (Tib. dröllum [Wylie, grol lam]) which has Buddhahood (Tib. sangye [Wylie, sangs rgyas]) as its Fruit—and that both manifest from the same source. In the Kunje Gyälpo, Samantabhadra, the state of dharmakāya, says (Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, English 1999, p. 94):

“There is nobody apart from me who has created dualism.”

As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has noted (*ibidem*), this does not mean that Samantabhadra has concretely done something; all it means is that nothing exists apart from the state of the individual. In other words, there is nothing apart from our true nature that may have created the world and ourselves, or that may have given rise to saṃsāra, or that may continue to maintain saṃsāra at every instant. And yet this does not mean that our own true condition has actively created and maintained these things. At any rate, this understanding is at the root of the myth of līlā (Tib. rölpa [Wylie, rol pa]), which represents the universe as a hide-and-seek play of universal awareness (in Hinduism represented as the god Shiva) with itself, and which is intended to provide a symbolic idea of the manifestation of experience and of the arising of saṃsāra to children and child-like people.

However, in truth *saṃsāra* arises again and again in our experience (in a way that was described both in Part Two of this book and in *Capriles*, electronic publication 2004), and thus this question does not refer to something that happened long ago, but to something that constantly happens again and again as time goes on.

At any rate, there being no duality the moment just before the occultation of the true condition of reality and the subsequent arising of *saṃsāra*, it is impossible that at that moment there may be an intention, and hence that there may be a “reason” for this occultation to occur; therefore, we cannot say that the occultation took place for this or that reason. In fact, the illusion of duality that is the core of *saṃsāra* arises nondually. If, after being possessed by the illusion of duality, we are fortunate enough as to recognize *rigpa* and thereby apprehend nondually what at some point had seemed to be a duality, we come to realize the “meaning beyond words” referred to above.

Though we cannot say why *saṃsāra* arises, we can say how it arises: this is what the Dzogchen teachings do when they explain the successive arising of the Base-of-all (Tib. *kunzhi* [Wylie, *kun-gzhi*]) as basic ignorance concerning the true condition of the Base (Tib. *zhi* [Wylie, *gzhi*]), of the consciousness of the Base-of-all (Tib. *kunzhi namshe* [Wylie, *kun gzhi namshe*]) as a readiness to know the forms that may be singled out in the continuum of sensation that manifests in the state of the Base-of-all, of the passionate consciousness or consciousness of defilements (Tib. *nyönmongpachen yikyī namshe* [Wylie, *nyong mongs pa can yid kyī namshe*]) as the active core of the passions that are the essence of the realm of sensuality, and of the six sensory consciousnesses as the actual functioning of this realm of *saṃsāra*. For a detailed explanation of this, see the possible definitive version on print of *Capriles* (electronic publication 2004), and also Part Two of this book.

²²³ It is not easy to assess the authenticity or inauthenticity of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*. Unlike the texts conforming the Collection of *Mādhyamika Reasonings* (Skt. *Yuktikāya*; Tib. *Rigtsog* [rigs tshogs] or *Uma rigtsog* [Wylie, *dbu ma rigs tshogs*]), universally attributed to *Nāgārjuna*, this text posits what seems to be the same as the figurative ultimate, and in general some of its views seem partly similar to those of the *Svātantrika Mādhyamikas*. However, the text in question makes it very clear that whenever Awake individuals posit something, they do so without what *Candrakīrti* called “own-view” (Skt. *svamata*; Tib. *ranglug* [Wylie, *rang lugs*]): they do not believe what they say, but say it as an expedient means for leading beings of specific capacities to Awakening. This is a view rejected by the *Svātantrikas* and accepted both by the *Prāsaṅgikas* (though not so by *Tsongkhapa* in his reinterpretation of *Prāsaṅgika* thought) and by the adherents of the Inner, Subtle *Mādhyamaka* (Tib. *Nang trawai uma* [Wylie, *nang phra ba'i dbu ma*]), and in particular by those of *Mahāmādhyamaka* as I have reinterpreted the term. Therefore, the *śāstra* clearly does not seem to have been concocted by late followers of the *Svātantrika Mādhyamaka* subschool.

In the same way, the method of interrelated opposites attributed to *Wei-lang* (his name was 惠能, which in Cantonese is *Wai⁶-nang⁴*; however, in the West that Cantonese name is best known as *Wei-lang* [Hanyǔ Pīnyīn, *Huínéng*; Wade-Giles, *Hui⁴-neng²*; Jap. *Enō*]), which consists in proving the opposite of what the interlocutors assert and, if they concede, then proving their original view (for the method’s purpose is to destroy clinging to all views—cf. *Capriles*, in press 1, and the upcoming, definitive edition of *Capriles*, 2004), which is at the root of many intellectual skillful means of *Chán* and *Zen Buddhism*, since it is based on the understanding that *Buddhas* have no own-view and all they say is other-directed assertions having the function of leading (nonexistent) beings to Awakening, could be based, among other sources, on the *Prajñāpāramitāśāstra* and on the whole Collection of *Mādhyamika Reasonings*.

²²⁴ In *Guenther*, Herbert V. 1984, we are told the tale of the men and the elephant is an ancient Indian fable. As remarked in the regular text, to the knowledge of this author it first appeared in written form in *Khuddaka Nikāya*, III: *Udāna* (*Buddha Śākyamuni*, ed. P. Steinthal, 1885/1982, pp. 66-68; *Venkata Ramanan*, 1966, pp. 49-50, reference in note 138 to Ch. I, p. 344). Then it appeared in the *Mahāyāna Sanskrit Canon*, in the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* (*Dudjom Rinpoche*, 1991, vol. I, p. 295). Later on, it reappeared in Islamic countries, in texts by the *Šūfī* poets; for example, according to the *Ḥadīqatu’ l-ḥaqīqat* (Persian: *الطریقہ شریعہ و الحقیقہ حدیقہ*) or *Walled Garden of Truth by Sanā’ī* (*Hakim Abul-Majd Majdūd ibn Ādam Sanā’ī Ghaznavi*; Persian, *غزنوی سنای آدم بن مجدود ابوالمجدد حکیم*; Persian Sufi poet who lived in *Ghazna*, in what is now *Afghanistan*, between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and died around 1131), just like in the original *sūtra*, the men were blind; later on, it appeared in the *Matnawīye Ma’nawī* (*Spiritual Couplets*; *معنوی مثنوی*) by *Rūmī* (*Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad*

Balkhī—Persian: بلخی محمد الدین جلال—also known as Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī—Persian: مولانا جلال الدین محمد رومی—and popularly known as Mowlānā—Persian: مولانا—Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī), written centuries after the Ḥadīqatu’ l-ḥaḳīqat, in which the men, rather than being blind, were in the dark. Cf. Iqbal (1964).

Recently, the story has been told in Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, p. 295), in Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s oral teachings, in texts dealing with systems theory and also in previous works by the author of this book (cf. Capriles, 1986; 1988; 1994; etc.).

²²⁵ I got this example from Alan Wilson Watts several decades ago, and have used it in a number of works, but unfortunately I do not remember in which of Watts’ books it was used—and although I have endeavored to identify it, have been unable to do so.

²²⁶ There is a direct relation between the ampleness or narrowness of an individual’s space-time-knowledge and what Dzogchen and Tantrism designate as “energetic volume determining the scope of awareness” (Tib. thig le; similar in meaning to the Skt. kuṇḍalinī)—a concept that was explained in a note the first time the term is used in the regular text, and that will be considered in far greater detail in the context of the discussion of the maṇḍala in Part Three of this book. This relation is emphasized to such an extent that Total Space-Time-Awareness corresponds to what the Dzogchen teachings call “thigle chenpo” or Total Sphere: although this term is used as a synonym of Dzogchen mostly because a sphere has no corners or angles, and the angles represent the limits which are our concepts (which as noted repeatedly are limits because they are defined by exclusion of other—i.e. by differentia specifica or by apoha (Tib. selwa [Wylie, sel ba]; 除 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, chú; Wade-Giles, ch’u²] or 遮除 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhēchú; Wade-Giles, che¹-ch’u²] or, more specifically, anyāpoha (Tib. zhensel [Wylie, gzhan sel]; most likely Ch. 他感排除 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, tā gǎn páichú; Wade-Giles, t’ā¹-kan³ p’āi²-ch’u²])—that which is relevant in this context is that this term also has a meaning very similar to that of the Sanskrit term kuṇḍalinī, which I express with the phrase “energetic volume determining the scope of awareness”—so that in this sense “total thigle” also means total bindu in the sense of “total seed-essence,” which in this case is equivalent to “total energetic volume determining the scope of awareness” (akin to total kuṇḍalinī). Though the term Total Sphere is a synonym of Dzogchen (no matter whether qua Base, qua Path or qua Fruit), in this particular sense of total energetic volume determining the scope of awareness it refers specifically to Dzogchen qua Fruit.

It may be useful to relate the Dzogchen term “total sphere” to the statement by Saint Bonaventura (“the Seraphic Doctor:” John of Fidenza [1221-74]) that was later reproduced by Blaise Pascal (1962), and which physicist Alain Aspect repeated after his experiments of 1982 at the University of Paris-Sud:

“The universe is an infinite sphere the center of which is everywhere and the periphery of which is nowhere.”

²²⁷ The Chinese, Korean and Japanese proverb goes: “The frog in the well knows nothing of the great ocean” (井底之蛙, 不知大海). The Watson translation of the chapter under discussion is available in the Web at the URL <http://www.terebess.hu/english/chuangtzu1.html#17>.

²²⁸ The Age of Truth (Skt. satyayuga; Tib. denden [Wylie, bden ldan]; Ch. 黃金時代 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, huángjīn shídài; Wade-Giles, huang²-chin¹ shih²-tai⁴]) or Era of Perfection (Skt. kṛtayuga; Tib. dzogden [Wylie, rdzogs ldan]; Ch. 圓滿時 [abridged 圓滿时] [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, yuánmǎn shí; Wade-Giles, yūan²-man³ shih³]), when the spontaneous plenitude and perfection of the primordial order prevailed, corresponds to what the Bible called Eden and to what in Persia and Greece was named Golden Age. (The hypothetic initial, most complete and perfect manifestation of this condition consists in what pre-Aryan Persians called Zurvan—absolute Space and absolute Time—and that pre-Aryan Indians called Śiva Mahākāla or “Total Time:” the condition of Total Space-Time-Awareness that has already been discussed.) With the Indo-European invasions the concept of an initial and an upcoming era of Truth and Perfection was lost in Greece, but at some point Hesiod reintroduced it from Persia, and centuries later it became central to the Cynics and the Stoics, who revived the characterization of that period as being previous to the rise of the State, government, property or the exclusive family (I assume the Stoics received this interpretation from the Cynics, since Zeno of Citium was a disciple of Crates, and it seems to be from the Cynics that the early Stoics absorbed their proto-anarcho-communist views and their philosophy of history). In Tibet, the Bön tradition of Tibet also referred to it as a period in which property and other restrictions proper to civilization were still nonexistent (Reynolds, 1989a). In China, Daoist / Taoist sages referred to it as the Age when the Dào (Ch 道; Wade-Giles Tao⁴) prevailed and the

authenticity of the uncut trunk was embraced; its social and political aspects were discussed mainly in the *Huáinánzǐ* (Ch. 淮南子; Wade-Giles, *Huai²-nan²-tzu³* [Huainan Masters / Thomas Cleary, 1990]). And so on.

The idea that it was the development of essential delusion that produced the progressive degeneration of humankind manifesting in the succession of ever more degenerate ages or eras might have been part of Heraclitus' thought, because the Ephesian sage used the concepts of *lethe* (λήθη) and *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια) in a way that seems to correspond to the use of *avidyā* and *vidyā*, respectively, in Buddhism, and used the term *aion* [αἰών: aeon or eon] as well—according to Diogenes Laërtius [L, IV, 9], in the context of the conception of temporality and degenerative evolution that we are concerned with here. However, that idea is not explicitly expressed in any known extant document produced by Hesiod, Heraclitus, the Stoics, or any other Greek individual or school of thought. The same applies to the idea that the progressive development of delusion involves the gradual acceleration of the vibratory activity of the human organism at the root of hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization, which results in an acceleration of the experience of time, and to the idea that the Dark Age or Black Age (Skt. *kaliyuga*; Tib. *tsöden* or *tsöden gyi dü* [Wylie, *rtsod ldan {gyi dus}*]; Ch. 爭鬥時 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēngdòu shí*; Wade-Giles, *chéng¹-tòu⁴ shih²*): the Age of Degeneration at the end of the cycle) comes to an end when, vibratory rates having reached a threshold, they collapse and as a result of this both time and human delusion come to an end: this conception is expressed in Padmasambhava and others (1973).

For my own interpretation of the cyclic conception of time, corruption and regeneration in terms of the development of the basic delusion, and my explanation of how ecological crisis represents the *reductio ad absurdum* of this delusion, which may make its eradication possible **at an ample scale**, see Capriles (1994, Second Essay; 2012a).

²²⁹ The loss of the *Dào* is illusory, for in truth the “Fall” corresponding to the loss in question is part of the *Dào*'s flow, and the same applies to all thoughts and acts of human beings after this “Fall.” In other words, that which is lost is not the *dào qua Base*, but the unveiling of the *dào qua Base* that here I have been referring to as *dào qua Path* and *dào qua Fruit*. The term here translated as “virtue” is *dé* (Ch. 德; Wade-Giles, *te²*: virtue), which refers to the *Dào*'s inherent virtue in the sense in which one speaks of the “healing virtue” of a plant: as noted in a previous endnote, it is not “virtue” in the Kantian sense in which a person is said to be virtuous when she or he resists the impulses issuing from selfishness and / or from the Jungian shadow, and contrivedly, artificially sets out to help others. The way the *Dào*'s *dé* or virtue remains after the *dào* is veiled may be compared to a mothball that has been removed from a drawer, without its smell disappearing from the drawer.

²³⁰ It is clear that if the implementation of a project gives rise to practical consequences that contradict the aims inherent in the project, the theses or views at the root of the project have achieved their *reductio ad absurdum*. However, in the case of the technological project of domination of all that we see as other with regard to ourselves, it is not only the thesis or view at the root of the project that completes its *reductio ad absurdum* when the implementation of the project gives rise to the ecological crisis that seems to be about to disrupt human society and eventually wipe out human life from the face of the earth: what completes its *reductio ad absurdum* is mainly the basic delusion that, upon developing to a certain degree, gave rise to the technological project of domination. In fact, this project is no more than a late product of the development of delusion throughout the cosmic cycle (eon / aeon, *aion* or *kalpa* [Pāli *kappa*; Tib. *kalpa* {Wylie, *bskal pa*}; Ch. 劫波 {Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiébō*; Wade-Giles, *chieh²-po¹*} or 劫 {Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn *jié*; Wade-Giles *chieh²*; jap. *gō*}), which by reducing delusion to absurdity, allows for its eradication at the level of the species (or at least at the level of those members of the species who survive), and thereby may make the end of the cycle and the beginning of a new one possible—the first stage of which would be a new Golden Age, Age of Truth (Skt. *satyayuga*; Tib. *denden* [Wylie, *bden ldan*]; Ch. 黃金時代 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *huángjīn shídài*; Wade-Giles, *huang²-chin¹ shih²-tai⁴*) or Era of Perfection (Skt. *kṛtayuga*; Tib. *dzogden* [Wylie, *rdzogs ldan*]; Ch. 圓滿時 [abridged 圓滿時] [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánmǎn shí*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-man³ shih³*]). In this regard, see Capriles (1994; 2012a).

²³¹ In ordinary Buddhism the Skt. term *samāhita*, the Tib. *nyamzhak* (Wylie, *mnyam bzhag*), and the Ch. 等引 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *děngyīn*; Wade-Giles, *teng³-yin³*) refer to staying in the patency of self-manifest *rigpa* (*rang'i rigpai thong* [Wylie, *rang gi rig pa'i mthong*]), whereas the Skt. term *prṣṭhalabdha*, the Tib. *jethob* (Wylie, *rjes thob*) and the Ch. 後得 (Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *hòudé*; Wade-Giles, *hou⁴-te²*) refer to the

periods outside sessions (Tib. thun [Wylie, thun]) of meditation after the arising of movement on rising from meditation and entering all kinds of activities with a full presence of responsible awareness (Skt. samprajanya; Tib. shezhin (Wylie, shes bzhin); Ch. 正知 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zhèngzhī; Wade-Giles, cheng⁴-chih¹). However, as Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, pp. 185-6) notes, “In the practice of Dzogchen, the key point of postmeditation is that you remain in ‘rigpa’s own place of repose’ (Tib. rigpai mal [Wylie, rig pa’i mal] or rigpai rangmal [Wylie, rig pa’i rang mal]), and without [obliterating] the essence of awareness, you engage in all kinds of activities.” (The translation by David Christensen has forgetting instead of obliterating.) Moreover, the Dzogchen teachings warn us that to believe that post-Contemplation refers to keep a sense of illusoriness or of dream-likeness outside sessions of practice, although correct in the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna, is utterly wrong in Dzogchen.

²³² In Pascal (1962 [posthumous edition, 1669]), without mentioning the second Noble Truth (at the time, Buddhism was reputedly unknown in France), this truth is correctly described, and just as in the story of the maddening water, it is compared to a psychological disturbance.

²³³ Pascal (1962).

²³⁴ Fromm (1955, pp. 14-15).

²³⁵ Mainstream clinical psychology and psychiatry reserve the term delusion for the degrees of distortion of reality characteristic of psychosis, which are purportedly beyond those that this distortion can reach in normality and even in neurosis. However, this is a clearly defective criterion, for as I have shown elsewhere, the degrees of delusion achieved in neurosis and normality are not necessarily lesser than those that occur in psychoses—and, moreover, what psychiatry views as instances of delusion occurring in psychosis are often metaphoric ways of soundly perceiving an actual relative reality (cf. Lemert, 1962 [Paranoia and the Dynamics of Exclusion], and the case of “Jane” in Laing & Esterson, 2nd. Ed. 1971, pp. 14-16).

The criterion of sanity / mental health as absence of delusion, quite similar to the one used here, is found in some trends of phenomenological-existential psychology and psychiatry, and in particular in those influenced by Eastern philosophy and psychology, such as the ones developed by R. D. Laing and D. E. Cooper. In fact, according to the latter, the condition that mainstream psychology and psychiatry regard as normal is marked by delusion, and sanity consists in the absence of delusion rather than in adaptation to a deluded and delusive society—the identification of sanity with normality being anyhow obsolete, as the WHO dropped it over half a century ago, and only some trends of Ego-psychology continue uphold it in our time.

In three recent works I have distinguished different types and degrees of sanity and insanity; cf. among other works of mine:

Capriles (2007: *Beyond Being, Beyond Mind, Beyond History* (3 megavolumes), Vol. II: *Beyond Mind* (Provisional e-version: <http://webdelprofesor.ula.ve/humanidades/elicap/en/Main/Bb-bm-bh>).

Capriles (2013ab: *The Beyond Mind Papers: Transpersonal and Metatranspersonal Theory*, Volumes I and II (Nevada City: Blue Dolphin Publishing).

²³⁶ Let me expand the idea in the paragraph of the regular text to which the reference mark for this endnote was appended.

In our time all forms of positivism are widely seen as obsolete remnants of the enthusiasm with science proper to early modernity; in particular, even though most of those philosophers who define themselves as postmodern continue to implicitly uphold the myth of progress that is the root and essence of modernity, as a rule they outright negate that science or philosophy discover truths or that the discourses of science and philosophy can achieve an *adæquatio intellectus et rei* (i.e., a concordance of knowledge with a purportedly independent, factic reality). In fact, this idea runs counter, not only to those trends of philosophy that categorize themselves as postmodern, but in general to the views of a long list of philosophers, scientists and philosopher-scientists that goes at least as back as the Greek Skeptics. (An interesting case is that of Wilfred Sellars [1997, 1963], who absorbed and amalgamated elements of British and American analytic philosophy and Austrian and German logical positivism, as well as of American Pragmatism—and, in at least one work [1968], even of Kant’s transcendental idealism—and became renowned for having questioned the foundationalist belief in a given that may serve as the basis for an *adæquatio intellectus et rei*. However, his conclusions have been used to negate the fact that digital, clear-cut separations and divisions lie in the conceptual mind of operative thinking and secondary process, and are lacking in our sensory continuum or in physical reality—if we accept

the existence of a physical reality different and separate from our experience of it—and to negate the fact that perceiving *sensa*, which are analog and continuous, in terms of thoughts that are digital and as such discontinuous, and confusing the former with the latter, is a delusion. This I have refuted in Capriles 2013d Appendix III, which I briefly summarized in a previous endnote to this book.)

It is well known that Kant claimed that the Scottish critical empiricist, David Hume, had awakened him from what he called his “dogmatic dream.” Among Hume’s alleged discoveries, most relevant to us at this point is the universally accepted objection to empirical science as the source of “scientific laws,” which nowadays is widely referred to as Hume’s law, and which may be enunciated as follows: “we are not entitled to extrapolate the regularities observed in a limited number of cases to the totality of possible cases, thus making it into a law, as one or more of the unobserved cases could contradict the observed regularity.” Moreover, science claims that it derives its purported laws from observation of objective facts, the very existence of which, as noted above, Sellars called into question.

Furthermore, the human psyche structures perception in terms of ideologically conditioned expectations; therefore, scientists tend to find what their theories require them to observe; for example, in Gaston Bachelard (1938, this edition 1957), we read that prejudices consisting in opinions and previous “knowledge” (and therefore by their ideologies and wishful thinking) condition the way a researcher interprets empirical observations, becoming epistemological obstacles that impair his or her capacity to admit that the results obtained may fail to correspond to the *a priori* theoretical construction that caused him or her to expect a specific outcome. An anecdote told by Edgar Morin (1981) clearly illustrates the extent to which observational judgments are conditioned by ideology: while driving his car into a crossroads, he saw another car’s driver disregard the traffic light and, with the front of his car, hit a moped that was moving with the Green light. Morin stopped his car and stepped down in order to testify in favor of the moped driver, yet when he did so he heard the latter admit that it was him who overlooked the red light and hit the car on the side. Incredulous, the famed thinker examined the car, finding the dent the moped made in the car to be on the latter’s side, and concluding that his thirst for social justice and socialist ideology caused him to perceive the event wrongly and invert the facts, even though he had not drunk any alcohol and no other conditions were present that could have distorted his perception. In the case of an experiment planned beforehand, the results are far more dubious, for the way in which the experiment is set up and the criteria in terms of which the data it yields are assessed are arranged to satisfy the researcher’s expectations, as he / she intends to corroborate a theory put forward beforehand.

Léon Brillouin’s (1959) theorem, conceived in 1932, purportedly showed that empiric experiments do not yield exact results, for “information is not free of charge:” each and every observation of a physical system increases the system’s entropy in the lab, and hence the experiment’s output, which must be defined in terms of the relation obtained and the resulting increase in entropy, will always be lower than the unit (1)—which represents exactness of information—and only in rare cases will approach it: since the perfect experiment would require an infinite expenditure of human activity, it is impossible to achieve.

The above explains why such a conservative thinker as Karl Popper (1961) noted that, if no experience contradicts a theory, scientists are entitled to adopt it provisionally as a probable truth (thus openly acknowledging that no scientific theory can be fully substantiated, yet closed-mindedly clinging to the belief in truth *qua adæquatio*), and that the acceptance of a new theory gives rise to as many problems as it solves.

Moreover, as it is well-known, on going through the history of science, Thomas Kuhn (1970) noted that from the moment a scientific theory or paradigm is accepted as true, scientific observations begin to contradict it, yet scientists consistently overlook these contradictions until the point is reached at which contradictions become so abundant and conspicuous that they can no longer ignore them, and hence they must set out to devise new theories and paradigms in order to account for these observations—yet new observations will contradict the new theory or paradigm as well, and hence the process in question will repeat itself again and again. For these and quite a few other reasons, a series of authors (cf. for example, Anthony Wilden, 1972; 2d Ed. 1980) have noted that scientific theories are nothing but ideologies. In fact, in our time the belief that science discovers truths has been demystified to such a degree, that Paul K. Feyerabend (1982, 1984, 1987)—who has shown scientists to often arrive at their discoveries and theories by breaking the established procedural rules of science—placed Western

reason and science on the same plane as magic and sorcery.

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Friedrich Nietzsche (1999) had already left behind the above-discussed idea that our interpretations often do not reflect facts, and had gone so far as to claim that there are no facts that may be or not be matched by our interpretations. In his allegedly “postmodern” period, in which he propounded the active radicalization of nihilism, Gianni Vattimo (1995, p. 50) wrote in this regard: “Nihilism means in Nietzsche ‘de-valorization of the supreme values’ and fabulation of the world: there are no facts, only interpretations, and this is also an interpretation.”

All of the above shows that Georges Sorel (1922, 1906, 1908) was right in claiming, between the last years of the nineteenth century and the outset of the twentieth century, that human beings act under the influence of myths, that the sciences are myths, and that the scientific pretensions of Marxism—a focus of his criticism responded to the force of the myth of science, which prevailed in Marx’s time. And that Antonio Gramsci (1998, p. 63) was equally right in pointing out, in 1948, that to the extent to which we take the “discoveries” of the sciences as truths in the sense of *adæquatio* of a scientific map to an interpreted territory, the sciences are ideologies.

The point is that science and technology are indivisible from the ideological project of modernity,¹⁸⁹ which initially was associated with the ascending bourgeoisie and at a later stage, through the influence of Marxism, also with the ascending proletariat: as Marcuse (1964, Ch. 6, “From Negative to Positive Thinking: Technological Rationality and the Logic of Domination”) noted, science is by its very nature instrumental, and hence it naturally delivers the means for the domination of the natural environment and other human beings.

Thus it is not difficult to see why Michel Foucault (1976, 1978) and Gilles Deleuze (1980) asserted philosophy and science to be more than ideologies: for a very long time philosophical systems, and for a shorter time scientific disciplines and theories (according to Deleuze, psychoanalysis played this role at the time he wrote the book in question), have functioned as an “abstract machine or generalized axiomatic” that works as the matrix that makes possible the very existence of power—their function being that of providing power with the forms of knowledge necessary to sustain the models on the basis of which it will have to structure itself in each period.

As to the logic in terms of which the sciences function, it is evident that from one standpoint a given entity is that entity, yet from a different viewpoint (belonging to a different logical type) it is not that entity (e.g., from a certain standpoint a wooden table is a table, but from other standpoints it is not a table but: an assembly of pieces of wood; a conglomerate of atoms; a segment, singled out for perception, of the continuum that according to Einstein’s Field Theory the universe is; etc.)—and that this may at first sight seem to contradict Aristotelian logic (in particular, the conjunction of the principle of the excluded middle and the principle of noncontradiction that Peter Suber [1997] refers to as Exclusive Disjunction for Contradictories [PEDC]). In their noted *Theory of Logical Types*, Bertrand Russell and A. N. Whitehead (1910-1913) seemingly intended to solve apparent problems of this kind by asserting contradictions between terms to be “real” only when both terms belong to the same logical type, and hence requiring that no element belonging to a logical type different from that of the class being dealt with be included in the class or excluded from it. However, the theory elaborated by Russell and Whitehead was objected by Kurt Gödel (1962), who pinpointed a major problem, not only of the theory in question, but of all deductive systems—which, after induction was shown to be nonexistent, has been acknowledged to include all scientific systems—by ideating his incompleteness theorem, which showed all logical systems to necessarily contain at least one premise that cannot be proven or verified without the system contradicting itself... from which it follows that it is impossible to establish the logical consistency of any complex deductive system without assuming principles of reasoning the internal consistency of which is as open to questioning as the system itself. With a reasoning far more accessible to the general reader, Gregory Bateson (1972) noted that in order not to include or exclude items that do not belong to the logical type being considered, as the theory of logical types demanded, one had to exclude all such items from consideration, which meant that one was excluding them in order not to exclude them and thus was violating the principle one was intent on respecting. Moreover, this implies that, when dealing with the class to which *x* belongs, whatever does not belong to the same class as *x* cannot be considered either as *x* or as not-*x*—which violates the principle of Aristotelian logic the theory in question was intended to save, for according to it whatever is not *x* is not-*x*. Of course, if we regard the theory of logical types as a mere convention necessary for resolving practical problems,

rather than as an attempt to substantiate the supposedly ultimate character of Aristotelian logic, then it will fulfill its purpose—and, at any rate, the problems just discussed may be deemed irrelevant for the validity or invalidity of the empirical sciences.

I would not deny that, in spite of Hume's law and the whole of the above objections, the sciences are as a rule capable of predicting some types of events with a considerable degree of reliability, as well as of producing predictable immediate effects. However, in the long run they produce effects that altogether contradict the ones they claim to be intent on producing. In fact, as noted in the regular text, in terms of Korzybski's (1973) semantics—according to which the criterion for sanity is the structural fit between our reactions to the world and what is actually going on in the world, and insanity by the lack of such fit—we must conclude that Śākyamuni Buddha was right when he compared fully fledged avidyā to an illness, and that Candrakīrti hit the mark when he compared this fully fledged avidyā to insanity, for it gives rise to a severe structural discrepancy between our reactions to the world and what is actually going on in the world: as stated again and again throughout this book, our attempts to achieve satisfaction yield dissatisfaction, our efforts to suppress pain produce pain, and our efforts to (allegedly) destroy death and all negative aspects of life and build a technological Eden have originated the ecological crisis that is producing major natural disasters and which threatens to disrupt human society and put an end to human existence in the course of the current century. Thus it seems that Korzybski was wrong when noting, in terms of the famed map/territory analogy, that although the map is not the territory, the map could be correct in the sense of having a structure similar to that of the territory that allows us to successfully deal with the latter—thus achieving the structural fit defining sanity.

Korzybski's criterion coincides with the one that, in the face of Hume's law and the accumulated objections of subsequent epistemologists (cf. Capriles, 1994, 2007a vol. III, 2007c), Alfred Julius Ayer (1981) devised with the aim of validating the sciences: the one according to which “we are authorized to have faith in our procedure, so long as it carries out its function, which is that of predicting future experience and thus control our environment.” However, in trying to control our environment with the purported aim of creating an artificial Eden and kill death and pain, the sciences and the technology based on them, rather than achieving their declared effect, have produced a hellish chaos and taken us to the brink of extinction—and, moreover, at no moment did they foresee this outcome. Therefore Ayer's criterion, rather than validating, outright invalidates the sciences.

In fact, as already noted, the current ecological crisis has made it evident that the technological application of the sciences in the long run gives rise to effects contrary to the ones it is allegedly intended to produce. Thus to the extent to which the sciences involve a pretension of truth in the sense of exact correspondence of their maps to the territory of the given, or the pretension of improving our lives and producing a technological paradise, it is clear that they are metanarratives involving the denial of their character as metanarratives, and as such they must be denounced as being both myths and ideologies: they are elements of modernity's myth of progress, which ecological crisis has proved, not merely to be unrealizable, but to be outright deadly.

The above discussion of the limits of science makes it evident that the positivistic belief that metaphysics will be surpassed and truth will be attained by replacing philosophy with the positive sciences (etc.) could hardly be more misguided.

²³⁷ So long as Total Space-Time-Awareness is veiled by space-time-knowledge (no matter whether the latter is narrower or wider), a directional consciousness observes, judges and controls behavior. And so long as a directional consciousness observes, judges and controls behavior, to some degree one is subject to the impeded-centipede effect.

²³⁸ In many instances of the base-of-all (Tib. kunzhi [Wylie, kun gzhi]) the continua of sensation of all our sensory fields are manifest, though there is no coarse conceptual, dualistic consciousness of them. However, as noted in the *Dzogpa chenpo kuntuzangpo yeshe longgyi gyü* (Wylie, rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud), a Dzogchen Tantra revealed by Jigme Lingpa, the potentiality of the base-of-all (Tib. kunzhi [Wylie, kun gzhi]) to produce saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is present even in the five unconscious states, which are: (1) the absence of all thoughts; (2-3) the two kinds of cessation of all mental activity—namely (2) supreme wisdom of cessation resulting from perfect insight issuing from discrimination (Skt. pratisaṃkhyānirodha; Tib. *sosor tak gog* [Wylie, so sor brtags 'gog]; Ch. 擇滅 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, zémiè; Wade-Giles, tse²-mieh⁴]) and (3) nonperception of phenomena due to the absence of conditions (Skt. pratyaya; Pāli paccaya; Tib. kyen [Wylie, rkyen]; Ch. 緣 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn

yuán; Wade-Giles yuan²) and resulting from concentration (rather than from the perfect insight that issues from discrimination) (Skt. apratisamkhyānīrodha; Tib. **sosor tak mingyi gokpa** [Wylie, so sor brtags min gyi 'gog pa]; Ch. 非擇滅 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, fēizémiè; Wade-Giles, fei¹-tse²-mieh⁴]); (4) swoon; and (5) deep sleep. See Guenther, Herbert, 1977, pp. 116-117 and note 11, p. 117.

²³⁹ Let us take as an example the Atiyoga method for direct Introduction through the abrupt pronunciation of the syllable PHAT! Immediately after a realized Master explosively pronounces this mantric syllable, fortunate disciples might have an experience of the dimension of the base-of-all or kunzhi (Wylie, kun gzhi) in the illusory experience (Tib. nyam [Wylie, nyams]) of clear, startled, empty awareness in which the latter is not beclouded or dulled, and we are neither sleepy nor unconscious; contrariwise, there is a clear awareness of the experience. This is the experience that in Tibetan is called heddewa (Wylie, had de ba), in which it is possible to have a nonconceptual experience of the dharmadhātu that, however, involves unawareness of its true condition.

After an extremely brief lapse, that which is known as ngowo shi (Wylie, ngo bo'i gshis) might shine forth. This shining forth has the potentiality of revealing the “face” of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake self-awareness called rangrig (Wylie, rang rig; this term renders the Skt. terms svasaṃvedana and svasaṃvittiḥ—in Chinese, 自證 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìzhèng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-cheng⁴] or 自覺 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìjué; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-chüeh²]; it must be noted, however, that whereas in the Mahāyāna the term may refer either to apperception [a conceptual, samsaric, indirect awareness that one is perceiving] or to nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake self-awareness, either qua Base, qua Path or qua Fruit, in Dzogchen Ati the term as a rule refers to the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake self-awareness qua Path or qua Fruit that makes the true condition of nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake self-awareness patent). In a deluded individual the true condition of this ngowo shi is immediately concealed by the unawareness that is the first aspect or type of avidyā; then by the second aspect or type of avidyā, which turns it into a conceptual, dualistic noticing; and then by the third aspect or type of avidyā, as the object is perceived in terms of a hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized content of thought. This is why, in order to nonconceptually, nondually reGnize the shining forth of ngowo shi, the very instant it arises one can, as it were, turn back toward it or, which is the same, turn back toward the place where one has the impression that the source of awareness lies. There is no guarantee that this reGnition will occur, but if it does, it will be the reGnition of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake self-awareness called rangrig, which will become patent in what is known in Tibetan as rangngo shepa (Wylie, rang ngo shes pa). Since in this case the emphasis would be on the essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo]) aspect of this awareness and the dang form of manifestation of the Base's energy aspect, this will (be) the disclosure of the true condition of the Base as the dharmakāya and the manifestation of the famous chikshe kundröl (Wylie, gcik shes kun grol) or all-liberating single gnosis. (Cf. the short terma revealed by Jigme Lingpa called Dzogpa chenpoi nesum shenjyé [Wylie, rdzogs pa chen po'i gnad gsum shan 'byed], which is part of the Longchen Nyingthik Thigle [Wylie, klong chen snying gi thig le], and that was translated in Guenther, 1977, pp. 142-147)

This gnosis is all-liberating because it involves a keen, clear, alert awareness the true condition of which is neither concealed by the unawareness that is the first sense or aspect of avidyā in the threefold division adopted here, nor distorted by the duality of the grasper and the grasped that is the second sense or aspect of avidyā, nor deluded by the perception of the grasped in terms of a hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized content of thought. Therefore, thoughts liberate themselves as they arise without leaving traces, rather than been fixated and leaving traces because an illusory perceiver clings to them as percepts, because of manifest interest in their of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized contents.

At any rate, if rangrig—which also may be called rangjunggi yeshe (Wylie, rang byung gi ye shes) or “self-arisen, self-aware primordial gnosis”—actually manifests, it will be perfectly evident that it manifested in a way that is absolutely spontaneous (Tib. rang [Wylie, rang], which has the acceptations of self-, spontaneous and intrinsic, among others)—which, as stated in a previous note, is not at all the case in the Anuyoga, or even less so in any of the lower vehicles.

In case the above explanation was not clear and comprehensive enough, in order to facilitate the reGnition of ngowo shi when it arises, one may look and check what or who is noticing the heddewa—or in what awareness, just like a reflection in a mirror, is it manifest. The point is that, since the illusory mental

subject can perceive objects only and by no means can it perceive itself, the above instruction may offer a most precious opportunity for the subject-object duality that is the core of the delusion that makes up the second of the senses the term *avidyā* in the threefold classification adopted here, to short-circuit and collapse in what the Dzogchen teachings call *rulog* (Wylie, *ru log*) or “reverting [*samsāra*].” *Samsāra* is reverted because that very instant at which the nondual, nonconceptual reGnition that makes Awake nondual self-awareness’ face patent, the aspects or types of *avidyā* instantly dissolve, abruptly disrupting the neutral condition of the base-of-all (Tib. *kunzhi* [Wylie, *kun gzhi*]) of which the *heddewa* was an instance, so that this self-awareness manifests, functioning as the “all-liberating single gnosis.”

If this happens, it will be self-evident that it occurred spontaneously: that it was in no way produced by an action, and that it cannot be produced by any means whatsoever. If there is no reGnition (of) Awake awareness, of if after its reGnition *avidyā* or *marigpa* arises again in the first of the senses it has in the threefold classification adopted here and therefore the dimension of the base-of-all manifests anew, the process discussed in the following note may take place.

To conclude, it must be noted that though most of the terms the Dzogchen teachings use in the descriptions of Gnitive events (whether purely Gnitive and nirvanic or cognitive and samsaric) are either identical or very similar to those used in Mahāyāna texts of the Third Promulgation such as the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, in philosophical schools such as the *Yogācāra* and the *Mādhyamaka-Svātantrika-Yogācāra* and so on, the Dzogchen teachings do not give these terms exactly the same sense they have in the Mahāyāna.

(A more detailed explanation of the combined term “ngowo shi” will be offered in Part Two of this book, and also in the possibly upcoming definitive version in print of Capriles, electronic publication 2004.)

²⁴⁰ As shown above in the regular text, the Pāli term *saṅkhata*, the Sanskrit term *saṃskṛta*, the Tibetan term *duche* (‘*dus byas*) and the Chinese term 有為 (*Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*)—the negations of which are, respectively, *asaṅkhata*, *asaṃskṛta*, and (‘*dus ma byas*) and 無為 (*Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-wei²*)—mean compounded, fabricated, configured, conditioned and/or intentionally contrived. In general Buddhism, all of these words refer to the principal characteristic of phenomenal entities in their totality, which are mutually conditioned and interrelated (as established by the doctrine of interdependent origination (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; Pāli *paṭiccaṣamuppāda*; Tib. *tendrel* or *tenching drelbar jungwa* (Wylie, *rten [cing] ’brel [bar ’byung ba]*); Ch. 緣起 [*Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *yuánqǐ*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-ch’i³*]) in all its interpretations, from that of the succession in the time of the twelve links (Pāli and Skt. *nidāna*; Tib. *drel* [Wylie, ‘*brel*]; Ch. 尼陀那 [*Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *nítuónà*; Wade-Giles, *ní²-t’o²-na⁴*]), to that of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*, which does not understand it as temporal succession but as the essential, synchronous dependence of all entities with regard to each other). However, the acceptations of “made up” and “intentionally contrived” should not be taken to mean that Buddhism asserts that a god or demiurge created them with a purpose: the conception of a god or demiurge is extraneous to Buddhism.

The four characteristics just listed in the regular text before the reference mark for this note boil down to the assertion that all that is compounded, fabricated, configured, conditioned and / or intentionally contrived has a beginning and an end, and as such it is impermanent (Pāli *anicca*; Skt. *anitya*; Tib. *mitakpa* [Wylie, *mi rtag pa*]; Chin. 無常 [*Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *wúcháng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-ch’ang²*] Jap. *mujō*). Lists of what the philosophical schools that were traditionally taught in Tibet deemed to be compounded, fabricated, configured, conditioned and/or intentionally contrived and what they deemed to be uncompounded, nonfabricated, unconfigured, unconditioned and/or not intentionally contrived will be provided in the upcoming edition in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004); some of those lists are reproduced in the following notes.

²⁴¹ Take the example of a circle—a geometrical figure that in Buddhism represents the *dharmakāya*, true condition of all reality and mental aspect of Buddhahood—made with an undivided string. So long as it is not cut, the string has no beginning and no end. As soon as you cut it, the string has a beginning but also an end. Though this example is spatial, it is obvious that the same applies to time, which according to Einstein, together with the three dimensions of space, is one of the four dimensions of the universe; which, according to superunification theories, is one of the only four dimensions that expanded with the big bang; and which, according to holonomic theory, is one of the dimensions of the explicate order.

²⁴² As stated in a previous note, the word *phenomenon* derives from the Greek *phainomenon* (φαινόμενον), meaning, that which appears. Strictly speaking, that which appears is the deceptive appearances that characterize *samsāra* and that veil the true condition of reality. Contrariwise, *nirvāṇa*, even though it

comprises the sense data that are the basis of appearances, because it involves the dissolution of all false appearances and the perfect realization of the true condition of reality, in a special sense may be viewed as being beyond that which appears. In order to leave room for this interpretation, I preferred not to speak of the phenomena of nirvāṇa, but of the metaphenomenon or the series of metaphenomena of nirvāṇa (nirvāṇa being beyond one and many, neither expression is precise—though common sense is likely to think that metaphenomenon is more correct than metaphenomena).

²⁴³ For example, according to the Vaibhāṣika School, the unmade, unconditioned and uncompounded (asaṃskṛta) phenomena are: (1) space (Skt. ākāśa; Tib. namkha [Wylie, nam mkha’]; Ch. 虛空 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, xūkōng; Wade-Giles, hsü¹-k’ung¹]); (2) nonperception of phenomena due to the absence of conditions (Skt. pratyaya; Pāli paccaya; Tib. kyen [Wylie, rkyen]; Ch. 緣 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn yuán; Wade-Giles yuan²]) and resulting from concentration (rather than from perfect insight issuing from discrimination) (Skt. apratisaṃkhyānirodha; Tib. **sosor tak mingyi gokpa** [Wylie, so sor brtags min gyi ’gog pa]; Ch. 非擇滅 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, fēizémiè; Wade-Giles, fei¹-tse²-mieh⁴]); and (3) supreme wisdom of cessation resulting from perfect insight issuing from discrimination (Skt. pratisaṃkhyānirodha; Tib. sosor tak gog [Wylie, so sor brtags ’gog]; Ch. 擇滅 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, zémiè; Wade-Giles, tse²-mieh⁴]). The Mahāsaṃghika School (which other Hīnayāna schools deemed heretic) went further and posited nine categories of asaṃskṛta dharma.

²⁴⁴ The philosophical schools of the Mahāyāna are not unanimous as to what is conditioned and what is unconditioned. The Yogācāras posited six unconditioned phenomena or asaṃskṛta dharma: (1) space (Skt. ākāśa; Tib. namkha [Wylie, nam mkha’]; Ch. 虛空 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, xūkōng; Wade-Giles, hsü¹-k’ung¹]), which was “the unlimited and unchanging;” (2) supreme wisdom of cessation resulting from perfect insight issuing from discrimination (Skt. pratisaṃkhyānirodha; Tib. sosor tak gog [Wylie, so sor brtags ’gog]; Ch. 擇滅 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, zémiè; Wade-Giles, tse²-mieh⁴]); (3) nonperception of phenomena due to the absence of conditions (Skt. pratyaya; Pāli paccaya; Tib. kyen [Wylie, rkyen]; Ch. 緣 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn yuán; Wade-Giles yuan²]) and resulting from concentration (rather than from perfect insight issuing from discrimination) (Skt. apratisaṃkhyānirodha; Tib. **sosor tak mingyi gokpa** [Wylie, so sor brtags min gyi ’gog pa]; Ch. 非擇滅 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, fēizémiè; Wade-Giles, fei¹-tse²-mieh⁴]); (4) disinterest concerning power and pleasure (Skt. acalā; Tib. migyowa [Wylie, mi g.yo ba]; Ch. 不動地 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, bùdòng dì; Wade-Giles pu⁴-tung⁴ ti⁴]); (5) a state wherein recognition in terms of concepts and sensation are inactive (Skt. saṃjñāvedayitanirodha; Pāli saññāvedayitanirodha; Tib. dushe dang tsorwa gogpa [Wylie, ’du shes dang tshor ba ’gog pa]; Ch. 想受滅 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, xiǎngshòu miè; Wade-Giles hsiang³-shou⁴ mieh⁴]); and (6) thatness or thusness (Skt. tathatā; Tib. dezhinnyi [Wylie, de bzhin nyid]; Chin. 真如 [性] [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, zhēnrú {xìng}; Wade-Giles, chen¹-ju² {hsing⁴}), which was the true absolute-qua-Base of the Yogācāras: the basic constituent, nature or condition of all phenomena, which unveils in nirvāṇa and is veiled in saṃsāra. Note that according to the Mahāyāna in general, a first, incipient glimpse tathatā first takes place in the first of the four stages of the path of preparation or path of application (Skt. prayogamārga[h]; Tib. jorlam [Wylie, sbyor lam]; Ch. 加行道 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, jiāxíng dào; Wade-Giles tzu¹-liang² tao⁴]), which is the stage called “heat” (Skt. ūṣman / ūṣmagata; Tib. drö [Wylie, drod]; Ch. 煖 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, nuǎn; Wade-Giles, nuan¹]).

In the Rangtongpa sub-schools (Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika) of Mādhyamaka, dualistic appearances, which we wrongly perceive as being self-existent or hypostatically / inherently existent (Skt. svābhāva; Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo] or rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin]; Ch. 自性 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, zìxìng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsing⁴; Jap. jishō]), are deemed to be conditioned; for its part, the unconditioned is the emptiness (śūnyatā; Tib. tongpanyi [Wylie, stong pa nyid]; Ch. 空 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, kōng; Wade-Giles, k’ung⁴; Jap. kū) or emptiness of self-existence, hypostatic existence or inherent existence (Skt. svābhāvaśūnyatā; Tib. rangtong or rangzhingyi tongpanyi [Wylie, rang {bzhin gyi} stong {pa nyid}]; Ch. 自性空 [Hàn yǔ Pīn yīn, zìxìng kōng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsing⁴ k’ung⁴; Jap. jishōkū) of those appearances—which lack the self-existence we mistakenly perceive in them, and cannot be precisely matched by anything that can be asserted in their regard. (Note that Je Tsongkhapa preferred rangzhingyi madrubpa [Wylie, rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa] over rangzhingyi tongpanyi [Wylie, rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid].)

The view expressed in the regular text of this book, according to which conditioned phenomena are in truth unconditioned, is best explained in terms of the philosophy of the Mahāmādhyamaka sub-school of the Mādhyamaka School, which correctly asserts that conditioned phenomena are in truth unconditioned to

the extent that absolute truth, corresponding to the Buddha-nature and explained as the inseparability of appearances and emptiness, is free of the four characteristics of all that is conditioned or made (Düdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, pp. 196-8, 206-7). If the rūpakāya were something that arose by virtue of the accumulation of merits, it would be produced, contrived, conditioned or compounded; however, since the rūpakāya is inherent in the Buddha-nature qua Base, which is the indivisibility of appearances and emptiness, so that it is not produced, and since it is not affected or modified by conditions, it is unconditioned and uncompounded. Some statements by Düdjom Rinpoche in this regard will be quoted and discussed in the section on Mahāmādhyaṃaka of the possibly upcoming definitive version in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004).

²⁴⁵ The problem arises mainly when we write in Western languages, for the terms that are usually rendered as self-existent when the works of Dōlpopa Sherab Gyaltzen and other Zhentongpas are rendered into Western languages is the Sanskrit svābhāva and its Tibetan equivalent, rangzhin (Wylie, rang bzhin), which do not necessarily imply existence, or, even less so, self-existence—for they may be rendered as self-nature. In fact, even Candrakīrti, who is the author that Prāsaṅgika critics of the Zhentong view claim to follow, in Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya (dbu ma la 'jug pa'i bshad pa / dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rang 'grel) asserted self-nature (Skt. svābhāva; Tib. rang bzhin) regarding the true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality:

“Does a nature, as asserted by the Master [Nāgārjuna], that is characterized in such a way [as in Nāgārjuna’s (Prajñānāmamūlamadhyamakakārikā) XV.2cd, which Candrakīrti has just cited] exist? The absolute nature of phenomena (Skt. dharmatā; Tib. chōnyi [Wylie, chos nyid]) put forward by the Supramundane Victor—‘Whether the Tathāgatas appear or not, the absolute nature of phenomena just abides’—exists. Also, what is this absolute nature of phenomena? It is the self-nature (Skt. svābhāva; Tib. rang bzhin) of these eyes and so forth. And, what is the nature of these? It is their non-fabricatedness (Skt. asaṃskṛta; Pāli, asaṅkhata; Tib. dūmache [Wylie, 'dus ma byas]; Ch. 無爲 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²]), that which does not depend on another, their thatness of thushness (Skt. tathatā; Tib. dezhinnyi [Wylie, de bzhin nyid]; Chin. 眞如 [性] [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhēnrú {xìng}; Wade-Giles, chen¹-ju² {hsing⁴}) that is realized by wisdom free from the dimness of unawareness. Does it exist or not? If it did not exist, for what purpose would bodhisattvas cultivate the Path of the pāramitās? Why would bodhisattvas initiate hundreds of difficulties for the sake of realizing the absolute nature of phenomena?”

In the edition prepared by De La Vallée Poussin (1970: Madhyamakāvatāra par Chandrakīrti. Bibliotheca Buddhica IX, Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag), 305.19-306.12. Tsongkhapa cites it in the Lamrim Chenmo (Dharamsala edition, 416b.6-417a.2; translation in Wayman [1978; Indian ed. 1979, p. 256] cited in Napper [2003, pp. 128-129]; alternative trans. in Tsong kha pa [2002, Vol. III, p. 198]).

²⁴⁶ This does not mean that it is permanent. If the nature that manifests in nonstatic nirvāṇa is the single nature of all entities, then it does not have either genus proximum or differentiam specificam, and hence it cannot be said to be either nonimpermanent or not-nonimpermanent.

²⁴⁷ As will be shown in a subsequent chapter, in Dzogchen Base, Path and Fruit are more than congruent, for in a sense they are the same: the Path is no other than the repeated disclosure of the Base while on the Path, and the Fruit is attained when the Base is concealed no more.

²⁴⁸ It is said that failure to realize the emptiness of those phenomena that are not persons is an impediment to omniscience—which can be realized solely through practice of the Mahāyāna and higher vehicles, and which is a necessary condition for effectively helping others. This will be discussed in the chapter dealing with the Path of Renunciation, sections on the Pratyekabuddhayāna and the Bodhisattvayāna.

²⁴⁹ See the explanation of the etymology of the term Dzogchen (Wylie, rdzogs chen) in a previous note, and in particular the explanation of the reasons why rendering dzogpa (Wylie, rdzogs pa) as “completeness / plenitude” emphasizes the katak (Wylie, ka dag) aspect of Dzogchen, and translating the same term as “perfection” emphasizes the lhundrub (Wylie, lhun grub) aspect of Dzogchen.

²⁵⁰ In Düdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I, p. 768), we are told that at the time when the Nepalese Bharo Tsukdzin was to leave Tibet, he offered his teacher Guru Chōki Wangchuk sixty zho (weight measure corresponding to one-tenth of the Tibetan ounce or srang) of the gold he had gathered as a gold digger in the country. The Master asked Bharo to mix the gold with barley flour and perform a burnt offering, and then asked him to throw the remains into a nearby rushing stream. According to a different account, as Bharo did so, Guru Chōwang declared “what should I want gold for, when the whole world is gold

for me?” (According to Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, p. 768, the Master said the *ḍākinīs* would rejoice in this throwing the gold away.)

(The name *Bharo* [Newar, *bade*] refers to the Buddhist priestly caste among the Newars, which in later times had exclusive rights to gold- and silver-work. Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. II, p. 72, note 1010 by the translators.)

²⁵¹ We learn different sets of values in different social contexts or groups, and among the sets of values we learn, one of the worldly ones posits acting in self-interest as the highest value, whereas some religious and ethical ones posit the sacrifice of self-interest for the sake of others as the highest value. However, this is not the place to consider this in detail, and so for the sake of simplicity I decided to pit acting on the basis of self-interest against acting on the basis of learned values.

²⁵² See the preceding note.

²⁵³ The self-interference of artists will be greater when they are deemed responsible for their work, and are valued according to the degree of excellence their work attains, for fear of blundering—which, in the terminology of Sartre (1980/1969), is anguish—will instill doubt into the artist, which will make him or her more prone to self-interference. This doubt can be magnified by the exposure to the objectifying, judging gaze of others, which induces the artist to become what those others see as him or her, and, by becoming an object, interfere with his or her subjectivity in the sense of spontaneity (i.e., of “capacity to freely and uninhibitedly act as a subject”). The power of a critical gaze may be so great that even Zen Masters with a relatively high degree of spiritual realization have occasionally been incapable of freeing themselves from the interference that it induces. Consider the following anecdote told in a book on Zen Buddhism by an anonymous compiler (1959, pp. 13-4.):

“Master Kosen drew (in Chinese characters) the words ‘The First Principle’ which are carved over the door of Oaku Temple in Kyoto. He drew them with his brush on a sheet of paper and then they were carved in wood.

“A student of the Master had mixed the ink for him and had remained standing near him, watching the Master’s calligraphy. This student said, “Not so good!” Kosen tried again. The student said, “This is worse than the last one!” and Kosen tried again.

“After attempt number sixty four, the ink was gone and the student went out to mix some more. Having been left alone, without being distracted by any critical eye that might observe him, Kosen made another rapid drawing with what was left of the ink. When the student returned, he took a good look at this latest effort.

“‘A masterpiece!’ he said.”

Arts can be undertaken as “Paths” (Chinese: *dào*; Japanese: *do*) of spiritual realization: as disciplines of action directed toward the achievement of nonaction (Ch. 無為; *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *wúwéi*; Wade-Giles *wu²-wei²*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Pāli, *asaṅkhata*; Tib. *dūmache* [Wylie, ’*dus ma byas*]) or “action that emerges through the spontaneity of the *Dào* (Ch. 道; Wade-Giles *Tao⁴*), without the interference inherent in the intentionality of an apparently separate subject” (Ch. 為無為; *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*, *wéiwúwéi*; Wade-Giles, *wei²-wu²-wei²*). Those who have established themselves firmly in the Awake state, so that the *Dào* may flow uninterruptedly through them, will not be affected by the gaze of others and will be able to accomplish masterpieces under the watchful eye of the most critical and fearsome of observers.

²⁵⁴ This term, which refers to the true, original condition of our cognitive capacity, which is inherently nondual, is more or less equivalent to the concept of the Base (Tib. *zhi* [Wylie, *gzhi*]) in the Dzogchen teachings in general, and to that of *bodhicitta* (Tib. *changchubsem* [Wylie, *byang chub sems*]) in the Series of Dzogchen Teachings of [the Essence or Nature of] Mind (Tib. *Semde* [Wylie, *sems sde*]). The difference between the concepts of *semnyi* and *bodhicitta*, on the one hand, and that of the Base, on the other, is that the latter does not equally emphasize the cognitive aspect—which is correct because, since everything is this true condition and there is nothing that is not contained in it, it could not correspond to one of the opposites in any duality whatsoever and hence it could not be either mental or material. And yet, since all that appears in our experience is mental or experiential, in this sense that condition may be said to be in a sense mental or experiential.

As to the meaning of *rigpa* (Wylie, *rig pa*), as noted in the regular text, the term *semnyi* may be considered to be a synonym of *rigpa* when the latter term is understood qua Base (as it was used once in the paragraph of the regular text to which the call for this note was affixed). Here I rendered “*semnyi*” as “awareness” because the Tibetan term refers to our own cognitive capacity understood as the Base of

Dzogchen, and because awareness has the etymological acceptance of “being true.” When dualism and the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought arise in it, saṃsāra manifests; when the dualism and hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization dissolve and rigpa's own face becomes fully patent in the manifestation of rigpa-qua-Path or rigpa-qua-Fruit, nonstatic nirvāṇa manifests. Among the best alternative translations would be terms such as “nature of mind” or “essence of mind,” which correspond etymologically to the Sanskrit terms as well as to the Tibetan one. Another good alternative is Base-awareness. Paying attention to the Skt. term *citta eva* some prefer the translation of the Tib. *semnyi* as Mind-as-such, but this writer considers that the etymology of this term does not at all correspond to the meaning of the latter: Mind-as-such logically would be understood to mean mind-qua-mind, which, because the term mind in the Dzogchen teachings refers to the very core of delusion, is the very opposite of what the term *semnyi* refers to. All combinations of words involving the term “consciousness” must be discarded because the prefix *co* implies duality, and hence they would convey an idea that would be the very opposite of what the term *semnyi* refers to.

Normally, it is the Sanskrit term *jñāna* and its Tibetan equivalent, *yeshe* (Wylie, *ye shes*: a word composed by the prefix *ye*, which means “primordial,” and the term *shes*, which suggests Gnitiveness—i.e. cognitiveness that need not involve the subject-object chasm implied by the prefix “co”—or a Gnitive event) that I render as “primordial gnosis.” This is justified because the prefix “*ye*” in the Tibetan term *yeshe* means “primordial,” and because the Sanskrit *jñāna* and the Greek *gnosis* share the same Indo-European root—and, moreover, the latter was used in some Greek traditions to refer to the cognitive event that, according to those traditions, made the absolute patent. Elsewhere I have also used the term *gnosis* as an alternative translation of the Tibetan word *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*), (1) because the latter contains the term *sems*, which shows that it deals with a cognitive function, but at the same time refers to the true condition of all phenomena (i.e. what in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna is designated as “absolute condition”), and (2) because the unveiling of that which the Tibetan term refers to, makes the absolute condition patent.

²⁵⁵ The Kunje Gyalpo (Namkhai Norbu & Clemente, 1999 p. 200) reads:

“Teacher of teachers, Supreme Source (lit. All-Creating King), I have understood the true nature thus: all phenomena are one in the true nature... The whole animate and inanimate universe composed of the five elements is the Supreme Source. Apart from the Supreme Source, there are no Buddhas or sentient beings, and no animate or inanimate universe or any other phenomenon exists.”

For its part, the Namkha che (Wylie, *nam mkha' che* [cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 137; the rendering here widely differs from Baroetto's]) reads:

“[Each and every thing] being pervaded by the dharmakāya, [the true condition of all phenomena] is one.”

For its part, the Chiching (Wylie, *spyi bcings* [cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 105; the rendering offered here widely differs from Baroetto's]) reads:

“There is the Self. There is no other. There is the total self, [which (is)] spontaneously manifest. In the state of Samantabhadra, since everything is one, there is no other.”

Likewise, the Tawa chönyi trin (Wylie, *lta ba chos nyid sprin* [cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 106; the rendering offered here widely differs from Baroetto's]) reads:

“The sentient beings issued from illusion and the Buddhas issued from realization have the nature of the Self; all without exception are included in the self.”

And the Naljor drubpai lung (Wylie, *rnal 'byor grub pa'i lung* [cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 11; the rendering offered here widely differs from Baroetto's]) tells us:

“The state of Buddha of the total self is Samantabhadra, which contains and unifies all.”

However, this does not mean that the Dzogchen Series of [the Essence or Nature of] Mind falls into one of the extremes—namely that of oneness, as contrary to that of plurality. As stated repeatedly the Dzogchen teachings are based on an even keener awareness of the fact that the true condition cannot enter into the limits of any concept, which is why the condition of Dzogchen is called single, sole sphere (Tib. *thigle nyakchik* [Wylie, *thig le nyag gcig*]) and also total sphere (Tib. *thigle chenpo* [Wylie, *thig le chen po*]). The Khyungchen (Wylie, *khyung chen* [cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 114; the rendering offered here widely differs from Baroetto's]) reads:

“The spontaneous gnosis (or gnosis without other) (is) an ever-manifest nonconceptual state just as it (is).”

And also (Cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 115 [the rendering offered here widely differs from Baroetto's]):

“The spontaneous gnosis (or gnosis without other) in itself is unrelated to [all] verbal positions.”

For its part, the Kuntu Zangpo chewala rangngepa (Wylie, kun tu bzang po che ba la rang ngas pa [cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 134; the rendering offered here widely differs from Baroetto's]) states:

“No matter how it is explained, [the true condition] is not any [of those explanations]. It is not nothingness, for there (is) the sensibility of responsive [nonconceptual, nondual] mindfulness... It does not fall into eternalism, [for] it involves no conceptual determinations. It does not exist as a single, sole something, for it pervades everything. At the beginning there is no cause [or] creation, and hence at the end it does not die or pass away. In the now it is not a real substance, for it does not exist as something permanent or that may be grasped.”

And for its part the Gumchung (Wylie, sgum chung [cited in Baroetto, 2010, p. 145; the rendering offered here widely differs from Baroetto's]) notes:

“No matter how many profound words are uttered, they will not accord with the principle.”

²⁵⁶ As will be shown in the discussion of the Path, in Dzogchen the rūpakāya (the sambhogakāya plus the nirmāṇakāya) is known to be inherent in the dharmakāya, so that when the latter is realized and as this realization becomes stable, all kāyas are spontaneously actualized.

²⁵⁷ Patency n (1656): The quality or state of being patent (Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 1983 ed.). The term “roaring patency” indicates that in total silence this patency may be accompanied by a roar-like illusory experience (Tib. nyam [Wylie, nyams]) or, and that all discursive thoughts, which reproduce the sound of words, liberate themselves spontaneously in this roar that does not involve the subject-object duality.

²⁵⁸ As shown elsewhere in this book, the three aspects of the Base are: essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo]) or, which is emptiness; nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang-bzhin]), which is reflectiveness and/or luminosity; and energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]: lit. compassion), consisting in the unobstructed disposition to manifest phenomena and the uninterrupted flow of phenomena. In a subsequent section they will be discussed in further detail.

²⁵⁹ As we have seen, the terms rigpa (Wylie, rig pa) and its Skt. equivalent, vidyā can be understood in terms of the concepts of Base, Path and Fruit. If so understood, then marigpa (Wylie, ma rig pa) and avidyā do not refer to the negation of rigpa / vidyā qua Base (as suggested by their etymology), for qua Base rigpa / vidyā cannot be destroyed or uprooted, but to (1) the nonmanifestation of rigpa / vidyā qua Path and qua Fruit as a result of the activation of the unawareness of the true condition of the Base that obscures the nondual self-awareness inherent in rigpa, preventing it from making patent rigpa's own face, and (2) the manifestation of active delusion in saṃsāra, which on the top of (1) involves the other two types of avidyā posited in the already explained, threefold classification adopted here. (As it has been shown, the Dzogchen teachings prefer to designate rigpa qua Base by other terms. It has also been shown that, in the context of this terminology, to speak of avidyā is to speak of the nonmanifestation of rigpa / vidyā qua Path and qua Fruit).

For a complete understanding of the above, it is necessary to have a good grasping of the concepts of Base, Path and Fruit as used in the Dzogchen Atiyoga, in the Tantras and in the Mahāmādhyaṃaka school of Mahāyāna philosophy. An explanation of the usage of the terms in Dzogchen is provided in Part Two of this book; an explanation of the usage of the terms in Mahāmādhyaṃaka (and of some relations between this understanding and that of Dzogchen and of the Tantras of the Path of Transformation) is provided in the upcoming definitive edition in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004), provided I complete it.

However, the concept of avidyā is best known in the context of the Hīnayāna and the general Mahāyāna, which do not use the concepts of Base, Path and Fruit. This is perhaps the reason why, in the Tibetan term marigpa, the negative prefix is not the one that is used in normal categorical negation.

²⁶⁰ Delusion causes us to attribute enormous value and importance to some phenomena, a medium degree of value and importance to others, a very low one to still others, and no value or importance to yet other ones. Although nonpractitioners may think the last possibility is identical to the absence of reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization, this is incorrect, for it is an effect of hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization, relative to the different degrees of value and importance that we attribute to different phenomena, and therefore it is an instance of delusion.

²⁶¹ In Third Promulgation Mahāyāna sources, in the Cittamātra (Tib. Semtsampa [Wylie, sems tsam pa]) or / and Yogācāra (Tib. Naljor Chöpa [Wylie, rnal 'byor spyod pa]) Schools, in the Svātantrika-Yogācāra-Mādhyaṃaka (Tib. Naljor Chöpai Uma Rangyüpa [Wylie, rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa])

School, in the Mahāmādhyaṃaka (Tib. Uma Chenpo [Wylie, *bdu ma chen po*]) or Uma Zhentongpa School (Wylie, *dbu ma gzhan stong pa*; Skt. trans. Para[rūpa]śūnyatāvāda Mādhyaṃaka) and in many Tantric sources, the term consciousness of the base-of-all) refers to the so-called “store consciousness” or “receptacle consciousness” wherein all traces or propensities are stored—though in Vasubandhu’s summary of Yogācāra thought, the *Triṃśikā* (Tib. *Sum chupa* [Wylie, *sum cu pa*]), it has a phenomenic or phenomenological sense, for the text in question explains the process that begets the saṃsāric world of objects in terms of three “transformations of the experiencing process” (Skt. *pariṇāma*; Tib. *gyur*) whereby the consciousness of the base-of-all as an experience becomes increasingly conditioned and thus “gradually solidifies into the subject-object dichotomy.”

In the Dzogchen teachings the term base-of-all (Skt. *ālaya*; Tib. *kunzhi* [Wylie, *kun gzhi*]) used alone also has phenomenistic or phenomenological senses—even though, as shown below in the regular text and in endnote 263, some of these senses also relate to the storage and transmission of traces or propensities.

²⁶² Transpersonal psychology has given consistent continuity to the overestimation of indeterminate “peak experiences” fostered by Abraham Maslow (who, however, had the wisdom of warning that for such experiences to be truly valuable they would have to arise in the context of a self-consistent method); consequently, the theses and proposals of this form of psychology might as well lead people to pursue conditioned states either near the summit or at the very summit of saṃsāra, or to establish themselves in the neutral condition of the base-of-all wherein neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active in one of its varieties—all of these being forgeries or counterfeits which may be compared to a night in which (in terms of a phrase that Hegel applied to the wrong object) “all cats are grey”—or, in German, “all cows are black.” (The translator of the first draft of this book into English warned me that in English the “cat” sentence is used in the context of erotic relations in a “sexist, women-denigrating sense;” however, this is no reason for sacrificing the allusion to Hegel’s statement, which to my knowledge has nothing to do with that context or with that attitude.)

Originally Ken Wilber posited three levels of human experience, and with the passing of time the number of such levels increased progressively—so that, by 1996 (cf. e.g. Wilber, K. 1996, Spanish 1996), the original threefold classification had been replaced by a complex map of combined “holoarchies,” and in the current reinvention of Wilber, which he calls Wilber V, he keeps positing quite complex maps of combined “holoarchies.” However, in all of Wilber’s reinventions so far the basic error or inaccuracy in Wilber’s conception has kept being the same as in 1977, which consisted in presenting Awakening or Enlightenment as though it lay in establishing oneself on a level characterized by the experience of cosmic unity that would be above all other levels (and which thus would be relative to the other ones). In Wilber (1977; revised ed. 1993a) these levels were: (1) “of the ego,” which is at the base of the hierarchy; (2) “existential,” located in the middle of the hierarchy; and (3) “mental,” at the top of the hierarchy. He defined them as follows (Wilber, 1993a, p. 8):

“Now the Ego Level is that band of consciousness that comprises our role, our picture of ourself, our self-image, with both its conscious and unconscious aspects, as well as the analytical and discriminatory nature of the intellect, of our ‘mind.’ The second major level, the Existential Level, involves our total organism, our soma as well as our psyche, and thus comprises our basic sense of existence, of being, along with our cultural premises that in many ways mold this basic sensation of existence. Among other things, the Existential Level forms the sensory reference of our self-image: it’s what you feel when you mentally evoke the symbol of your self-image. It forms, in short, the persistent and irreducible source of separate I-awareness. The third basic level, here called Mind, is commonly termed mystical consciousness, and it entails the sensation that you are fundamentally one with the universe. So where the Ego Level includes the mind, and the Existential Level includes both the mind and the body, the Level of Mind includes the mind and the body and the rest of the universe.”

Thus we can see that for Wilber liberation consists in the comprehension (a word that, incidentally, refers to understanding in terms of thoughts) of the plane in which one has the feeling of being fundamentally one with the universe (feeling being one of the aggregates that interact to produce the illusion of self). We no longer identify solely with the mind, or even with the mind plus the body: now we identify with the whole universe. The point is that so long as we continue to identify with something, we continue to be under delusion—and since now this identification is so grandiose and hence so pleasurable, we won’t be willing to let go of it, and hence we will continue to experience in terms of hypostasized / reified /

valorized / absolutized thoughts, rather than creating the conditions that may allow such thoughts to liberate themselves spontaneously. (I am using the term “[to] identify with [this or that]” because it is easier for readers to understand than the more precise concept of “[to] make oneself [this or that],” as defined in Sartre [1980]. Briefly, the point is that identification is a less immediate and more intellectual process than the one described by Sartre. However, both are based on the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thoughts.)

My objection to the characterization of the process of Awakening as a progressive climbing through levels in a hierarchy (whether or not it is euphemistically called holoarchy) is due to the fact that in general climbing is a movement away from authenticity like the one explained by Ronald D. Laing (1962) in terms of a “spiral of pretenses” (reproduced in a subsequent note), a clear example of which was offered by the Buddha Śākyamuni by denouncing the ascension through the various realms of saṃsāra toward the peak of experience which is the highest of the four realms of the formless sphere (Skt. ārūpyadhātu [also arūpaloka or ārūpyāvacara]; Pāli, arūpaloka; Tib. **zukmepai kham** [Wylie, gzugs med pa'i kham]; Ch. 無色界 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, wú sè jiè; Wade-Giles, wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴]) and possibly beyond, into the meditative absorption of the base-of-all in which neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active. And, in fact, a hermeneutical reading of Wilber (1996) and of the later works that Wilber classes as Wilber V such as the one I did in Capriles (2013a, 2013c) and in the series of articles bearing the title Beyond Mind will show that the holoarchy that this author identifies with the stages of the Path does not at all respond to the latter, at least as understood in Dzogchen and other higher Buddhist systems, but on the contrary seems to reflect the ascent toward the peak of existence (this will be substantiated below in this note, and was substantiated more thoroughly in Capriles (2013a, 2013c, and 2007a Vol. II). At any rate, Awakening does not consist in dwelling in any of the levels posited by Wilber, but in going beyond the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought that gives rise to all levels, and remaining in the condition of absolute equality wherein there can be no hierarchy or holoarchy whatsoever.

Stanislav Grof, for his part, classes human experience into four realms, the “highest” of which is the one he calls “transpersonal,” which according to his definition comprises all possible types of experience of union with the universe, of divine archetypes, of “previous reincarnations” and so on, no matter how delusory such experiences may be. Furthermore, Grof has stated that psychotherapy has its optimum result when it culminates in experiences of the thus defined transpersonal realm. Therefore he incurs in the indeterminateness that characterizes most thinkers in the field of transpersonal psychology, and, moreover, falls within the bounds of the shamanic as defined in Harner (Spanish 1973). (According to Harner, South American shamans, and probably shamans throughout the world, take for the true reality the one they gain access to through shamanic means—which is different from ordinary, everyday reality and which modern Westerners would describe as “supernatural,” but which, according to the Dzogchen teachings, is as delusive as ordinary, everyday reality because it is also produced by the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought—and think ordinary, everyday experience is false or illusory with regard to it.)

Furthermore, what Grof called Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPMs) are stages, not only of the process of birth, but mainly of a far more encompassing constant—in which, however, they may have a different order—that expresses itself in different manifestations of the intermediate state between death and rebirth (Skt. antarābhava; Tib. bardo [Wylie, bar do]; Ch. 中有 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhōng yǒu; Wade-Giles, chung¹-yu³] / 中陰 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhōng yīn; Wade-Giles, chung¹-yin¹]), among which I deem the following to be worth mentioning: the stage between the ordinary death and rebirth of human beings; the stage between psychological death and rebirth into a more balanced ego (discussed in Bateson, Ed. and Int. 1961; Laing, 1967; and Bateson, 1972, among other texts, and probably to some extent corresponding to the shamanic journey undertaken in Paleo-Siberian shamanism that is expressed in a symbolism analogous to that of the Divine Comedy and that was described in Eliade, 1964)—and in the unfolding of practices such as those of Thögel (Wylie, thod rgal) and the Yangthik (Wylie, yang thig) of the Series of Pith Instructions of Dzogchen teachings (Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, man ngag [gyi] sde), which involve undergoing ontological death and culminate in a condition of total plenitude and perfection (Tib. Dzogchen [Wylie, rdzogs chen]). Confinement within any BPM is pathological or, at least, not truly liberating; going through the whole process involving the series of BPMs while the body is clinically alive (as discussed in Bateson, Ed. and Int. 1961; Laing, 1967 and Bateson, 1972, among

many other texts) may result in a more balanced ego; however, it is going through the process in the framework of a traditional wisdom tradition (for example, in the practices of Thögel and the Yangthik) that may burn out the seeds of saṃsāra, so that the individual may become established in inherently all-liberating nirvāṇa.

In short, it is clear that integral theorist Ken Wilber, as well as Stan Grof and the majority of transpersonal psychologists, fail to distinguish between neutral (Tib. lungmaten [Wylie, lung ma bstan]) and delusory peak experiences, on the one hand, and Awakening, in which one is utterly free from both peaks and depressions, on the other. For greater details, cf. Capriles (2013abcd, electronic publication 2007 [3 vols.]) and the various papers bearing the title *Beyond Mind*.

Concerning the current debate featuring Washburn and Grof, on the one side, and Wilber, on the other, and which Wilber has characterized in terms of what he has called the “pre/trans fallacy” (1993b) and the “ascender/descender debate” (1995), both sides seem to be equally off the mark. Grof (1985, 2000) and Washburn (1995) assert early and prenatal life experiences to be legitimate sources of transpersonal experience corresponding to deeper consciousness, while Wilber objects that Grof and Washburn are confusing early, prepersonal life experiences with the transpersonal experiences that in his (wrong) view correspond to spiritual realization. I have already objected to the characterization of the process of Awakening as a progressive climbing through levels in a hierarchy or holoarchy, for such climbing would be a movement away from authenticity like the one Laing represented in terms of a “spiral of pretenses” (as exemplified by the ascent through the various realms of saṃsāra toward the “peak of experience,” and possibly beyond, into the meditative absorption of the base-of-all in which neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active). Because I have characterized the Path as an undoing of the pretenses of Laing’s spiral to be achieved by seeing through the illusory divisions established in the process of socialization and through all that is conditioned, I could be seen as siding with Washburn and Grof and asserting that the true Path is a descending one, which consists in the uncovering of the Base. However, just as the true Path cannot be explained as a process of ascent, it cannot be explained as a process of descent and reduced to the reversal or undoing of the illusory divisions and wayward habits resulting from the process of socialization: in the best of cases, this reversal or undoing would allow us to revive the more wholesome states we experienced as infants before these illusory divisions and wayward habits were firmly established, or to revive intrauterine states, or conditions that manifested in the intermediate state between death and rebirth (or perhaps even states experienced in “previous lives”), but by no means could it result in the manifestation of rigpa qua Path and/or rigpa qua Fruit, for in ordinary, unenlightened individuals these do not manifest during infancy, nor in intrauterine life, nor in the intermediate state, nor in “previous lives.”

In fact, if rigpa is not reGnized upon the shining forth of the clear light—according to the Bardo Thödröl, in the intermediate state of the moment of death (Skt. mumūrṣāntarābhava; Tib. chikhai bardo [Wylie, ’chi kha’i bar do]); according to Nyingthik literature and the Dzogchen Series of pith instructions, as the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. dharmatā antarābhava; Tib. chönyi bardo [Wylie, chos nyid bar do) dawns—the shining forth of the clear light will be an instance of the neutral condition of the base-of-all in which neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active, which certain Dzogchen texts call rigpa qua Base, and which involves basic unawareness (avidyā in the first of the senses listed by the prevailing threefold classification: the obscuration, by a contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction, of the nondual Awake self-awareness that the teachings of Dzogchen Ati call rigpa, so that the latter cannot make patent its own face in the manifestation of rigpa-qua-Path or rigpa-qua-Fruit). Therefore, only if rigpa had been reGnized when the clear light shone forth at the moment of death, or in subsequent stages of the intermediate state (or in “previous lives,” for that matter), could rigpa qua Path theoretically be found by retroceding and undoing (however, even in such a case the reGnition of rigpa would be a wholly new event requiring the application of specific instruction in the present). Therefore, by these means one cannot obtain a valid Buddhist realization; at best, one could experience the neutral condition of the base-of-all in which neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active (which in the experiences that Grof referred to as BPM 1 often alternates with the grasping at the base-of-all that gives rise to formless samsaric experiences). Therefore, if the Path may be described as a process of undoing and descending, this is so only in part, for it must be clear that the Fruit does not lie in recovering the greater wholeness characteristic of early infancy, of some intrauterine experience, or of some intermediate state experience, but in the reGnition (of) rigpa, which is a wholly unprecedented,

new occurrence. Therefore, strictly speaking the true Path cannot be properly understood either in terms of the interpretation developed by Wilber, or in terms of those developed by Grof and Washburn.

To conclude, it must be noted that among transpersonal psychologists who have taken LSD and similar substances, many have taken for the initial manifestation of Awakening or nirvāṇa what in fact is the neutral condition of the base-of-all (in which, as we have seen, neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active), or delusive, samsaric states such as the formless absorptions which result from the subsequent grasping at the base-of-all and which are the higher regions of saṃsāra. This seems to have happened to Alan Watts as well, for in the nineteen sixties (Watts, Alan W. 1962) he wrote that the ingestion of LSD could allow people to experience Awakening—and, furthermore, rather than describing Awakening, he reported a series of experiences that seemed to include the base-of-all and so on.

As to the substantiation of the above claim that Wilber's system at the best leads to higher realms and/or to absorption in the neutral condition of the base-of-all (which for its part leads to rebirth in the formless realms which lie at the top of deluded, cyclic existence), as noted above, with the passing of time the levels posited by Wilber multiplied, even though for a long time he did not distinguish different types of hierarchy. Above it was noted that in 1977 the levels he posited were three. By 1982 (Wilber, 1982), the levels were: (1) the physical; (2) the biological; (3) the mental (no longer intended to correspond to Awakening or Enlightenment, for at this stage the term stood for the "level of ego, logic and thought"); (4) the subtle (of archetypes, transindividual, intuitive); (5) the causal (formless brilliancy or luminosity, perfect transcendence), and (6) the absolute (consciousness as such, which would be the source of all other levels). Note that the explanation of the causal level Wilber offers in this book correctly describes the neutral state known as the base-of-all (Tib. kunzhi [Wylie, kun gzhi]), wherein neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active—and in particular the manifestation of this state in the intermediate state, when the "clear light of the void" shines forth for the first time (as different from the dharmakāya, which consists in the reGnition [of] rigpa upon the shining forth of the clear light—in particular, of its second shining forth in the after-death—or in other experiences of the dang [Wylie, gdangs] form of manifestation of energy). In turn, the sixth and last is, more than a level, the true condition of all levels, and as such it seems to correspond to the Base, which itself is not nonstatic nirvāṇa (either qua Path or qua Fruit) but that which must disclose itself for nonstatic nirvāṇa to obtain, and which somehow Wilber turned into the summit of a hierarchical classification of experience (note that the term Base tends to evoke the bottom rather than the top of a pyramid).

In 1996, Wilber (Wilber, K. 1996, Spanish 1996) was still offering his readers hierarchical schemas (which lately he has preferred to call "holoarchival"). However, by then the levels were organized in different systems: one involving three groups of levels described by Ervin Laszlo (1987, p. 55); two involving five levels each; another one involving nine basic structures of consciousness; a twofold one involving twelve levels ("the great holoarchy in Plotinus and Aurobindo"); and the one involving four series of thirteen levels each that Wilber calls "the four quadrants."

Among the systems Wilber posited in 1996, here we are concerned mainly with the first one, featuring three groups of levels, and with the one establishing nine "basic structures of consciousness:" whereas the first group responds to the perfectly valid need to distinguish degrees of complexity in reality (which since the early nineteen nineties I have advocated in various works; for example, in Capriles, 1994, to this end I quoted Laszlo, 1974, pp. 29-31), the last group is yet another hierarchical ("holoarchival") division of states of consciousness of the type criticized above (as well as in Capriles 2013a, 2013c, 2007a Vol. II, and the series of articles titled "Beyond Mind"). In this case, the hierarchy comprises nine "fulcra," plus a tenth category that, according to Wilber, "is not so much a fulcrum or separate level, but is rather the very Essence of all levels, of all states, of all conditions"—a definition that, once more, clearly refers to what the teachings of Dzogchen Ati call the Base, but which Wilber has turned into a Self qua Summit.

Among these "fulcra", the sixth (the centaur or existential level) is defined as involving (a) the integration of mind and body and (b) the authenticity of not eluding basic anguish (i.e. not eluding that which, according to Heidegger, is inherent in being-for-death, and which, according to Sartre (1980/1969), is inherent in being-for-Self). Though it is correct to note that the first level of genuine realization is often preceded by the authenticity of not eluding basic anguish (which, according to Wilber, takes place in the sixth fulcrum), the full experience of the being of the human individual that basic anguish is, does not in

any sense involve the integration of mind and body that, according to Wilber, is inherent in the sixth fulcrum.

It is in the following fulcra that according to Wilber transpersonal levels begin. In the seventh fulcrum—the “psychic level”—the sensation of a separate identity dissolves momentarily. To illustrate this, Wilber writes [p. 271 of the Spanish version]: “...a person can provisionally dissolve the sensation of separate identity (the ego or the centaur) and then experience what I call natural mysticism, the identification with the ordinary or sensory-motor world. Perhaps you yourself have experienced this sensation in some occasion when, taking a walk through nature, relaxed and open, you have suddenly realized that the observer had disappeared and there was only mountain, you had become the mountain” [italics my own]. If in the contemplation of nature the mental subject actually disappeared in a spontaneous manner, the ensuing condition would be an absorption of the base-of-all rather than the dharmakāya, for as a rule the latter can manifest only upon the application of specific instructions transmitted by genuine wisdom traditions such as Ati Dzogpa Chenpo and so forth; however, in the immediately following moment a dualistic consciousness of this condition is likely to dawn, and if this consciousness is established for a longer lapse there manifests an experience of the formless realms in which the subject-object duality is still operative, but is obliterated by the fact that the spurious mental subject becomes (in the sense Sartre [1980] gave the term in *Being and Nothingness*) what is appearing as object. If what you seem to become is the mountain rather than an infinity, then this may be an experience of what the Dzogchen teachings call consciousness of the base-of-all or a samsaric absorption with form.

In the eighth—the “subtle level”—the individual purportedly contacts non-ordinary strata of perception and subtle non-Jungian archetypes. Wilber asserts the appearance of these luminous archetypal forms to be the sambhogakāya, but per se the manifestation of non-ordinary strata of perception and subtle non-Jungian archetypes does not correspond to any level of realization: such things may happen in psychosis or upon the ingestion of a psychedelic drug. The point is that realization does not depend on what is it that manifests, but on how does it manifest: for a condition to be a genuine realization it must be nondual, and yet this nonduality must not be a neutral condition in which there is not an absolute freedom of awareness, for otherwise we would be referring to the neutral condition of the base-of-all. In the practice of Thögel such luminous archetypal forms manifest, and their appearance is an absorption of the realm of form—the sambhogakāya manifesting only when the apprehending subject dissolves by virtue of the wrathful selfless activity (Tib. thinle drakpo [Wylie, phrin las drag po])—also called irate (Tib. trowo [Wylie, khro bo]) dynamics—of the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. dharmatā antarābhava; Tib. chönyi bardo [Wylie, chos nyid bar do] and its rölpa (Wylie, rol pa) energy, and hence the true condition of this form of manifestation of energy becomes nonconceptually and hence nondually patent.

Finally, Wilber characterizes the ninth fulcrum, which paradoxically he calls causal, as nondual—which is a contradiction, for nonduality would necessarily imply being beyond all dualities, including that of cause and effect, the subject-object structure of knowledge and action, etc. Therefore a truly nondual condition may not be called causal. According to Wilber, this last, nondual level corresponds to what Mahāyāna Buddhism calls emptiness or emptiness (Skt. śūnyatā; Tib. tongpanyi [Wylie, stong pa nyid]; Chinese, Ch. 空 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, kōng; Wade–Giles, k’ung⁴; Jap. kū]). However, for all interpretations of Mādhyamaka except for Je Tsongkhapa’s unorthodox combination of Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, true emptiness—what the Svātantrikas and many non-Gelug Prāsaṅgikas call nonfigurative absolute (Skt. aparyāyaparamārtha; Tib. namdrang mayinpai dōndam [Wylie, nam grangs ma yin pa’i don dam]), and there cannot be causality without the subject-object duality. In fact, the Master Āryadeva wrote in *Catuḥśatakaśāstrakārikā* (XIV.25):

The seed of cyclic existence (saṃsāra) is consciousness;
objects are its sphere of activity.

And Śāntideva wrote (in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX.2),

“The absolute is not within the sphere of mind;
the mind is said to be the relative...”

Therefore, if Wilber’s words are taken at face value, the highest Mādhyamaka subschools of Mahāyāna philosophy and the higher vehicles will agree that this level is not the absolute truth of the Mahāyāna (and, in fact, Wilber’s description of this level seem to be referring to experiences of the dharmadhātu

in the condition of the base-of-all, or to another of the non-nirvanic experiences of emptiness that may manifest on the Path).

More problematic is the fact that Wilber also makes the above level correspond to that which different Vedic traditions have called “the disinterested witness” (Skt. *sākṣin*): a Hindu concept positing a subject that is characterized as “absolute” but which, nonetheless, is separate and different from its object (cf. e.g. Gupta, 1947, 2^a Ed. 1998)—ignoring the fact that a subject different and separate from its objects necessarily must be relative to them (and thus could not be regarded as being absolute, which by definition is that which is not relative to anything). Moreover, Wilber makes this level correspond to that which different Indian spiritual traditions call *nirodha* or “cessation” (Wilber, K. 1996, Spanish 1996, p. 293 of the Spanish edition)—which implies that it cannot be equated to the realization of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo, which is the state of *rigpa* that, as all Dzogchen Tantras and Treatises make clear, does not involve cessation in any sense (had Wilber not explicitly stated that this level involves cessation, we could still wishfully think that by “emptiness” he might be referring imprecisely to the integration of the experience of the *dharmadhātu* in *rigpa*, which is comparable to the manner in which a reflection manifests in a mirror, and hence to the first level of realization on the Dzogchen Path; however, both his identification of this level with the “disinterested witness” [Skt. *sākṣin*] that is defined as separate and different from its objects [and note that Wilber himself explicitly asserts the witness in question to be separate and different from its objects] and his use of the term *nirodha* definitively dispels any doubts in this regard [for more detailed and thorough review of the reasons for this, cf. Capriles, 2103a, 2013b, 2007a Vol. II, the series of articles bearing the phrase *Beyond Mind* in their titles, and other works]).

In none of the genuine paths I am familiar with, does the practitioner have to go through all the fulcra posited by Wilber or, even less so, to go through them in the order he establishes. Though Wilber intended his seventh, eighth and ninth fulcra to be a progression of levels of realization beginning with the *nirmāṇakāya*, continuing with the *saṃbhogakāya*, and concluding with the *dharmakāya*, which is how the inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation present the successive realization of the *kāyas*, as shown above his fulcra cannot correspond to what these Tantras refer to by these names, for: (1) his wording suggests the seventh fulcrum consists in the neutral condition of the base-of-all and/or the formless realms located at the top of *saṃsāra*; (2) he never stated that in his eighth fulcrum the non-ordinary strata of perception and subtle non-Jungian archetypes is not sufficient in itself for realization of the *saṃbhogakāya*, which can only manifest when the subject that seems to be different and separate from the visions dissolves and the true, nondual condition of the vision is realized; and (3) his ninth fulcrum seems to consist in the experience of the *dharmadhātu* in the condition of the base-of-all, or in another of the non-nirvanic experiences of emptiness that manifest on the Path.

Furthermore, in the Menngagde (Skt. *Upadeśavarga*) series of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo the three *kāyas* are realized in a sequence that is contrary to the one that characterizes the inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation and those *kāyas* do not correspond to what these Tantras call by the same names. The point is that according to the Menngagde series of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo—which Wilber has studied with at least one of the most important Masters of our time—the levels that, according to the Tantras of the Path of Transformation, are the *nirmāṇakāya*, the *saṃbhogakāya* and the *dharmakāya*, and which according to these Tantras are realized precisely in this order, are not the three *kāyas* of Buddhahood: in the *Atiyogatantrayāna* the first *kāya* to be realized is the *dharmakāya*, which is far beyond the *nirmāṇakāya*, the *saṃbhogakāya* and the *dharmakāya* as understood in the inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation, and corresponds to what these Tantras call the *svabhāvikāya*, which in their system is the fourth and final level of realization. For their part, the subsequent levels of realization of Dzogchen Ati, which these teachings call *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, as shown in the regular text of this book, cannot be reached through the methods of the inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation, for they go far beyond the final level of realization of these systems.

²⁶³ As stated in a previous note, the clarity or luminosity and thoughtlessness that manifests immediately after the unconsciousness that immediately follows one’s falling asleep is an instance of the base-of-all unless its true condition is reGnized—and Longchenpa asserted that some Sarmapa Masters claim that those who can realize this state and then contemplate in that state enjoy the absolute nature of clarity without having any dreams. However, in Dzogchen practice that which is to be reGnized and on which one must rest during sleep is the second luminosity that shines forth, which is piercing and which is the luminosity of the *dharmakāya*.

²⁶⁴ The individuals who, instead of integrating into the nondual gnosis of primordial awareness the states produced by the visualization practices applied in the Tantric stage of creation (Skt. utpattikrama or utpannakrama; Tib. kyerim [Wylie, bskyed rim]; Ch. 生起次第 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, shēngqǐ cìdì; Wade-Giles, sheng¹-ch¹'i³ tz'u⁴-tì⁴]) or by similar practices, cling to those states, thereby may take birth in the heavens of the sphere of form. Likewise, those who, incapable of integrating into the nondual gnosis of primordial awareness the experiences of pleasure that are obtained by means of the practices of the completion or perfection stage (Skt. saṃpannakrama, niṣpannakrama or utpannakrama; Tib. dzogrim [Wylie, rdzogs rim]; Ch. 圓滿次第 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yuánmǎn cìdì; Wade-Giles, yüan²-man³ tz'u⁴-tì⁴]) of the inner Tantras or similar practices, cling to these states, may gain access to the heavens of the sphere of sensuality. (The two mentioned stages of Tantric practice are explained in the chapter on the Path of Transformation of the Vajrayāna.)

²⁶⁵ According to the Dzogchen teachings, saṃsāra manifests out of the absorptions of the base-of-all (Skt. ālaya; Tib. kunzhi [Wylie, kun gzhi]; Ch. 来源 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, láiyuán; Wade-Giles, lai²-yüan²]) under the impulse of what is known as self-preoccupation (Skt. ahaṃkāra; Tib. ngardzin [Wylie, ngar 'dzin]; Ch. 我執 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wǒzhí; Wade-Giles, wo³-chih²] or 我慢 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wǒmàn; Wade-Giles, wo³-man⁴]), as follows: (1) we may be led to grasp at the condition of the base-of-all, and thereby enter a formless absorption of the top of saṃsāra; (2) if we are not so led, at the following stage that which the Dzogchen teachings call consciousness of the base-of-all (Skt. ālayavijñāna; Tib. kunzhi namshé or kunzhi nampar shepa (Wylie, kun gzhi nam [par] shes [pa]); Ch. 阿賴耶識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, ālāiyē shí; Wade-Giles, a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴) or 藏識 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zàngshì; Wade-Giles, tsang⁴-shih⁴)), to which we are impelled by an incipient drive to grasp at forms, which may lead us into an absorption of the realm of form; (3) if the process goes on because we do not remain in any of the aforementioned to samsaric realms, we will begin to single out within the as yet undivided totality of sense data, one after the other, a series of collections of characteristics (Skt. lakṣaṇa; Pāli lakkhaṇa; Tib. tsennyi [Wylie, mtshan nyid]; Ch. 相 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xiāng; Wade-Giles, hsiang¹]), establishing ourselves as apparently substantial, subsisting subjects by reacting to those collections of characteristics in ways that assert and confirm ourselves as separate selves—thereby entering the realm of sensuality and revolving in the wheel from one to another of the six realms into which the sphere of sensuality is divided.

All of this will be considered in further detail in a subsequent note; for a more detailed explanation, see Part Two of this book and Capriles (2013abcd, 2007a [3 Vols.] and the likely upcoming definitive version of electronic publication 2004).

²⁶⁶ As briefly stated in a previous note, the common teachings of the Sūtrayāna place formless absorptions and the samsaric formless sphere (Skt. ārūpyadhātu, arūpaloka or ārūpyāvācāra; Pāli, arūpaloka; Tib. **zukmepai kham** [Wylie, gzugs med pa'i khams]; Ch. 無色界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúsèjiè; Wade-Giles, wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴]) at the top of the hierarchy of psychological states; they place absorptions with form and the corresponding samsaric sphere (Skt. rūpadhātu; Pāli, rūpa loka; Tib. zugkham [Wylie, gzugs khams]; Ch. 色界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, sèjiè; Wade-Giles, se⁴-chieh⁴]) in the middle range; and place lowest the absorptions of sensuality and the corresponding sphere (Skt. kāmādhātu or kāmāloka; Tib. döpai kham [Wylie, dod pa'i khams]; Ch. 欲界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yùjiè; Wade-Giles, yü⁴-chieh⁴]). As evinced by the symbolism of the hat of the Vajra Master (Skt. vajrācārya; Tib. dorje lopön [Wylie, rdo rje slob dpon]; Ch. (lit.) 金剛阿闍梨 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jīngāng āshé lí; Wade-Giles, chin¹-kang¹ a¹-she²-li²] or (lit.) 金剛師 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jīngāngshī; Wade-Giles, chin¹-kang¹-shih¹]), the Vajrayāna's inner Tantric teachings invert this hierarchy, placing the sphere of sensuality at the top, the sphere of form in the middle, and the formless sphere at the bottom: the brim represents the formless sphere, the crown represents the sphere of form, and the feather—which rises above the crown as an adornment—represents the sphere of sensuality, the manifestations of which are an adornment for the realized Tantrika or Dzogchenpa. For some reflections in this regard, see Capriles (electronic publication 2007, 3 vols., and 2013abcd).

²⁶⁷ In Buddhism, there was much discussion as to whether or not in the formless sphere (Skt. ārūpyadhātu, arūpaloka or ārūpyāvācāra; Pāli, arūpaloka; Tib. **zukmepai kham** [Wylie, gzugs med pa'i khams]; Ch. 無色界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wúsèjiè; Wade-Giles, wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴]) and the corresponding contemplations there is a genuine and thorough formlessness and by implication a complete dissolution of the figure / ground division. For example, the Mahāsāṃghikas asserted that ārūpa comprised rūpa or figure in a subtle sense. For his part, this writer has claimed that the formless is established in contrast to what has

form and is recognized in terms of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized concepts as the “general form of the formless” in contrast with the “general form of what has form.”

In Tarthang Tulku (1977a), the limited expansion of space-time-knowledge in the more spacious samsaric realms (i.e. those of the formless sphere) is contrasted to the condition of Total Space-Time-Awareness proper to Awakening. The four absorptions of formlessness and the four levels of the formless sphere (Skt. Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*, *arūpaloka* or *ārūpyāvācāra*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. **zukmepai kham** [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i kham*]; Ch. 無色界 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*]) are instances of such limited expansion, which contrasts with the narrower perception of figure as singled out from ground; however, in both cases there is recognition, which always consists in the understanding of a configuration or collection of characteristics (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Pāli *lakkaṇa*; Tib. *tsennyi* [Wylie, *mtshan nyid*]; Ch. 相 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiāng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang¹*]) in terms of hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized concepts—independently of whether the configuration is a singled out figure that clearly and precisely stands against a background, or whether it is the above mentioned “general form of the formless.”

For its part, the state of Total Space-Time-Awareness is the very dissolution of recognition in terms of hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized concepts, and since it does not involve the recognition of either the “general form of the formless” or singled-out forms, it cannot be said either to involve form or not to involve form.

²⁶⁸ In Sartrean terminology, being-for-Self (i.e. the being of the mental subject) establishes a link of being with the pseudo-totality that is perceived as object. I did not express this in these terms because readers who are not familiar with Sartre’s philosophy would fail to understand the expression “link of being” without an exhaustive explanation. Therefore, I chose to say “identification,” even though this term does not convey so precisely what I am referring to. (For an explanation of the concept of establishing a link of being with an object, see Sartre, 1980.)

²⁶⁹ See the preceding note.

²⁷⁰ Both thoughts and the space between thoughts are manifestations of the essence (Tib. *ngowo* [Wylie, *ngo bo*]) aspect of the Base, which is emptiness. When thoughts or other manifestations of the *dang* [Wylie, *gdangs*] mode of manifestation of energy are reGnized, so that the *ngowo* aspect of the Base is apprehended correctly rather than delusorily, this is the reGnition (of) the *dharmakāya*. For a more extensive and in-depth explanation of this see Part Two of this book.

²⁷¹ As stated in previous notes, I write, “identifies with” in order to keep the text simple. However, it could be more precise to resort to Sartrean terminology and specify that the subject becomes the object by establishing a link of being with it. (For an explanation of the concept of establishing a link of being with an object, see Sartre, 1980.)

²⁷² Other examples would be “all is the undivided energy-field,” “all is the Buddha nature,” “all is the One Mind,” “all is God,” etc.

This delusion does not take place exclusively in traditional meditation. In the early seventies, I met an American hippy in the Greek island of Mikonos. One afternoon he told me he was on LSD: seeming quite marveled, he constantly repeated, “All is one,” “all is one.” This seems to be a clear example of how an individual may identify with a subtle thought in terms of which he experienced a condition of larger-than-usual space-time-knowledge and then express the ensuing perception in terms of a series of coarse thoughts of the discursive kind.

LSD and similar substances—which in an Appendix to Capriles, 2013d, I christened chemical raisers of the energetic-volume-determining-the-scope-of-awareness that have an epochotropic, non-dissociative, non-hypnotic, potentially “psychotomimetic,” consciousness expanding effect (CREV)—tend to widen the scope of conscious awareness and have an effect I have called epochotropic (a neologism compounded of the Greek noun *epoché* [ἐποχή], usually rendered as suspension of judgment, and the Greek verb *trepein* [τρέπειν, present active infinitive of τρέπω], here understood in the sense of to tend to): they tend to suspend—i.e., to delay—the interposition of subtle thoughts and judgment in sensory awareness, in such a way as to defer recognition and perception. In general, all sharp increases of the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness (Tib. *thigle* [Wylie, *thig le*]; somewhat similar to the Skt. *kuṇḍalīnī*), tend to have an effect of this kind, even though drugs may also produce other effects that are not produced by other ways to raise the energetic volume in question.

Thus the increase of the energetic volume and the ingestion of LSD and similar substances, to the extent

that they widen the scope of conscious awareness and to the extent that they delay perception, may give access to the neutral base-of-all, in which a contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction (Tib. *mongcha* [Wylie, *rmongs cha*]) obscures the Base's inherent nondual self-awareness, preventing it from making patent rigpa's own face in the manifestation of rigpa-qua-Path and rigpa-qua-Fruit. At this point, this obscuring element is what is called *gyu dagnyi chikpai marigpa* (*rgyu bdag-nyid gcig-pa'i ma-rig-pa*).

The above condition, in which neither *samsāra* nor *nirvāṇa* are manifest, often has been taken for rigpa qua Path or rigpa qua Fruit. This happens immediately after the manifestation of the second type of *avidyā* in the threefold classification adopted here, which is called automatically arising illusion (Tib. *lhenchig kyepai marigpa* [Wylie, *lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*]), which gives rise to the subject-object duality and hence causes us to attempt to take the condition of the base-of-all or rigpa qua Base as object—and hence what manifests is no longer the base-of-all, but the experience of the formless realms that results from grasping at the base-of-all. If the subsequent arising of the third type of *avidyā* or *marigpa*, which is the one called imagining delusion (Tib. *kuntak marigpa* (Wylie, *kun brtags ma rig pa*), does not result in the singling out of manifold entities in the continuum appearing as object, and the yogin manages to make the grasping at the continuum in question stable over a long period (which is impossible in the case of individuals under the effect of LSD and similar substances), he or she has become established in a formless absorption (Skt. *ārūpyāvacaradhāna*; Pāli *arūpāvacarajhāna*; Tib. *zugmé na chöpai samten* [Wylie, *gzugs med na spyod pa'i bsam gtan*]; Ch. 無色界定 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè dìng*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴*]; also Skt. *ārūpyasamāpatti*; Tib. *zugmepai nymjug* [*gzugs med pa'i snyoms 'jug*; Ch. just the same). And, of course, whoever habituates him or herself to the absorptions of the base-of-all or to the formless absorptions may subsequently take birth in the formless realms (Skt. *ārūpyadhātu*, *arūpaloka* or *ārūpyāvacara*; Pāli, *arūpaloka*; Tib. *zukmepai kham* [Wylie, *gzugs med pa'i khams*]; Ch. 無色界 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *wúsèjiè*; Wade-Giles, *wu²-se⁴-chieh⁴*]) that lie at the summit of *samsāra* and stay in this realm for periods that subjectively may be experienced as aeons.

When in the nineteen sixties Alan Watts (1962) wrote that the ingestion of LSD could allow people to “experience” Awakening, he might have been confusing his own LSD-induced experience of the neutral base-of-all (Tib. *junzhi lungmaten* [Wylie, *kun gzhi lung ma bstan*]) and probably a subsequent formless absorption, with the *dharmakāya* qua initial manifestation of Awakening or *nirvāṇa*. The point is that, as noted above, when the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness increases sharply, the neutral base-of-all may manifest spontaneously with the arising of nonconceptual experiences of pure sensation, without there being the need to apply any *dharma* method whatsoever to this end. However, the manifestation of rigpa-qua-Path that takes place upon the reGnition of the *dharmakāya* that makes patent rigpa's own face and is free from the basic obscuration inherent in the neutral base-of-all is most unlikely to occur in the same manner and situation. This is one of the reasons why, as stated in the regular text to which the call for this note was affixed, Jigme Lingpa predicted that in our time many yogins would commit the terrible mistake of taking for the *dharmakāya* the neutral condition of the base-of-all, which, upon the subsequent manifestation of dualistic grasping (which is the condition for interpreting the experience as this or that), may be followed by a short-lived formless absorption.

Furthermore, once the neutral condition in which neither *samsāra* nor *nirvāṇa* are manifest is taken for rigpa qua Path or rigpa qua Fruit, rigpa qua Base has been taken as object and grasped at (so to speak, for once it manifests as object it is no longer rigpa qua Base), and so what manifests is no longer the base-of-all, but a formless condition. Watts might have recognized the condition of the base-of-all, thus turning it into a formless absorption—in which case at the time he may have taken the ensuing *samsaric* experience for the manifestation of *nirvāṇa* or Awakening.

²⁷³ In normal life we feel we are our body, speech, mind, qualities and activities (or one or more of these elements), and so our ego is limited to these aspects of our persons. (The reasons why I say “or one or more of these” should be explained in great detail; since this cannot be done in a footnote, I might do so in a possible future book called *Meditation on the Selflessness of Human Beings and of Phenomena that are not Human Beings*).

Conversely, in formless conditions we identify with something much larger than our person: a pseudo-totality that seems to be limitless rather than to have narrow limits. However, both in normal life and in formless conditions we identify (or, more properly, establish a link of being) with something we have

taken as object, and then pretend there is no difference, distance or duality between the object and the subject. For a more extensive and in-depth discussion of this and in general of the errors of transpersonal and integral psychologies, see Capriles (2013abcd; electronic publication 2007 [3 vols.] or/and the series of papers bearing in their titles the phrase “Beyond Mind.”

²⁷⁴ Though it was Ronald D. Laing’s disciple, David E. Cooper (1967), who coined the term antipsychiatry, and Laing never applied it to his own system, when I use the term in a wide sense I include Laing under the label—a custom that, according to Adrian Laing (1996), was initiated by David Cooper (Ed. 1968) in his Introduction to *The Dialectics of Liberation*, but which I have observed in other works as well (for example, Boyers & Orrill, Eds. 1971, and, if my memory does not fail, Sedgwick, 1982). I also include under the label the Scottish psychiatrist’s associates and those who assimilated his influence: Aaron Esterson, Joseph Berke, Morton Schaszman, Leon Redler, Noel Cobb, James Low, Ross V. Speck, Andrew Feldmár, Douglas C. Smith, David Small, Mina Semyon, M. Guy Thompson, Steven J. Ticktin, Ljiljana Filipović, Steven Gans, Peter R. Breggin, Kevin F. McCready, Peter Sedgwick, etc. And I include even akin thinkers or therapists having a different filiation—some of whom influenced Laing, and some of whom were influenced by him, and with some of which the influence was mutual—such as Gregory Bateson, the Jungian Psychiatrist John W. Perry (whose Diabasis had a striking success in the “healing” of psychotics), Michel Foucault, Thomas Szasz, Kazimierz Dabrowski, Jay Haley, Bert Kaplan, Franco Basaglia, Don Jackson, John Weakland, etc. Though I could include transpersonalists Stan and Christina Grof, and to some extent even Michael Washburn, under the label, I refer to them as leading transpersonal theorists.

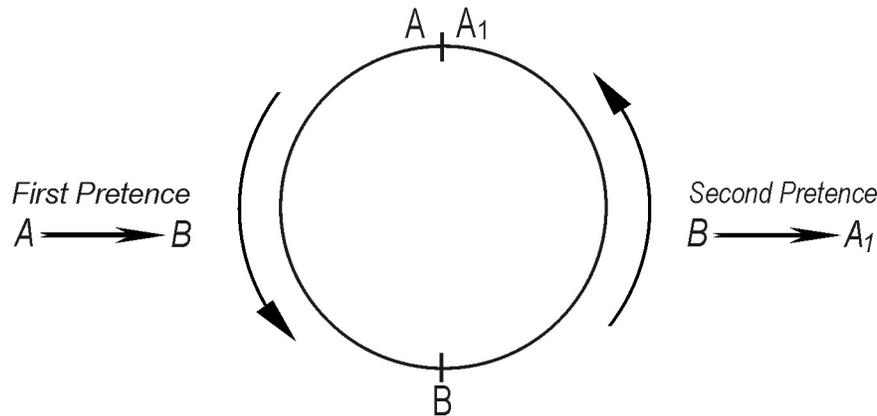
²⁷⁵ This is the highest of all four formless realms or concentrations, and as such is called the “Summit of Existence” (Skt. bhavāgra; Tib. sidtse or sidpai tsemo [Wylie, srid {pa’i} rtse {mo}]; Ch. 有頂天 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒudǐngtiān; Wade-Giles, yu³-ting³-t’ien¹]); the term “beyond perception and lack of perception” that here designates this concentration renders the Sanskrit naivasamjñānāsamjñāsamāpatti (Tib. dushemé dushé memin gyi nyomjug [Wylie, ’du shes med ’du shes med min gyi snyoms ’jug]; Ch. 非想非非想處定 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, fēixiǎng fēifēixiǎng chùdìng; Wade-Giles, fei¹-hsiang³ fei¹-fei¹-hsiang³ ch’u⁴-ting⁴]); it responds to the fact that in this concentration gross discrimination is left behind and only the subtlest of discriminations obtains. No sense of good and evil obtains in it because it is the fruit of the neutral karma of immobility (Skt. ānīnyakarma [also aniñjanakarman]; Pāli aniñjitakamma; Tib. migyowai le [Wylie, mi gyo ba’i las]; Ch. 不動業 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, bùdòng yè; Wade-Giles, pu⁴-tung⁴ yeh⁴]).

²⁷⁶ Cf. notes 124 and 125.

²⁷⁷ Laing shared Sartre’s (1980) view that it is consciousness that negates all that it does not want to be aware of, in the same operation negating that it has negated something (and that it has negated that it has negated something and so on ad infinitum), or that it is consciousness that deceives itself while in the same operation negating it has deceived itself (and that it has deceived itself about the fact that it has deceived itself and so on ad infinitum). Freud developed different explanations in the two topics, but Sartre imprecisely reduced his view to the idea that the agent of repression was an entity external to the conscious. For Laing’s explanation see the immediately following endnote.

²⁷⁸ Consider the diagram of Laing’s spiral of pretenses (Laing, Ronald D. 1961/1969):

“Elusion is a relation in which one pretends oneself away from one’s original self; then pretends oneself back from this pretense so as to appear to have arrived back at the starting point. A double pretense simulates no pretense. The only way to “realize” one’s original state is to forgo the first pretense, but once one adds a second pretense to it, as far as I can see, there is no end to the series of possible pretenses. I am. I pretend I am not. I pretend I am. I pretend I am not pretending to be pretending...



“The positions A and A₁ on the perimeter of the circle are separated by an impermeable barrier which is thinner and more transparent than one can imagine. Begin at A and move towards B. Instead of going back in a clockwise direction to A, continue in an anti-clockwise direction to point A₁. A and A₁ are ‘so near and yet so far’. They are so close that one says: ‘Is not A₁ just as good as A, if it is indistinguishable from A?’”

In the interpretation of the diagram I am making here, point A corresponds to the unveiling of our true condition in the self-reGnition of rigpa. If this is what one values, upon reaching A₁ one will think that one has arrived at A, for one will not be able to admit that what one has reached is no more than its imitation.

In turn, point B is our habitual condition marked by delusion, in which we hypostasize / reify / valorize / absolutize the idea that we are the finite, limited entity that is designated by our name, which we believe to be distinct and separate from the rest of the universe.

Finally, point A₁ represents those conditions that may be confused with the Awakening represented as A, and in particular the states of the formless sphere that is the highest region of saṃsāra (i.e. of experience marked by the delusion called avidyā).

Though A is represented as preceding the genesis and development of delusion, as stated in the note dealing with the debate between Wilber, on the one hand, and Grof and Washburn, on the other, the reGnition of rigpa that makes our true condition patent is a wholly new event, rather than consisting in the return to a more wholesome and holistic condition previous to the development of the spurious divisions that characterize deluded adults (as we have seen, ordinary individuals have not reGnized rigpa during infancy, in the intermediate state or in “previous lifetimes”). Therefore, the diagram should not be thought to represent the chronological development of delusion, but to express its development from a (meta-)phenomenological perspective.

At any rate, it is once we arrive at B and thus feel separate from the totality that is our true condition (or, in terms of twenty-century physics, from the plenitude of the single energy field that the universe is), as a result of which we experience the powerful sensation of “lack of plenitude” discussed in the regular text of this book, that we try to fill that lack by whatever means—which may include spiritual methods. However, since we fiercely cling to the illusion of selfhood and this clinging has been vehemently cultivated by our conditioning, in our attempts to regain totality and plenitude by spiritual means we strive to maintain ourselves as truly existing separate selves; therefore, instead of returning to A, we would rather go ahead to A₁ by becoming (or, less precisely, by identifying with) the conceptualization of the spurious totality produced by a limited panoramification of our focus of conscious attention.

Concerning the assertion that the reGnition of rigpa represented as A is a wholly new event rather than the return to a more wholesome condition experienced in the past, it is self-evident that the state of Awake individuals and that of babies are extremely different. Beside being unable to deal with life situations, babies are beclouded by avidyā in the first of the senses the term has in the threefold classification adopted here (which, as we have seen, is that of the element of stupefaction that in Tibetan is called mongcha [Wylie, rmongs cha]), and their experience is conditioned by a proto-dualism that, through their interaction with their parents and other adults, will develop into the second and third senses of the term avidyā in the threefold classification adopted here. Contrariwise, Awake individuals deal with life

situations more effectively than deluded adults, for they maintain the learning achieved in the process of socialization and education, but have rid themselves of the self-hindering that issues from the hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized self-consciousness illustrated with the centipede poem; being characterized by the self-recognition of rigpa, they are totally free of all types of avidyā or marigpa; and since they have entirely overcome dualism and neutralized (or burned) the seeds at the root of dualism, they cannot be conditioned to develop saṃsāra again.

However, as Norman O. Brown (1968) suggested in a different context and without referring to Laing's diagram (which had not yet been conceived in 1959 when the first edition of his book was published), "returning to A" after having become fully conditioned adults may be compared to recovering what Freud called oceanic feeling (*ozeanische Gefühl*), as well as the spontaneity and unselfconsciousness that characterizes infants. (Note that Freud believed the infant's oceanic feeling implied a sensation of unsheltering and was at the root of religious sentiment, which he viewed as a means to elude that sensation. Though it is true that infants may experience a feeling of unsheltering in the period when their energetic volume determining the scope of awareness has not yet decreased to the levels necessary for adult normal ego-functioning, and when the oceanic feeling has not yet been obliterated, this unsheltering is not inherent in the oceanic feeling, but in the developing illusion of being a separate ego or self, as the ocean-like condition does not afford the latter the illusory shelter granted it by the narrow and hermetic focus of attention that is the condition of possibility of normal ego-functioning. Therefore, though I may view the feeling of unsheltering as a driving force toward building up a normal Freudian ego, I am appraising the oceanic feeling in a way that is closer to Norman O. Brown's than to Freud's.)

At any rate, it was on the basis of the panoramic, spontaneous and unselfconscious character of both the experience of babies and the condition of Awake individuals, that the *Zhuāngzǐ* (莊子; Wade-Giles, *Chuang¹-tzu²*) referred to the experience of the baby who (Giles, 1926, quoted in Watts, Alan, 1956):

"...sees all things all day long without blinking; this is possible because his eyes are not focused on any specific object. He goes without knowing that he goes and stops without knowing what he is doing. He has no idea of separation with regard to his environment and moves along with it. These are the principles of mental health."

(An alternative translation is provided in Watson, B. (trans.), 1968, p. 253, according to which the baby...

"...stares all day long without blinking its eyes—it has no preferences in the world of externals. To move without knowing where you are going, to sit at home without knowing what you are doing, traipsing and trailing about with other things, riding along with them on the same wave—this is the basic rule of life-preservation...")

Dudjom Rinpoche (1979, 2005 [first attempt at translation 1978]) also compared Dzogchen realization to an infant entering a Tibetan temple for the first time and watching the frescoes in its walls, pillars and so on.

To conclude, it must be noted that the explanation in terms of the spiral of pretenses is an exclusively digital interpretation of the process of spiritual ascension to spurious highs based on the interaction of a digital and an analog process (the first of which, in individuals who have not suffered brain damage, is principally associated with the cerebral hemisphere situated on the left, and the second of which, in the same individuals, is associated with the right hemisphere). Furthermore, that explanation is allegoric rather than literal, and so it would be absurd to try to establish the number of revolutions involved in any given process of spiritual ascension (as I did in a book published in 1977 in Nepal).

For a more detailed discussion of the above, cf. Capriles (2013abcd; electronic publication 2007 [3 vols.] and the series of papers bearing in their titles the phrase *Beyond Mind*.

²⁷⁹ It is human natural sensitivity that makes it possible to establish which actions are "good" and which are "bad" in a universal way, and according to the Buddhist teachings it is the karmas thus established that determine future rebirths.

²⁸⁰ In the Iron Age or kaliyuga (Age of Darkness or Black Age) individuals internalize a set of mutually conflictive criteria (for example, a Christian priest may tell a boy that he should respond to violence by "offering the other cheek," but other boys will make it clear to him that the "right thing" to do is to strike back). Though initially most children are bound by the criteria espoused by their parents (which, for their part, change from one set of parents to another), later on each individual produces his or her own synthesis of criteria, according to different circumstances (and yet in general the first criterion to

bind us will continue to exert a crucial influence on us throughout our lifetime). I have discussed this in a series of other works, among which the first were *Capriles* (1977 and 1986).

However, even if we become convinced that, for example, killing rabbits in order to sell their meat is not bad, at the moment of killing the rabbit our natural sensitiveness will cause of to be aware that we are causing suffering and harm to a sentient being, and that this is a negative action; therefore, we will accumulate the corresponding negative karma regardless of our cultural conditioning.

²⁸¹ What makes our actions create a cause that will have effects is that, at the moment of acting, the acting entity designated by our name becomes the object of our own consciousness, and we judge this object as a subject that is carrying out a good, bad or neutral act. When we judge ourselves as agents of a good act we accept ourselves, and since this acceptance embraces all potential objects, including the mental feeling that is experienced with each and every perception or act in the center of the body at the level of the heart, we experience a rather pleasant feeling; when we judge ourselves as agents of a bad act we reject ourselves, and since the acceptance embraces all potential objects, we experience an unpleasant feeling; and when we judge ourselves as agents of a neutral act we remain indifferent towards ourselves and hence experience a neutral feeling. Therefore, through this judgment we give rise to a good, bad or neutral self-image and to karmic propensities of the same sign—which in the future will cause us to accept ourselves and thereby accept the whole of our experience, experiencing pleasure; to reject ourselves and thereby reject the whole of our experience, experiencing pain; or to remain indifferent toward ourselves and thereby toward the whole of our experience, experiencing a neutral sensation. Furthermore, an individual's self-image determines his or her behavior: if her or his self-image is good according to a given criterion, an individual will tend to have a good conduct according to that criterion; if it is bad, he or she will tend to have a bad behavior; etc.

The fact that the criteria in terms of which we judge our actions somehow depend on a synthesis of the criteria of internalized others, rather than on universal abstract norms, does not entail a moral relativism. As stated in the preceding note, even those who are taught that acts that are harmful to others are good, know very well that they are evil, and this knowledge will condition their judgment of their own actions and therefore will determine the karmic result of their actions.

²⁸² This is why it is said that the full ripening of karmas does not necessarily take place in the lifetime when the negative action was committed, or in the one immediately following, or even in the ones closely following this one, but may take place at any time—even many lifetimes after the negative action was committed.

It must be noted that one of the contributory conditions for the maturation of a negative karma may be a condition of wider space-time-knowledge in which the mechanisms of self-deceit cannot conceal the full extent of the pain produced by our rejection of sensations. In this condition, the manifestation of the habits of rejection may be the doorway to a rebirth in the purgatories.

Likewise, the presence of certain pathogens may be a contributory condition for a very painful disease to manifest. And so on.

²⁸³ Both the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna shun alcohol. As to meat, the Mahāyāna prohibits its consumption, but the Hīnayāna allows it when put as alms in a monk's begging bowl—prohibiting only its intentional acquisition by both monks and laypeople.

²⁸⁴ In this case by “concealed,” in terms of the twofold classification of aspects of the Base I mean that the primordial purity (Tib. *katak* [Wylie, *ka dag*]; hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*) aspect, which is emptiness, is obscured, and by “obstructed” I mean that the spontaneous perfection (Skt. *anābogha* or *nirābogha*; Tib. *lhundrub* (Wylie: *lhun grub*) aspect is hindered by self-consciousness. In terms of the threefold classification of aspects of the Base, the primordial purity aspect corresponds to essence (Tib. *ngowo* [Wylie, *ngo bo*], which is one of the terms that renders the Skt. *svabhāva*), and spontaneous perfection is subdivided into nature (Tib. *rangzhin* [Wylie, *rang bzhin*], which is also one of the terms that renders the Skt. *svabhāva*) and energy (Tib. *thukje* [thugs rje], which renders the Skt. *karuṇā*, meaning compassion). These aspects of the Base will be discussed in the explanation of the *Atiyogatantrayāna* in the regular text (this word is in Oḍḍiyāna language, for which there are no diacritic marks, for its exact pronunciation has not been scientifically determined, yet I used the diacritics for *yāna* as they would be employed in Sanskrit—in which the term would be *Ādiyogatantrayāna*)

²⁸⁵ Because of all that has been explained in the regular text, in Capriles, Elías, electronic publication 2004, I noted that, had a Dzogchen practitioner replied to Shénxiù (神秀; Wade-Giles, Shen²-hsiu⁴; Jap. Jinshū), probably he or she would have written something like the following:

Freed from the illusory obstruction introduced by self-grasping (Skt. ahaṃkāra),*
the nonexistent primordial mirror's inherently all-liberating nature
is not hampered by an illusory subject's clinging
and so all illusory dust liberates itself spontaneously upon arising.
If, contrariwise, one tried to clean the looking glass,
this would be a function of ahaṃkāra (self-grasping)
that would impede spontaneous liberation, illusorily tainting the looking glass
with the fictitious stains such "dirty cloth" would leave on it upon cleaning it.

* ahaṃkāra (Tib. ngardzin [Wylie, ngar 'dzin]) is a synonym of āmagraha (Tib. dagdzin [Wylie, bdag 'dzin]).

²⁸⁶ This may be read in at least two divergent ways. The first is in terms of the Hetuyāna or "causal vehicle" (a term that refers to the Sūtrayāna, to which the Śūraṅgamasūtra and in general all sūtras and their commentaries and treatises belong), according to which Awakening is explained in terms of cause and effect—even though all Buddhist teachings agree that all that arises as the effect of a cause is produced / fabricated / conditioned / contrived and or compounded (Skt. saṃskṛta; Pāli saṅkhata; Tib. duche [Wylie, 'dus byas]; Ch. 有為 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒuwéi; Wade-Giles, yu³-wei²]) and as such is transitory and subject to duḥkha (Pāli: duḥkha; Tib. dugngal [sdug bsngal]; Ch. 苦 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn kǔ; Wade-Giles k'u¹; Jap. rōmaji, ku; Kor. ko). The second is in terms of the Atiyogatantrayāna, according to which, to be truly unproduced / nonfabricated / unconditioned / uncontrived and uncompounded (Skt. asaṃskṛta; Pāli, asaṅkhata; Tib. dūmache [Wylie, 'dus ma byas]; Ch. 無為 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²]), and hence to be irreversible and represent a definitive eradication of duḥkha, Awakening has to be entirely beyond the cause-effect relation (however, to some extent the latter view may apply to the Vajrayāna, to the sudden Mahāyāna and to the Mahāmādhyaṃyaka school of the Mahāyāna).

In the first context, the Śūraṅgamasūtra should be interpreted as asserting that the cause of Awakening must be the unconditioned and unmade nature of all reality, which alone is not false or spurious. However, because effects are by definition produced, causation always gives rise to something produced / fabricated / conditioned / contrived and or compounded, which as such is false, impermanent and subject to duḥkha.

If this sūtra were interpreted in terms of the second context (since the text does not belong to Ati Dzogpa Chenpo or to the Vajrayāna, this would be either an interpretation in terms of the sudden Mahāyāna, or one in terms of the Mahāmādhyaṃyaka school of the Mahāyāna), it would be saying that Awakening cannot be caused, for otherwise it would be conditioned and made.

Even though I have related this second interpretation (which is the perfectly flawless one) to some forms of the Mahāyāna, only Ati Dzogpa Chenpo could implement it thoroughly and perfectly. In fact, as expressed in Dūdjom Rinpoche, English, 1991, vol. I, pp. 300-301:

"The Sugata (Śākyamuni's), during the intermediate (i.e. the Second) Promulgation of the transmitted precepts (i.e. of the Sūtrayāna), did not reveal the structure of the fundamental reality, though he did extensively teach the inconceivable, abiding nature (consisting in the dharmakāya's primordial emptiness) without referring to symbols of elaborate conception. And, during the final (i.e. the Third) Promulgation (of the Sūtrayāna), though he did reveal the structure of the fundamental reality, he did not teach the characteristic Path through which it is actualized. Therefore, the conclusive intention of the two promulgators (i.e. Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga) actually abides without contradiction in the nature of Dzogchen."

In fact, Dzogchen is the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, in which Awakening results from the spontaneous dissolution of the illusory nucleus of experience and action and of all that is spurious, conditioned and made, rather than from the action of the illusory nucleus of experience and action. As the Kunje Gyalpo Tantra of the Series of [the Essence or Nature of] Mind puts it (in

(It must be noted that the reference to Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga as "the two promulgators" may be taken to suggest that, just as Nāgārjuna revealed the sūtras of the Second Promulgation, which Śākyamuni's had left in the custody of the nāgas, Asaṅga revealed the sūtras of the Third Promulgation. However, though

I have often found references to Nāgārjuna as a revealer of Śākyamuni's teachings, I have never found any analogous reference to Asaṅga.)

²⁸⁷ According to the sources that do not class Dzogchen Ati as a Path separate from that of the Vajrayāna in general, the Dzogchen teachings and transmission arose through the sambhogakāya Vajrasattva. It is according to the texts that classify all vehicles into Path of Renunciation, Path of Transformation and Path of Spontaneous Liberation that canonical sources and transmissions of the Path of Transformation arose through Vajrasattva—i.e., from the sambhogakāya—and yet the Tantras and the transmission of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation arose through Samantabhadra—or, which is the same, from the dharmakāya.

²⁸⁸ The discoveries Tucci reported thirty years after his initial association of Oḍḍiyāna with the Swat Valley seem to be most relevant. He (Tucci, 1970, section on Bön, p. 244) writes:

“...the tombs at Leh (note by the author of the present book: the capital of Ladakh, in Eastern Kashmir, an area where nowadays Tibetan Buddhism and Shī'ah Islam prevail) (...) as far as their ceramics are concerned appear to stand in clear relation to those which have been uncovered by the Italian Archeological mission in Swat, Pakistan, in the Indus Valley (Francke, 1914, p. 71), burial places which must doubtless be ascribed to Dardic tribes.”

Ladakh traditionally included what is nowadays the Indian regions of Ladakh, Lahaul and Spiti, as well as Baltistan, the Indus Valley, Zangskar, Askai Chin, and Gari [including the regions of Rudok and Guge to the East and the Nubra valleys to the North], and thus the findings suggest that Oḍḍiyāna may have been a region ampler than the Swat Valley, which included parts of what culturally may be referred to as Western Tibet (perhaps reaching as far as Mount Kailāśā) and that therefore overlapped with the Kingdom of Zhang Zhung. In another book, Tucci (1966) suggested the existence of trade connections between the ethnic Tibetans and Iranian regions through Badakhshan, Gilgit, Ladakh and West Tibet—and, indeed, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (2009) has made it clear that the kingdom of Zhang Zhung embraced from Persia through Western Tibet. At any rate, the above findings suggest that a region far ampler than the Swat Valley and that included at least the greater Ladakh and reached to the Chitral Mountains and Gilgit was the seat of an ample culture that politically may have constituted the kingdom of Oḍḍiyāna. In the Internet anonymous text reads (<http://yoniversum.nl/dakini/uddiyana.html>; retrieved on June 25, 2014; it seems likely that the passage was cited from some published book that was not cited by the person who uploaded the text, but I have not been able to find out whether or not this is so, as there is no indication of the author and by searching extracts with Google no publication by an identified author appears):

“The idea of Uddiyana being the name of a large region rather than of a small valley, actually reiterates information published 100 years earlier by Laurence Austine Waddell in his *Buddhism of Tibet* (New York: Dover Publishing, 1895; reprinted in 1972 as *Tibetan Buddhism*). Although Waddell writes twice that Uddiyana equals Swat, he also noted in a footnote (3) that from the extent assigned to it by Hwen Tsang, the name probably covered a large part of the whole hill region south of the Hindu Kush, from Chitral to the Indus, as indeed it is represented in the Map of Vivien de St. Martin (*Pelerins Bouddhistes*, ii.)...

“...Whereas many a Tibetan text simply locates Uddiyana by saying that it lies to the West of India, Patrul Rinpoche (b. 1808) provides us with more detail when describing the birth place of Garab Dorje not simply as ‘Uddiyana’ but as being close to Lake Kutra in the region of Dhanakosha; thus indicating present day North-eastern Kashmir (now Pakistan)—a region right in the middle between Chitral, Gilgit and Swat. [Patrul Rinpoche, revised ed. 1998, pp. 338-339]...

“...Taking this view of Uddiyana and projecting it in the form of map (which I've done here), one arrives at a very interesting image. Uddiyana thus becomes the uniting name for the whole region along the length of the Indus River for as long as it stays in the mountains. Starting with the river's multiple sources near Mt. Kailas, passing through Zhang-Zhung, Lahul and Spiti, crossing Kashmir with Zanskar on the left and Ladakh on the right before moving into Gilgit; the Indus turns South just before reaching Chitral. From here onwards, the river becomes the natural (Eastern) border of the Swat valley (the ancient capital was near present day Mingora) until its waters leave the mountains and reach the low and fertile plains that much earlier gave rise to the Indus Valley civilization (Harappa, Mohenjo Daro) as well as the later Buddhist kingdom of Gandhara.”

²⁸⁹ As John Reynolds (1996, p. 349, n.2) reports, S. E. Upāsaka (1990) “compiles evidence for clearly locating Uddiyana in eastern Afghanistan.” Therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that Oḍḍiyāna was an eastern region of today’s Afghanistan... although it seems more likely that the author in question mistook remains of the Kingdom of Shambhala—which according to both Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Giuseppe Tucci (personal communication by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu) was located in Afghanistan—for those of Oḍḍiyāna. However, it is also possible that Oḍḍiyāna extended to the West as far as Eastern Afghanistan, as suggested in the regular text right before the reference mark for this note.

²⁹⁰ The declared aim of this Path is the realization of absolute truth. In the Mahāyāna, most systems identify absolute truth with the twofold emptiness (that of persons and that of phenomena other than persons); nevertheless, the Prāsaṅgika subschool, summit of the coarse, outer Mādhyamaka, does not reduce the absolute to mere emptiness. For its part, the Mahāmādhyamaka School, and in general all of the subtle, inner Mādhyamaka, understands absolute truth to lie in the inseparability of emptiness and appearances (or, in the case of the Zhentongpa School, when I class it as different from Mahāmādhyamaka, as that of emptiness and awareness). However, according to the Nyingmapa, the Path that allows the individual to effectively attain this realization is not that of the Mahāyāna, but that of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo.

²⁹¹ According to the Mādhyamaka Prāsaṅgika school, it is impossible to have a true realization of the emptiness of human beings if one does not realize the emptiness of phenomena that are not human beings, which include the aggregates the interaction of which gives rise to the illusion that human beings exist and do so hypostatically or inherently.

²⁹² According to the Dzogchen teachings, the Base has three aspects. The ngowo (Wylie, ngo bo) aspect is emptiness and corresponds to the mind aspect of the individual; in fact, its correct apprehension is the dharmakāya, which is the mind aspect of Buddhahood. The rangzhin (Wylie, rang bzhin) aspect is clarity or luminosity, source of all experience, which corresponds to the voice or energy aspect of the individual; its correct apprehension is the sambhogakāya, voice or energy aspect of Buddhahood. The thukje (Wylie, thugs rje) aspect is unobstructedness of manifestation and uninterrupted manifestation of phenomena, and comprises the whole of manifest, yet nonexistent phenomena and corresponds to the body aspect of the individual; its correct apprehension is the nirmāṇakāya, which is the body aspect of Buddhahood.

²⁹³ The illusory experiences (Tib. nyam [Wylie, nyams], roughly equivalent to that which Chán / Zen calls demonic states [Ch. 魔境: Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, mójìng; Wade-Giles, mo²-ching⁴; Jap. makyo] and what Śūfism calls ḥāl [pl. aḥwāl]) of emptiness are said to be the characteristic experiences of the mind aspect of the human reality; the illusory experiences of clarity are said to be the characteristic experiences of the energy or voice aspect of the human reality; and the illusory experiences of sensation are said to be the characteristic experiences of the body aspect of the human reality. Therefore, though it is said to be with the mind that Tantric practitioners apply the concentration / visualization whereby they transform or modify their vision, with regard to experiences it may be said that vision, which is a function of clarity, is a manifestation of our energy.

Furthermore, the transformation of vision that is the essence of the Path of Transformation consists in perceiving ourselves and the whole of our dimension as sambhogakāya deities in their dimension (in particular, as the sambhogakāya deity that manifested to the mahāsiddha who introduced into the human world the Tantric teaching we are practicing). The original mahāsiddha was in the state in which the true condition of the level of energy or voice (Skt. vak; Tib. sung [Wylie, gsung]) is realized, and for our transformation to become actual realization, we must find ourselves in the same state. Thus the visions of this Path arose from the realization of the true condition of the level of energy and are a method whereby practitioners can achieve this realization. (In Tibetan, the term sung [Wylie, gsung] refers to the voice and corresponding aspect of Buddhahood; the voice and corresponding aspect of the existence of a sentient being trapped in saṃsāra is referred to by the term ngag [Wylie, ngag].)

(As will be shown, the English term energy is used to translate various words. In the context of Tantrism it is used mainly for rendering the Tibetan term lung [Wylie, rlung], and in general for referring to the energy aspect of our condition, represented as the “voice,” which is the sense in which it is being used in this note and in the discussion to which this note was appended. However, some authors have also used it to translate the Tibetan term thigle [Wylie, thig le], which in one of its senses refers to the basic energy of which lung is a dynamic manifestation. In the context of the Dzogchen Atiyoga, Chögyal

Namkhai Norbu [who I follow also in this regard] uses the term for translating the Tibetan term *thukje* (Wylie, *thugs rje*), which literally means compassion, and which consists in the unobstructed (Tib. *ma gagpa* [Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*]) and all-pervasive (Tib. *kunkhyab* [Wylie, *kun khyab*]), uninterrupted (Tib. *ma gagpa* [Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*]) flow of phenomena and the latter's functionality—independently of whether these manifest in the *dang* [Wylie, *gdangs*], *rölpa* [Wylie, *rol pa*] or *tse* [Wylie, *rtsal*] modes of manifestation of energy. While the first terms translated as energy [*lung*, *ngag* and *sung*] correspond to the voice, the next [*thigle*] corresponds in an important sense to the mind, and the last [*thukje*] corresponds to the body. However, in a sense it may be said that the voice or energy is a manifestation or function of the mind, and that the body is a manifestation or function of the voice or energy.)

²⁹⁴ As stated in the preceding note, here reference is being made to the level of energy in the sense in which the word is used when one talks about the body, energy or voice, and mind, rather in the sense it has when one talks about essence (Tib. *ngowo* [Wylie, *ngo bo*]), nature (Tib. *rangzhin* [Wylie, *rang bzhin*]) and energy (Tib. *thukje* [Wylie, *thugs-rje*]).

²⁹⁵ Before invading the Indian subcontinent, proto-Indo-European peoples had a three tiered cast system; however, after their conquest of the Indian subcontinent and their crossbreeding with the peoples that at the time populated the region (namely the Dravidians and the various kinds of *ādivāsi* / first inhabitants) they introduced a fourth caste into their social system, so as to turn those who had a lesser proportion of proto-Indo-European blood into servants and agricultural providers. Thus the highest caste was that of the Brahmins (Skt. *Brāhmaṇa*), which conformed the priesthood, thereby having the highest privileges without having the duty to fight wars. The immediately inferior caste was that of the *Kṣatriyas*, who constituted the political and warring class (i.e. the “nobility”). Then came the *Vaiśyas*, who were traders and artisans. Finally there came the *Śūdras*, who had a very small proportion of Indo-European blood and who were farmers and servants. Those who had no proto-Indo-European blood were the tribal *ādivāsis*, and those born from the union of father and mother of different casts—i.e. from unions that were deemed illegitimate—were declared untouchables (Skt. *amedhyaṃ*) and divided into subgroups according to the casts of father and mother—each subgroup in charge of one of the tasks that caste people needed them to perform because of being deemed too base and/or contaminating. In fact, according to the *R̥gveda* (X. 90), Brahmins issued from the mouth of *Puruṣa*, the universal soul and divinity; *Kṣatriyas* arose from *Puruṣa*'s arms; *Vaiśyas* were formed from *Puruṣa*'s thighs; and *Śūdras* arose from *Puruṣa*'s feet. The *ādivāsis*, having no proportion of Indo-European blood whatsoever, and the untouchables, being born of unions deemed illegitimate or being the descendants of people born of unions deemed illegitimate, did not arise from any of the parts of *Puruṣa*'s body and hence were thought to lack the capacity to attain spiritual realizations and to be unfit for traditional religious activities.

Orthodox Hindu traditions regard the Brahmins as having the highest spiritual capacity, followed by the *Kṣatriyas*, and then by the *Vaiśyas*. The *Śūdras* were deemed incapable of attaining spiritual realizations and hence were not allowed to devote themselves to the spiritual quest upon reaching the age at which it was deemed that cast men had fulfilled their social *dharma* duties—and, of course, the same applied to *dalits* (meaning “oppressed,” this label is used by untouchables [Skt. *amedhyaṃ*] to characterize their situation as an oppressed social group, in contrast with the term Gandhi coined for them, which is *harijan[ah]* or “children of god”—which they deemed to be patronizing and outright contradictory, for as shown above according to the *R̥gveda* they were precisely those who did not arise from the divinity and hence lacked the “presence of the divine.”

However, as shown in the regular text, the nondual spirituality of India did not come through the barbarian Indo-European invaders; it seems to have come through the Tibeto-Burmans living on the plateaus and slopes of the Himalayas and the Dravidians who received transmission and teachings from them and spread them in their civilization. In fact, the pre-Indo-European Indian religion was *Śaiva* and, rather than being antisomatic, deemed corporeal reality, including the body and its impulses, to be sacred, and to be a vehicle for the realization of the divine. The Indo-Europeans, on the contrary, were anti-somatic and sternly repressed the *Śaiva bacchanalia* as a threat to the continuity of their cast system and hence to their own political, social and economic power—for whoever was born of one of the unions that took place in them was excluded from the caste system and declared untouchable.

In India, Tantrism represented a revival of pre-Indo-European traditions, and therefore the prejudices and antisomatism of the Brahmins made them least apt to practice Paths such as that of transformation and that of spontaneous liberation. The *Kṣatriyas* were slightly more apt to practice these Paths, the *Vaiśyas*

more so, and the Śūdras were aptest among caste Indians. Though some mahāsiddhas, such as the great Sarahapāda and a few others, came from Brahmin families, it was often among those untouchables that cast people deemed to be of the lowest type (the caṇḍālas and caṇḍālīs, born from a Śūdra father and a Brahmin mother, who were in charge of the disposal of corpses), among other groups of untouchables, or in many cases even among Śūdras, that there arose the greatest mahāsiddhas and realized beings.

This inversion of the traditional caste-structure was reflected in the Tantric appraisal of the spiritual capacity of the members of the different castes. With regard to the classification of the Tantras into four vehicles, as taught by the Sarmapa in Tibet, an unpublished manuscript by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu translated by Adriano Clemente states:

“In the Sheja Kunkhyab (Wylie, shes bya kun khyab; Jamgön Kongtrul’s Encyclopædia of Knowledge) we read:

“There are four types of disciples of the Buddha: (1) those who appreciate to a greater extent external practices such as purification and ablutions, who desire to practice the Teaching in this way; (2) those who are more interested in the real meaning and less in external actions; (3) those who understand that external actions can be a source of distraction, and therefore devote themselves principally to meditation on the real inner meaning; and (4), those who rejoice in the enjoyments through the nondual wisdom of method and prajñā.

“When these four types of disciple receive a Teaching, they become respectively followers of (1) Kriyā[tantra], (2) Ubhaya[tantra] [or Cāryatantra], (3) Yoga[tantra], and (4) Anuttarayogatantra.

“To transmit the Teaching to the four types of disciples in accordance with their inclinations there have therefore been imparted teachings related to the four types of Tantra: to those who feel greater attachment and lust, and who in the Hindu tradition are followers of the god Śiva, the method of the Anuttarayogatantra was transmitted; to those who are conditioned by anger, who in the Hindu tradition are followers of the methods linked to Viṣṇu, the method of the Ubhayatantra was taught; to those who are more obscured by ignorance, who traditionally follow the methods linked to Brahmā, the Kriyātantra has been taught; to the individuals with undefined characteristics the Yogatantra was taught. These considerations are explained in the De nyid ’Dus pa, which contains the way of seeing of Masters such as Nāgārjuna, Rab ’byor bskyans and others.”

“And furthermore:

“The (Anuttarayogatantra titled) Dur khrod smad du byung ba rgyud maintains that in order to discipline Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras with the Teaching, and to carry them onto the Path, the four series of Tantras were transmitted, namely the Kriyā[tantra], Ubhaya[tantra or Cāryatantra], Yoga[tantra] and Anuttara[yoga]tantra[, respectively].

“The (Tantra titled) rDor je gur (mkha’ ’gro ma dra ba rdo rje gur zhes bya ba’i rgyud kyi rgyal po) states:

“To those with an inferior capacity the Kriyātantra was taught.

To those with a medium capacity the Ubhayatantra was taught.

To those with a superior capacity the Yogatantra was taught.

To those with a supreme capacity the Anuttara[yoga]tantra was taught’.”

²⁹⁶ The principle of Anuyoga is instantaneous visualization, rather than the gradual visualization that is the principle of other, lower Tantric vehicles, including both the Mahāyoga of the Nyingmapa and the Anuttarayogatantra of the Sarmapa. In a situation like the one described here, only an instantaneous, lhundrub (Wylie, lhun grub) visualization will do, for in an unforeseen situation we cannot sit down in order to develop a visualization step by step: we have to transform instantaneously and sustain the visualization with the passion’s energy (in this case, the anger’s), or else the method will not work. Furthermore, it is likely that the passion would not allow us to concentrate on the successive steps of the gradual process, and if we succeeded in so doing, this would mean the passion has already passed and thus we no longer have a passion to transform.

²⁹⁷ Even if they do not harm their present body during the fight, they will harm themselves because they will create bad karma that will have negative effects for them in the future.

²⁹⁸ Note that in Dzogchen, and in particular in the Upadeśavarga or Series of pith instructions, clarity—and in general all three main experiences—is not the same as in the Tantras of transformation. Whereas in the latter a visualization (or even an enhanced perception of the “physical” phenomena of tsel [Wylie, rtsal] energy) is regarded as clarity, in the Upadeśavarga—and in particular in the Nyingthik (Wylie,

snying thig)—clarity is a quality of rigpa that is only manifest when rigpa is manifest. As Jigme Lingpa expresses it in *The Lion’s Roar* (Sengge Ngaro [Wylie, seng ge nga ro; Skt. *Siṃhanāda*):

“Clarity, or clear light, is the unobstructed shining forth, as rigpa-awareness, of the clarity of rigpa’s potentiality [manifesting with total] energy, untainted by hindrances such as fogginess or dullness. It is not the arising through the avenues of perception of apparent objects such as shapes, colors and so forth.”

The above is a free rendering after taking into account the translation by Khyabje Dungse Thinle Norbu (2015, p. 81)—who as noted in the Introduction was one of my principal teachers—as well as the one by David Christensen in Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, p. 142) and that by Sam van Schaik (2004, p. 229).

Jigme Lingpa makes it clear that in the same context the experience of pleasure excludes the pleasure that depends on causes and conditions, including a consort’s body and energy.

²⁹⁹ Coarse metals represent the passions and gold represents Awakening: the very examples that illustrate this Path show that its basic principle lies in transforming something (coarse metals) into something totally different (gold), rather than in directly discovering the true condition and nature (Tib. *shi* [Wylie, *gshis*]) of what seemed to be “coarse metals” but which is actually gold (where gold represents total plenitude [Dzogchen], the illusory loss of which as a result of the manifestation of the two first aspects of types of *avidyā* in the classification privileged in this book, is at the root of the projection of value on objects, according to the extent to which we feel that their possession or enjoyment will fill the ensuing lack of plenitude)—which, as we will see, is the principle of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation.

As will be shown in a subsequent note, the risk involved in the “alchemic process” of the Path of Transformation in the strictest sense of the term, is illustrated with the use in the alchemical process of *mākṣika* mercury (a mercury compound used in the Tibetan, Āyurvedic and Chinese medical systems for the preparation of alchemical medicines, and which some texts associate or compare to pyrite): its application would be extremely risky for those who lack the necessary qualities.

³⁰⁰ The Skt. term *amṛta* refers to the condition for the passions to be transmuted into primordial gnosis on the Path of transformation. It is related to the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness (Tib. *thigle* [Wylie, *thig le*], when this term is understood in a sense that is somewhat similar to that of the Skt. term *kuṇḍalinī*), and hence in inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation, from the standpoint of the male, it is represented with human semen (however, when five *amṛtas* are referred to, semen is only one of them, and the symbolism expressed here does not fully apply). Reference is often made to a “nectar medicine or elixir” (*dütsi men* [Wylie, *bdud rtsi sman*]), or to a “nectar elixir or medicine of attainment” (*dütsi mendrub* [Wylie, *bdud rtsi sman grub*]), which may have different levels of meaning.

Qua Base, *rakta* (Tib. *rak ta*) consists in the passions that are to be transmuted into Awakening and that are compared to the firewood on which the fire of wisdom depends; qua Fruit, it represents Awake involvement in the world manifesting as a limitless flow of Awake, selfless, actionless activities.

³⁰¹ As stated in a previous note, the *Yogācāra* School, as well as the *Mādhyamaka Svāntarika* School, assert the absolute truth and final realization of the *Sūtrayāna* to be emptiness. However, according to *Mahāmādhyaṃaka*, the absolute truth and final realization of the *Sūtrayāna* is the indivisibility of emptiness and appearances. A detailed explanation of this may be offered in the possibly upcoming definitive version of *Capriles* (electronic publication 2004).

³⁰² The Base *dharmakāya* is, generally speaking, the emptiness that (is) the true condition of all entities, no matter whether this true condition is concealed in *saṃsāra* or unconcealed in *nirvāṇa*. However, in the *Dzogchen* Series of pith instructions the *dharmakāya* is the true condition of the *dang* (Wylie, *gdangs*) form of manifestation of the Base’s (Skt. *āśraya*; Tib. *zhi* [Wylie, *gzhi*]; Ch. 依止 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn: *yīzhǐ*; Wade-Giles: *i¹-chih³*]) energy aspect (Tib. *thukje* [Wylie, *thugs rje*], which renders the Skt. *karuṇā*, meaning compassion), which (is) the form of manifestation of energy that (is) the stuff of thoughts, memories, fantasies and in general all mental phenomena. When the true condition of that form of manifestation of energy is reGnized, the Path *dharmakāya* manifests. And when the manifestation of the *dharmakāya* becomes irreversible and uninterrupted, that is the Fruit *dharmakāya*. Therefore, it could be said that in this context *dang* energy, independently of whether or not its true condition is realized, (is) the Base *dharmakāya*.

However, as noted in the regular text, normally the Sanskrit term *dharmakāya* and its Tibetan translation, *chöku* (Wylie, *chos sku*) are used only to refer to what in this endnote is called Path *dharmakāya* and what is called Fruit *dharmakāya*. Therefore, if the terms are used to refer to *dang* energy, it is essential

to make it clear that the Base dharmakāya (is) that energy when its true condition (is) not unconcealed (or independently of whether or not it is concealed or unconcealed), and the term should be used only in relation to Path dharmakāya and Fruit dharmakāya.

³⁰³ Dualistic delusion always involves tensions, which are inherent in the hypostatization / absolutization / reification / valorization of supersubtle thoughts and the ensuing subject-object duality, and of subtle thoughts and the ensuing illusion of self-existence or substantiality. That it depends on the subject-object duality is due to the fact that a conscious entity can only pull in a direction opposite to that in which an animate or inanimate force is pulling, or push in a direction contrary to that in which an animate or inanimate force is pushing, if it feels itself to be separate from this force. That it depends on the illusion of self-existence or substantiality is due to the fact that if one does not conceive a self-existent self and a self-existent alien entity or force one cannot oppose or pursue that entity or force. These are the reasons why no degree of tension whatsoever can manifest when all aspects or types of avidyā instantly dissolve and the nondual true condition of all phenomena becomes perfectly patent, and why this dissolution of avidyā and instant manifestation of the nondual true condition of all phenomena results in a sudden, absolute relaxation of body, speech and mind, in a way that has been compared to the fall of firewood sticks when the rope tying them breaks. (Of course, whenever oppose animate or inanimate forces may be necessary in order to benefit beings, totally Awake individuals can do so; however, rather than doing so out of delusion, they would do so as a function of spontaneous compassionate responsiveness.)

³⁰⁴ On the Path of Transformation the order in which the kāyas are realized is said to be *nirmāṇakāya-saṃbhogakāya-dharmakāya-svabhāvikāya* (where the latter term refers to the inseparability of the three kāyas). However, as stated in a previous note and as will be shown below in the regular text, according to the teachings of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, Dzogchen Atiyoga, the final realization on the Path of Transformation, which the latter calls *svabhāvikāya*, corresponds to the initial manifestation of rigpa that the Dzogchen teachings refer to as Direct Introduction and which is the very outset of the Path, for only after having this initial realization can one begin treading this Path in the true sense of the expression. And this means that in a sense the Path of Dzogchen Atiyoga begins exactly at the point at which the Path of Transformation ends: the Path of Spontaneous Liberation goes much further than the Path of Transformation, for it allows practitioners to consolidate the realization of the true dharmakāya and then, through its exclusive use of the Base's spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification (Tib. *lhundrub* [Wylie, *lhun grub*]) aspect and in particular though its energy (Tib. *thukje* [Wylie, *thugs rje*]) aspect and in particular of the self-rectifying dynamics of the *rölpa* (Wylie, *rol pa*) mode of manifestation of energy, to expand this realization, so as to realize the true *saṃbhogakāya* and the true *nirmāṇakāya*, and therefore allow the true *svabhāvikāya* to consolidate.

³⁰⁵ See the preceding note.

³⁰⁶ It has been noted that those systemic positive feedback loops that activate themselves as contradiction turns into conflict, and which result in the spontaneous liberation of both contradiction and conflict as tensions instantly break of their own accord, which are functions of the spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification (Tib. *lhundrub* [Wylie, *lhun grub*]) aspect of the Base, have their paradigmatic expression in the practices of Thögel (Wylie, *thod rgal*) and the Yangthik (Wylie, *yang thig*). However, they can also activate themselves and play a role in the practice of Tekchö (Wylie, *khregs chod*)—especially in the context of the Nyingthik (Wylie, *snying thig*), which focus on Tekchö but does not radically separate this practice from that of Thögel.

³⁰⁷ The realization of rigpa corresponds to the final realization of the Path of Transformation, which this Path identifies as the *svabhāvikāya*, but which, as stated in note 304, the Path of Spontaneous Liberation considers it to be the initial realization of the dharmakāya that marks the true outset of this Path. The Path of Spontaneous Liberation begins at this point because its function is to consolidate the realization of the dharmakāya, and then expand it by including the subsequent realizations of the *saṃbhogakāya* and, finally, the *nirmāṇakāya*. Once the three kāyas become simultaneously manifest and functional, the true *svabhāvikāya* has consolidated.

³⁰⁸ This principle, which in the Dzogchen teachings is the counterpart of that of *katak* (*ka-dag*), will be considered in greater detail in Part Two of this book.

³⁰⁹ In a different context, the principle behind this kind of systemic activity was explained in Bateson (1972), in terms of the relation between the functioning of our two brain hemispheres and the mental

processes associated with them. The right hemisphere is mainly analog and thus is mainly responsible for what Freud (1954; original work published 1895) called primary process. The left hemisphere is mainly digital thus is mainly responsible for what Freud called secondary process.

Since the code of primary process is analog, the process in question cannot entertain negatives, and thus cannot say “no” to wayward function-relations in order to bring them to a halt; therefore, it is utterly unable to uproot them at will. Hence the only way to surpass wayward function-relations in this process is by developing them to the extreme at which, incapable of “stretching” any further, they simply break like a rubber band that is stretched beyond its maximum resistance. In the practice of the Dzogchen Menngag[gyi]de (Wylie, man ngag [gyi] sde) this break-up of function-relations takes place after the application of some specific ways of questioning experience and of looking into coarse or subtle thoughts (or into supersubtle thought structures): the application of these is the condition that allows that break-up to result in the unveiling of the true condition of thoughts, which is the manifestation of the dharmakāya aspect of Awakening, rather than being a worldly therapeutic break-up (for an exposé of the distinction between worldly therapeutic break-up and the therapeutic break up that leads beyond saṃsāra, cf. Capriles (2013abcd; electronic publication 2007, vol. II).

It is the activation of a positive feedback loop that results in the exacerbation of what must be surpassed. This loop is activated by the organism’s discomfort because the discomfort causes digital secondary process, which does entertain negation, to reject it. Conscious awareness, which normally functions in terms of the coding of secondary process, cannot cause primary process, the code of which does not entertain negation, to negate and interrupt a wayward dynamics; however, it effectively modifies the dynamics of primary process in a way that is a paradigmatic instance of the law of reverse effect. When consciousness negates a wayward dynamics and tries to interrupt them, since primary process does not entertain negation, it reads the negation as an emphasis on that which is negated, just as the concerned attention paid to the function-relation that consciousness is trying to interrupt places an emphasis on the function-relation that is being negated—which feeds that function-relation, reinforcing it instead of interrupting it. (In well-adapted individuals who do not exaggerate too much in their attempts to control their impulses and emotions, consciousness, functioning in terms of digital, secondary process, a great deal of the time feels in control of analog, primary process; however, this is not the case in those who obsessively and uninterruptedly try to control analog, primary process.)

In particular, if we try to interrupt a relation of rejection and opposition, the “no” that digital, secondary process gives that relation, being an instance of rejection, will reinforce the relation of rejection that we are trying to interrupt. As we have seen, pleasure results from accepting sensation, pain results from rejecting sensation, and neutral feelings are produced by remaining indifferent to sensation. Therefore, relations of rejection always give rise to unpleasant sensations, which are intensified by our rejection of those relations and those sensations—causing our rejection to increase, which causes unpleasantness to increase, which makes our rejection further increase, and so on, so that a positive feedback loop gives rise to a self-catalyzing process (i.e. a process that increases from its own feedback).

The Dzogchen Atiyoga makes the most skillful use of the above principle and dynamics; for a detailed explanation of how it does so, cf. Capriles (2013ab, electronic publication 2007 vols. II).

³¹⁰ In order to make a schematic classification of vehicles it was convenient to establish a correspondence between the outer Tantras and the Path of purification. However, strictly speaking, the Yogatantrayāna, which I classified with the outer Tantras, as its very name suggests is a yogic Path that to some degree applies the principle of the Path of Transformation. And yet, because it also applies the principle of purification of the outer Tantras, to the extent of being classified as an outer Tantra, it cannot be deemed to belong to the Path of Transformation properly speaking. Thus the correct view in this regard is that the Yogatantrayāna combines the principle of purification proper to the outer Tantras with the principle of transformation of the inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation, and as such lies between the Path of purification and the Path of Transformation.

³¹¹ The passions included among the three nonvirtuous actions related to the mind (which together with the three non-virtuous actions related to the body and the four non-virtuous actions related to the voice make up the ten non-virtuous actions) are: craving other people’s property, and malevolence. The other nonvirtuous action pertaining to the mind is wrong view, which is not a passion though it is conducive to the manifestation of harmful passions.

³¹² That which I am referring to as craving spirits or Tantaluses (Skt. *preta*; Pāli *peta*; Tib. *yidag* [Wylie, *yi dwags*]; Ch. 餓鬼 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, èguǐ; Wade-Giles, o⁴-kuei³]) are beings with voracious appetites who are unable to satiate them. Some of them are represented as having enormous stomachs but tiny mouths and thread-like necks (hence their incapacity to satiate their hunger and thirst); with regard to this class, it is said that when they succeed in getting food, it appears to them as disgusting substances like pus and blood. Some are said to be able to eat a little, but then the food burns their stomachs as though it were molten iron. Etc.

They are said to have too good a karma to be born as a being of the purgatories (Skt. *nāraka*; Pāli *nerayika*; Tib. *myalwa* [Wylie, *dmyal ba*]; Ch. 地獄有情 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, dìyù yǒuqíng; Wade-Giles *tí⁴-yü⁴ yu³-ch'ing²*] or 地獄衆生 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, dìyù zhòngshēng; Wade-Giles *tí⁴-yü⁴ chung⁴-sheng¹*]), but too bad a karma to be born as an antigod, titan or demigod (Skt. *asura*; Tib. *lhamayin* [Wylie, *lha ma yin*; Ch. 阿修羅 (Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, āxiūluó; Wade-Giles, a¹-hsiu¹-luo²]); their existence results mainly from greed, but also from envy and jealousy.

³¹³ Each of the three “baskets” which are the *Abhidharmapiṭaka* (Pāli *Abhidhammapiṭaka*; Tib. *Chö ngönpai denö* [Wylie, *chos mngon pa'i sde snod*]; Ch. 論藏 [abridged 論藏] [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Lùn zàng; Wade-Giles, Lun⁴-tsang⁴]), *Vinayapiṭaka* (Tib. *Dülwai denö* [Wylie, 'dul ba'i sde snod]; Ch. 律藏 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, lǜ zàng; Wade-Giles, lü⁴-tsang⁴]) and *Sūtrapiṭaka* (Pāli: *Suttapiṭaka*; Tib. *Doi denö* [Wylie, *mdo'i sde snod*]; Ch. 經藏 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Jīng zàng; Wade-Giles, Ching¹-tsang⁴]) contains 21,000 sections, and so together they contain 63,000 sections. Thus when we add the 21,000 sections of the *Tripitaka* (Pāli *Tiṭṭaka*; Tib. *Denö sum* [Wylie, *sde snod gsum*]; Ch. 三藏 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, Sān zàng; Wade-Giles, San¹-tsang⁴])—this time understanding the term in a narrower sense—we have the famous 84,000 sections of the teachings that Śākyamuni's communicated on the *nirmānakāya* level. However, this is a way of speaking, for the *Abhidharma*, even though based on teachings of the Buddha, was developed by disciples of the various schools that accept these teachings (and which exclude the *Sautrāntika* school). For example, the *Vaibhāṣikas*—a name that means “Proponents of Particular Substances” and that may also refer to the fact that they make statements in accord with the *Mahāvibhāṣaśāstra*—can base themselves on the *Sarvāstivāda* Commentaries to the *Abhidharma* because they view them as being compilations of teachings actually contained in *sūtras* produced by the great realized masters of the *Hīnayāna* (Skt. *arhat*; Pāli *arahant*; Tib. *drachompa* [Wylie, *dgra bcom pa*]; Ch. 阿羅漢 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, āluóhàn; Wade-Giles, a¹-luo²-han⁴], often shortened to 羅漢 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, luóhàn; Wade-Giles, luo²-han⁴]). According to López and Buswell, also the name 應供 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, yīnggōng; Wade-Giles, yīng⁴-kung¹], which is one of the titles of a Buddha, may be used to refer to an *arhat*,—just as, in spite of the fact that it was compiled by *Dharmatrāta*, they considered the *Udānavarga*³¹³ (which the *Sautrāntikas* deemed to be a *śāstra*) to be a *sūtra*. (Cf. Kongtrul (2007, p. 330, note 321 by Elizabeth M. Callahan.)

³¹⁴ As stated in the preceding endnote, the *Abhidharma*, even though based on teachings of the Buddha, was developed by disciples of the various schools that accept these teachings (which exclude the *Sautrāntika* school). For greater details cf. the preceding endnote.

³¹⁵ These four factors are: (1) the abandoning of already generated nonvirtuous phenomena; (2) the nongeneration of not yet generated nonvirtuous phenomena; (3) the increase of already generated virtuous phenomena; and (4) the generation of not yet generated virtuous phenomena.

³¹⁶ As we have seen, Chinese schools such as *Huáyán* (Ch. 華嚴; Wade-Giles *Hua²-yan²*; Jap. *Kegon*) and *Tiāntái* (Ch. 天台; Wade-Giles, T'ien¹-t'ai²) combine the sudden and gradual method in an approach that they designate as “round” or total. The Chinese *Nirvāṇa* School or *Nièpánzōng* (涅槃宗; Wade-Giles, Nieh⁴-p'an²-tsung¹; Jap. *Nehanshū*) also refers to a “sudden” Awakening, and, as noted in the regular text, the *Pure Land* or *Jìngtǔ* (Ch. 淨土; Wade-Giles, Ching⁴-t'u³) School, in spite of not being a “sudden” school, is prolific in “sudden Awakenings.” Nevertheless, I will not consider these schools at this point, for most of them seem not to have had an active presence in Tibet in the time period when the system that is presented here was codified (with the possible exception of the *Pure Land* school, from which, as stated by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche [in *Guru Rinpoche* according to Karma Lingpa, Trungpa, Chögyam and Francesca Fremantle, translators, 1975], the practice of *phowa* [Wylie *pho ba*] or transference of consciousness in the *nirmānakāya* style applied in the different schools of Tibetan Buddhism might have been assimilated).

³¹⁷ In fact, the sūtra in question uses the parable of a house in flames, which stands for saṃsāra, and ordinary sentient beings with children (an ubiquitous simile, to the extent that Tibetans customarily refer to ordinary people as “children”). It compares the Buddha to a loving father and the three vehicles in question with toys he offers his children, who were unaware that the house was in flames and that hence it was mandatory and most urgent to leave it (as ordinary people are unaware that they are in saṃsāra), to lure them out of the house believing this to be part of a game. However, according to the text, Buddhahood is only attained by means of the Buddha vehicle, which is the only true vehicle.

³¹⁸ Actually, the Hīnayāna often refers to the śrāvakas as śrāvakabuddhas. In this case the three possible realizations of the Sūtrayāna are that of śrāvakabuddhas, that of pratyekabuddhas and that of anuttarā samyaksambuddhas.

³¹⁹ There are different enumerations of the ten powers of a Buddha or tathāgata (Skt. tathāgata bala; Tib. **dezhin shegpai thob** [Wylie, de bzhin gshegs pa'i stobs]; Ch. 如來力 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, rúlái lì; Wade-Giles, ju²-lai² lu⁴]). Perhaps the most precise list is as follows (to simplify I will use only the Skt. terms, or the Skt. and Tib. terms):

- (1) Skt. sthānāsthānajñānabala; Tib. **nedang nema yinpa khyenpai tob** (Wylie, gnas dang gnas ma yin pa mkhyen pa'i stobs): the Buddha's power to know the positive and negative contingencies of things and / or events—including what can be and what cannot be—as well as their causes and conditions (hetupratyaya) and the mechanism of their fruits of retribution (vipākaphalāniyāma).
- (2) Skt. karmavipākajñānabala; Tib. **lekyi nammin khyenpai tob** (Wylie, las kyi rnam smin mkhyen pa'i stobs): power of knowing the karmic results of the maturation of deeds: the power to know the sphere of action (karmasthāna) of all kinds of actions of the past, present and future.
- (3) Skt. nānādhimuktijñānabala; Tib. **möpa natsog khyenpai tob** (Wylie, mos pa sna tshogs mkhyen pa'i stobs): the power of the primordial gnosis of resolve, which allow them to know the diverse aspirations and dispositions of the different sentient beings, including their purity (prasāda) and inclinations (ruci).
- (4) Skt. nānādhātujñānabala; Tib. **kham natsog khyenpai tob** (Wylie, khams sna tshogs mkhyen pa'i stobs): power of knowing how the world has its many and different elements.
- (5) Skt. indriyaparāparajñānabala; Tib. **wangpo chokdang chokma yinpa khyenpai tob** [Wylie, dbang po mchog dang mchog ma yin pa mkhyen pa'i stobs): power of knowing who is of superior acumen and who is not, and what are the moral faculties of all beings.
- (6) Skt. sarvatragāmanīpratipadajñānabala; Tib. **thamche du drowai lam khyenpai tob** [Wylie, thams cad du 'gro ba'i lam mkhyen pa'i stobs): the wisdom power of the courses, which is the power to know the paths leading to all different destinations.
- (7) Skt. sarvadyānavimokṣasamādhisamāpattisaṃkleśavyavadānavyutthānajñānabala; Tib. **samten dang namtar dang tingngedzin dang nyompar jukpa dang kunne nyönmongpa dang nampar changwa dang denpa thamche khyenpai tob** [Wylie, bsam gtan dang rnam thar dang ting nge 'dzin dang snyoms par 'jug pa dang kun nas nyon mongs pa dang rnam par byang ba dang ldan pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i stobs): power of knowing the acquisition, defilement and purification of all meditative absorptions (dhyāna), liberations (vimokṣa), samādhis, trances (samāpatti), afflictions, purification—which is the power to know all these auxiliary factors of the path to liberation. This power is also referred to by the Skt. sarvadyānavimokṣasamādhisamāpattisaṃkleśavyavadānavyavasthānajñānabala, and by the Skt. dhyānavimokṣasamādhisamāpattijñānabala.
- (8) Skt. pūrvanivāsānusr̥tījñānabala; Tib. **ngöngyi ne jesu tenpa khyenpai tob** (Wylie, sngon gyi gnas rjes su dran pa mkhyen pa'i stobs): power of recollecting previous births / past lives and of discovering those of others.
- (9) Skt. cyutyupattijñānabala; Tib. **chi phowo dang kyewa khyenpai tob** (Wylie, 'chi 'pho bo dang skye ba mkhyen pa'i stobs): the wisdom power of birth and death, which is the power to see with the Buddha's divine eye (divyacakṣus) the place and time of death and rebirth of all beings.
- (10) Skt. āsṛavakṣayajñānabala; Tib. **sakpa zepa khyenpai tob** [Wylie, zag pa zad pa mkhyen pa'i stobs): the wisdom power of destruction of contaminants, which is the power to determine the destruction, cessation or extinction of contaminants or impure influences, their nature and the mindsets of all beings.

Another list gives the Buddhas' ten powers as the powers of

- (1) aspiration (Skt. āśaya),
- (2) resolution (Skt. adhyāśaya),

- (3) habit (Skt. abhyāsa),
- (4) practice (Skt. pratipatti),
- (5) wisdom (Skt. prajñā),
- (6) vow (Skt. prañidhāna),
- (7) vehicle (Skt. yāna),
- (8) way of life (Skt. caryā),
- (9) thaumaturgy (Skt. vikurvaṇa),
- (10) the power to turn the wheel of dharma (Skt. dharmacakrapravartana).

³²⁰ The four confidences or fearlessnesses of a Buddha (Skt. vaiśāradya; Pāli vesārajja; Tib. mi jikpa [Wylie, mi 'jigs pa]; Ch. 無所畏 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúsuǒwèi; Wade-Giles, wu²-so³-wei⁴]) are:

- (1)) The confidence that he is fully enlightened with regard to all phenomena, or alternatively the confidence that he has full knowledge of all elements (sarvadharmābhisambodhivaiśāradya).
- (2) The confidence that all the contaminations, obstructions and impure influences have been destroyed (sarvāsravakṣyajñānavaiśāradya);
- (3) The confidence of having identified all hindrances to emancipation and offered a correct exposition of them (antarāyikadharmavyākaraṇavaiśāradya); and
- (4) The confidence that all marvelous qualities are achieved through the path, or alternatively the confidence of having the knowledge of the sameness of all paths leading to spiritual advancement and emancipation (nairyāṇikapratipadvyākaraṇavaiśāradya), and of which are the false paths.

According to the Mahāyāna only fully awake Buddhas have these qualities, which are not possessed by those who have attained other lower Buddhist realizations—even though the Theravāda (Skt. Sthaviravāda) school claims that they are shared by śrāvakas.

³²¹ The eighteen special qualities or distinct attributes of a Buddha (Skt. [aṣṭādaśa]veṇikābuddhadharmā[h]; Tib. **sangyekyi chō madrepa cho** [Wylie, sang rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa {bco brgyad}); Ch. 十八不共[佛]法 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shíbā bùgòng{fó}fǎ; Wade-Giles, shih²-pa¹ pu⁴-kung⁴-{fo²}fa³]) may be summarized as follows:

- (1) absence of delusion **or** actions being free from error (Skt. nāsti[tathāgatasya]skhalitam; Tib. **tulpa mepa** [Wylie, 'khrul pa med pa]; Ch. 身無失 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shēn wúshī; Wade-Giles, shen¹ wu²-shih¹]).
- (2) absence of loudness (Skt. nāsti ravitam; Tib. **chacho mepa** [Wylie, ca co med pa]; Ch. 口無失 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, kǒu wúshī; Wade-Giles, k'ou³ wu²-shih¹]).
- (3) absence of false memories and forgetfulness (Skt. nāsti muṣitasmr̥titā; Tib. **nyelwa mepa** [Wylie, bsnyel ba med pa]; Ch. 念無失 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, niàn wúshī; Wade-Giles, nien⁴ wu²-shih¹]).
- (4) undistractedness [with regard to the absolute truth and everyday reality] (Skt. nāsti asamāhitacittam; Tib. **sem nyampar mazhakpa mepa** [Wylie, sems mnyam par ma gzhag pa med pa] 無異想 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wú yìxiǎng; Wade-Giles, wu² i⁴-hsiang³]).
- (5) absence of proliferation of perceptions (Skt. nāsti nānātvasaṃjñā; Tib. **thadepai dushe mepa** [Wylie, tha dad pa'i 'du shes med pa]; Ch. 無不定 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wú bùdìng; Wade-Giles, wu² pu⁴-ting⁴]).
- (6) their equanimity is not derived from [ignorant] indistinctness (Skt. nāsti apratisaṃkyāyopekṣā; Tib. **sosor matokpai tangnyön mepa** [Wylie, so sor ma rtogs pa'i btang snyoms med pa]; Ch. 無不知捨 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wú bùzhī shě; Wade-Giles, wu² pu⁴-chih¹ she³]).
- (7) non-degeneration of or regression in zeal or devotion (Skt. nāsti cchandasya hāni[h]; Tib. **dünpa nyampa mepa** [Wylie, dun pa nyams pa med pa]; Ch. [欲無減 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yù wúmiè; Wade-Giles, yū⁴ wu²-mieh⁴]).
- (8) non-degeneration of perseverance or effort (Skt. nāsti vīryasya hāni[h]; Tib. **tsöndrü nyampa mepa** [Wylie, brston 'grus nyams pa med pa]; Ch. 精進無減 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, jīngjìn wúmiè; Wade-Giles, ching¹-chin⁴ wu²-mieh⁴]).
- (9) non-degeneration or regression of recollection (Skt. nāsti smṛtihāni[h]; Tib. **tanpa nyampa mepa** [Wylie, dran pa nyams pa med pa]; 念無減 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, niàn wúmiè; Wade-Giles, nien⁴ wu²-mieh⁴]).
- (10) non-degeneration of Contemplation (Skt. nāsti samādhihāni[h]; Tib. **tingdzin nyampa mepa** [Wylie, ting 'dzin nyams pa med pa]; Ch. 定無減 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, dìng wúmiè; ting⁴ wu²-mieh⁴]).
- (11) non-degeneration of discriminating awareness (Skt. nāsti prajñāhāni[h]; Tib. **sherab nyampa mepa** [Wylie, shes rab nyams pa med pa]; Ch. 慧無減 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, huì wúmiè; Wade-Giles, hui⁴ wu²-mieh⁴]).).

- (12) non-degeneration or regression of liberation (Skt. *nāsti vimuktiḥāni*[h]; Tib. **namdröl nyampa mepa** [Wylie, *rnam grol nyams pa med pa*]; Ch. 解知見無滅 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jiě zhījiàn wúmiè; Wade-Giles, chieh³ chih¹-chien⁴ wu²-mieh⁴]).
- (13) all actions of the body are preceded by primordial gnosis [which is not disrupted by these actions] and remain in conformity with it (Skt. *sarvakāyakarmajñānapūrvagamam jñānānuparivarti*; Tib. **lükyi lethamche yeshekyi ngöndu droshing yeshekyi jesu drangwa** [Wylie, *lus kyi las thams cad ye shes kyi sngon du 'gro shing ye shes kyi rjes su 'brang ba*]; Ch. 一切身業隨智慧行 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yīqiè shēnyè suí zhìhuì xíng; Wade-Giles, i¹-ch'ieh⁴ shen¹-yeh⁴ sui² chih⁴-hui⁴ hsing²]).
- (14) all actions of the voice are preceded by primordial gnosis [which is not disrupted by these actions] and remain in conformity with it (Skt. *sarvavākarmajñānapūrvagamam jñānānuparivarti*; Tib. **ngakgi le thamche yeshekyi ngöndu droshing yeshekyi jesu drangwa** [Wylie, *ngag gi las thams cad ye shes kyi sngon du 'gro shing ye shes kyi rjes su 'brang ba*]; 一切口業隨智慧行 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yīqiè kǒuyè suí zhìhuì xíng; i¹-ch'ieh⁴ k'ou³-yeh⁴ sui² chih⁴-hui⁴ hsing²]).
- (15) all actions of the mind are preceded by primordial gnosis [which is not disrupted by these actions] and remain in conformity with it (Skt. *sarvamanana*[h]*karmajñānapūrvagamam jñānānuparivarti*; Tib. **yikyile tamche yeshekyi ngöndu droshing yeshekyi jesu drangwa** [Wylie, *yid kyi las thams cad ye shes kyi sngon du 'gro shing ye shes kyi rjes su 'brang ba*]; Ch. 一切意業隨智慧行 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yīqiè yìyè suí zhìhuì xíng; i¹-ch'ieh⁴ i⁴-yeh⁴ sui² chih⁴-hui⁴ hsing²]).
- (16) they never lose the primordial gnosis that is unimpeded with regard to the past (Skt. *athīte 'dhvani asaṅgam apratihataṃ jñānadarśanaṃ pravartate*; Tib. **depai düla machak mathokpai yeshe zigpar jugkpa** [Wylie, 'das pa'i dus la ma chags ma thogs pa'i ye shes gzigs par 'jug pa] or **manongpai düla machak mathokpai yeshe zikpar juggo** [Wylie, ma 'ongs pa'i dus la ma chags ma thogs pa'i ye shes gzigs par 'jug go]; Ch. 智慧知過去世無礙 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zhìhuì zhī guòqùshì wú ài; Wade-Giles, chih⁴-hui⁴ chi¹ kuo⁴-ch'u⁴-shih⁴ wu² ai⁴]).
- (17) they have access to the primordial gnosis that is unimpeded with regard to the future (Skt. *anāgate 'dhvani asaṅgam apratihataṃ jñānadarśanaṃ pravartate*; Tib. **depai düla machak mathokpai yeshe zikpar jugpa** [Wylie, 'das pa'i dus la ma chags ma thogs pa'i ye shes gzigs par 'jug go]; Ch. 智慧知未來世無礙 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zhìhuì zhī wèiláishì wú ài; Wade-Giles, chih⁴-hui⁴ chih¹ wei⁴-lai²-shih⁴ wu² ai⁴]).
- (18) they have access to the primordial gnosis that is unimpeded with regard to the now (Skt. *pratyutpanne 'dhvani asaṅgam apratihataṃ jñānadarśanaṃ pravartate*; Tib. **daltargyi düla machak mathokpai yeshe zigpar juggo** [Wylie, da ltar gyi dus la ma chags ma thogs pa'i ye shes gzigs par 'jug go] or **daltargyi düla machak mathokpai yeshe zikpar jugpa** [Wylie, da ltar gyi dus la ma chags ma thogs pa'i ye shes gzigs par 'jug pa]; Ch. 智慧知現在世無礙 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zhìhuì zhī xiànzàishì wú ài; Wade-Giles, chih⁴-hui⁴ chih¹ hsien⁴-tsai⁴-shih⁴ wu² ai⁴]).

³²² The major marks are 32 and the minor marks are 80; all of them are bodily characteristics purportedly exhibited by all Buddhas. These marks were taught due to the Hīnayāna belief that Buddhas are wholly different from ordinary people and that the latter cannot attain Buddhahood, but can only aspire to realizations minor than that of a Buddha. In the Mahāyāna, according to which all human beings can attain Buddhahood, they are said to be marks of the saṃbhogakāya aspect or dimension of anyone who has attained Buddhahood, but which can only be seen by those realized beings who can perceive that aspect or dimension of Buddhahood. (The two shortest versions of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra—the one in Tibetan and the shorter Chinese translation—assert that those beings who reject the dharma and who have severed their roots of wholesomeness called icchantika (Tib. *döchen* [Wylie, 'dod chen]; Ch. 一闍提 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yīchǎntí; Wade-Giles, i¹-ch'an³-t'i²]) can never attain Awakening or nirvāṇa; however, the longer Chinese version of the same canonical source by Dharmakṣema does not mention such thing and, contrariwise, subscribes to the doctrine that, since all beings have the tathāgatagarbha, all beings can attain Awakening or nirvāṇa. Note that other Mahāyāna sources list two other classes of beings who are barred from Awakening—the acchantikas, who are bodhisattvas that refuse to enter nirvāṇa yet, and the ātyantikas, whose original condition lacks the characteristics of nirvāṇa and hence cannot attain it—yet these minority sources contradict what is consensus for the mainstream of the Mahāyāna. In fact, Mahāyānasūtras that acknowledge the existence of the icchantikas such as the Laṅkāvatāra, assert that such people will be saved by the power of the Buddha, who does not abandon any being.)

There would be no point in listing the 32 major and 80 minor characteristics of a Buddha here, but if any of the readers is interested in information about them, they are listed in different dictionaries and encyclopædias of Buddhism, and there is even a Wikipedia article that provides it at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_characteristics_of_the_Buddha#The_32_Signs_of_a_Great_Man

³²³ This explanation of the view of the śrāvakas, as well as the following explanation of the view of the pratyekabuddhas, is that found in the Dzogchen teachings, which to a great extent coincides with that found in texts of the Mādhyamaka-Svātantrika-Yogācāra School of the Mahāyāna.

³²⁴ The original texts of the śrāvakas compare both theories—that of the nihilists and that of the eternalists or substantialists—to mistaking a rope for a snake, and so when expounding the views of the śrāvakas, Padmasambhava takes up this example in Tibetan Text 6. However, it seems more precise to say that the theories of the eternalists or substantialists are like mistaking a rope for a snake, because they involve taking something to be more serious or important than it actually is, and that the theories of the nihilists are like mistaking a snake for a rope, because they involve taking something to be less dangerous, serious or important than it really is (as a result of which they may ripe results that may be far more serious than being bitten by a venomous snake upon grabbing it as a consequence of having taken it for a rope, for they are not limited to the present life).

³²⁵ Adriano Clemente gives us a classification of these in terms of the five aggregates (Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, p. 150, note 114):

“The twelve bases (Skt. *āyatana*), literally ‘that arise and develop’, form another classification parallel to those of the skandhas and of the dhātus. In this case, for example, the seven constituents (dhātu) of consciousness are contained within the base (*āyatana*) of the mind.”

³²⁶ The Buddhist teachings generally refer to these as the “six consciousnesses;” however, in terms of the concept of consciousness that is reflected by Western languages, it may be more precise to explain them as the specific capacities of a single consciousness to perceive six different types of objects through six different “doors” (the five senses universally recognized, plus the mental sense that presents thoughts and related mental objects).

³²⁷ In this case, the term *dhātu* (Tib kham [Wylie, *kham*s] or ying [Wylie, *dbyings*], according to the case; Ch. 界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *jiè*; Wade-Giles, *chieh*⁴] or 法界 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎjiè*; Wade-Giles, *fa*³-*chieh*⁴] according to the case) refers to the eighteen sense constituents, corresponding to the six senses (the five that are universally accepted plus the one that presents “mental” contents), the six sensory objects (of the senses that were just listed), and the six (modes of) consciousness arising from perception through the six senses. In other contexts, the same Sanskrit and Tibetan terms refer to other sets of elements:

- (2) The three (*loka*) dhātu or kham, which are the *kāmadhātu* or realm of sensuality, the *rūpadhātu* or realm of form and the *ārūpyadhātu* or realm of formlessness. (Since some times the term *kham*s gsum may be used as a synonym of the terms *srid* gsum and ‘*jig*-*rten* gsum, it is important to remark that normally *srid* gsum refers to the realm of gods above, that of *nyen* [Wylie, *gnyan*] in the middle and that of *nāgas* below.)
- (3) The five gross dhātu or kham, which are the four elements corresponding to the four states of matter and the four functions of existence (solid state and function of supporting = “earth;” liquid state and function of concentrating = “water;” igneous state and function of ripening = “fire;” and gaseous state and function of moving = “air;”), plus a fifth element which consists in the space in which the four other elements manifest, and corresponds to the function of giving space.
- (4) The six dhātu or kham, which are the five elements listed as (2), plus a sixth element, which is consciousness.
- (5) Also the physical remains of a realized being in the form of relics (Skt. *śarīra*; Pāli *saṅgāṭhā*; Tib. *ring*sel / *lū*sel / *kū*sel [Wylie, *ring* bsrel / *lus* bsrel / *sku* bsrel / *ro* bsrel]; Ch. 舍利 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *shèlì*; Wade-Giles, *she*⁴-*li*⁴]).

Besides, as stated in a previous note, the six *loka* or *gati* (Skt. *sadgati* or *sadloka*; Ch. 六趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *liùqù*; Wade-Giles, *liu*⁴-*ch*⁴’*ü*⁴]) in Tibetan are also called the “six kham” or the “*jig*tengyi kham drug” [‘*jig* rten gyi *kham*s drug]—which, as we have seen, are: the realm of the gods (Skt. and Pāli *devagati* / *suragati* / *devaloka* / *devagati*; Tib. *lha* drowa [Wylie, *lha* ’gro ba]; Ch. 天趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *tiān qù*; Wade-Giles, *t’ien*¹ *ch*⁴’*ü*⁴]), the realm of antigods or titans (Skt. and Pāli *asuragati* / *asuraloka*; Tib. *lhamayingyi* drowa [Wylie, *lha* ma yin ’gro ba]; Ch. 阿修羅趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *āxiūluó qù*; Wade-Giles, *a*¹-*hsiu*¹-*luo*² *ch*⁴’*ü*⁴]), the realm of humans (Skt. *manuṣyagati* / *manuṣyaloka*; Pāli *manussagati* /

manussaloka; Tib. mi drowa [Wylie, mi 'gro ba]; Ch. 人趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, rén qù; Wade-Giles, jen²-ch'ü⁴), the realms of craving spirits or Tantaluses (Skt. pretagati / pretaloka; Pāli petagati / petaloka; Tib. yidwag drowa [Wylie, yi dvags 'gro ba]; Ch. 餓鬼趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, èguǐ qù; Wade-Giles, o⁴-kuei³ ch'ü⁴), the realms of animals (Skt. and Pāli, tiryagyonigati / tiryagyoniloka; tiracchānagati / tiracchānaloka; Tib. düdro drowa [Wylie, dud 'gro 'gro ba]; Ch. 畜生趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chùshēng qù; Wade-Giles, ch'u⁴-sheng¹ ch'ü⁴), and the realm of purgatories (Skt. narakagati / narakaloka; Pāli nerayikagati / nerayikagati; Tib. nyälwa drowa [Wylie, dmyal ba'i 'gro ba]; Ch. 地獄趣 有情趣 or 地獄趣 衆生趣 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, dìyù yǒuqíng qù or dìyù zhòngshēng qù; Wade-Giles, tí⁴-yü⁴ yu³-ch'ing² ch'ü⁴ or tí⁴-yü⁴ chung⁴-sheng¹ ch'ü⁴).

³²⁸ As shown earlier in the regular text, the Theravāda was not one of the Eighteen Schools of the Buddhism based on the First Promulgation, but arose after the latter.

³²⁹ The way in which the eighteen schools of what the Mahāyāna calls Hīnayāna developed was briefly summarized above in the regular text. (For further information, see Gö Lotsawa Zhönnupel, English translation attributed to G. N. Roerich but actually carried out by Gendün Chöphel, 2d English Ed. 1976, pp. 27-33; an extremely brief account is offered in Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991.) Concerning the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika, the reader may consult the possibly upcoming definitive ed. in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004).

³³⁰ Prāsaṅgika s are supposed to reject this view and assert that the absence of a self-nature in persons cannot be realized independently of the absence of a self-nature in phenomena other than persons: either both of them are realized, or none of them is realized. In Candrakīrti's [Auto]commentary to the "Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle Way'," we read (alternative, Gelug version in Napper, 2003, p. 172):

"Because of error due to apprehending a hypostatic entity in forms and so forth, [followers of the Hīnayāna such as śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas] fail to realize even the selflessness of human beings. This is because of their apprehending the aggregates that are the basis of designation of the self. [Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland (Skt. Ratnāvalī; Tib. Rinchen threngwa [Wylie, rin chen phreng ba]; Ch. 宝行王正论 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Bǎoxíngwáng zhèng lùn; Wade-Giles, Pao³-hsing²-wang² cheng⁴ lun⁴] 35 ab) says:

As long as one conceives the aggregates

So long does one conceive an I with respect to them.

³³¹ In particular, they are said to reject the belief that physical entities are constituted by indivisible infinitesimal particles existing absolutely on their own right (Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, p. 159). Therefore, as stated in the following note, they assert the emptiness of all those phenomena that, not being human beings, have form and are normally regarded as material, and therefore they posit the emptiness of the aggregate of form, and of the ten bases and ten sense constituents tied to form (see following note). Besides, they realize the emptiness of what is known as "imperceptible form" (see following note). However, among phenomena that are not human beings, or aspects of phenomena that are not human beings, with the exception of "imperceptible form" they do not realize the emptiness of those phenomena or aspects that do not involve material form and that therefore are not regarded as being constituted by infinitesimal particles—such as the four aggregates (Skt. skandha; Pāli khanda; Tib. phungpo [Wylie, phung po]; Ch. 蘊 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, yùn; Wade-Giles, yün⁴]) which are other than form (Skt. rūpa; Pāli rūpa; Tib. zug [Wylie, zgugs]; Ch. 色 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, sè; Wade-Giles, se⁴]), and the sense bases and sense constituents that do not involve material form (see following note).

In short, they fail to realize the emptiness of all five aggregates; therefore, according to the Prāsaṅgikas they not only fail to fully realize the selflessness of phenomena other than persons, but also fail to fully realize the selflessness of persons.

³³² Rongzompa (Tibetan Text 4) says that pratyekabuddhas understand the absence of substance solely in the aggregate of form (and not in the next 4) and in the 10 sense bases and 10 sense constituents tied to form (the reasons for this were discussed in the preceding note), as well as in imperceptible form, which is one modification that arises in the process of realization. In note 122 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (1999/2001, p. 155), Adriano Clemente writes:

"To summarize: the pratyekabuddhas accede to (realization of) the absence of a self or independent self-nature (bdag med) in the aggregate of form, as regards the classification of the five skandhas; in the ten internal and external bases (āyatana) linked to the five senses, as regards the classification of the twelve āyatanas; in the ten constituents (dhātu) that comprise the five sense faculties and the five sense objects,

as regards the classification of the eighteen dhātus. All of this pertains to the sense sphere. As regards the aspect of consciousness and of the phenomena that constitute its object, there are the two ‘bases’ of the mind and phenomena and the eight ‘consciousnesses’ that include the seven dhātus derived from the aggregate of consciousness plus the constituent of phenomena or mental contents (chos kyi khams): in terms of all of these the pratyekabuddhas acknowledge the absence of a self only in ‘imperceptible form’ (rig byed ma yin pa’i gzugs), the eleventh component of the aggregate of form, a term that indicates a kind of alteration of one’s individual structure determined by a precise will: taking a vow, for example, is a physical and verbal act, but its effect persists within the person; this ‘alteration’ that takes place is called ‘imperceptible form’.”

The fact that pratyekabuddhas do not acknowledge the absence of a self or independent self-nature (bdag med) in many nonmaterial phenomena as well as in many of the phenomena belonging to the sphere of consciousness (such as the four aggregates or skandhas that do not involve material form, the two bases [āyatana] and constituents [dhātu] that consist in the objects of the mental consciousness and the sense that apprehends these objects, various dhātus derived from the aggregate of consciousness and so on), is no doubt related to the fact that, according to some texts (e.g. Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, p. 159) pratyekabuddhas hold the idea that the supposedly internal, subjective consciousness does indeed exist in truth.

(In order to better understand the meaning of the above explanation by Adriano Clemente, it is advisable to consider the following classification of the eighteen constituents in terms of the five aggregates that the same scholar gives us in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, p. 150, note 114:

“The eighteen constituents [khams; dhātu] include ten constituents pertaining to the aggregate of form: the five sense faculties plus the five sense objects; seven constituents pertaining to the aggregate of consciousness: the six consciousness plus the mental constituent [yid kyi khams, a synonym of yid kyi dbang po] by which is intended the cognitive faculty that ensues on the cessation of one of the six consciousnesses, plus the constituent of phenomena [chos kyi khams] or ‘mental contents’ that embraces the aggregates of sensation, of perception and of mental formations as well as ‘imperceptible form’ and non-composite phenomena.”)

³³³ As noted in the regular text, avidyā is the source of both cognitive delusive obstructions—which may be said to be the source of the lack of plenitude that is a central element of the—and passional delusive obstructions Tsongkhapa insisted that grasping at phenomena that are not persons is a manifestation of passional delusive obstructions. Avidyā is the first of the twelve links (Pāli and Skt. nidāna; Tib. drel [Wylie, ’brel]; Ch. 尼陀那 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, nítuónà; Wade-Giles, ni²-t’o²-na⁴]) in the temporal sequence of interdependent origination (Skt. pratītyasamutpāda; Pāli paṭiccasamuppāda; Tib. tendrel or tenching drelbar jungwa [Wylie, rten cing ’brel bar ’byung ba]; Ch. 緣起 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yuánqǐ; Wade-Giles, yūan²-ch’i³]), and it is when viewed as the first link that the term is held to refer to passional delusive obstructions. In Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā 64 we read: “Conceiving as true the entities that the Teacher taught to be [products of] delusion—it is from this that the twelve links arise.” Tsongkhapa inferred from this that conceiving entities as true was an instance of passional delusive obstructions. Gorampa objected that the verse, rather than asserting that conceiving entities as true is the first link, is most clearly and explicitly saying that conceiving entities as true is that from which the first link arises—so that conceiving entities as true is that which gives rise to avidyā in the sense of passional delusive obstructions (i.e., to the first link) and it is the latter that gives rise to the other eleven links (Cabezón, 2007, pp. 145 and 315 n. 233). For their part, the Dzogchen teachings note that avidyā in the sense that, as Gorampa noted, gives rise to the first link, is the cause of avidyā in the sense of moha (Tib. timug [Wylie, gtī mug]; 癡 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, chī; Wade-Giles, ch’ih¹—i.e. avidyā qua one of the three or five poisons (or most basic defilements: Skt. kleśa; Pāli kilesa; Tib. nyönmong [Wylie, nyon mongs]; Ch. 煩惱 [simplified, 煩惱] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, fánnǎo; Wade-Giles, fan²-nao³]). In fact, Longchen Rabjam wrote (Shingta Chenpo [rdzogs pa chen po sems nyid hgal gso’i ’grel ba shing rta chen po, pub. by Dodrub Chen Rinpoche], Vol. 1,80a/1, alternative rendering in Tulku Thöndup 1996/1989, p. 219):

“[The base-of-all carrying propensities (Tib. bagchag na tsogpai kunzhi [Wylie, bag chags sna tshogs pa’i kun gzhi])] is the basis of both virtuous and nonvirtuous karmas; its essence [ngo bo] is ignorance / obfuscation [gtī mug], and it is neutral [with regard to both virtues and nonvirtuous karmas]

“Some say that it is not avidyā because it is the basis of all the five poisons (including avidyā qua moha) as well as of Awakening. That it just a misunderstanding. This is not the ignorance / obfuscation [which is

one of the] five poisons. [Rather,] it is the innate unawareness cum delusion (lhan chig skyes pa'i ma rig pa) arisen [together with or as part of] the delusion leading to saṃsāra, and it has also been referred to [as such].”

Conceiving entities as true is an aspect of the avidyā that is the root source of all the passions and hence of the first link of interdependent origination. In fact, it is this basic unawareness cum delusion that, when the necessary propensities and the objects of the realm of sensuality meet, gives rise to passions—of which the avidyā that is the first link is held to be an instance. In fact, it is because grasping at entities as true is cognitive delusive obstructions that, after the transition to the eighth level, higher bodhisattvas continue to perceive dirt, rocks, mountains and the like—even though they no longer carry much weight in their experience—and that Śāntideva illustrated this in the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra in terms of the magician that causes the attractive dancing girl to appear in the experience of his audience as well as in his own experience. And it is in those in whom the power of karmic propensities has not been made to dwindle as a result of the repetition of the realization of absolute truth, that grasping entities of the realm of sensuality as true automatically gives rise to passionate delusive obstructions.

³³⁴ An example of a pratyekabuddha who lived at a time when there was neither Buddha, nor dharma, nor saṃgha, and who, nonetheless, attained realization by meditating on the twelve links of interdependent origination, is the man who spontaneously identified the twelve links after finding a skeleton. This finding led him to think of old age and death (Pāli and Skt. jarāmaraṇa; Tib. gashi [Wylie, rga shi]; Ch. 老死 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, lǎosǐ; Wade-Giles, lao³-ssu³]: the twelfth link of interdependent origination), and then to identify birth (Pāli and Skt. jāti; Tib. kyewa [Wylie, skyed ba]; Ch. 生 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shēng; Wade-Giles, sheng¹]), as the cause of old age and death—birth, and old age and death, being “the links that constitute the result of the causes of existence.” Then he went on to identify the tenth link, which is becoming (Pāli and Skt. bhava; Tib. sidpa [Wylie, srid pa]; Ch. 有 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yǒu; Wade-Giles, yu³]), followed by the ninth, which is attachment to the aggregates (Pāli and Skt. upādāna; Tib. lenpa [Wylie, len pa]; Ch. 取 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, qǔ; Wade-Giles, ch'ü³]) and the eighth, which is desire or craving (Pāli, taṇhā; Skt. tṛṣṇa; Tib. sepa [Wylie, sred pa]; Ch. 愛 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, nài; Wade-Giles, nai⁴])—these being “the three links that constitute the causes of existence.” Then he identified the seventh link, which is sensation (Pāli and Skt. vedanā; Tib. tsorwa [Wylie, tshor ba]; Ch. 受 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shòu; Wade-Giles, shou⁴]), followed by the sixth, which is sensory contact (Pāli phassa; Skt. sparśa; Tib. regpa [Wylie, reg pa]; Ch. 觸 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, chù; Wade-Giles, ch'u⁴]), the fifth, which is the sense bases (Pāli and Skt. ṣaḍāyatana; Tib. kyemché [Wylie, skye mched]; Ch. 六入 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, liùrù; Wade-Giles, liu⁴-ju⁴]), and the fourth, which is name-and-form (Pāli and Skt. nāmarūpa; Tib. minzok [Wylie, ming gzugs]; Ch. 名色 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, míngsè; Wade-Giles, ming²-se⁴])—these being “the four links that constitute the result of the determining causes.” Then he identified the third link, which is consciousness (Pāli, viññāṇa; Skt. vijñāna; Tib. namshé [Wylie, nam shes]; Ch. 識 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shí; Wade-Giles, shih²]), then the second, which is repetitive mental formations or impulses (Pāli, saṅkhāra; Skt. saṃskāra; Tib. duche [Wylie, 'dū byed]; Ch. 行 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, xíng; Wade-Giles, hsing²]), and finally the first, which is unawareness-cum-delusion (Pāli avijjā; Skt. avidyā; Tib. marigpa [Wylie, ma rig pa]; 無明 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúmíng; Wade-Giles, wu²-ming²])—these being “the first three links, which constitute the determining causes.” Thus the man identified the twelve links and, by meditating on them, attained the realization of a pratyekabuddha without having received teachings in that lifetime.

³³⁵ As shown above in the regular text and explained in notes 331 and 332, the Pratyekabuddhayāna on the one hand accepted the nonexistence of some aspects of phenomena that are not human beings, but kept a belief in the existence of some other aspects, and were also accused of not fully realizing the selflessness of human beings because it purportedly maintains that the supposedly internal, subjective consciousness exists in truth [cf. Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, p. 159]).

³³⁶ Obviously, Prāsaṅgikas do not deem this explanation to be admissible—for, as stated in a previous note, they assert the selflessness of persons to be truly realized only if the selflessness of phenomena other than persons is realized.

³³⁷ According to Robert Buswell (1989), the Vajrasamādhisūtra, which he acknowledges to have been of great importance in the development of East Asian Buddhism, including Chán, is apocryphal—a suspicion Mizuno Kōgen and Walter Liebenthal previously harbored. Tibetans as a rule do not accept its validity because it was never translated into their language and it is not featured in the Kangyur

(Wylie, bka' 'gyur) or Tibetan Collection of Canonical Sources. However, Buswell's allegation has not been proved, and it is a fact that Chán and the rest of East Asian Buddhists continue to regard it as a genuine sermon of Śākyamuni—and they are right in so doing, since the Sūtra is in full agreement with the principles of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Moreover, the oral tradition quoted by Oon certainly agrees with the essence of the Mahāyāna.

According to Vasumitra, the Sarvāstivādin view is that ubhayatobhāgavimutta arhats, by reaching nirodhasamāpatti, remove both passionate delusion and vimokśāvaraṇa—which they explain as delusion regarding the knowledge of akarmaṇyatā of nāma and rūpa—whereas prajñāvimukta arhats remove only the first type, doing so by means of prajñā (cf. Dutt, 1978, p. 159). Yet the canonical sources and Commentaries of the Mahāyāna, including Maitreya's Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra, contradict those of the Hīnayāna.

³³⁸ Note that Chinese Buddhism attributes this text to Sthiramati rather than to Maitreya-Asaṅga.

³³⁹ As shown elsewhere in this book, the arising of the mental subject cleaves the undivided experiential totality of the base-of-all, and though the ensuing object, being undivided, still seems to be a totality, it is no longer so, as it excludes the mental subject.

³⁴⁰ The Cittamātra school posits three types of nirodha or cessation: (1) pratisamkhyānirodha or cessation (nirodha) of the passions (kleśa) by the power of perfect discrimination; (2) apratisamkhyānirodha or cessation of the passions or kleśas without the intervention of perfect discrimination; and (3) saṃjñāvedanāniroda, which is a state wherein saṃjñā or recognition in terms of concepts and vedanā or mental sensation are inactive.

³⁴¹ For example, a Hīnayāna monk avoids the arousing of desire by eluding women, and forestalls the manifestation of anger by keeping from engaging in worldly dealings. Contrariwise, a Mahāyāna layman (Skt. and Pāli, upāsaka; Tib. genyen [Wylie, dge bsnyen]; Ch. 優婆塞 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yōupósāi; Wade-Giles, yu¹-p'o²-sai¹]) or lawwoman (Skt. and Pāli, upāsikā; Tib. genyenma [Wylie, dge bsnyen ma]; Ch. 優婆夷 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yōupóyí; Wade-Giles, yu¹-p'o²-i²]) lives in the world; if “unlawful” desire arises in his mind, he will try to neutralize it by visualizing the woman as though he could see through her body and perceive a heap of bones, muscles, fat, blood, mucus, mucosa, organs, excrement and so on; if he gets angry at someone who wronged him, in order to neutralize the anger he will develop compassion by thinking the person did so because he or she is possessed by delusion and, as a result, is suffering in saṃsāra. The principle behind this is that a single mind cannot simultaneously entertain two different attitudes to an object, and thus that disgust puts an end to desire, just as compassion puts an end to anger, etc.

In the gradual Mahāyāna, the principle of training consists in trying to produce the qualities proper to Awakening through the application of antidotes to the vices or defects that are their opposites. As remarked in the regular text, this is contrary to the principle of the sudden Mahāyāna, in which the qualities of Awakening arise spontaneously as a result of Awakening itself.

³⁴² Cf. The Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra or Sūtra Spoken by Vimalakīrti (Tib. Drime drakpe tenpai do [Wylie, dri med grags pas bstan pa'i mdo]; Ch. 維摩經 or, in full in the translation by Kumārajīva, 維摩詰所說經 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, Wéimó jīng or, in full in the translation by Kumārajīva, Wéimójié suǒshuō jīng; Wade-Giles, Wei²-mo² ching¹ or, in full in the translation by Kumārajīva, Wei²-mo²-chieh² so³-shuo¹ ching¹]), which reveals the lifestyle of this Licchavi of the Indian city of Kapilavastu (which according to traditional accounts, in the time of Śākyamuni's was the capital of the kingdom of the Śākya and where the Kingdom's heir, Siddhārtha Gautama—who later became the Buddha of our age—lived until his decision to seek Awakening).

³⁴³ Since the teachings of Dzogchen Atiyoga interpret the three aspects consisting of the dharmakāya, the saṃbhogakāya and the nirmāṇakāya in a different, more specific way than both those of the Mahāyāna and those of the Vajrayāna, they will be explained in some detail from the standpoint of that teachings in Part Two of this book, which deals with the Atiyogatantrayāna.

³⁴⁴ As stated in a note to Chapter One, the word “phenomenon” is derived from the Greek phainomenon, meaning, “that which appears.” In a Buddhist context, it seems appropriate to interpret “that which appears” as referring to the deceptive appearances that characterize saṃsāra and that veil the true condition of reality. Contrariwise, nirvāṇa, even though it involves the sense data that constitute the basis of appearances, since it involves the dissolution of all false appearances and the perfect realization of the true condition of reality, in a special sense may be regarded as being beyond that which appears.

Because of this, I preferred not to speak of the phenomena of *nirvāṇa*, but of the metaphenomenon or the series of metaphenomena of *nirvāṇa* (the plural or singular depending on the standpoint we adopt).

³⁴⁵ The order in which Indian Master Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna taught the “Four Immeasurables” in Tibet during the Sarma (Wylie, *gsar ma*) or “new” diffusion of the teachings was: (1) love, (2) compassion, (3) joy and (4) equanimity. A well established and ancient Nyingmapa (Wylie, *mying ma pa*) tradition that at some point was codified by Andzam Drugpa (Wylie, a *'dzam 'brug pa*) in Tibetan Text 7 insists that if immeasurable equanimity is not present from the very outset of the development of the other three qualities, these could as well fall into partiality (i.e. they could be directed to some individuals to a greater extent than to others); therefore, it is possible that they never become genuine Immeasurables. See Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, p. 113.

It is important to keep in mind that the four qualities that the Mahāyāna designates as “immeasurable catalysts of Awakening” also exist in Hīnayāna Buddhism—even though in the latter they do not conform a particular grouping. If they are considered as a distinctive characteristic of the Mahāyāna, it is only because in this later vehicle they occupy a much more central place and are emphasized to a much higher degree than in the Hīnayāna.

³⁴⁶ In fact, the practice of immeasurable equanimity is an antidote to attachment and aversion. The practice of immeasurable love or loving kindness is an antidote, among other things, to thinking of oneself first and working for one’s well being at the expense of that of others. The practice of immeasurable compassion is an antidote to the rejection of suffering, and in particular of the suffering of others, which normally we wish to shun—and together with that of loving-kindness is an antidote to aversion in general. Finally, the practice of immeasurable, sympathetic joy or rejoicing for the good actions, qualities and positive circumstances of others is an antidote to jealousy/envy and competitiveness in relation to others.

³⁴⁷ Note 124 by Adriano Clemente to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (1999/2001) reads:

“The *pāramitā* of method (*thabs*) refers to the dedication of one’s merit to the Enlightenment of all beings; the *pāramitā* of force (*stobs*) signifies no longer being conditioned by adversities and negative forces; the *pāramitā* of aspiration (*smon lam*) means intensely wishing in all future lives never to separate from *bodhicitta* and to practice the *pāramitās* for the benefit of beings; the *pāramitā* of wisdom (*ye shes*) indicates genuine understanding of emptiness, the true nature of phenomena.”

In order to make the above more specific, it must be remarked that the *pāramitā* of method (Skt. *upāya pāramitā*; Tib. *thab phar pin* [Wylie, *thabs phar phyin*]; Ch. 方便 波羅蜜 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*]) implies the perfecting of the spontaneous skillful means that developed with great power since one became a superior *bodhisattva* and the ten levels (Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. *sa* [Wylie, *sa*]; Ch. 地 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *dì*; Wade-Giles, *tí⁴*]) previous to full Awakening began succeeding each other: as one acquires greater confidence in the Vision that initially manifested in the first level, one’s skillful means become more spontaneous, sharper and far more powerful.

The *pāramitā* of aspiration (Skt. *prañidhāna pāramitā*; Tib. *mönlam phar pin* [Wylie, *smon lam phar phyin*]; Ch. 願 波羅蜜 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuàn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *yüan⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*]) implies an even lesser concern with oneself, as well as the optimization of the natural arising of all-embracing transcendent wishes (which, as they manifest, may put every one of one’s hair on end).

The *pāramitā* of force (Skt. *bala pāramitā*; Tib. *tob phar pin* [Wylie, *stobs phar phyin*]; Ch. 力 波羅蜜 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *lì bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *li⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*]) involves even greater confidence in the Vision; it implies that one’s actions respond solely to the needs of others, and that they do so more unselfconsciously and hence uncontrivedly than ever.

The *pāramitā* of primordial gnosis (Skt. *jñāna pāramitā*; Tib. *yeshe phar pin* [Wylie, *ye shes phar phyin*]; Ch. 智 波羅蜜 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhì bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *chih⁴ po⁻¹luo²-mi⁴*]) cannot be reduced to the mere understanding of emptiness, which is a function of the *pāramitā* of *prajñā*. In fact, the *pāramitā* of primordial gnosis or wisdom implies the unveiling of absolute truth: the true condition of reality, which is inexpressible and cannot be reduced to mere emptiness, and that hence *Mahāmādhyaṃaka* referred to as the indivisibility of emptiness and appearances. (However, as noted in the discussion of *Chán* or *Zen*, this realization is different from that of *Dzogchen*, for even at this point the primordial purity (Skt. *katak* [Wylie, *ka dag*] aspect of the Base is to some extent privileged over its spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification / spontaneous accomplishment (Tib. *lhundrub* [Wylie, *lhun grub*] aspect).

³⁴⁸ Transcendent generosity (Skt. *dāna pāramitā*; Tib. *jinpa pharpin* [Wylie, *sbyin pa phar phyin*]; Ch. 布施波羅蜜 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bùshī bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po⁴-shih¹ po¹-luo²-mi⁴*]) is applied as an antidote to miserliness, avarice and endeavoring for one's well-being at the expense of that of others; transcendent moral discipline (Skt. *śīla pāramitā*; Tib. *tsültrim pharpin* [Wylie, *tshul khriims phar phyin*]; Ch. 持戒波羅蜜 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chíjiè bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ch'ih²-chieh⁴ po¹-luo²-mi⁴*]) is an antidote to debauchery, disrespect, mindlessness and so on; transcendent forbearance (Skt. *kṣānti pāramitā*; Tib. *zöpa pharpin* [Wylie, *bzod pa phar phyin*]; Ch. 忍辱波羅蜜 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *rěnrǔ bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *jen³-ju³ po¹-luo²-mi⁴*]) is applied as an antidote to impatience, rebelliousness and aversion in general; the practice transcendent perseverance (Skt. *vīrya pāramitā*; Tib. *tsöndrū pharpin* [Wylie, *brtson 'grus phar phyin*]; Ch. 精進波羅蜜 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jīngjìn bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ching¹-chin⁴ po¹-luo²-mi⁴*]) is an antidote to laziness and indolence; transcendent stable mental absorption (Skt. *dhyāna pāramitā*; Tib. *samten pharpin* [Wylie, *bsam gtan phar phyin*]; Ch. 禪定波羅蜜 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *chándìng bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *ch'an²-ting⁴ po¹-luo²-mi⁴*]) is applied as an antidote to distraction and the monkey mind; the practice of transcendent discriminating wisdom (Skt. *prajñā pāramitā*; Tib. *sherab pharpin* [Wylie, *shes rab phar phyin*]; Ch. 般若波羅蜜 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *bōrě bōluómì*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³ po¹-luo²-mi⁴*]) is an antidote to wrong view, ignorance, bewilderment and delusion. (Etc.)

³⁴⁹ Certainly the training in question cannot cause the arising of unconditioned nonreferential compassion, for whatever is unconditioned cannot be caused by a combination of main cause (Skt. & Pāli *hetu*; Tib. *gyu* [Wylie, *rgyu*]; Ch. 因 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn *yīn*; Wade-Giles *yin¹*]) and a set of contributory conditions (Skt. *pratraya*; Pāli *paccaya*; Tib. *kyen* [Wylie, *rkyen*]; Ch. 緣 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn *yuán*; Wade-Giles *yuan²*]); however, it can be a contributory condition that, similar to a favorable setting, may be ideal for the uncaused arising of such an unconditioned virtue as nonreferential compassion.

³⁵⁰ As stated in a previous note, these four factors are: (1) the abandoning of nonvirtuous phenomena already generated; (2) the nongeneration of nonvirtuous phenomena not yet generated; (3) the increase of virtuous phenomena already generated; and (4) the generation of virtuous phenomena not yet generated.

³⁵¹ The Mahāyāna description of the four stages of this path is as follows: (1) heat (Skt. *ūṣman* / *ūṣmagata*; Tib. *drö* [Wylie, *drod*]; Ch. 煖 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *nuǎn*; Wade-Giles, *nuan¹*]), which involves having an initial, incipient, partial, yet nonconceptual apprehension of *tathatā* (the true constituent of all entities); (2) peak or climax (Skt. *mūrdhan*; Tib. *tsemo* [Wylie, *rtse mo*]; Ch. 頂 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *dǐng*; Wade-Giles, *ting³*]), which means one has reached the point at which the virtuous roots (Skt. *kuśalamūla*; Pāli *kusalāmūla*; Tib. *gewai tsawa* [Wylie, *dge ba'i rtsa ba*]; Ch. 善根 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shàngēn*; Wade-Giles, *shan⁴-ken¹*]) one has cultivated cannot decrease or disappear, and the apprehension of *tathatā* becomes clearer; (3) forbearance (Skt. *kṣānti*; Tib. *zöpa* [Wylie, *bzod pa*]; Ch. 忍辱 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *rěnrǔ*; Wade-Giles, *jen³-ju³*]) implies that by becoming increasingly familiar with the concept of emptiness one overcomes the dread of it I call panic, and that the doors of lower realms are irreversibly closed; (4) supreme mundane qualities (Skt. *laukikāgradharma*; Tib. *jigtenpai chökyi chok* [Wylie, *'jig rten pa'i chos kyi mchog*]; Ch. 世第一法 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *shìdìyīfǎ*; Wade-Giles, *shih⁴-ti⁴-i¹-fa³*]) signifies one has actualized the highest qualities of mundane existence and become prepared to enter the supramundane Path—i.e. to gain access to the third path, which is the Path of Presence (Skt. *darśanamārga*[h]) or Path of Seeing (Tib. *thoglam* [Wylie, *mthong lam*]; Ch. 見道 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, *jiàndào*; Wade-Giles *chien⁴-tao⁴*]).

Since we are referring to the Mahāyāna, the dread that is overcome in the third stage has as its object the emptiness of the Mahāyāna, which is the twofold emptiness of both persons and phenomena-that-are-not-persons (both of which, in the case of the Mādhyamaka School, may be either coarse or subtle)—which is the reason why I call it panic—which, of course, is attended by dread of dread. The Mahāyāna conception of emptiness will be considered in the section on the gradual Mahāyāna; a more thorough elucidation, discussing the conceptions of emptiness held by the different schools of the Mahāyāna, will be offered in the definitive version in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004).—provided that I complete it.

³⁵² In the sudden or instantaneous Mahāyāna—Chán or Zen—the nonconceptual and hence nondual wisdom called absolute *prajñā* (or, in terms of the ten *pāramitās*, *jñāna*) must also manifest at a given moment, marking the entrance into the Path in the truest sense of the term. One of the essential differences between the instantaneous approach and the gradual one lies in the fact that the former does not require

the practitioner to begin the practice by performing the activities at the root of the relative accumulation of merits, or those traditionally done for developing relative bodhicitta—such as the contrived practices applied for developing the bodhicitta of intention (the four immeasurable catalysts of Awakening) and the contrived practices of the bodhicitta of action (the six or ten transcendences or *pāramitā*). Likewise, in the instantaneous Mahāyāna it is not deemed that the rūpakāya (the Buddha-body of form consisting of the sambhogakāya and the nirmānakāya) will manifest as a result of the accumulation of merits: it is held that in the state of Contemplation the three kāyas or Buddhist “bodies” are already manifest, and that therefore there is nothing to be produced by means of the “two accumulations.” The responsibility of practitioners, for their part, is not to allow delusion and relative truth to arise and veil absolute truth upon rising from a session of Contemplation. (All of these concepts will be explained in this section.)

³⁵³ Just as in the Śrāvakayāna the path of Vision marks the entrance into the “stream,” in the Mahāyāna the transition to the path of Vision is the entrance to the Path in a truer sense—or, which is the same, to the True Path. This is what was meant in the preceding note when it was stated that the nonconceptual and hence nondual wisdom called absolute *prajñā* (or, in terms of the ten *pāramitās*, *jñāna*) must manifest at a given moment, marking the entrance into the Path in the truest sense of the term.

³⁵⁴ It was the Mādhyamaka School, founded by Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva,* which developed the teachings on emptiness or emptiness into a quite subtle system of philosophy to serve as the conceptual counterpart to the practice of the Mahāyāna path, explaining it as absence of self-existence (*svabhāva śūnyatā*)—and in particular as the absence of both the coarse and the subtle self-existence, of both persons and phenomena other than persons—and making the point that this emptiness can only be truly realized through a nonconceptual gnosis that as such is free from the subject-object duality.

According to Tibetan Buddhism, at an early stage the Mādhyamaka School and the Svātantrika Schools (the latter comprising the Svātantrika-Sautrāntika and two types of Svātantrika-Yogācāra)—even though no Indian teacher ever used the two terms to refer to two different subschools of Mādhyamaka. In fact, the only Indian who used one of these labels was Jayānanda, the only Indian who carried the view of Candrakīrti to Tibet, for he used the term Svātantrika a couple of times in the *Madhyamakāvataṛāṭikā*, which this Indian interpreter of Candrakīrti used to refer to advocates of a position that he saw Candrakīrti as opposing (Cabezón, 2003, p. 292; it must be noted, however, that Jayānanda spent a long time in Tibet, and that the text just mentioned was consulted by Cabezón in Tibetan translation). At any rate, scholars as a rule assume the classification and terminology to have arisen in Tibet in the eleventh or twelfth century CE—the most ancient known texts in which it appears being the translations of works by Candrakīrti by Tibetan translator Patsab Nyima Drak (Wylie, *pa tshab nyi ma grags*), who, in spite of Jayānanda’s previous use of the term Svātantrika, is thus regarded as the probable originator of the terminological distinction (Dreyfus & McClintock, eds. 2003, *passim*).

Later on in Tibet, the Jonangpas—among whom the greatest seems to have been Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (Wylie, *dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan*, 1292–1361)—developed a Mādhyamaka view found in higher Mahāyāna Sūtras of both Promulgations (among higher Third Promulgation Sūtras, it is found in the Āryaśrīmālādevīsīṃhanādanāmamahāyāna, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, the *Āṅgulimāla*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, the *Mahābherīhāra* and others; among Second Promulgation Sūtras, it is found in the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*), and also found in Tantras such as the *Kālacakrantra* and the *Hevajratantra*, and in higher Indian Mahāyāna treatises interpreting Third Promulgation Sūtras (such as Maitreya’s *Ratnagotravibhāga / Uttaratantraśāstra [Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra]*—which according to the Chinese was authored by Sthiramati / Sāramati [Ch. 堅慧 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, jiānhuì; Wade-Giles, chien¹-hui⁴}]) and interpreting Second Promulgation Sūtras (e.g. Nāgārjuna’s *Collection of Eulogies [Skt. Stavakāya; Tib. bstod tshogs]*, among which most eloquent is surely the *Eulogy to the Absolute Expanse of the True Condition [of Phenomena] [Skt. Dharmadhātustava {also referred to as Dharmadhātustotra}; Tib. Chöying töpa {Wylie, chos dbyings bstod pa}; Ch. 讚法界頌 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, Zàn fǎjiè sòng; Wade-Giles, Tsan⁴ fa³-chieh⁴ sung⁴}])*, and other texts. They referred to their view by the Tibetan terms *Uma Zhentongpa* (Wylie, *dbu ma gzhan stong pa*), *Uma Chenpo* (Wylie, *dbu ma chen po*; Skt. *Mahāmādhyaṃaka*) and inner, subtle *Mādhyaṃaka* (Tib. *Nang Trawe Uma* [Wylie, *nang phra ba'i dbu ma*]), and grouped the rest of Mādhyamaka schools under the rubrics “coarse, outer *Mādhyaṃaka*” (Tib. *Ch'i Rappe Uma* [Wylie, *phyi rags pa'i dbu ma*]) and “*Mādhyaṃaka of Emptiness of Self-Existence*” (Tib. *Uma Rangtongpa* [Wylie, *dbu ma rang stong pa*]; Skt. *svabhāva śūnyatā Mādhyaṃaka*). This terminology was due to the fact that the Jonangpas and those red-hat lamas who

adopted their view further developed the conception of emptiness as the absence of anything other than ultimate truth itself that was already present in the just mentioned canonical sources and treatises. According to them, the Uma Rangtongpas were right in claiming that individual relative phenomena were empty of self-existence (Skt. svabhāva śūnyatā; Tib. rangzhinggyi tongpanyi [Wylie, rang bzhing gyis stong pa nyid]); however, they noted that it was equally important to emphasize the fact that absolute truth was void of extraneous existents (Skt. paraśūnya; Tib. zhentong [Wylie, gzhan stong]).

For a more detailed explanation of this and an exposition of the views of the various Mādhyamaka sub-schools, see Capriles (in press; possible definitive version in print of electronic publication 2004) and Chöphel & Capriles (in press). Note that I have artificially distinguished two subschools within the inner, subtle Mādhyamaka, using the term Uma Zhentongpa (Wylie, dbu ma gzhan stong pa) to refer to the view of Dölpopa and other Jonangpas right as they expressed it, and Mahāmādhyamaka (Tib. Uma Chenpo [Wylie, dbu ma chen po]) for referring to my own variety of it.

*Note that Āryadeva is called Kānadeva in the root text of Chán, the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch (Ch. 壇經 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Tánjīng; Wade-Giles, T'an²-ching¹], 六祖壇經 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Liùzǔtánjīng; Wade-Giles, Liu⁴-tsu³ T'an²-ching¹], which abbreviate 六祖大師法寶壇經 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Liùzǔdàshī fábǎotánjīng; Wade-Giles, Liu⁴-tsu³-ta⁴-shih¹ Fa²-pao³-t'an²-ching¹]; full title: 南宗頓教最上乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺說法壇經), which lists him as one of the links in the transmission of Chán Buddhism. He is also listed as one of the links in one of the main lines of transmission of Dzogchen Atiyoga.

³⁵⁵ Many people question how one might feel compassion toward others when one grasps the emptiness and therefore the unreality both of those others and of their circumstances and sufferings. This confusion arises from a wrong understanding of the meaning of “nonreferential compassion:” in general, what the noun “compassion” refers to is not piety, commiseration and charity felt toward particular individuals; for its part, the adjective “nonreferential” means that here compassion is not directed toward particular individuals and does not stem from reflecting on the problems and suffering that people face, but, as remarked in the regular text, is inherently inseparable from emptiness.

In his King Dohās, the mahāsiddha Sarahapāda used the example of a simpleton (who might just as well have been a drunkard) who squinted and saw two moons, and then believed them to be two substantially separate and different entities. The inseparability of emptiness and compassion is like the indivisibility of the moon, but the delusion of dualism is like that of the simpleton or drunkard, which makes us utterly incapable of understanding the indivisibility of what the combination of these two terms refers to.

In fact, it is the illusion of inherently true selfhood or egohood that lies at the root of selfishness and that causes us to always put what we consider to be in our own interest before the interests of others. When we find ourselves possessed by the illusion of inherent existence, we are in the state described in Pascal (1962 [posthumous edition, 1669]):

“(134) All hate each other, although they feign charity or serving the public welfare; (135) admirable rules of courtesy, morality and justice have been founded on concupiscence and made out of it; but the heart, this *fragmentum malum*, rather than having been uprooted, has been covered up.”

Evil issues primarily from selfishness and egotism, which for their part result from delusion and the ego-grasping it involves; although delusion and its inherent ego-grasping arise as the play (Skt. līlā; Tib. rōlpa [Wylie, rol pa]) or dance (Skt. lalita) of our true condition, the telos (τέλος) of human life is the game of hide-and-seek whereby this true condition is concealed so that it may be progressively unveiled in a process of ever greater plenitude and fulfillment—and evil, being a result of delusion, arises from the hiding stage of the game rather than being something that is inherent in our true condition and that as such could never be removed. Contrariwise, the game is the game of removing delusion together with the evil it begets.

However, the greatest source of evil is that which Jung called “the shadow,” but which, rather than being, as Jung believed, the remnant of the violent instincts of our animal ancestors, results from that which psychoanalyst Susan Isaacs (1989)—a disciple of Melanie Klein—called “unconscious phantasy,” which is the true fragmentum malum at the root of evil—especially because then we are compelled to see the fragmentum malum in others and to try to destroy this fragmentum by trying to destroy those others. The phantasy in question installs itself in us when the infant is punished or reprimanded in a civilized society for engaging in socially unacceptable courses of behavior, for the individual who

inflicts the punishment perceives the infant as a little, shameful demon, causing the infant to become that which is being perceived as him or her. Thereon he or she will have to repress those courses of behavior is she or he is to avoid punishment, but the unconscious phantasy is already installed in her or him, and he or she will have to conceal it by means of the mechanics which Freud explained in terms of the concept of “repression” and which Sartre (1980/1969) explained in terms of that of “bad faith”—which, rather than curbing the evil impulses inherent in feeling that in the bottom of ourselves we are inherently evil, potentiates them and exacerbates them precisely to the extent to which repressing it confirms our wrong belief that the phantasy in question is his or her deepest and truest identity.

Contrariwise, when delusion is uprooted, from our chest there may emanate a warmth that embraces all sentient beings and all things without discrimination, and the whole universe, with the totality of human and other sentient beings in it, is our own body, which we take care of naturally, beyond the idea of substantial, external individuals or beings with absolutely true sufferings whom we should pity and feel sorrow for.

³⁵⁶ The term phenomenon derives from the Greek *phainomenon* (φαινόμενον), which means “that which appears.” Christianity posited a hypostatically existing soul that could not appear to human perception but that was the agent of perception and action, and Western metaphysics was conditioned by this belief throughout its history—not only giving rise to Descartes’ thesis that there were two created substances, one of which was the *res cogitans* that was no other than the Christian soul and to some extent to Kant’s transcendental consciousness, but persisting well into the twentieth century, when the philosopher that was the source of phenomenology—Edmund Husserl—transformed this belief into his concept that he referred to by the term “pure transcendental consciousness,” conceived as a substantial reality that did not appear in perception yet was responsible for perception, and thus betrayed the very concept of phenomenology. Therefore Sartre (1980) had to denounce Husserl and assert consciousness to be no more than an appearance that existed only insofar as it appeared. On the other hand, even before Kant conceived his system, Hume had reduced the mind to a bundle of phenomena, thus showing it to be phenomenal.

In the East, however, since Antiquity various Buddhist philosophers showed the mind to be a phenomenon and a mere appearance. As stated in endnote 73 to this volume, Bhāvaviveka, creator of the initial form of Mādhyamaka-Svātantrika philosophy *avant la lettre*, was the first Buddhist thinker to make the point that consciousness was part of the phenomenal world, and to substantiate this view with a plethora of arguments. At any rate, consciousness and the mental subject, which manifest only in *samsāra* when the subject-object duality is functioning, are phenomena, even though they do not appear directly and explicitly as objects, but in a much more subtle way, which in the case of the mental subject has been referred to as “indirect and implicit.”

For further details, cf. endnote 73. For a longer discussion, cf. Capriles (2007, 3 Vols; 2013abcd).

³⁵⁷ Candrakīrti had made the point that all relative truth is delusion and that the only truth is the absolute. This is why GC then notes that the Tibetan *kun rdzob*, the etymological meaning of which is all-concealed, is the term earlier scholars used to render the Sanskrit *saṃvṛti*, which has the etymological meaning of an obscuration to correctness or thoroughly confused. Because one is “deluded about the meaning,” we must also understand “relative truth” as “mistaken truth” — i.e., as that which those who are utterly deluded take to be true. *Madhyamakāvātāra* VI-28 may be rendered from its Tibetan version as follows (corresponding yet not identical translation in Chandrakīrti & Mipham, 2002, p. 72):

“The true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *chönyi* [Wylie, *chos nyid*]; Ch. 法性 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fǎxìng*; Wade-Giles, *fa³-hsing⁴*]), enshrouded by delusion, is “all concealed” (Tib. *kundzob* [Wylie, *kun rdzob*]; Skt. *saṃvṛti*; Ch. 俗諦 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *súdi*; Wade-Giles, *su²-ti⁴*]), yet what is conditioned by this delusion appears as true, and so the Buddha spoke of “concealed truth” (Tib. *kundzob denpa* [Wylie, *kun rdzob bden pa*]; Skt. *saṃvṛtisatya*; Pāli *sammūtisacca*; Ch. 世俗諦 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *shìsú dì*; Wade-Giles, *shih⁴-su² ti⁴*] or simply 俗諦 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *súdi*; Wade-Giles, *su²-ti⁴*]). Thus fabricated / produced / contrived / compounded / conditioned (Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Pāli *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düché* [Wylie, *’dus byas*]; Ch., 有為 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒuwéi*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-wei²*]) phenomena are “all-concealing.”

Candrakīrti explains the term *saṃvṛti* / *kun rdzob* in the following three senses (corresponding yet not identical explanation in Thakchoe, 2007, p. 46):

“(1) Deluded consciousness, which according to the Mahāyāna conceals the true condition of entities and produces a false reality through conceptual fabrications (Skt. *prapañca*; Pāli *papañca*; Tib. *thöpa* [Wylie,

spros pa]; Ch. 戲論 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xìlùn; Wade-Giles, hsi⁴-lun⁴]) that produce the subject-object dichotomy, our perceptions of reality in terms of the contents of countless thoughts that are confused with what they interpret (thus giving rise to a proliferation of entities), and the illusion that the ensuing appearances are self-existent.

“(2) That which is mutually interdependent (Tib. **pentsum tenpa** [Wylie, pan tshun brtan pa]; Skt paraparasaṃbhavana);

“(3) Worldly conventions (Skt. lokavyavahāra; Tib. jigten thanye [Wylie, ’jig rten tha snyad]).”

Gorampa (in **Ngedön rabgyäl** [Wylie, nges don rab rgyal], p. 376d of the edition Thakchoe used) discusses the three senses Candrakīrti ascribes the term (corresponding yet not identical translation in Thakchoe, 2007, p. 47):

“ [1] Relative truth (Tib. kundzob [Wylie, kun rdzob]) is that which obstructs all. The primal delusion is named kundzob (Wylie, kun rdzob) or all-concealing because delusion thoroughly conceals the true condition of entities. [2] Alternatively, kundzob / kun rdzob means mutually interdependent: it means [that all entities] are mutually interdependent. [3] Finally, kundzob / kun rdzob refers to terms—i.e. worldly conventions. That too is explained as having the characteristics of expresser and expressed, consciousness and object of consciousness, and so forth.”

In the above passage, the word “alternatively” may be misleading, for sense [2] implies sense [1], since whatever is interdependent thoroughly conceals the true condition of entities and is all-obstructing — doing so to a progressively lower extent in higher bodhisattvas as they proceed on the Path, yet doing so without exception, for what is interdependent is phenomena of relative truth in general, which are only perceived by the deluded, as they are not perceived either by higher bodhisattvas in the Contemplation state or by Buddhas throughout their Buddha-life.

Tsongkhapa acknowledges the etymology of both the Sanskrit saṃvṛti and its Tibetan translation, kun rdzob, but claims that there is a type of relative truth, which he called “mere existents,” that is not a product of delusion. Let us ponder on Tsongkhapa’s words on the etymology of the Tibetan kundzob / kun rdzob and the Sanskrit saṃvṛti, which as we know are the terms rendered as “relative truth” (in Thakchoe, 2007, p. 47; terminology adapted to the one used here; the italics at the end are my own, and some of the words within brackets were added to Thakchoe’s translation):

“Kun rdzob (saṃvṛti) is unawareness or ignorance because it conceals (’gebs) and thereby obstructs (sgrib par byed pa) the true condition. Since the [Sanskrit] equivalent of kun rdzob (saṃvṛti) also applies to obstruction (sgrib pa), it is explained in these terms: this, however, is far from stating that all kun rdzob are obstructers [or concealers].”

The final assertion, “this, however, is far from stating that all kun rdzob are obstructers or concealers,” is the distinguishing trait of the Gelugpa system, which distinguished between hypostatic, inherent or true existence, which it deems to be a delusion, and a purported mere existence of entities that is held not to be an instance of delusion, and which, therefore, must be left standing after the analysis has refuted true, hypostatic or inherent existence if one is to avoid falling into nihilism. This amounts to asserting the existence of a multiplicity of entities, which may not be questioned in analysis, and of those entities being the type of entity that the concept in terms of which we perceive them establishes them to be: a cat, a pot, a pillar, etc. Moreover, whereas the original Prāsaṅgikas and their faithful followers in Tibet have always acknowledged that Buddhas apprehend the absolute truth only, Tsongkhapa claimed that Buddhas simultaneously apprehend the two truths. For further information on this issue and a thorough refutation of the Gelug position in this regard, cf. Capriles (in press), Chöphel & Capriles (in press) and, if I complete it at some point and publish it, the definitive version in print of Capriles (2004).

³⁵⁸ When someone cannot continue in Contemplation indefinitely, at some point he or she must move to another condition that is marked by delusion and that is as such conceptual and dualistic and hence is an instance of delusion, but in which delusion manifests with less force than in an ordinary individual. It is this second state that in Sanskrit is referred to by the Skt. pṛṣṭhalabdha the Tib. jethob (Wylie, rjes thob) and the Ch. 後得 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, hòudé; Wade-Giles, hou⁴-te²).

³⁵⁹ In the case of individuals of the type referred to in the above note, the period in which Contemplation manifests is referred to by the Sanskrit term samāhita, the Tib. nyamzhak (Wylie, mnyam bzhak) and the Ch. 等引 (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, děngyǐn; Wade-Giles, teng³-yin³).

³⁶⁰ Passionate delusive obstructions (Skt. kleśāvaraṇa; Pāli kilesāvaraṇa; Tib. nyön[mongpai] drib[pa] [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa’i} sgrib {pa}]; Ch. 煩惱障 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, fánǎozhàng; Wade-Giles, fan²-

nao³-chang⁴)), which are defined as “any state of mind that when developed brings about uneasiness and suffering,” and which according to the gradual Mahāyāna are totally removed when the bodhisattva moves from the sixth to the seventh level (Skt. bhūmi; Tib. sa), are classified into:

- (1) Intellectual or theoretical delusive obstructions (Tib. kuntag nyönmongkyi dribpa [Wylie, kun btags nyon mongs kyi sgrib pa]), which refers to any intellectual framework that justifies, gives rise to, or reinforces hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization, grasping and the manifestation of the passions. This is what is known as a “wrong view,” of which classical examples are: believing one is an inherently existing, autonomous, independent self; thinking that relative, conditioned phenomena are permanent; saying that there is no basis for propounding the Four Noble Truths; believing that a god made the universe; etc.
- (2) Inborn delusive obstructions (Tib. lhenkye nyönmongkyi dribpa [Wylie, lhan skyes nyon mongs kyi sgrib pa]), which consist in the inborn tropism to grasp, and to delusorily hypostasize / absolutize / reify / valorize thoughts, in such a way as to automatically give rise to the various defilements (such as the three poisons, the six root delusions, etc.). Examples of this are: the automatic arousal of anger when someone insults one and the reflex drive to retaliate; the automatic welling-up of longing desire as soon as one encounters an object to which one is attracted, and the reflex drive to appropriate that object; etc.

³⁶¹ However, in Thögel practice (Wylie, thod rgal), in which the practitioner oscillates between absorptions of form (Skt. rūpādhyāna; Pāli rūpājhāna; Tib. zugkham samten [Wylie, gzugs kham bsam gtan]; Ch. 四禪 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, sìchán; Wade-Giles, ssu⁴-ch’an²] or rūpāvacaradhyāna; Pāli rūpāvacarajhāna; Tib. zugna chöpai samten [Wylie, gzugs na spyod pa’i bsam gtan]; Ch. 色界定 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, sèjiè dìng; Wade-Giles, se⁴-chieh⁴ ting⁴]) and the sambhogakāya (Tib. longku [Wylie, klong sku]; Ch. 報身 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, bàoshēn; Wade-Giles, pao⁴-shen¹]), this oscillation occurs because the instant delusion arises as an absorption with form aversion (Skt. dveṣa; Pāli dosa; Tib. zhedang [Wylie, zhe sdang]; Ch. 瞋 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, chēn; Wade-Giles, ch’en¹]) is activated, and its activation unleashes a spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification (Skt. nirābogha or anābogha; Tib. lhundrub [Wylie, lhun grub]) systemic loop that concludes with the spontaneous liberation of delusion in the manifestation of the sambhogakāya, which involves the correct apprehension of the visions of rōlpa energy, which involves not experiencing oneself as different from them.

³⁶² Cognitive delusive obstructions (Skt. jñeyāvaraṇa; Pāli ñeyyavāvaraṇa; Tib. shé[chai] drib[pa] (Wylie, shes [bya’i] sgrib [pa]); Ch. 所知障 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, suǒzhīzhàng; Wade-Giles, so³-chih¹-chang⁴]) are so called because they do not involve the passions themselves (which are manifestations of passionate delusive obstructions: Skt. kleśāvaraṇa; Pāli kilesāvaraṇa; Tib. nyön[mongpai] drib[pa] [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa’i} sgrib {pa}]; Ch. 煩惱障 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, fánnǎozhàng; Wade-Giles, fan²-nao³-chang⁴]), for they are subtler manifestations of delusion circumscribed to the non-passionate hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of knowledge and action—which as such cannot create the causes for rebirth in lower realms.

This kind of delusive obstruction has often been defined as the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of knowledge and action that persists after passionate delusive obstructions (Skt. kleśāvaraṇa; Tib. nyöndrib or nyönmongpai dribpa [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa’i} sgrib {pa}]) and the intense passionate karma involved have been neutralized or uprooted, and which underlies these so long as they are present. It is because of the emphasis on the fact that these delusions persist after coarse ones have been uprooted that in the twentieth century the coarse obscurations that constitute the obstacle of passions has been compared to a mothball in a drawer, and the subtle obscurations that constitute the obstacle of knowledge has been symbolized with the odor that remains in the drawer once the mothball has been removed. However, as we have just seen, the latter obstacle is also active while the former is present—just as a mothball’s odor is also present while the mothball is present, rather than manifesting after it has been removed.

An instance of the obstacle of knowledge that is present both while the coarse obscurations that make up the obstacle of passions are active and after they have been removed, is that of the intentional self-conscious action that characterizes saṃsāra, the drawbacks of which are the same independently of whether or not the action is carried out under the influence of the passions. As already noted, whenever we act in an intentional and self-conscious manner, at the moment of acting we take the entity designated by our name as the object of our consciousness and we perceive this entity as “a subject that is carrying out an action,” thus causing the subject to become an object and hence producing a greater

or lesser degree of self-impediment. In Chán or Zen Buddhism, in order to develop the capacity to act in the state of Contemplation, beyond the influence of the basic human delusion and the self-interference that this implies, a series of dào (Ch. 道; Wade-Giles Tao⁴; Jap. dō [わたる]) are applied, among which archery may offer a useful example. When an archer shoots under the power of delusion, at the moment of shooting his or her own consciousness takes the human entity that is shooting as its object and perceives it in terms of an intuitive thought that in discursive terms could be expressed as “now I am shooting.” Thereby the subject-consciousness that has decided to shoot becomes the shooter that is perceived as object, which interferes with the consciousness’ subjectivity-spontaneity, interrupting it for a second and thereby giving rise to a slight twitch that deflects the arrow. The training of the Zen archer aims at allowing him or her to “shoot without shooting:” while uncontrivedly “aiming” at the center of the target, his or her fingers must open spontaneously to free the arrow, beyond any self-conscious intention to shoot. When the archer finally succeeds in this “prowess” every time he shoots, nothing interferes any longer with his aim, and so he becomes a consummate archer.

A classical gradual Mahāyāna example of the obstacle of knowledge after the coarse obscurations that constitute the obstacle of passions has been removed, is that of the effort bodhisattvas in the last three levels (Skt. bhūmi; Tib. sa) still have to apply in their everyday practices.

³⁶³ The particular kind of cognitive delusive obstruction (Skt. kleśāvaraṇa; Pāli kilesāvaraṇa; Tib. nyön[mongpai] drib[pa] [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa’i} sgrib {pa}]; Ch. 煩惱障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, fánnǎozhàng; Wade-Giles, fan²-nao³-chang⁴]) responsible for deviating the arrow, as well as for the effort bodhisattvas in the last three levels (Skt. bhūmi; Tib. sa [Wylie, sa]; Ch. 地 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, dì; Wade-Giles, ti⁴]) still have to apply in their everyday practices, is the one called ’khor gsum rnam par rtog pa gang de shes bya sgrib par ’dod. Most special thanks are due to the accomplished translator and scholar Elio Guarisco for the extensive research he so kindly did on my behalf concerning the usage of the term khorsum (Wylie, ’khor gsum; Skt. trimaṇḍala; Ch. 三輪 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, sānlùn; Wade-Giles, san¹-lun⁴]).

³⁶⁴ Śāntideva compared what is termed *passional delusive obstructions* Skt. kleśāvaraṇa; Pāli kilesāvaraṇa; Tib. nyön[mongpai] drib[pa] [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa’i} sgrib {pa}]; Ch. 煩惱障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, fánnǎozhàng; Wade-Giles, fan²-nao³-chang⁴]) to the desire spectators at a magic show feel toward the illusory woman created by the magician, and likened what is called *cognitive delusive obstructions* (Skt. jñeyāvaraṇa; Pāli ñeyyavāvaraṇa; Tib. shé[chai] drib[pa] (Wylie, shes [bya’i] sgrib [pa]); Ch. 所知障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, suǒzhīzhàng; Wade-Giles, so³-chih¹-chang⁴]) to the desire the magician himself feels toward that same illusory woman. Understood in this restricted sense, the second type of obscuration would be circumscribed to superior bodhisattvas (those in the third and fourth paths and thus between the first and tenth level [Skt. bhūmi; Tib. sa {Wylie, sa}; Ch. 地 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, dì; Wade-Giles, ti⁴}) in their post-Contemplation state. However, the obscuration or obstacle of knowledge also underlies what is called *emotional obscuration or obstacle of the passions* while this type of obscuration is manifest, and as such it must be understood in the wider sense in which it is explained in the paragraph of the regular text to which the call for this note was appended.

³⁶⁵ Human existence does not mean simply that one was born from human beings and that the shape of one’s body is human. In Buddhist terms, for our existence to be called “human,” we must count with the conditions necessary for realization to be attainable; for example, he or she must count with the necessary natural endowments and thus traditionally could not be deaf (as in antiquity a deaf person would have been unable to listen to the teachings), cannot be mentally retarded to the level of being unable to understand the teachings, and so on; moreover, in order to be human it is necessary to have access to the teachings of the Dharma and the effective possibility of practicing them.

³⁶⁶ This noun refers to a group of essential, direct teachings of the Dzogchen Menngagde (man-ngag-sde; Skt. Upadeśavarga). As noted in Namkhai Norbu (Ed. E. Capriles, unpublished), this term has been translated erroneously into Western languages as “heartdrop.” However, in this case the word “nying” (Wylie, snying) does not refer to the physical heart, but to the innermost essence, to what is most central and essential. In turn, “thik” (Wylie, thig) is the root syllable of the word “thigle” (Wylie, thig le), which here has the twofold sense of potentiality and absence of limitations (which is what the roundness of thigles represents), and which therefore may be said to refer to a limitless potentiality. (Roundness represents the absence of limitations because it represents the lack of concepts: as stated repeatedly in the regular text, the very nature of concepts is to establish limits or bounds that exclude all that does not

fall within their own scope; for example, the concept of table automatically implies the exclusion of all that is not a table.) Since angles confine and restrict space, in the teachings they represent limits, and since circles, spheres and so on have no angles, they represent the absence of limits and therefore are used to symbolize the true nature of entities, which cannot be contained in concepts, as well as the realization of this true nature, in which there is no hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of concepts. This is why Buddhism represents the state of dharmakāya with a circle, and why the Dzogchen teachings represent our true condition with a sphere.)

In short, rather than “heartdrop,” Nyingthik means “the most essential potentiality.” Furthermore, in the same book Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche points out that in Tibetan the word “drop” is not thig but thigs: it has a final sa that is not part of the term “nyingthik” (Wylie, snying thig) or of the root syllable of the word “thigle.”

Although in general the essential teachings of Dzogchen Menngagde (Skt. Upadeśavarga) are those known as Nyingthik, in the same work the Master Namkhai Norbu points out that:

“The most concentrated essence of the Nyingthik consists in the body of teachings grouped under the term Yangthik (Wylie, yang thig). In Tibetan, yang means “even more.” For example, something profound is “zabmo” (Wylie, zab mo), and something even more profound is “yangzab” (Wylie, yang zab). “Essential” is “nyingpo” (Wylie, snying po), and “even more essential” is “yangnying” (Wylie, yang-snying)...

“Thus, the Yangthik—explained in many volumes of teachings, among which perhaps the most widespread are those revealed by the tertön (Wylie, gter ston) Duntso Repa (Wylie, dung mtsho ras pa)—is deeper and more essential than other teachings. All Yangthik teachings transmit methods to develop the capacity of Contemplation, which these teachings assume the practitioner already has, because it is the requisite for practicing these methods.”

³⁶⁷ Unlike the “Four Reflections,” the Seven Lojongs are not circumscribed to the Hīnayāna level of the lamrim Path; in particular, the trainings in contemplation pertaining to the Seventh Lojong include Vajrayāna and/or Atiyogatantrayāna elements.

³⁶⁸ In fact, they are not teachings of the ati-ati section of Atiyoga, for they incorporate elements that are proper to Tantric teachings of the Path of Transformation (Tib. gyurlam [Wylie, sgyur lam]). The point is that Dzogchen Atiyoga has an Ati-Ati section that is based exclusively on properly Atiyoga methods, and an Ati-Anu and an Ati-Mahā sections that, although based on an Atiyoga View, incorporate methods from the Anuyoga and the Mahāyoga, respectively.

³⁶⁹ This term (Ch. 頓門 [simplified: 顿门]: Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, dùnmén; Wade-Giles, tun-men]; Tib. tönmun [ston mun]) is the general one for referring to this tradition. In his sūtra, Huìnéng noted that no tradition is sudden or gradual, and that these adjectives should be applied to students rather than to teachings or schools, for no doubt some students are more “sudden” than others (Wong Mou-Lam and A. F. Price, translators, 1969); however, the term is used to refer to the Chán or Zen School because in it Awakening is not posited as the result of a gradual development through paths and levels, but as an instantaneous breakthrough.

³⁷⁰ It is easy to wonder how can the sudden Mahāyāna value a sūtra that asserts that, after attaining vajra-like samādhi, the bodhisattva will have to study the majestic conduct of the Buddhas for one thousand aeons and the refined practices of the Buddhas for ten thousand aeons before finally fulfilling Buddhahood. However, Chán views this as having a hidden meaning, and to prove their point retort: “each kalpa being immeasurable, how could anyone posit one thousand or ten thousand in a literal sense?” As shown by the story of the conversion of Déshān Xuānjiàn (Ch. 德山宣鑑; Wade-Giles, Te²-shan¹ Hsüan¹-chien⁴; Jap. Tokusan Senkan: Cleary, T & J. C. trans., 1977), the same reply is given to the general Mahāyāna statement that the bodhisattva attains Awakening after three immeasurable cosmic time cycles (Skt. kalpa; Pāli kappa; Tib. kalpa [Wylie, bskal pa]; Ch. 劫波 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jié²bō; Wade-Giles, chieh²-po¹] or 劫 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn jié; Wade-Giles chieh²]) treading the Path (according to canonical source and treatises of the Mahāyāna, one of these periods is required to go through the paths of accumulation and preparation or application; one for going through levels one to seven [i.e. for the path of Vision and part of the path of Contemplation]; and one for going through the last three levels of the path of Contemplation and thus reaching the path of No more learning—i.e., full, irreversible Buddhahood).

³⁷¹ Although, according to Hīnayāna Buddhism, only monks can attain nirvāṇa, this is not the case in the Mahāyāna, where the great bodhisattvas are not depicted as being necessarily monks. Moreover, in the Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra, as a model of the perfect practitioner, very superior to the Hīnayāna monk, a lay bodhisattva is portrayed that lived at home with his family and whose conduct could not be set up as a paradigm of the Path of Renunciation. If Vimalakīrti is set up as the supreme type of practitioner by an important canonical text of the Sūtrayāna, it is curious that some Sarmapa monks, in spite of being Vajrayāna practitioners—and thus of treading a Path that is not centered on the level of the body to which vows belong, and that does not teach practitioners should become monks and nuns—and in spite of seeing no problem in being granted temporary dispense of their vows in order to take a secret consort when this is required in order to perform specific practices, express misgivings and even overt hostility toward lay Masters.

The above does not happen among the Nyingmapa, according to whose teachings it is not convenient for the supreme Masters, who are the tertöns (Wylie, gter ston) or “revealers of spiritual treasures” (the term will be explained toward the end of the main text of this Part One of the book), to be monks or nuns, because they have to necessarily take a consort. Among the Drugpa Kagyü, just as among the Sakyapas, it is not a rule that lamas should be monks (moreover, in the latter school the hierarchs may not be monks, for they must have offsprings—for they are chosen by family line rather than being chosen by reincarnation).

Furthermore, in many of the sūtras mentioned above in the regular text of this book, elements are found that seem to belong to the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, while in certain sūtras (some of which were not included among the former) we find elements that seem to belong to the Path of Transformation. (These two Paths will be considered below in the regular text of this book).

Concerning the sūtras that feature elements that seem to belong to the Path of Transformation, it is extremely significant that the bodhisattva *Mārācārya Viśnaya Vimalā*, hero of the *Ārya-Śurangama-Samādhi Nāma Mahāyāna-Sūtra* (extant in Tibetan version), puts the demonic forces of delusion to the service of Awakening—which seems to be related to the principle of inner Tantras. For his part, as will be shown in a subsequent section of the regular text of this book, the bodhisattva Vimalakīrti, hero of the above-mentioned Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra, was an extremely important lineage holder in the lineal succession of both the Mahāyogatantra and the Anuyogatantra.

With regard to those sūtras of the Mahāyāna, pertaining both to the Second and Third Promulgations, which feature elements that seem to belong to the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, in a subsequent section of the regular text it will be seen that, according to the Dzogchen teachings, the tönpa or Primordial Master Garab Dorje, who introduced Buddhist Dzogchen into the human world, was an emanation of Śākyamuni’s Buddha. This, and the fact that since all Buddhist canonical sources, whether pertaining to the Pāli Canon and hence to the Hīnayāna, to the Mahāyāna Canon, to the Vajrayāna or to Dzogchen Ati, assert Buddhahood to be unproduced, nonfabricated, uncontrived, unconditioned and uncompounded (Skt. asaṃskṛta; Pāli, asaṅkhata; Tib. dūmache [Wylie, ’dus ma byas]; Ch. 無爲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²]), implies that in all vehicles genuine realization occurs by means of spontaneous liberation and hence that Śākyamuni, being a Buddha, could not have been unaware of the principle of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo. In fact, this explains the fact that those sūtras contain elements that seem to be based on the principle of the Atiyogatantrayāna or that somehow show its traces.

³⁷² In fact, according to the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch (Wong Mou-Lam and A. F. Price, trans., 1969), Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva (the latter of whom is called Kānadeva in the sūtra) were respectively the fourteenth and fifteenth links in the lineal succession of Chán or Zen.

However, not only is Nāgārjuna listed among the Patriarchs of the Dhyāna, Chán or Zen School, for according to (1) Yudra Nyingpo’s (Wylie, g.yu sgra snying po) noted Bairo Dradak (Wylie, rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa bai ro tsa na’i rnam tar ’dra ’bag chen mo); (2) the Menngag Shethab (Wylie, man ngag bshad thabs) of the Bairo Gyu Bum (Hundred Thousand Tantras of Bairotsana: Wylie, bai ro rgyud ’bum, vol. Ka, pp. 134-172); and other texts that include (3) the *Semde Chogyékyi Gongpa Rigdzin* (Wylie, sems sde bco brgyad kyi dgongs pa rig ’dzin rnam kyis rdo rje’i glur bzhengs pa; en el Ngagyur Kama [Wylie, snga ’gyur bka’ ma], vol. Tsa [Sichuan]) and so on, Nāgārjuna was a link in the transmission of Dzogchen Ati—which, like Chán, is not a gradual system (even though in it nongradual and gradual approaches coexist). And the same applies to Āryadeva, for Pawo Tsuglag Threngwa’s Chöjung Khepai Gatön (Wylie, chos ’byung mkhas pa’i dga’ ston, p. 568) cites both Nāgārjuna and his

associate and disciple, Āryadeva—who according to this text attained the rainbow body after receiving Dzogchen teachings from Mañjuśrīmitra the Younger—as links in one of the two lines of transmission originating from Garab Dorje (Wylie, dga' rab rdo rje), source of the current transmission of Buddhist Dzogchen (cf. Norbu, Namkhai, Italian 1988). Moreover, the author (Ibid.) went so far as to conclude that the theoretical view of the original Mādhyamaka may be a Mahāyāna expression of the essential outlook of Dzogchen:

“The (theoretical) viewpoint of Dzogchen is that of the Mādhyamaka-Prāsaṅgika system, aim of the teaching of Buddha and supreme among Buddhist philosophical systems, originally expounded by Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva.* This is confirmed by the (root Tantra of the Dzogchen Menngagde series), the Drataljur (sGra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud; Skt. Shabda maha prasamga mula tantra). Therefore, we could conclude that the (theoretical) view of Dzogchen (corresponds to that of this philosophical system that transcends eternalism and nihilism. (In fact), it is even possible to speculate that the (theoretical) view of Mādhyamaka -Prāsaṅgika (may) have originated from Dzogchen. There are two reasons to substantiate this. The first is that the (real) Knowledge of the true condition cannot be something different from the state of spontaneous perfection of Dzogchen, and therefore the view of Mādhyamaka-Prāsaṅgika must correspond to it. The other is that Garab Dorje (dGa'-rab rDo-rje), the first Master of (Buddhist) Dzogchen, was the source of two lineages, one of seven disciples and one of twenty-one, and one of these twenty-one successors was Nāgārjuna. Besides, it is claimed that Āryadeva vanished in light after having received Dzogchen teachings from the second Mañjuśrīmitra (who is considered to have been an emanation of the direct disciple of Garab Dorje bearing the same name). All of this is clearly reported in *A Feast for the Erudite: A History of Buddhism* (Tibetan Text 8, Ms A, p. 568).

“But even if the (theoretical) view of Dzogchen (corresponds to) that of Mādhyamaka-Prāsaṅgika, Sakya Paṇḍita asserted that:

“‘The View of Primordial Yoga (Atiyoga) is wisdom rather than a vehicle.’

“Therefore, it is not correct, basing oneself merely on a limited vision, to define Dzogchen as a philosophical system transcending eternalism and nihilism, (for this would reduce Dzogchen to a theoretical) view. Dzogchen must in fact be understood in the completeness of the three aspects, which are the Base, the Path and the Fruit. The (term tawa [Wylie, lta ba], which is usually rendered as) View, (refers to) only one of the three elements of the Path, and thus (is far from) representing the whole (of Dzogchen).”

The fact that both Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva are listed as links in the transmission of both Dzogchen Ati and the sudden Mahāyāna (Chán or Zen), could make one suspect that the latter may have been the result of an adaptation of the practice of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo to the principles and the context of the Mahāyāna, and that it was this adaptation that introduced the partiality towards emptiness that Namkhai Nyíngpo denounced in his *Kathang Dennga* [Wylie, bka' thang sde lnga]). And if this were the case, then the fact that the theoretical view of Mādhyamaka seems to be an essentially Mahāyāna expression of the Dzogchen View of could be due to the fact that it was introduced by great Dzogchen yogis who were also links in the transmission of Chán or Zen, as an expression of the realization of the latter tradition to be offered to practitioners of the gradual Mahāyāna. (Note that this interpretation is the opposite of the one found in Keith Dowman, Ed. and Trans. 1984, according to which Dzogchen derived from Chán Buddhism) At any rate, I feel fully confident that it may properly be said that Chán or Zen is to the Mahāyāna what Dzogchen Ati is to the Vajrayāna.

All of the above is quite congruent with the fact that, in his *Samten Migdrön* (Wylie, bsam gtan mig sgron), Nubchen Sangye Yeshe (Wylie, gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes) designated the Atiyogatantrayāna as the “universal ancestor of all vehicles,” and that some other teachings of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo seem to suggest that all paths of Awakening might have been derived from the mentioned primordial vehicle (in fact, the very title “primordial” implies the meaning of “source of everything”).

Though some Bönpo Masters (such as Lopön Tenzin Namdak) have privately claimed that the Buddhist Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna and Atiyogatantrayāna were originally taught by Bönpo Masters, and insisted that Garab Dorje was in truth the Bönpo Master Rasang Tapihritsa (Wylie, ra sangs ta pi hri tsa), there is no evidence whatsoever to substantiate such claims—which, so long no sound evidence is offered, should be decidedly dismissed.

*Note 14 by Adriano Clemente:

“Mādhyamaka (dBU ma) philosophy was originally taught by the Indian Master Nāgārjuna... and his disciple Āryadeva. In a later period two schools developed, the Prāsaṅgika (Thal ’gyur pa) and the Svātantrika (Rang ’gyur pa). The first, faithful to the original thought of the founder, and propounded by Buddhapālita (470-540), does not uphold any theory, but limits itself to showing the absurdity of all possible theses concerning the ultimate nature of reality. The second, founded by Bhāvaviveka (fifth century), is based on a more systematic formulation of this philosophy.”

At any rate, as stated elsewhere in this book, the labels Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika and the division of the Mādhyamaka into these two subschools were introduced in Tibet by Tibetan scholar-yogis—although, as already noted, the label Svātantrika had already been used in Jayānanda’s *Madhyamakāvātāraṅkā* to refer to advocates of a position that he saw Candrakīrti as opposing (Cabezón, 2003, p. 292).

³⁷³ In the standard translation of *The Sūtra of Huinéng* (in Wong Mou-Lam and A. F. Price, translators, 1969 pp. 50-1) there is no explanation as to the identity of Kānadeva, who is listed as the 15th Patriarch and successor to Nāgārjuna, the 14th Patriarch. However, in the standard translation of the Chán classic *The Blue Cliff Record* (T. and J. C. Cleary, translators, 1977, vol. I, Thirteenth Case, pp. 88-93) the fact that Kānadeva was a disciple of Nāgārjuna is emphasized, and in a note to the same book the translators note that Kānadeva is another name for Āryadeva.

³⁷⁴ In endnote before last I speculated that the original Mādhyamaka philosophy developed by Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva may have been an adaptation of the view of the sudden school to the gradual Mahāyāna. However, since, as stated in the same note, Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva were links in the lineage of the Dzogchen Atiyoga, which in Tibetan Text 1 (pp. 290-145b, 6) was referred to as “the universal ancestor of all vehicles,” it would be more reasonable to think that both the sudden Mahāyāna qua vehicle, and the view of original Mādhyamaka, arose as ways of adapting the Dzogchen Atiyoga to the Mahāyāna view and practice. This, however, would have to be determined by future research and scholarship.

The sudden Mahāyāna makes use of the views and explanations of the original Mādhyamaka, many of which correspond to the Rangtongpa view. However, throughout Chán and Zen we find the terminology of the canonical texts of the Third Promulgation—for example, making ample reference to the single, primordial Mind, as well as to the Laṅkāvatārasūtra’s so-called “eight consciousnesses,” which later on became a central tenet of the Yogācāra School (the fact should not be overlooked that the Sūtra of Huinéng lists Vasubandhu, one of the architects of the Mind-Only school [Skt. Cittamātra; Tib. semtsampa {Wylie, sems tsam pa}; Ch. 唯心 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wéixīn; Wade-Giles, wei²-hsin¹}]) as the twenty-first link in the transmission of Chán or Zen). In fact, the ideas, terminology and explanations of (1) the Second Promulgation and the Mādhyamaka School, and (2) the Third Promulgation, coexist and fuse in the sudden Mahāyāna. However, whatever this vehicle took from the Third Promulgation was not digested in terms of Mind-Only philosophy, for in the sudden Mahāyāna the general conception of the emptiness of the manifold phenomena is that of the Mādhyamika Rangtongpas, and the seemingly idealistic explanations it provides insist on the emptiness of Mind in a way that is reminiscent of the views of the subtle, inner Mādhyamaka (i.e. of the Mahāmādhyamaka and Zhentongpa schools).

It must be noted that in the Sudden Mahāyāna we do not find lengthy theoretical explanations of reality like those provided by the theoretical schools of the Mahāyāna, for its intent is to cut off speculation and all wanderings of mind, and achieve that which has been imprecisely rendered into English as “sudden Awakening” (Ch. 悟; [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wù; Wade-Giles wu⁴; Jap. satori]). Therefore, it would not be at all inaccurate to say that, like Mahāmādhyamaka, the sudden Mahāyāna unifies the Rangtongpa and Zhentongpa sub-schools of Mādhyamaka.

(For an explanation of the above schools and their relation to Dzogchen and Tantrism, see Capriles [in press; Chöphel & Capriles, in press; and the possibly upcoming, definitive edition in print of Capriles, electronic publication 2004.]

³⁷⁵ Although it is possible that this term may have been used in the Northern school as well, I have seen it in a Master of the Southern School: Huángbò Xīyùn (Ch. 黄檗希运 [simplified, 黄檗希运]; Wade-Giles, Huang²-po⁴ Hsi¹-yün⁴); lit., “Xīyùn of Mt. Huángbò” (Jap. Ōbaku Kiun) (died 850). Cf. Blofeld (1958).

³⁷⁶ In fact, the meaning of “great use of prajñā” corresponds to the manifestation of skillful means or method (Skt. upāya; Tib. thab [Wylie, thabs]; Ch. 方便 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, fāngbiàn; Wade-Giles, fang¹-pien⁴]) in the form of spontaneous actionless actions effective in leading others to Awakening; as it is well-known, upāya is the counterpart of prajñā (Tib. sherab [Wylie, shes rab]; Ch. 般若 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn bōrě; Wade-Giles, po¹-je³]). Cf. Blofeld (1958).

³⁷⁷ The Japanese name of the Rinzai tradition, which was imported into Japan by Eisai Zenji (1141-1215) is Rinzai-shū, which translates the Chinese Línjìzōng (臨濟宗; Wade-Giles, Lin²-chi⁴ Tsung¹), for Línjì (d. 866; Wade-Giles, Lin²-chi⁴; Japanese, Rinzai) was the founder of this school. Its Korean name is Imje-chong, and the Vietnamese one is Lam-te.

The Japanese name of the Sōtō tradition, which was imported into Japan by Dōgen Zenji (1200-1253; 道元禪師; also Dōgen Kigen 道元希玄, or Eihei Dōgen 永平道元, or Koso Jōyō Daishi) is Sōtō-shū, which translates the Chinese Cáodòngzōng (曹洞宗; Wade-Giles, Ts'ao²-tung⁴ Tsung¹; this school was founded by Dòngshān Liángjiè (洞山良價, 806-869; Wade-Giles, Tung⁴-shan¹ Liang²-chieh⁴; Jap. Tōzan Ryōkai) and his Dharma-heirs in the ninth century. Some attribute the name “Cáodòng” to a juncture of the first character of the name Dòngshān and the first character of the name Cáoshān—which was that of one of from one of Dòngshān’s dharma heirs, Cáoshān Běnjì (曹山本寂; Wade-Giles, Ts'ao²-shan¹ Pen³-chi⁴; Jap. Sōzan Honjaku); however, according to others, the “Cáo” much more likely came from Cáoxī (曹溪). Huìnéng’s “mountain-name” as Cáoshān is said to have been of lesser importance than the name of his contemporary and fellow Dharma-heir, Yúnjū Dàoyīng (雲居道膺; Wade-Giles, Yūn²-chū¹ Tao⁴-ying¹; Jap. Ungo Dōyō). The sect emphasizes sitting meditation and later “silent illumination” techniques. The Vietnamese name of the sect is Tao-Dong.

The Ōbaku-shū (黃檗宗³) is the third school of Japanese Zen, but it will not be discussed here, as it is not relevant to explain the contrast between the dynamic and the quietist approaches.

³⁷⁸ In this context it would not be permissible to speak of the two aspects of the Base, which according to the Dzogchen teachings are primordial purity (Tib. katak [Wylie, ka dag]; hypothesized Skt. kaśuddha) and spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification / spontaneous accomplishment (Tib. lhundrub [Wylie, lhun grub]; Skt. nirābogha or anābogha), for these concepts do not belong to the Mahāyāna, gradual or sudden—nor does Chán or Zen make use of the spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification / spontaneous accomplishment principle in the sense and to the extent in which it is applied in the Dzogchen teachings. However, if illegitimately we transposed these concepts into the sudden Mahāyāna, perhaps it could be permissible to say that the approach that in present day Japan is represented by the Rinzai School makes some kind of use of the principle of lhundrub—albeit the katak aspect predominates in the practice of the Mahāyāna in general and the principle of lhundrub is neither acknowledged nor fully employed.

It may also be remarked that in the Sōtō school the two rows of practitioners sit back to back, facing the walls, whereas in the Rinzai school the two rows of students face each other. The first way of sitting emphasizes the primordial purity aspect of emptiness and calm to a greater extent than the latter, which for its part may activate the systemic loops that lead delusion to its reductio ad absurdum, which are related to spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification / spontaneous accomplishment aspect of spontaneity and spontaneous perfection.

For a more detailed discussion of the concepts of katak and lhundrub, see Part Two of this book.

³⁷⁹ The Japanese term dokusan (獨參; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, dúcān; Wade-Giles, tu-ts'an) means literally “go alone to a high one” and refers to the meeting of a Zen student with his teacher alone in the Master’s room. Sōtō Zen abandoned this extremely important practice since the middle of Meiji times.

³⁸⁰ This term is said to mean “doing only zazen whole-heartedly” or “single-minded sitting,” and is believed to have been introduced by a Master of the Cáodòngzōng: Tiāntóng Rújìng (天童如淨; Wade-Giles, T'ien¹-t'ung² Ju²-ching⁴; Jap. Tendō Nyōjo), the teacher of the Japanese monk Dōgen, who introduced Sōtō Zen into Japan. There is a well-made biographic movie on Dōgen, most interestingly picturing his wisdom-seeking trip to China: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TinmRC2BS00>

³⁸¹ In fact, Dòngshān Liángjiè (洞山良價; Wade-Giles, Tung⁴-shan¹ Liang²-chieh⁴; Jap. Tōzan Ryōkai) himself, the original Chinese founder of the Sōtō School, was involved in a good deal of mondos. See Cleary, Thomas and J. C. translators, 1977, vol. II, case 43 (pp. 306-311) and Biographies of Masters (pp. 449-452).

³⁸² On the same occasion, emperor Wu asked Bodhidharma what was the highest meaning of the holy truths. Reportedly he replied, “Empty, without holiness.” (Thomas and J. C. Cleary, translators, 1977, vol. I, First Case, pp. 1 and 3.)

³⁸³ As repeatedly noted, “other-directed assertions” are not made because the individual who makes them believes them to be true, but because he or she intends to produce a specific effect on the interlocutor. Therefore, a realized master does not make them “from his or her own heart,” but only in view to lead

others beyond delusion. For a more detailed discussion of this, see Capriles (in press; Chöphel & Capriles, in press; and in case I manage to complete it, the definitive version in print or electronic publication 2004).

³⁸⁴ Normal people are confused and deluded, and yet feel certain that their ideas, beliefs and perceptions are absolutely sound. The above was a means of shaking the emperor's beliefs and throwing him into a state in which confusion becomes evident and which therefore is nearer to Awakening than normal, smooth-functioning delusion—and, most important, from which it is far easier to Awaken. The point is that genuine Chán and Zen Masters are perfectly aware that no statement can correspond to absolute truth; they will express ideas such as the above, which seem to respond to the standpoint of emptiness or emptiness, but as soon as they realize that their interlocutor is clinging to such ideas, they will affirm the opposite viewpoint in order to lead him or her beyond clinging to dualistic concepts. This is the essence of the Chán or Zen method of interrelated opposites that will be explained in detail in the definitive version in print or electronic publication 2004), in case I complete it.

³⁸⁵ Countless other texts could be cited to make the same point, but I chose to provide as a token this brief quotation from the Sūtra of Huìnéng because, as we have seen, this is the most important extant text of Chán/Zen Buddhism.

Furthermore, a very interesting paradox can be appreciated when comparing (1) Tibetan monasteries, in which the law of cause and effect was constantly emphasized, together with the practices of the gradual Mahāyāna for developing the bodhicitta of intention and the bodhicitta of action (and especially the practices for developing the Four Immeasurables and such practices as giving and taking, exchanging oneself for others, and so on), and (2) Chinese monasteries devoted to the practice of Chán—a tradition accused by Tibetans of negating the law of cause and effect—in which the Four Immeasurables and such practices as giving and taking, exchanging oneself for others, and so on, were not emphasized. While most Tibetan monasteries were feudal lords that sustained themselves from the tributes exacted from their feudal serfs and took donations from the people at large, Chinese Chán monasteries were self-sustaining, for the monks, including the abbot and master, every day ploughed the fields during the whole morning, precisely in order not to be a charge to the poor peasants of the area—or to anyone else, for that matter. In particular, Chán Master Bǎizhàng Huáihǎi (Ch. 百丈懷海; Wade-Giles, Pai³ Chang⁴ Huai² Hai³; Jap. Hyakujo Ekai) instituted the norm “one day without work, one day without food,” which was adopted by all Chán monasteries. (When Bǎizhàng was very old and feeble, he was asked to stop working on the fields, but he refused. In order to protect his health and well-being, a monk hid his laboring utensils; however, the Master stopped eating, forcing the monk to return his utensils to him, and hence he was able to continue plowing the fields.) Moreover, in general Chán monks and nuns take great pains not to let even the smallest morsel of food be lost. (When Déshān Xuānjiàn [Ch. 德山宣鑑; Wade-Giles, Te²-shan¹ Hsüan¹-chien⁴; Jap. Tokusan Senkan] was in the company of other monks by a river that flowed from the wilderness, the monks saw a leaf of spinach being carried by the current; saying there should be a man of the Path in the mountains, they proposed to follow the river upwards. However, Te-shan said no man of the Path would let a leaf of spinach go to waste, and refused to search for whoever let the leaf be carried away by the river.) (Cleary, T & J. C. trans., 1977)

The above is not to say that all Tibetan practitioners depended on exacting tribute from others. Many Nyingmapa Masters were laymen who as such did not live in monasteries, yet were not lay feudal lords; among them a great number herded their bovines or carried out other productive activities. As we read in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (Ed. John Shane, 1986), there were also self-sustaining communities such as the one led by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's root Guru, Rigdzin Changchub Dorje, which obtained its resources from the labor of all members and, moreover, offered a daily free soup to the destitute and the poor in the surroundings, and helped many with diagnostic and free medicines. Furthermore, some Tibetan monasteries did not exact tribute from the peasants; according to an article in the *Vajradhātu Sun* in the early 1980s, this was the case with the monasteries under the Tai Situpas. And so on.

³⁸⁶ In the West, there has been controversy as to whether this debate actually took place. Some of the Western sources discussing the supposed debate are: Demiéville (1952); Tucci (1958); Houston (1980); Guenther (1983); Yanagida Seizan (1983); Gómez (1983a, 1983b); Wayman (1979, pp. 44-58). Brief yet most important commentaries in this regard (some of which are included in the discussion of the debate featured in the regular text of this chapter) were also made in Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, Ed. unpublished).

Many scholars who have concentrated on the Chán or Zen of the Southern school insist that the Northern school propounds a gradual Path. This indicates that what they know about the Northern school is only what the Southern school asserts about it, and that they have not studied any of the original manuscripts of that school discovered in Dùnhuáng (Ch. 敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun²-huang⁴; also known as 燉煌 [simplified Chinese, 炖煌]) by Paul Pelliot and others. In all of these, it is evident that the Northern school is based on the principle of “sudden” Awakening and that its teachings are not so different from those of the Southern school as the latter has presented them.

³⁸⁷ Kennard Lipman (Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], Ed. Kennard Lipman, 1984, p. 33, note 11) tells us that, according to Nubchen Sangye Yeshe’s Samten Migdrön (Wylie, bsam gtan mig sgron; Leh, Ladakh: S.W. Tashigangpa, 1974, pp. 23-24):

“Kamalaśīla taught according to sūtras that were provisional in their meaning (drang don) and ‘incomplete’ (yongs su ma rdzogs), while Hwa-shan taught according to (sūtras that) were ‘complete’ (yongs su rdzogs). See H. V. Guenther, “‘Meditation’ Trends in Early Tibet,” in *Early Chán in China and Tibet*, p. 352. There is a parallel passage in the bka’ thang sde lnga, edited and translated by G. Tucci in his *Minor Buddhist Texts* (Rome, Is.M.E.O. 1958), p. 68 ff. He mistranslates: The Indian ācārya Kamalaśīla did not fully realize (the meaning) of the sūtras, the sense of which is to be determined (i.e. relative, drang don, neyārtha)... (p. 82, the passage in Tibetan in to be found on p. 69). The text has the same meaning as that of the bSam-gtan Mig-sgron.”

In fact, the Menngagde (Wylie, man ngag sde; Skt. Upadeśavarga) series of Dzogchen features the method taught by Kamalaśīla as a semdzin (Wylie, sems ’dzin); however, it does not claim that the ensuing experience is the absolute truth, but explicitly asserts it to be a mere illusory experience (Tib. nyam [Wylie, nyams]) that must be used to discover the nondual awareness in which it manifests.

³⁸⁸ During the Táng Dynasty (Ch. 唐朝; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Táng cháo; Wade-Giles T’ang ch’ao), after achieving certainty in the state revealed by sudden Awakening (Ch. 悟; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, wù; Wade-Giles wu⁴; Jap. satori), Chán practitioners used to go for long periods into a hut for continuing with their practice in strict retreat, assisted by a less experienced monk who, at the same time, would learn from the more advanced practitioner. I do not know what was the practice they would do in such retreats, but one may assume that the aim of it was to make the state of satori stable.

³⁸⁹ Aversion (Skt. dveṣa; Pāli dosa; Tib. zhedang [Wylie, zhe sdang]; Ch. 瞋 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chēn; Wade-Giles ch’en¹]) is one of the “three poisons:” the three most basic passions that sustain saṃsāra. The other two are attachment / desire (Skt. rāga; Tib. dōchak [Wylie, ’dod chags]; Ch. 貪 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, tān; Wade-Giles, t’an¹]) and consistent, ignoring obfuscation and dullness (Skt. moha; Tib. timug [Wylie, gti mug]; 癡 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chī; Wade-Giles, ch’ih¹]). The terms I am rendering as aversion have also been translated as anger and hatred, but actually these are just some of the particular instances of aversion, which is what the term really refers to, and that which the practice of Thögel (Wylie, thod rgal) must activate.

³⁹⁰ The two main stages of practice in the Dzogchen Menngagde (Wylie, man ngag sde; Skt. Upadeśavarga) are Tekchö (Wylie, khregs chod) or “spontaneous rupture of tension” and Thögel (Wylie, thod rgal) or “acceleration” (the meaning of this translation, which is not literal, will be briefly explained in a subsequent note, and then will be discussed in detail in Volume Two of this book). It could very well be said that Thögel is to a great extent a way of boosting the practice of Tekchö through the manifestation of luminosity, which activates the tendency to irritation at the root of the dynamics of (Skt. dveṣa; Pāli dosa; Tib. zhedang [Wylie, zhe sdang]; Ch. 瞋 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, chēn; Wade-Giles ch’en¹]), causing practitioners to react to the phenomena of luminosity in manners that exacerbate their tensions—which for their part catalyze the process of spontaneous liberation characteristic of Tekchö or “spontaneous, instant, absolute release of tension.” This is the reason why it would be nearly suicidal to undertake the practice of Thögel before the necessary capacity of spontaneous liberation has been developed through the practice of Tekchö. And yet it is most important to undertake it when the conditions are given, for otherwise the realization of Tekchö might not be optimized and in our time it would most unlikely that the higher attainments of Dzogchen would be obtained. (Many texts correctly note that Tekchö is for people of higher capacity and Thögel for people of lower capacity; however, in our time the practice of Tekchö is mainly the means to develop the capacity required for undertaking the practice of Thögel.)

In fact, Thögel will not only accelerate the development of the practice of Tekchö, but will give rise to realizations that can only be attained through the practice of Thögel. If the “mass of light” has not

manifested in the external dimension (Tib. *chiying* [Wylie, *spyi dbyings*]), the awareness associated with our organism (and thus this very organism) will not have the possibility of integrating with it—which would mean that we could obtain other Dzogchen realizations and modes of death, but not the body of light (Tib. *ökyi ku* [Wylie, 'od kyi sku] or *öpfung* [Wylie, 'od phung)—often called rainbow body [Tib. *jalü* {Wylie, 'ja' lus}) as well) or, even less so, the total transference (Tib. *phowa chenpo* [Wylie, 'pho ba chen po]). (It must be stressed that, in the dynamics activated by the practice of Thögel, the “total pleasure” associated with the *zhiwa* [Wylie, *zhi ba*] or “peaceful” aspect—which in this case is joyful because of its being associated with total pleasure—of the *zhitro* [Wylie, *zhi khro*] is as important regarding the ensuing learning as the dynamics of the *trowo* [Wylie, *khro bo*] or “wrathful” aspect. In particular, in the practice of darkness, the function of the experiences of total pleasure is not any less important than that of those involving the manifestation, spontaneous exacerbation and subsequent spontaneous liberation of tensions.)

³⁹¹ Different examples of this are found in the *Essays on Zen Buddhism* by D. T. Suzuki, which deal exclusively with the Southern school, as well as in the texts of the Northern school discovered in Dūnhuáng (敦煌; Wade-Giles, Tun-huang; also known as 燉煌 [simplified Chinese, 炖煌]), among other sources. Nevertheless, condemnation of sensory pleasure and/or recommendations about the use of antidotes are as a rule found next to such exhortations, which make it perfectly clear that Chán or Zen belongs to the Path of Renunciation. (An example of Zen text in which different approaches co-exist is *The Vast Chinese Instructions on the Dhyāna* [Tib. *samten gyalung chenpo* {Wylie, bSam gtan rgya lung chen po}], which Nubchen Sangye Yeshe attributed to [Hwashan] Mahāyāna, but which in China and Japan are currently attributed to Bodhidharma.)

³⁹² Many Sarmapa scholars have classified the Tantras as belonging to the Abhidharmapiṭaka. However, the three piṭakas that make up the Tripiṭaka (Abhidharmapiṭaka, Vinayapiṭaka and Sūtrapiṭaka) traditionally include the canonical texts of the Sūtrayāna, and thus I do not see any valid reason for including the Tantras in any of these.

More reasonable seems to me the view according to which the Tantras constitute a fourth piṭaka, called the Tantrapiṭaka. However, I would prefer to keep the term piṭaka to refer to the canonical texts of the Sūtrayāna, which are the ones that feature the term, and classify the Tantras—which do not feature the word piṭaka—as constituting an altogether different corpus of teachings.

In fact, even though saying this is a truism and a tautology, the Tantras are simply the Tantras, and I see no reason to classify them otherwise.

³⁹³ In common language the Sanskrit noun *vajra* meant “diamond.” In the Buddhist teachings, the term refers to that which embodies the superlative manifestation of the qualities of diamonds: our own true nature—which, because it is unconditioned and unmade, is unborn and indestructible, as well as changeless or immutable—and the nonconceptual, direct realization of it.

A diamond cut into a brilliant is transparent and spotlessly pure, and thus it may represent emptiness; however, when exposed to sunlight it gives rise to a wonderful, complex manifestation of colors, which may represent the manifestation of the variegated phenomena and their consummate functionality. In fact, emptiness is merely the primordial purity (Tib. *katak* [Wylie, *ka dag*]; hypothesized Skt. *kaśuddha*) aspect of our Vajra-nature (i.e. our true nature, which, as we have seen, possesses the qualities of the Buddhist vajra), which also has a spontaneous perfection / spontaneous rectification / spontaneous accomplishment (Tib. *lhundrub* [Wylie, *lhun grub*]; Skt. *nirābogha* or *anābogha*) aspect that consists in perfect manifestation and its consummate functionality. (These two aspects of *katak* and *lhundrub* will be considered in Part Two of this book.)

Since beginningless time the three kāyas or dimensions of Buddhahood have been inherent in our Vajra nature, which means that, besides possessing qua Base the dharmakāya (which, viewed as the essence [Tib. *ngowo* {Wylie, *ngo bo*}) aspect of the Base, corresponds to emptiness), it also possesses qua Base the rūpakāya, consisting in the unity of the sambhogakāya qua Base (which, considered as the nature [Tib. *rangzhin* {Wylie, *rang bzhin*}) aspect of the Base, corresponds to luminosity / clarity / reflectiveness) and the nirmāṇakāya qua Base (which, considered as the energy [Tib. *thukje* {Wylie, *thugs rje*}) aspect of the Base, consists in the unobstructed [Tib. *ma gagpa* {Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*}, all-pervasive [Tib. *kunkhyab* {Wylie, *kun khyab*}) and uninterrupted [Tib. *ma gagpa* {Wylie, *ma 'gags pa*}) flow of phenomena and the latter's functionality). (The three aspects of the Base, consisting in

ngowo or essence, rangzhin or nature, and thukje or energy, will be considered in Part Two of this book.)

³⁹⁴ In this context, the term bodhicitta has the meaning given it in the inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa, as well as in the Semde (Wylie, *sems-sde*) series of Dzogchen teachings, rather than the one discussed in the consideration of the Mahāyāna: here it refers to the Base and true condition of all reality. For his part, Samantabhadra—which means “all good”—is the primordial Buddha, which is no other than the Base qua Awake condition: our own nondual Awake, undistorted awareness or rigpa (Wylie, *rig-pa*), the self-reGnizing nature of which, according to the Dzogchen teachings, in the neutral condition of the base-of-all and in saṃsāra is veiled by a contingent, beclouding element of stupefaction (Tib. *mongcha* [Wylie, *rmongs cha*]), but not so in nonstatic nirvāṇa, where its “own face” (so to speak) becomes patent.

The name Samantabhadra or “all good” has the connotation of “all is viable,” for both in the Tantric Path of Transformation and in the Ati Path of Spontaneous Liberation whatever manifests in saṃsāra is not considered useless, or deemed impossible to incorporate into the Path and hence viewed as something to be repressed; contrariwise, what manifests in saṃsāra is viewed as viable in that it can be turned into the Path.

³⁹⁵ Our perception of entities as being substantial and self-existing is the core of the basic unawareness cum delusion called avidyā, which is the ultimate source of all defilements. As stated in previous notes, the schools that make up the Mādhyamaka Rangtongpa (Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika) understand the term “emptiness” in the sense of absence of self-existence (Skt. *svābhāvaśūnyatā*; Tib. *rangtong* [Wylie, *rang stong*] or *rangzhingyi tongpanyi* [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid*])—except for Je Tsongkhapa, who preferred *rangzhingyi madrubpa* [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa*]; Ch. 自性空 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng kòng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴ k’ung⁴*; Jap. *jishōkū*]) and lack of substantiality. In fact, for the passions or defilements to well up, the precondition is that we have the deluded experience of being a separate sentient being and that the phenomena we perceive are other than our consciousness, are self-existent, and have inherently positive, negative or neutral qualities. This is why emptiness is very often equated with purity: without the delusion of self-existence there are no defilements. And this is why Gorampa noted that avidyā in the sense of the basic misconception at the root of the delusion that makes us perceive substantiality, rather than being the first link in the twelvefold chain of interdependent causation (Skt. *pratīyasamutpāda*; Pāli *paṭiccasamuppāda*; Tib. *tendrel* or *tenching drelbar jungwa* (Wylie, *rten cing ’brel bar ’byung ba*); Ch. 緣起 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *yuánqǐ*; Wade-Giles, *yüan²-ch’i³*]), and rather than being a case of delusive obstruction of the passions (Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*; Pāli *kilesāvaraṇa*; Tib. *nyön[mongpai] drib[pa]* [Wylie, *nyon {mongs pa’i} sgrib {pa}*]; Ch. 煩惱障 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎozhàng*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³-chang⁴*]) is that from which the first link arises. And it is also the reason why Longchenpa noted that avidyā in the sense of the delusion of substantiality is the cause of avidyā in the sense of moha (Tib. *timug* [Wylie, *gti mug*]; 癡 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *chī*; Wade-Giles, *ch’ih¹*])—i.e. avidyā qua one of the three or five poisons (or most basic defilements: Skt. *kleśa*; Pāli *kilesa*; Tib. *nyönmong* [Wylie, *nyon mongs*]; Ch. 煩惱 [simplified, 煩惱] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fánǎo*; Wade-Giles, *fan²-nao³*]). (For all of this, cf. endnote 333 to this volume.)

However, in the particular case of emptiness qua the Base’s primordial purity aspect, the term emptiness refers mainly to our own awareness, which: (1) is empty of a sentient being; which can give rise to experiences precisely because it (2) is empty in the sense in which a mirror may be said to be empty (i.e. in that it can fill itself with any new content without previously having to empty itself of the contents filling it); and which (3) is empty in the sense of there being no substances different or other than itself (i.e. in the sense of *rangtong* [Wylie, *rang stong*] emptiness).

The first of the senses in which our own awareness was said to be empty—its being empty of a sentient being—refers to the fact that it is not a separate core of perception and action: it is not a sentient being, but an empty cognition lacking an owner—and yet delusion causes us to wrongly take it to be a sentient being and delusively experience it as a separate source of action and a separate receiver of experiences.

In order to understand the second sense in which our awareness is said to be empty, it is convenient to note that in general we regard as empty whatever can contain something yet at the moment does not contain that which we expect it to contain. For example, a pot, a jug, a jar, a glass or other hollow container is said to be empty when they do not contain anything liquid or solid—even if it is full of air—and hence it can be filled with anything liquid or solid we may wish to put in them. Now suppose that, in a loosely

similar sense, we say that a mirror is inherently empty: the statement will make sense if what we are trying to say is that the mirror does not exhibit any fixed image, nor is filled with image-obstructing matter, and therefore it can “fill itself” with the reflection of whatever is put in front of it. However, when a pot, a jug, a jar, a glass or any other hollow container is filled with walnuts, for it to be filled with almonds it will have to be emptied of the walnuts that had been filling it so far. This is not the case with a mirror, which does not need to be emptied of whatever had been filling it in order to “fill itself” with the image of the new object that is placed in front of it: as the mirror “fills itself” with the new image, the old one automatically disappears. The fact that mirrors do not need to be emptied of the reflections they contain for them to fill themselves with new reflections may be taken to mean that, even while filled with images, mirrors are empty (for they are still ready to fill themselves with new images), and so are the images that fill them (among other senses of the term, they may be said to be empty in the sense in which space is said to be empty: in that they are nonobstructing). Therefore, in a particular sense, it may be said that, unlike the emptiness of a pot, a jug, a jar, a glass or any other hollow container, the emptiness of a mirror is somehow inherent in it, and whatever fills a mirror is as inherently empty as the mirror itself. It is well known that one of the eight similes of illusion taught by Śākyamuni’s was a reflected image, which illustrated the fact that phenomena “appear yet do not have a self-nature:” the very nature of reflections illustrates the fact that phenomena are utterly empty in the absence-of-self-existence or rangtong sense of the word. All that was said here with regard to the mirror and its reflections applies equally to our own awareness and the phenomena it manifests—the only difference being that the phenomena manifested by our awareness are not the copies of entities existing externally to it. This shows that the simile of the mirror is imperfect in that it is dualistic, and therefore cannot illustrate precisely the nondual reality it represents. One could think that a computer screen is a more suitable simile, in that it does not depend on something external to reflect and in this way fill itself; however, the computer is conditioned because whatever it manifests depends on a system and a program—which is not the case with primordial, Awake awareness.

The third sense in which our own Awake awareness is empty is that of being empty of substances other than itself—i.e. in the rangtong (Wylie rang stong) sense, which was defined and briefly explained in some of the previous endnotes and which therefore will not be considered at this point.

At any rate, the emptiness aspect of awareness and of all reality is referred to as primordial purity because “emptiness” means that both our awareness and the phenomena it manifests lack the substantiality and self-existence we project on them—in the case of the phenomena manifested, because they depend on our awareness and on other phenomena to manifest. As already suggested above in this note, since the projection of self-existence and substance is the very source of all defilements, the absence of these qualities means that the true condition of both the universe and ourselves is utterly free from defilement. It is because purity may be defined as lack of defilement that in the Dzogchen teachings emptiness corresponds to primordial purity (Tib. katak [Wylie, ka dag]; hypothesized Skt. kaśuddha).

³⁹⁶ In a previous note we saw that the principle of the Path of Transformation is compared to the use, in the alchemical process, of a type of mercury called māṅṣika (a mercury compound used in the Tibetan, Āyurvedic and Chinese medical systems for the preparation of alchemical medicines, and which some texts associate or compare to pyrite—and which might be mercury pironate): its application would be extremely risky for those who lack the necessary capacity and know-how. This warning and example are applied specifically to the practice of the Path of method or tab-lam (Wylie, thabs lam) of the inner Tantras, which is the one that paradigmatically embodies the principle of the Path of Transformation as explained in these pages. With respect to the application of māṅṣika mercury in the alchemical process as an example of the path of method, in particular in the Mahāyoga, cf. Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I. p. 277; the word māṅṣika is explained in footnote 267, vol. II, p. 19, as a substance used in the transmutation of iron into gold; however, this is surely a symbol of the transmutation of the passions on the path of method of the path of Transformation.

³⁹⁷ The dharmadhātu is the space of the all-embracing, empty condition of the primordial state; this is why the wisdom of the dharmadhātu has been called “panoramic wisdom” and “all-encompassing wisdom,” among other terms. It may also be remarked that the passion corresponding to this Buddha family, which is often called “obfuscation” (Skt. and Pāli moha; Tib. timug [Wylie, gti mug]; Ch. 癡 [Hānyū

Pīnyīn, chī; Wade-Giles, ch'ih¹]), contains an element of laziness—although perhaps it may be said that it involves lack of motivation and interest.

³⁹⁸ This system is common to some of the Anuttarayogatantras of the New or Sarmapa schools and Mahāyogatantras of the Old or Nyingmapa School, but it is not universal: other Tantric systems (and in particular different terma [Wylie, gter ma] teachings) establish different correspondences between passions and primordial gnoses [Skt. jñāna; Pāli ñāṇa; Tib. yeshe {Wylie, ye shes}; Ch. 智 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, zhì; Wade-Giles, chih⁴; Jap. chi}]].

³⁹⁹ A more precise explanation of these was given in a note appended to the discussion of the term in the section on the Śrāvakayāna.

⁴⁰⁰ These include onions, leeks and other vegetables of the lily (Liliaceae) family, as well as some types of pepper and more pungent vegetables of the capsicum family, and so on.

The Sāṃkhya system of the three guṇas classify foodstuffs, among other things, in terms of predominance of one of these three guṇas (principles or tendencies of Prakṛti—the female, active principle, embodied in nature), which are sattva (purity, goodness), rajas (passion, activity) and tamas (darkness), where the latter promotes obfuscation, dissolution, death, destruction, bewilderment, sloth and resistance. The reasons why tamasic elements are to be avoided in a system such as Kriyātantra are therefore self-evident.

⁴⁰¹ According to Adriano Clemente, Supreme Maṇḍala is the complete creation of the maṇḍala with the central deity, and Supreme Action is the visualization of the activities performed by the Yidam such as purifying the impure dimensions etc. He writes (Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, note 153, p. 168):

“In Tibetan, las rgyal mchog and dkyil 'khor rgyal mchog. Usually these terms denote two of the three phases that correspond to the bskyed rim stage: the initial contemplation of preparation (dang po sbyor ba'i ting nge 'dzin), which includes the transformation of oneself as the deity through the five factors of realization; contemplation of the supreme maṇḍala (dkyil 'khor rgyal mchog gi ting nge 'dzin), which refers to the complete creation of the maṇḍala with the summoning of the wisdom deity in front of oneself; contemplation of the supreme action (las rgyal mchog gi ting nge 'dzin), which refers to the visualization of the activities performed by the yi dam deity, e.g. purifying the impure dimensions etc.”

⁴⁰² Adriano Clemente writes (Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, note 149, p. 167):

“The Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba subdivides the Yoga vehicle in two series: the Tantras of the outer yoga of control (rnal 'byor phyi pa thub pa'i rgyud) and the Tantras of the inner yoga of method (rnal 'byor nang pa thabs kyi rgyud). The former, corresponding to the Yoga Tantra, are for those who have not got the capacity to apply the principle of absolute equality characteristic of the inner Tantras and who consequently must comply with rules that limit behavior.”

⁴⁰³ Cf. endnote before last.

⁴⁰⁴ Note 157 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 169], by Adriano Clemente:

“The five factors of realization (mngon byang lnga), the five fundamental phases that correspond to the creation stage or bskyed rim, are sometimes listed slightly differently.”

⁴⁰⁵ As will be shown below in the regular text, the plural in the term “higher Tantras” does not indicate that in the Sarma system this level of Tantra comprises a plurality of vehicles. I used the plural because there are many texts called Tantras that belong to the single vehicle of higher Tantra of the Sarmapas, which is the one called Anuttarayogatantra (“Unsurpassable Tantra of the Direct Realization of our Original, Unmodified Condition”).

⁴⁰⁶ Indeed, whereas the Nyingma teachings of Mahāyoga generally designate this Path as dröl lam (Wylie, grol lam), the Anuttarayogatantras or the Sarmapa use the word thar lam (Wylie, thar lam). However, the words “drölwa” (Wylie, grol ba) and “tharpa” (Wylie, thar pa) are synonyms that are both rendered as “liberation,” and that in most contexts are interchangeable.

⁴⁰⁷ The path of method or of skillful means is known in Tibetan as tab lam (Wylie, thabs lam)—a name that is equally used in the Tantras of the Old or Nyingmapa School and in those of the New or Sarmapa schools. In Mahāyoga, in particular, there is a division into two yogas, which are (1) the yoga with characteristics or tsenche (Wylie, mtshan bchas), in which the two stages—that of generation or creation and that of perfection or completion—are practiced, and (2) the yoga without characteristics or tsenme (Wylie, mtshan med), in which one simply “contemplates thatness (Skt. tathatā; Tib. dezhinnyi [Wylie, de bzhin nyid]) or absolute nature,” so that no visualization is to be practiced.

It may be noted that the fact that there are two paths, one of method that puts the emphasis on method or skillful means (Skt. *upāya*; Tib. *thab* [Wylie, *thabs*]; Ch. 方便 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fāngbiàn*; Wade-Giles, *fang¹-pien⁴*]), and another of liberation, which puts the emphasis on wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*; Tib. *sherab* [Wylie, *shes rab*]; 般若 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*]), should not lead us to think that in one of them the cause of liberation is method and that in the other the cause is wisdom. Even though from the standpoint of Atiyoga, Mahāyoga is struggle-biased and cause-biased, if someone achieves Awakening in connection with the practice of Mahāyoga, we can be sure that this did not occur as the effect of a cause, for Awakening is in all cases beyond the cause-effect relation. Furthermore, if on the Path of liberation methods are not applied, by no means will primordial gnosis spontaneously become evident—and without primordial gnosis spontaneously becoming evident in the Path of method, the latter will not bear fruit.

Finally, in Dzogchen Atiyoga, thought liberates itself spontaneously (i.e. liberates of its own accord), but does not do so unless method comes into play. It must be noted that in this vehicle, rather than emphasis being put on *prajñā* wisdom (), it is put on primordial gnosis (Skt. [ādi]jñāna; Pāli [ādi]ñāṇa; Tib. *yeshe* [Wylie, *ye shes*]; Ch. [本初] 智 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, [bēnchū] zhì; Wade-Giles, [pen³-ch¹u¹] chih⁴; Jap. *chi*]; note that the prefix “primordial” appears only in the Tibetan, as it is not part of the Skt., Pāli or Ch. terms)—to which, as will be shown in the corresponding chapter of the regular text, the principle of spontaneous liberation is inherent: this is why Atiyoga calls this gnosis “all-liberating single gnosis” (Tib. *chikshe kundröl* [Wylie, *gcik shes kun grol*]). (It must be noted that, like the Atiyoga, the Anuyogatantrayāna uses mainly the term “primordial gnosis” and only secondarily employs the expression “discriminating wisdom” [Skt. *prajñā*; Tib. *sherab* {Wylie, *shes rab*}; 般若 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn *bōrě*; Wade-Giles, *po¹-je³*}); nonetheless, its principle, rather than spontaneous liberation—which is exclusive to the Atiyoga—is transformation, which, as will be shown in the corresponding section, in this vehicle is instantaneous rather than gradual.)

⁴⁰⁸ In the generation or creation stage, one meditates on the union of one’s three doors (body, energy or voice and mind) with the three vajras of the deities (*nirmānakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya* and *dharmakāya*), placing the emphasis mainly on the generation of the visualization of the maṇḍala by means of the three *samādhis* or *tingdzin sum* (*ting-’dzin gsum*), which are: (1) the *samādhi* of the great emptiness or thatness (Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. *dezhinnyi* [Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*]; Chin. 眞如 [性] [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú* {*xìng*}; Wade-Giles, *chen¹-ju²* {*hsing⁴*}), which are generally rendered as “suchness”; (2) the *samādhi* of illusory or all-embracing compassion, and (3) the *samādhi* of the cause constituted by clear and stable syllables.

⁴⁰⁹ Note 162 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 172], by Adriano Clemente:

“The Illusory Body (*sgyu lus*) is also one of the Six Yogas of Nāropā.”

⁴¹⁰ Note 163 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 172], by Adriano Clemente:

“‘Direct action’ (*mngon spyod*) denotes the fierce actions tied to the Karma family whose aim is to destroy evil beings by freeing their consciousness.”

⁴¹¹ Note 164 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 173], by Adriano Clemente:

“The Clear Light (*’od gsal*) is also one of the Six Yogas of Nāropā.”

⁴¹² Note 165 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 173], by Adriano Clemente:

“The Path of Method (*thabs lam*) embraces practices tied to control of the subtle energies (*prāṇa*) and the seed-essence (*thig le*), such as the *gtum mo* or inner heat, the purpose of which is to ‘melt’ the *thig le* to enable its reabsorption in the various *cakras*.”

⁴¹³ Note 166 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 173], by Adriano Clemente:

“The activity of ‘conquest’ (*dbang*) pertains to the Padma family.”

⁴¹⁴ Note 167 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 173], by Adriano Clemente:

“Concerning the term *bodhicitta*, in the inner Tantras and in particular in rDzogs chen it denotes the primordial state of the individual, pure from the beginning and perfectly endowed with all qualities, thus corresponding to [the] absolute *bodhicitta* of the Mahāyāna Sūtra tradition. The term *rig pa* alongside *bodhicitta* indicates that Knowledge (of) the primordial state is a continuous living Presence.”

⁴¹⁵ As stated elsewhere in this volume, there are different types of *bindu* or seed-essence. At this point I am referring to the seminal *bindu*, which in the male is directly related to the semen and in the female it is mainly related to the ovum that is lost in menstruation, though some systems relate it to the transparent liquid copiously emitted in female ejaculation. Evidently I am not referring to the most essential aspect

of bindu or seed-essence, which is only lost at death—for there is no way to retain the latter forever and thus achieve eternal life.

It is thigle (Wylie, thig le) energy that, in a polarized form, “circulates through” the “structural pathways” called tsa (Wylie, rtsa) as the different types of lung (Wylie, rlung). (Actually this is only a way of speaking, for the “structural pathways” are not material structures, but the possible configurations of the circulation of thigle as lung). Since the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness (Tib. thigle [Wylie, thig le]) and the related kuṇḍalinī are directly linked to retention of the thigles or bindus consisting in the ovum and the sperm, one pole of that energy is symbolically represented with the color of sperm and the other pole is represented with that of menstrual blood: this is the main reason why some Westerners have mistranslated the Tantric texts, saying that “the energetic winds carry red and white drops along the structural pathways called tsa (Wylie, rtsa),” and that the ovum and the sperm are the gross referent of these “drops:” the thigle that circulates does not consist in drops, but in the colorless, polarized energy that rises and ebbs as energetic volume determining the scope of awareness and as kuṇḍalinī. (It may be relevant to note that some particular experiences associated with the colors red and white are directly related to the subtle energetic winds, which is part of the reason for the use of the symbolism at the root of these mistranslations.)

The above translation of the term thigle as “drop” is due to the fact that it also refers to the sperm and ovum / blood that drops upon ejaculation and menstruation. In the context of the Dzogchen teachings the best translation of these terms is “sphere,” for ultimately they refer to the true nature of reality and the direct realization of it, which are absolutely nonconceptual: as noted repeatedly, since the true nature of reality is energy and its realization implies total energetic volume determining the scope of awareness, and since concepts are limits, which are represented with angles or corners, this true nature of reality and its realization are represented as a total sphere (Tib. thigle chenpo [Wylie, thig le chen po]). Furthermore, as we have seen, the terms thigle and bindu also designate the luminous spheres that can manifest when one closes ones eyes in the dark, when one looks at the sky or, in a much more vivid, impressive and total manner, in practices like Thögel—in which they are the very condition for the swiftest methods to accomplish their function.

⁴¹⁶ See note 167 to Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 173], by A. Clemente, reproduced above in endnote 414 to this volume.

⁴¹⁷ Tarthang Tulku (1977b, pp. 172-173 / 1991, p. 165) classes the Guhyasamāja as an Anuttarayogatantra and as such asserts it to overlap the outer and inner Tantras—i.e., to lie somewhere in between them. In this book that tantra, following Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, has been classed as a Mahāyogatantra. Both ways of classifying the tantra in question are justified and in harmony with tradition.

⁴¹⁸ In Dzogchen Ati, the point is to gain direct, nonconceptual and hence nondual awareness (of) the essence aspect of the nonconceptual, nondual Awake self-awareness called rangrig (Tib. rangrugpai ngowo [Wylie, rang rig pa'i ngo bo]), which is achieved by means of the immediate patency of the nonconceptual, nondual Awake awareness called rigpa (Tib. righthoktu malebpar [Wylie, rig thog tu ma slebs bar]). Otherwise one is lost in delusion (Tib. tuljam [Wylie, 'khrul 'byams]).

⁴¹⁹ As stated in note 368, whereas the Nyingma teachings of Mahāyoga generally designate the Path of Liberation as dröl lam (Wylie, grol lam), the Anuttarayogatantras or the Sarmapa use the word thar lam (Wylie, thar lam). However, the words “drölwa” (Wylie, grol ba) and “tharpa” (Wylie, thar pa) are interchangeable in nearly all contexts, and both are translated as “liberation.”

⁴²⁰ In Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, the visualization of the three divine manifestations and the procedure for the Contemplation of the cause are described. This description will not be reproduced here because this is a public circulation book, which as such must not provide instructions for the practice.

⁴²¹ As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001) notes, the Sanskrit corresponding to the word “letter”, which is akṣara, can also mean “immutable.” In fact, as Adriano Clemente comments in a note to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s aforementioned text, the Sanskrit term akṣara actually means “immutable,” but is commonly used as a synonym of “letter” because the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, divided in vocals (āli) and consonants (kāli), in traditional India represent the origin of the whole of existence. In fact, the famous verse of the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti that states “the supreme utterly pure letter” is rendered in a quotation found in the commentary to the Kālacakratantra called Stainless Light (Dri med 'od) as “the supreme immutable utterly pure (state)”. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu notes that from this one can infer

that the name of the thirteenth level could also be interpreted as “great accumulation of the wheel (cakra) of the maṇḍala that knows no changes or transformations.”

The above means that it is a nonfabricated, unconditioned, unproduced, uncontrived, unintentional and /or uncompounded (Pāli *asankhata*; Skt. *asaṃskṛta*; Tib. *dumache* (Wylie, 'dus ma byas); Ch., 無為 (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²) maṇḍala. Therefore, it is neither impermanent nor subject to suffering. On the basis of the same commentary, the Great Accumulation of the Cakra of Letters is so called because as it is attained one effortlessly realizes the spontaneously perfect state of primordial gnosis and of the maṇḍala with characteristic attributes (Wylie, *mtshan ma'i dkyil 'khor*). The letters or immutability are of two types: of primordial gnosis and of the characteristic attributes (Wylie, *ye shes dang mtshan ma*). Rinpoche says that “the interpretation based on the term *akṣara* meaning immutable, that would render it into level of the great accumulation of the immutable cakra, seems to me a lucid explanation that points out with supreme discernment the authentic meaning of tantra.”

In terms of this explanation, that the letters are of two types means that there are two aspects of what is immutable:

Primordial Gnosis: *dharmakāya*

Characteristic attributes: *rūpakāya*

According to causal Mahāyoga accumulation that as it is Dzogchen does not result from yet corresponds to the Collection of Wisdom

According to causal Mahāyoga accumulation that in Dzogchen does not result from yet corresponds to the Collection of Merits

In fact, here they are spontaneously realized, as the principle is that of Dzogchen, and they have always been inherent in our true condition. The difficulty stems from the fact that Collection of Merits is used as a synonym of *rūpakāya* rather than as its cause, because this is Dzogchen, which is not causal, and Collection of Wisdom is used as a synonym of *dharmakāya*, because this is Dzogchen, which is not causal. Primordial Gnosis is *dharmakāya* because it is pure (co)ntition, and Characteristic Attributes is *rūpakāya* because attributes is all that can be known, which is all that has form.

The (letters of the) characteristic attributes (*rūpakāya*) are in their turn subdivided in two types: of names and of forms. As noted above, rendering the term *akṣara* as “letters” gives rise to diverse interpretations of its meanings, among which figure, “letters of primordial gnosis and of characteristic attributes” and “manifestation of the clouds of letters.” In any case, it can be explained in the sense of the manifestation of sound, light and rays as the expression of the potentiality of energy of the primordial state in the form of letters, and from this viewpoint no contradiction arises and there is no disagreement with any of the principles of Anuyoga and Dzogpa Chenpo.

In terms of this explanation of letters in the literal sense, which are manifestations of sound that makes it possible to understand that which appears by virtue of the sound, light and rays, this is the source of *saṃsāra*, but also that which allows us to understand that *saṃsāra* is *saṃsāra* and hence to move from *saṃsāra* to *nirvāṇa*. In fact, the text reads:

“As regards the ‘letters,’ all phenomena exist only inasmuch as they are designated by the letters of names and words and apart from this they are by nature devoid of existence. However, simultaneous with this absence (of actuality) everything that appears is (the manifestation of) the maṇḍala of the basic (form) dimensions and of the primordial gnosis (or wisdom) that exists from the beginning as the great spontaneously perfect accumulation of merit and wisdom.”

In fact, it is by realizing that all phenomena exist only because they are designated by the letters of names and words and apart from this they are by nature devoid of existence, and by reaching stability in this realization, that this final level of Mahāyoga is attained. Then everything appears as the immutable maṇḍala that has two aspects, *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya*, which in the adaptation of the Mahāyāna’s and of Mahāyoga’s causal terminology to Atiyoga are the great spontaneously perfect accumulation of merit and wisdom that was always manifest.

⁴²² In Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, pp. 278-279 we read:

“Concerning the paths that are the object of this meditation, the Guhyagarbha Tantra explains:

“Through their maturation during the sequence of rebirth,
the aspects of the entrance are established to be five:
because all that has a self-nature is intrinsic awareness,
death is [the moment of] the ultimate truth,
the intermediate state before birth is relative appearance
and the three phases of birth are the nondual truth.’

“In this way, Mahāyoga perfectly reveals the Paths through which the rebirth process including death, the intermediate state and the three phases of birth, is immediately purified. Now, the Path that corresponds to inner radiance at the moment of death is great emptiness, and the Paths that correspond to the three phases of birth are the single symbol (phyag rgya gcig pa), the elaborate symbol (phyag rgya spros bcas) and the attainment of the maṇḍala clusters (tshom bu tshogs sgrub), making five in all.”

In the work quoted above, there follows an explanation of the generation stage in terms of death, intermediate state and birth, and an extremely important explanation of the completion stage. The reader is referred to this book for an extremely wonderful description of Mahāyoga, which to my knowledge is the most complete in any Western language so far.

⁴²³ The following explanation of the four branches of approach and attainment (Tib. “nyendrub zhi” [Wylie, bsnjen sgrub bzhi]) appears in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, pp. 208-213:

Regarding the true meaning of the four branches of approach and attainment [of Mahāyoga, considered from the standpoint of Dzogchen], Tibetan text 6 (A: p. 170, 6; B: p. 24, 2) reads:

“Thus one should engage diligently in the yoga that leads to spontaneous perfection of the final goal of approach, complete approach, attainment and great attainment.” (Note by Adriano Clemente: In this case, according to Rong zom pa’s commentary [Tibetan text 4] the approach [bsnyen pa] is the object to recognize, the complete approach [nyen ba’i bsnjen pa] and the attainment [sgrub pa] are the method, and the great attainment [sgrub pa chen po] is the result.)

In particular, regarding the true meaning of approach, Tibetan text 6 (A: p. 171, 1; B: p. 24, 2) reads:

“Approach is the recognition of bodhicitta, the understanding that all phenomena have been from the beginning of the nature of Awakening, for which reason there is nothing to obtain through practice or to correct by means of antidotes.”

Regarding the true meaning of complete approach, Tibetan text 6 (A: p. 171, 2; B: p. 24, 3) reads:

“Complete approach is the recognition of oneself as the deity: the understanding that, since all phenomena have been from the beginning of the nature of Awakening, we too have been from the beginning of the nature of the deity, which is not something to realize now by means of practice.”

Regarding the true meaning of attainment, Tibetan text 6 (A: p. 171, 3; B: p. 24, 3) reads:

“Attainment is the creation of the mother: the understanding that from the dimension of space, which is the great mother, space itself manifests in the four great mothers [of the elements] earth, water, fire and air, and that from the beginning these are the mothers endowed with the active function [of existence].”

And regarding the true meaning of great attainment, Tibetan text 6 (A: p. 171, 5; B: p. 24, 5) reads:

“Great attainment is the union of method and prajñā. From the prajñā of the five mothers and from the emptiness of space that is the mother [there manifest] as consorts the Buddhas of the five aggregates [that represent] method, from the beginning in union without any intention. From their union [comes] bodhicitta, the nature of which [has the capacity to] emanate the deities, male and female (literally: brothers and sisters), whose [true] meaning is primordial Awakening. In the illusory enjoyment of a dimension that [itself] is [also] illusory, one [experiences] the illusory flow of supreme bliss: in the very moment of bliss without conceptualization, one realizes the true meaning of the absence of characteristics equal to space, thus acceding to the state of spontaneous perfection. In this way the four demons too are vanquished and the final goal is achieved.” (Note by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: The four demons [bdud bzhi] that cause interruptions or hindrances to liberation are: the demon of the son of the deity or [demon] of pride [Skt. devaputamāra; Tib. lhaibu dü {Wylie, lha’i bu bdud}; Ch. 天子魔 {Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, tiānzīmó; Wade-Giles, t’ien¹-tzu³-mo²}); the demon of the aggregates of the body [Skt. skandhamāra; Tib. phungpoi dü {Wylie, phung po’i bdud}; Ch. 陰魔 {Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, yīnmó; Wade-Giles, yin¹-mo²}); the demon of the lord of death [Skt. mṛtyumāra; Tib. chidaggi dü {Wylie, ’chi bdag gi bdud}; Ch. 死魔 {Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, sǐmó; Wade-Giles, ssu³-mo²}); the demon of passions or disturbing emotions [Skt. kleśamāra; Tib. nyönmongpai dü {Wylie, nyon mongs pa’i bdud}; Ch. 煩惱魔 {Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, fánǎo mó; Wade-Giles, fan²-nao³ mo²}). (Note by EC: In the context of the practice of Chö [gcod] other four demons are listed, which should not be confused with these ones.)

Rongzompa’s commentary (Tibetan text 4, p. 259, 6) explains:

“Here [Padmasambhava’s Garland of Views] explains concisely how the four approaches and attainments of Mahāyoga are transcended in Dzogpa Chenpo [for example by affirming that the approach is the uncaused, uncontrived, unconditioned (Skt. asaṃskṛta; Pāli, asaṅkhata; Tib. dümache [Wylie, ’dus ma byas]; Ch. 無為 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, wúwéi; Wade-Giles, wu²-wei²]) recognition of bodhicitta and not

something that depends on the temporary factor of the Path]. Great attainment is the union of method and prajñā and refers to their union also in relation to bodhicitta [qua Base]: thus it demonstrates the original union and the state of spontaneous perfection of the three aspects consisting in method, prajñā and bodhicitta; father, mother and male and female emanations; and the three doors of liberation, which are emptiness, the absence of intention and the absence of characteristics.” (Note by Adriano Clemente: The three doors of liberation [rnam thar sgo gsum], in Tibetan stong pa nyid, smon pa med pa and mtshan ma med pa, also called ‘the contemplations of the three doors of liberation’ [rnam thar sgo gsum gyi ting ’dzin] are characteristic features of the sūtra teachings.)

Furthermore, the commentary by Ju Mipham called Treasury of Jewels (Nor bu’i bang mdzod: Tibetan text 21) states (p. 451, 3):

“Approach means recognizing bodhicitta as the Base in which original purity and spontaneous perfection are indivisible; that is, understanding that all phenomena, already pure in themselves, are from the very beginning of the nature of Awakening and that there is nothing new that must be obtained by means of the Path or corrected by means of antidotes.

“Complete approach means recognizing, on the basis of this same view, that the individual composed of five aggregates is the deity itself; that is, understanding that, since all phenomena are from the beginning of the nature of Awakening, we too are from the beginning of the nature of the deity, which therefore is not something to realize by generating oneself as the deity on the basis of the view of Mahāyoga and other [vehicles]. [When it is said that] attainment is the creation of the mother, this is not the same as the creation of the mother as applied in Mahāyoga and other [vehicles]. Rather, it means understanding that, from the dimension of space that is the great mother, space itself manifests as the four great mothers [consisting in] earth, water, fire and air, and that these mothers, endowed with the active functions of giving space, of supporting, of concentrating [in one place], of ripening and of moving, respectively, have existed from the very beginning.

“Great attainment is the union of method and prajñā. But in which way are they united? From the prajñā of the absence of self-nature of the five great elements that are the mothers and from the [door of] liberation of emptiness, which is the space of the mother, the Buddhas of the five aggregates, which represent method, manifest without interruption as consorts. They are in union from the beginning [on the basis of the principle of the door] of liberation and of the absence of intention, which is absolutely not the result of [engaging on] a Path. From their nature of inseparability in [the state of] bodhicitta all the sense bases manifest as male and female Bodhisattvas whose nature, which is the very condition of original Awakening, does not depend on the emanation of male and female bodhisattvas from the bodhicitta of the union of male and female deities as occurs in Mahāyoga and other [vehicles]. The wisdom of rigpa illusorily enjoys the ultimate dimension of phenomena, similar to a magical display, which is the consort. When experiencing the harmonious (in Tibetan rol mo lta bu, literally ‘similar to music’) state of the gnosis of pleasure that manifests everywhere, without interruption and indivisible, beyond concepts and all attachments, not even a speck of dualistic attachment remains, and so the pleasure of wisdom is supreme bliss. Experiencing and enjoying its illusory flow [one understands] that this itself is the flow of the true condition that, like space, cannot be grasped even in a moment. The moment of bliss transcends all conceptual elaboration, [is based on the door of] liberation of the absence of characteristics, cannot be conceptualized within any limits, and is like space. Never leaving this dimension of total equanimity means to have realized the single state of self-arising wisdom of the ultimate nature: thus, without acting and without effort one is in the state of spontaneous perfection. In fact, the impure causes of the dualism of subject and object, being purified in self-arising wisdom, manifest without interruption as the flow of the fundamental nature: this is the accumulation of merit. The fact that there is not the slightest concept or attachment to conceptual characteristics represents the accumulation of wise knowledge. This total self-arising wisdom in which the two accumulations are spontaneously perfect also vanquishes the four demons and enables realization of the final goal.”

Regarding the way the four demons are vanquished, in his commentary Rongzompa (Tibetan text 4, p. 260, 3) says:

“In general every teaching has a specific method for subjugating the demons. Here it is asserted that through the four branches of approach and attainment one can vanquish the four demons. In fact, by means of contemplation of the unborn (in Tibetan ma skyes pa’i ting nge ’dzin)—the characteristic of recognizing bodhicitta that is the approach—the demon of the lord of death is vanquished. By means of

contemplation similar to a magical illusion (in Tibetan *sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin*, at times synonymous with *kun tu snang ba'i ting nge 'dzin*: the contemplation of total vision according to Mahāyoga)—the characteristic of recognizing oneself as the deity—the demon of aggregates is vanquished. By means of contemplation that transcends the subtlest atom (in Tibetan *rdul dang bral ba'i ting nge 'dzin*: beyond any concept of an infinitesimal particle as the essential constituent of phenomena)—characteristic of the creation of the mother that is attainment—the demon of the passions is vanquished. By means of non-conceptual space-like contemplation (in Tibetan *mi dmigs mkha' dang snyoms pa'i ting nge 'dzin*)—characteristic of the union of method and *prajñā* that is the great attainment—the demon of the son of the deity [that symbolizes] interruptions and distractions is vanquished. A Path that has the power to vanquish the four demons is a perfect Path, and in particular this is the great Path [that enables realization] of spontaneous perfection without relying on effort.”

All of these passages clearly explain the way to enter Total Perfection [and Completeness in terms of the categories proper to Mahāyoga].

⁴²⁴ In the Anuyogatantra, the Path of method has the same name as in the Nyingmapa Mahāyogatantra and the Sarmapa Anuttarayogatantra, and, consequently, its name is universal: *thab lam* (Wylie, *thabs lam*). In turn, the path of liberation has the same name as in the Nyingmapa Mahāyogatantra, which, as already explained, is *dröl lam* (Wylie, *grol lam*).

It is important to remark that on the Anuyoga Path of method or *thablam* there are—just as in that of the Mahāyogatantra—two possible trainings, which are that of the “upper doors,” in which one works with the four or six cakras in order to cause innate gnosis (or innate wisdom) to gradually manifest, and the training with the lower doors, consisting in union with the Tantric consort, which according to followers of this system causes innate wisdom to manifest instantaneously. In the second, there are two aspects, which are Contemplation of the meaning (Tib. *dön* [Wylie, *don*]), which consists in Contemplation of thatness (Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. *dezhinnyi* [Wylie, *de bzhin nyid*]) beyond any interpretative thought, and Contemplation of the signs or characteristics, which is the one consisting in the instantaneous transformation into the meditation deity (Skt. *iṣṭadevatā*; Tib. *yidam* [Wylie, *yid dam*]).

To conclude, in Anuyoga the totality of phenomenal appearances are *Samantabhadra*, the masculine aspect of the primordial state, which is the spontaneous maṇḍala of deities, while the empty nature of all phenomenal existence is *Samantabhadri*, the feminine aspect of the primordial state, which is the maṇḍala of primordial thatness (Skt. *āditathatā*; Tib. *yedezhinnyi* [Wylie, *ye de bzhin nyid*]). (Alternatively, it is said that *Samantabhadra* is self-arisen Awake Awareness [Tib. *rangrig* [Wylie, *rang rig*], corresponding to the *dharmakāya*, and *Samantabhadri* is the *dharmadhātu*: the primordial expanse or primordial space that in realization is inseparable from the *dharmakāya*; however, there is no contradiction, for all phenomena are manifestations of awareness.) The essence of both is the child of total pleasure, the nature of the sameness that is the maṇḍala of Awake Awareness.

⁴²⁵ *Herukas* are the deities or masters that exhibit a “wrathful” (Skt. *krodha*; Pāli *kodha*; Tib. *trowa* [Wylie, *khro ba*]; Ch. 忿 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *fèn*; Wade-Giles, *fen*⁴]) aspect; however, they exhibit as adornments all the passions that in the transformed state manifest as primordial gnosis. The Skt. is rendered into Tibetan and Chinese as “blood drinker” (Tib. *thraktung* [Wylie, *khrag 'thung*]; Ch. 𩇛𩇛𩇛 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xīlǔjiā*; Wade-Giles, *hsi⁴-lu³-chia¹*]).

⁴²⁶ Note 192 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001[p. 187], by Adriano Clemente:

“In Tibetan *rig pa skad cig ma*: the pure nonconceptual, nondual instant Presence that is the specific feature of the path of *rDzogs chen Atiyoga*.”

Keep in mind that the etymology of the term “presence,” which is “being in front of,” implies the subject-object duality, which is absent in the state of *rigpa*, and that “instant” which renders the Tib. *kechikma* (Wylie, *skad chig ma*), means that, (1) awareness is free from the division of the temporal continuum into past, present and future that arises when the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valuation of the threefold directional thought-structure sunders the uninterrupted Base into subject and object, and thus into space, time and knowledge as different dimensions (cf. the explanation above in the regular text), and (2) sense data are apprehended without mediation by concepts and hence without the lapse that it takes for recognition (Skt. *saṃjñā*; Pāli *saññā*; Tib. *dushé* [Wylie, *'du shes*]; Ch. 想 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *xiǎng*; Wade-Giles, *hsiang*³) to occur..

⁴²⁷ Note 193 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001[p. 187], by Adriano Clemente:

“In Tibetan sgyu ma lha’i dkyil ’khor: the illusory maṇḍala of the deity with the depiction of all the symbolic attributes.”

⁴²⁸ Note 186 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 185], by Adriano Clemente:

“In Tibetan gzugs brnyan gyi dkyil ’khor: the maṇḍala presented during the initiation, on which one meditates to attain realization, is the counterpart of the spontaneously perfect maṇḍala. In general there are three maṇḍalas (dkyil ’khor rnam pa gsum): the spontaneously perfect maṇḍala as the Base, [consisting in] one’s body (gzhi lhun grub rtsa ba’i dkyil ’khor); the maṇḍala of method of images as the Path, [corresponding to] the depictions of the maṇḍala with colored powders or paints, etc. (lam gzugs brnyan thabs kyi dkyil ’khor); and the maṇḍala of the nature of purity as the Fruit, [consisting in] Contemplation (’bras bu rnam dag rang bzhin gyi dkyil ’khor). There is also the classification of maṇḍala of nature (rang bzhin gyi dkyil ’khor), maṇḍala of contemplation (ting nge ’dzin gyi dkyil ’khor) and maṇḍala of images (gzugs brnyan gyi dkyil ’khor).”

⁴²⁹ Note 195 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001 [p. 187], by Adriano Clemente:

“The four activities (spyod lam rnam bzhi) are: sitting, walking, eating and sleeping.

⁴³⁰ In the original translation of this passage the text read “medial condition” instead of “condition free from conceptual extremes.” Note 196 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2000 [p. 188], by A. Clemente explains the meaning of the term “medial condition” or “condition free from conceptual extremes:”

“The condition free from conceptual extremes (dbu ma), characteristic of the Mādhyamaka tradition, indicates overcoming all conceptual limits, [and] in particular the extremes of eternalism and nihilism.”

⁴³¹ Note 197 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2000 [p. 188], by Adriano Clemente:

“In Tibetan lung chen. On the basis of the classification into rgyud, lung and man ngag, Anuyoga is usually defined as lung.”

⁴³² Note 198 to Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2000 [p. 189], by Adriano Clemente:

“In Tibetan rdo rje ’dzin pa’i sa.”

⁴³³ The text by Longchenpa cited by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu refers explicitly to the Anuyoga and yet speaks of spontaneous liberation, which is the defining feature of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation corresponding to Ati Dzogpa Chenpo. Though originally it seemed to me to have been written from the standpoint of Anu-Ati (application of methods of Anu while keeping to the View or Vision of Ati), I must confess I am not sure how to classify it.

⁴³⁴ Furthermore, when the limitless Now corresponding to total plenitude and perfection is disrupted as the present separates the future from the past, the limitless condition is limited by the illusion of sequential time, which entails fragmentariness: the undisrupted Now, which is the unmade and unconditioned, is veiled by the present as a manifestation of the conditioned.

⁴³⁵ In order to have the capacity to visualize oneself as a deity while remaining in the state of rigpa, one would have to have consolidated this state to a considerable degree through the practice of Atiyoga, for only in this case the absolutely panoramic state of rigpa will not be disrupted by the visualization (which can occur only in the case of those who have acquired the capacity to carry out the most diverse activities in that state). However, if one has already attained a higher realization through a higher Path or vehicle, it would be senseless to undertake the practice of a lower Path or vehicle in order to attain the corresponding realization. Hence Anuyoga-style visualizations can be applied in the state of rigpa only by advanced Atiyoga practitioners who for one or another reason need to apply an Anuyoga-style visualization (for example, because they need to solve a particular problem, etc.), and they would likely apply in the context of the Ati-Anu section of Atiyoga.

⁴³⁶ After the end of the quotation in the regular text of this book, the following verses follow in the Tantra (Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, English 1999, p. 180):

Listen great being!

The view and behavior of total completeness / plenitude and perfection
are not like those of practices based on cause and effect.

The view and behavior of pure and total Awake awareness are like the sky:
the sky is beyond thoughts and analysis.

Those who seek to reason and analyze
will never achieve sky-like Awakening:

the arising of judgments and analysis is the deviation and hindrance.

Whoever tries to apply sky-like View and Behavior in terms of subject and object

will never realize sky-like Awakening:

the arising of subject and object is the deviation and hindrance.

⁴³⁷ The dharmadhātu is primordial, limitless space, where everything that can be known manifests. As pointed out in a previous footnote, in the Anuyoga the dharmadhātu is Samantabhadri, the feminine aspect of primordial Buddhahood; in turn, rang rig (self-arisen rigpa or self-arisen Awake awareness), which here corresponds to the dharmakāya or Buddha-Mind, is Samantabhadra, the masculine aspect of Buddhahood, of which the myriad phenomena appearing in the dharmadhātu are manifestations (keep in mind that, when it is asserted that the myriad phenomena that appear in the dharmadhātu are manifestations of rang rig, this self-arisen Awake awareness is being considered qua Base—i.e. in the most usual sense of semnyi [sems-nyid]—rather than qua Path or qua Fruit, which in general is when the Dzogchen teachings apply such terms as rig-pa, rang rig and dharmakāya).

In the Anuyoga it is said that total pleasure is the “child” of both aspects (maternal and paternal), even though these are not two separate elements from the union of which pleasure may originate: having been a single, indivisible reality since beginningless time, they may not be said to constitute a duality. However, there is a reason for this view to be adopted by the Anuyoga: in this vehicle the experience of the dharmadhātu may arise upon union with the consort, and hence from the standpoint of the male the *bhāga* or female sexual organ is identified with the dharmadhātu; in turn, the ensuing flow of bliss seems to be the effect of the union with the consort and therefore of the experience of the dharmadhātu. Since in the Anuyoga rang rig is said to manifest by realizing the inapprehensible character of the flow of bliss, this vehicle views the dharmadhātu as cause and rang rig as effect. (As will be shown in the immediately following note, something similar happens in Mahāyoga.)

Contrariwise, in the Dzogchen Atiyoga the dharmadhātu is not seen as cause and rang rig is not seen as effect, for in this vehicle it is perfectly evident that the arising of rang rig is not the effect of any cause: as implied by the particle rang, rang rig manifests as a spontaneous occurrence beyond the cause-effect relation. (It must also be noted that in the context of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo Padmasambhava explained the indivisibility of the paternal and the maternal aspects represented as Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri (Tib. Kunzang yab-yum [Wylie, kun bzang yab yum]), as the indivisibility of vision and emptiness.)

In fact, throughout the whole of the practice of Atiyoga it is equally evident that rang rig is not the effect of any cause, for it manifests as a spontaneous occurrence beyond the cause-effect relation. In a note to the chapter on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation, the fact that throughout Dzogchen Ati it is evident that rang rig is not the effect of any cause, but that it manifests spontaneously beyond the cause-effect relation, will be illustrated with the method for direct Introduction through pronunciation of the syllable PHAT!

⁴³⁸ In the explanation of the four nyendrub (Tib. nyendrub zhi [Wylie, bsnyen-sgrub bzhi]), the first two correspond to the stage of creation and the last two to the stage of completion; of these last two, the first, which is drubpa (Wylie, sgrub pa), and which corresponds to the experience of the dharmadhātu, is seen as the cause of the second, which is drubpa chenpo (Wylie, sgrub pa chen po)—and which for its part corresponds, at least to some extent, to the rang rig and the yeshe (Wylie, ye shes) of Anuyoga—even though in Mahāyoga it is explained in terms of prajñā (Tib. sherab [Wylie, shes rab]). (The four nyendrub of Mahāyoga were explained in a previous note in terms of a citation from Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2000, pp. 208-213; following Tibetan Text 6, this quotation explains the four Nyendrub in the context of Atiyoga, as the entrance door to the state of Ati.)

⁴³⁹ See note before last.

⁴⁴⁰ For example, among the Gelugpa (the newest of Sarmapa schools), the “Great Fifth” Dalai Lama, who was the first Dalai Lama to rule over Tibet, was not only a supreme Dzogchen practitioner, but also an important revealer of treasure-teachings (Tib. terma [Wylie, gter ma])—i.e., he was a tertön (Wylie gter ston)—in the Old School or Nyingmapa tradition (toward the end of the regular text of this first part of the book, the terms terma and tertön will be briefly explained). The same applies to the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (Wylie, rang ’byung rdo rje), head of the Kagyüpa School (which is also a New or Sarmapa school), who was a wonderful Dzogchen practitioner and a great revealer of treasure-teachings or tertön, and also to Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (Wylie, ’jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po) and other Sakyapa Teachers who were extremely important tertöns and Dzogchen Masters. A high number of the most important Masters of the New or Sarmapa schools were among the main Dzogchen Masters, and also among the principal tertöns of this teaching.

Besides, it may be pointed out that the Mahāmudrā teachings on formless meditation are classed within the Anuttarayogatantra of the Sarmapa, and that the practice of these teachings, just like Dzogchen Atiyoga, is not based on visualization, but on Contemplation. As stated elsewhere in this volume, the original Mahāmudrā was that which in Tibetan is called Chagchen Gaṅgāma (Wylie, phyag chen gang gā ma)—where Chagchen renders the Skt. Mahāmudrā—which the mahāsiddha Tilopā taught to Nāropā on the banks of the Ganges, and which seems not to have involved any form of concentration, for it seems to have been an utterly formless, objectless, nongradual practice—and in this sense, as in many other ones, it seems to have been to a great extent akin to the original forms of the Dzogchen Series of [the Essence or Nature of] Mind or Dzogchen Semde (Wylie, rdzogs chen sems sde).

However, in Tibet a form of Mahāmudrā was developed that was gradual and in its initial stages was based on concentration and hence involved form. According to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, ed., unpublished), this form of Mahāmudrā was developed by Gampopa (1077-1152)—which is no doubt correct if the text that was published by W. Y. Evans-Wentz (1958, pp. 101-154), called Chagchengyi zindi zhugso (Wylie, phyag chen gyi zin bris bzhugs so), was actually authored by the ex-Kadampa monk who was the main disciple of Milarepa. According to the late Chögyam Trungpa (Commentary by C. Trungpa in Trungpa & Fremantle, trans. 1975), it was introduced by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (Wylie, rang ’byung rdo rje), who as stated in a previous endnote was a great Treasure-revealer (Tib. tertön [Wylie, gter ston]) of Dzogchen teachings. No matter who introduced the gradual Mahāmudrā into the Kagyu School modeled these teachings on the Kham (Wylie, khams) tradition of the Dzogchen Ati “Series of the (Essence or Nature of) Mind” or Semde (Wylie, sems sde), which according to Khyabje Dungse Thinle Norbu (2015, p. 68; cf. also Gö Lotsawa Zhönnupel, 2d English Ed. 1976, which I cite in endnote 475 to this volume) was introduced by Aro Yeshe Jungne (Wylie, a ro ye shes ’byun gnas), by compounding the original teachings of the Series in question with teachings of the gradual and sudden Mahāyāna. And, at any rate, the Mahāmudrā teaching of the Third Karmapa, together with that of the Ninth Karmapa, are widely acknowledged as being the supreme synthesis of both traditions, which served as the base for all successive forms of Mahāmudrā.

⁴⁴¹ However, as Nyoshül Khenpo (2015, p. 211) notes, when one first catches a glimpse of realization (Tib. tokpa thongwa [Wylie, rtogs pa mthong ba]) still some grasping is involved in it. However, as the husk of grasping or fixation is removed (Tib. dzingpai shunpa dräl [Wylie, ’dzin pa’i shun pa bral]), awareness becomes naked (Tib. jen [Wylie, rjen]), limpid (Tib. dwang [Wylie, dvangs]) and free from grasping (Tib. dzingpa mepa [Wylie, ’dzin pa med pa]). And then it progressively expands and unfolds (Tib. gongne gongdu phelwa [Wylie, gong nas gong du ’phel ba]).

⁴⁴² In each of these levels of realization all three kāyas are realized.

For example, the first level of realization is that of the dharmakāya because it is the realization, in the practice of Tekchö (Wylie, khregs chod), of the true condition of the dang (Wylie, gdangs) form of manifestation of the energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]) aspect of the Base (Tib. zhi [Wylie, gzhi]), which in the Dzogchen Ati Series of Pith Instructions (Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde [Wylie, man ngag {gyi} sde]) is the dharmakāya, and which illustrates the essence or ngowo (Wylie, ngo bo) aspect of the Base—which from another standpoint (which is held by the general Dzogchen teachings), since it is the emptiness aspect of the Base, is also identified as the dharmakāya. However, in this level we realize the emptiness of dang energy simultaneously with its clarity and with its unobstructedness in unceasing manifestation, and therefore in the sense in which realization of the Base’s emptiness (its essence or ngowo aspect) is realization of the dharmakāya, realization of the Base’s clarity (its nature or rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin] aspect) is realization of the sambhogakāya, and realization of the Base’s unobstructedness in unceasing manifestation—its energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]) aspect—is realization of the nirmāṇakāya, though in this case what manifests most strikingly is the dharmakāya, all three kāyas may be said to be realized in the unveiling of the true condition of dang energy that, in the special sense proper to the Dzogchen Ati Series of Pith Instructions, is the dharmakāya.

Likewise, the second level of realization in the Dzogchen Ati Series of Pith Instructions is the realization of the sambhogakāya, because it is the realization, in the practice of Thögel (Wylie, thod rgal), of the true condition of the rölpa (Wylie, rol pa) form of manifestation of energy, which in the Series in question is the sambhogakāya, and which illustrates the nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin]) aspect of the Base—which from another standpoint (which is held by the general Dzogchen teachings), since it is the clarity aspect of the Base, is also identified as the sambhogakāya. However, in this level we realize the

clarity of rölpa energy simultaneously with its emptiness and with its unobstructedness in unceasing manifestation, and hence in the sense in which realization of the Base's clarity (its essence or ngowo aspect) is realization of the dharmakāya, realization of the Base's clarity (its nature or rangzhin aspect) is realization of the saṃbhogakāya, and realization of the Base's unobstructedness in unceasing manifestation (its energy or thukje aspect) is realization of the nirmāṇakāya, though what manifests most strikingly is the saṃbhogakāya, all three kāyas may be said to be realized in the unveiling of the true condition of rölpa energy that, in the special sense proper to the Dzogchen Ati Series of Pith Instructions, is the saṃbhogakāya.

Similarly, the third level of realization is that of the nirmāṇakāya, for it is the correct apprehension, as a result of the total consolidation of Thögel realization, of the tsel (Wylie, rtsal) form of manifestation of energy—a realization that in the Dzogchen Ati Series of Pith Instructions is the nirmāṇakāya. It is also the nirmāṇakāya because this realization illustrates the energy (Tib. thukje) aspect of the Base, which from another standpoint (held by the general Dzogchen teachings), since it is the unobstructedness in unceasing manifestation aspect of the Base, is also identified as the nirmāṇakāya. However, here we realize the unobstructedness of unceasing manifestation of tsel energy simultaneously with its clarity and with its emptiness, and hence in the sense in which realization of the Base's emptiness (its essence or ngowo aspect) is realization of the dharmakāya, realization of the Base's clarity (its nature or rangzhin aspect) is realization of the saṃbhogakāya, and realization of its the unobstructedness of unceasing manifestation (its energy or thukje aspect) is realization of the nirmāṇakāya, though the salient aspect is the nirmāṇakāya, all three kāyas may be said to be realized in the realization of the true condition of tsel energy that, in the special sense proper to the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions, is the nirmāṇakāya.

At any rate, each dimension realized successively in the Dzogchen Ati Series of Pith Instructions embraces the preceding ones: the saṃbhogakāya's realization embraces that of the dharmakāya, and that of the nirmāṇakāya comprises the saṃbhogakāya's and the dharmakāya's. Thus we could say that in the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions the realization of the true condition of the dang (Wylie, gdangs) form of manifestation of energy is the dharmakāya, but that this dharmakāya has a dharmakāya, a saṃbhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya aspect in a sense that is not limited to the Dzogchen teachings. Likewise, in the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions realization of the true condition of rölpa (Wylie, rol pa) energy is the saṃbhogakāya, but this saṃbhogakāya has a dharmakāya, a saṃbhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya aspect in a sense that is not limited to the Dzogchen teachings. And in the Upadeśavarga or Menngagde series of Dzogchen teachings realization of the true condition of the tsel (Wylie, rtsal) form of manifestation of energy is the nirmāṇakāya, yet this nirmāṇakāya has a dharmakāya, a saṃbhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya aspect in a wider sense that is not limited to the Dzogchen teachings.

In Capriles (1977) I presented the diagram of a "spiral of spirals," which was an elaboration on R. D. Laing's "spiral of pretenses." In it, it seemed that from the level wherein the anguish that is the being of the human individual is fully experienced, one proceeded to the realization of the nirmāṇakāya, and then from it to the successive realizations of the saṃbhogakāya and the dharmakāya. Therefore, there was an error in that diagram.

However, from all the above we must not infer that in order to undertake the practice of Dzogchen Ati it is necessary to first practice the Inner Vajrayāna Tantras of the Path of Transformation until we attain the highest level of realization of this vehicle: Dzogchen Ati is a self-contained Path featuring the most powerful methods of Awakening, all of which are based on the principle of spontaneous liberation rather than on that of transformation, and many of which allow individuals to gain Direct Introduction (to some extent analogous to a first satori [Chin. 悟; Hànyǔ Pīnyīn: wù; Wade-Giles, wu⁴]) without having to spend years practicing the stages of creation and completion or perfection. Furthermore, in each of these levels of realization, the kāyas may be understood in a wider sense that is not limited to the Dzogchen Ati Series of Pith Instructions.

⁴⁴³ I speak of kuṇḍalinī and bindu as two different elements because these are two different Sanskrit words, used in different contexts. However, it is important to keep in mind that it is the term thigle (Wylie, thig le), which renders the Skt. bindu, that I am translating both as seed-essence and as energetic-volume-determining-the-scope-of-awareness (the latter having a sense akin to that of the Skt. kuṇḍalinī), for that which the term thigle refers to is a single subtle reality.

⁴⁴⁴ Mi pham’s way of relating the inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa with the Sarmapa Father, Mother and Nondual Anuttarayogatantra was aimed at making the Nyingma teachings palatable to the Sarmapa, and in particular to the Gelugpa. In fact, it so happens that Mipham spent some time in Gelugpa monasteries (cf. Williams, Paul, 1998, pp. 25-26), and he seems to have decided, like his teacher, Dza Petrül (Jigme Chökyi Wangpo) Rinpoche (Wylie, dza dpal sprul ’jigs med chos kyi dbang po rin po che), to keep being a monk after receiving the Dzogchen transmission of the Longchen Nyingthik (Wylie, klong chen snying thig) revealed by Jigme Lingpa (Wylie, ’jigs med gling pa). In the same vein, it seems that he decided to present the Nyingma philosophical teachings in a way that would be appealing to the Gelugpa—perhaps due to the sectarian political turmoil and occasional violence that had taken place in Kham (Wylie, khams), where he lived.

⁴⁴⁵ Both the Nyingmapas and the Sarmapas have a Tibetan terminology that is far more precise than the original Sanskrit. For example, in Napper (2003), which comments on Gelugpa philosophy, we read (p. 69):

“Of particular assistance is the development in Tibetan of very precise technical terminology that makes it possible to extract from the more loosely worded Indian texts greater specificity of meaning than might otherwise be gained.”

⁴⁴⁶ For example, in the Nyingma translation of the Guhyasamājantra (a Tantra that, as we have seen, also exists in the Sarmapa system, where it is a father Anuttarayogatantra), we read (quoted in Tibetan Text 6 [A: p. 167, 3; B: p. 21, 7], for its part cited in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], 1999/2001, p 201):

“All dharmas are fundamentally empty,

“All dharmas are utterly pure from the beginning,

“All dharmas are entirely luminous clarity,

“All dharmas are by nature nirvāṇa,

“All dharmas are perfect Awakening.

“Just this is Total (Plenitude and) Perfection (Dzogpa Chenpo).”

⁴⁴⁷ In fact, in the Mādhyamaka Rangtongpa sub-schools, emptiness means that no entity exists inherently or hypostatically, or, which is the same, that there are no self-existing entities. This clearly implies that we are not separate entities in a universe that is the sum of countless separate entities, but, on the contrary, our true nature is a continuum of fullness and plenitude (a fact that was discussed in a previous chapter of the regular text of this book, in terms of the positions of [1] those who assume the existence of a physical universe—which according to contemporary physics is an undivided continuum with no empty spaces in it; [2] those who claim that all is mind; [3] Skeptics; etc.). Moreover, since emptiness implies that qua Base we ourselves are not separate from this continuum of fullness and plenitude and therefore do not find ourselves at a distance from it, and since the realization of emptiness implies that in the Contemplation that is the Path and in the Fruit we are beyond the illusion that we are separate from it or that we find ourselves at a distance from it, there can be no doubt that the katak aspect of our true nature corresponds to “fullness” or “plenitude.”

In the use of the term Dzogchen to which this note was appended, the word katak refers to the Fruit, to which it is applied in the Anuyogatantras and Mahāyogatantras of the Nyingmapa (whereas in the Atiyoga it is equally applied to the Base, to the Path and to the Fruit); therefore, in this context the emphasis should be on the ensuing condition of plenitude.

⁴⁴⁸ The Kālacakra adds to the ten traditional superior stages (Skt. āryabhūmi; Tib. phagpai sa [Wylie, ’phags pa’i sa]) the “stage without obstacles” (Tib. barche mepai sa [Wylie, bar cad med pa’i sa]) and the “totally liberated stage” (Tib. nampar drölwai sa [Wylie, rnam par grol ba’i sa]). According to Elio Guarisco (research done in my behalf) here the ten stages are specified as been superior (Skt. ārya; Tib. phagpa [Wylie, ’phags pa]) because the Kālacakratantra (and the Sakya Lamdré [Wylie, lam ’bras] teachings) posits another set of twelve stages, which are supposedly attained on the path of preparation and which are known under the general name of twelve stages of contemplation (Tib. tingngedzinkyi sa [Wylie, ting nge ’dzin kyi sa]). These constitute a branch of the six-fold yoga.

Elio Guarisco (research done in my behalf) also notes that a text called Choktu Migyurpa (Wylie, mchog tu ’mi ’gyur pa [Toh.2219?]) states that the Tantra called Vajrahṛdayalaṃkāranāma (English trans., Ornament of the Vajra Nucleus Tantra; Tib. Dorje nyingpo gyengyi gyü [Wylie, rdo rje snying po rgyan gyi rgyud] [Toh.451]) lists twelve stages, as follows: kun tu ’od, bdud rtsi ’od, nam mka’i ’od, rdo rje’i ’od, rin chen ’od, pad ma’i ’od, sangs rgyas kyi las byed pa’i sa, dpe med pa’i sa, dpe thams cad kyi dpe

rab tu rtogs par byed pa'i sa, shes rab kyi 'od bla na med pa'i sa, thams cad mkhyen pa nyid 'od gsal ba chen po'i sa, so so'i bdag nyid rig pa rnal 'byor pa'i sa. Also, some Tibetan Masters say that these stages taught in the rDo rje snying rgyan rgyud are Buddha stages only; others say that they are exalted (ārya) stages; still others associate them with the twelve stages of the six-fold yoga of Kālacakra. Guarisco notes that the Indian Masters of that tradition and the Jonangpas explained them as been present in the Base, as the Path and as the Fruit, and gave explanations regarding each of the twelve (see Kongtrül's Shecha Kunjab [Wylie, shes bya kun khyab: Tibetan Text 11, Chinese book form edition], vol. III, p. 523).

Thanks are due to Elio Guarisco for the research done in this regard.

⁴⁴⁹ There are Anuttarayogatantras of the Sarmapa that refer to their final realization by the term “rainbow body;” however, this realization is not the same as the one that the Dzogchen teachings refer to by the same name. It must also be noted that, though the Anuyoga is asserted to allow its most consummate practitioners to attain one special type of death, it does not allow them to attain the same four modes of death as the Atiyoga.

⁴⁵⁰ Among the other terms used to refer to Dzogchen and/or to the Atiyoga are: gza' gtad dang bral ba, lhun gyis grub pa, rang byung ye shes, bya btsal dang bral ba, bde ba chen po, gnyis su med pa, mtha' ril ma spangs bral ba's rang lugs chen po, gzhi ji bzhing bar lta be, etc. These terms are discussed in the Ati Changsem Gongdzö (A ti byang sems dgongs mdzod ces bya ba), which it would be utterly illegitimate to reproduce here.

⁴⁵¹ Dūdjom Rinpoche (Dūdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I, p. 244) compares the Hetuyāna (Causal vehicle) or Hetulakṣaṇayāna (Causal vehicle of characteristics; Tib. gyu tsennyi thekpa [rgyu mtshan-nyid/phyi'i theg-pa]), discussed in the first of the following paragraphs, with the Phalayāna or Result-based vehicle (Tib. Drebu Thekpa ['bras-bu theg-pa]), discussed in the second:

“Therefore, in the vehicle of (the distinction of) characteristics (by means of dialectics), the nature of mind (corresponding to primordial gnosis) is merely perceived as the causal basis of Buddhahood. Since it is held that Buddhahood is obtained under the condition whereby two provisions (that of merits and that of wisdom) increasingly multiply, and since the purifying doctrines which form the causal basis of nirvāṇa are made into the Path, it is called the Causal vehicle (rgyu'i theg-pa). Therein a sequence in which cause precedes result is accepted.

“According to the vehicle of mantras, on the other hand, the nature of mind abides primordially and intrinsically as the essence of the result, consisting in the kāyas and primordial gnoses. The nature of mind is thereby established as the Base within oneself already at this moment as the aim of attainment. It is then established as the Path through its functions of bringing about recognition and removing the provisional stains that suddenly arise by means of inducing the apprehension of isness, and it is established as the Fruit through its function of actualizing this very Base. Since a sequence in which cause precedes effect is not really distinguished therein, it is called the Result-based vehicle ('bras-bu'i theg-pa) and the Vehicle of the indestructible condition (rdo-rje theg-pa).”

⁴⁵² As will be seen immediately following in the regular text of the book, in Dzogchen Atiyoga the Path consists in the progressive unveiling of the Base and, therefore, rather than involving the production of something, it is based on what has (been) in the Base from beginningless time. Contrariwise, on the Path of Transformation corresponding to Tantrism it is necessary to produce visualizations and other experiences that originally were not manifest. It is for that reason, among other things, that I point out that the Base-Path-Fruit continuity (gyü [Wylie, rgyud]: Tantra) is less perfect in Vajrayāna or Tantrism than it is in Dzogchen Atiyoga.

⁴⁵³ In Anuttarayoga and Mahāyoga one is supposed to keep aware that whatever one visualizes is empty of self-existence or substance, but still one is creating a new reality and while one does so one has no unconditioned direct awareness (of) the unconditioned Base. In Anuyoga one is supposed to carry out the instantaneous, lhundrub (spontaneously perfect) visualization in the state of nonconceptual and thus nondual Awake Awareness called rigpa, but as Rongzompa pointed out, one does not really have this capacity and therefore the generation stage entails fragmentation. Only Atiyoga involves, from the very outset of the Path—which, as will be shown below in the regular text, consists in the manifestation of tawa [Wylie, lta ba] or Vision upon Direct introduction—the unconditioned, direct unveiling of the unconditioned nature of the Base in the state of rigpa or Awake awareness.

⁴⁵⁴ Of course, even in the Series of Pith Instructions (Tib. Menngagde [Wylie, man ngag {gyi} sde]; Skt. Upadeśavarga), which is be the most characteristic series of Dzogchen Atiyoga, there are secondary practices, such as, for example, some of the semdzin (Wylie, sems 'dzin), some of the khorde rushen (Wylie, 'khor 'das ru shan), the zernga (Wylie, zer lnga) and so on, in which specific experiences are induced or visualizations are generated; it is in the main practice that does not involve constructing or producing anything specific. Let us take the two levels of Menngagde or Upadeśavarga as an example:

In Tekchö (Wylie, khregs chod) thoughts arise spontaneously of their own accord, as they have always done, so that the only difference between this practice and the experience of an ordinary individual is that, in the case of the ordinary individual, thoughts veil the Base and fail to liberate themselves spontaneously, as a consequence of which samsaric propensities (Skt. vāsanā; Tib. bagchag [Wylie, bag chags]; Ch. 氣習 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, qìxí; Wade-Giles, ch'í⁴-hsi²] or 習氣 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, xíqì; Wade-Giles, hsi²-ch'í⁴]) are established, whereas in Tekchö practice thoughts liberate themselves spontaneously rather than veiling the Base, and therefore no samsaric traces are established. If we consider the natural arising of thoughts as a generation or creation stage (Skt. utpattikrama or utpannakrama; Tib. kyerim [Wylie, bskyed rim]; Ch. 生起次第 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shēngqǐ cìdì; Wade-Giles, sheng¹-ch'í³ tz'u⁴-ti⁴]), we have to conclude that in Tekchö this stage rather than being contrived is self-generated, as corresponds to the principle of lhundrub inherent in our own true nature. For its part, ideally the stage of completion or perfection (Skt. saṃpannakrama, niṣpannakrama or utpannakrama; Tib. dzogrim [Wylie, rdzogs rim]; Ch. 圓滿次第 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, yuánmǎn cìdì; Wade-Giles, yüan²-man³ tz'u⁴-ti⁴]) ought to occur simultaneously with the arising of thoughts and should not depend on an action on the part of the illusory subject—which is how it occurs in the third type of spontaneous liberation that will be considered in the description of Tekchö in Part Two of this book.

In Thögel (Wylie, thod rgal) that which arises spontaneously of its own accord is the visions necessary for the method to function (see the section on this practice in Part Two of this book). Furthermore, the systemic loops consisting in the runaway (i.e. the spontaneous, uncontrolled exacerbation) of tensions toward their logical extreme and subsequent spontaneous liberation, together with the spontaneous liberation of the whole of dualistic delusion (a spontaneous liberation that consists in the dissolution of the illusory mental subject that feels itself to be separate from the visions), develop in an equally spontaneous / spontaneously perfect / spontaneously rectifying (Tib. lhundrub [Wylie, lhun grub]; Skt. anābogha or nirābogha) manner. Though the principle of lhundrub means that whatever occurs—the manifestation of visions, the development of tensions, and the spontaneous liberation of these tensions together with the whole of delusion—does so spontaneously rather than being the result of actions carried out by the illusory subject, the runaway of tensions depends on the mental subject's automatic reactions before the self-manifesting visions in a condition that is subject to the dynamics of the rölpa mode of manifestation of energy, which do not allow the development of dualism. Therefore, practice does not involve any conditioned / conditioning element.

The above is the reason why The Vajra Essence (Tib. **Dagnang yeshe dvapa la nelug rangjunggi dorje nyingpo** [Wylie, dag snang ye shes drva pa las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po])—a treasure teaching revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa—notes with regard to the practice of Thögel (alternative trans. by A. Wallace in Dūdjom Lingpa, 2015, Vol. 3):

“If you practice in this way—unlike [what is the case in] the mentally constructed, dim meditation proper to Tekchö—the true condition of the clear light will directly appear to your senses, and this is therefore called the vision of the direct apprehension of the absolutely true [condition].”

⁴⁵⁵ It is possible to distinguish many numbers of aspects in the undivided Base, but for their purpose, the Dzogchen teachings make two most common divisions in it:

- (1) The one into the three aspects which are essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo], which is one of the Tibetan rendering of the Skt. svabhāva [Ch. 自性 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, zìxìng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsing⁴; Jap. jishō}], nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin], which is one of the Tibetan renderings of the Skt. svabhāva [Ch. 自性 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, zìxìng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-hsing⁴; Jap. jishō}]) and energy (this term renders the Tibetan thukje [Wylie, thugs rje {lit. soft and noble heart}], which is one of the Tibetan terms that render the Skt. karuṇā, which literally means compassion—the other term being nyingje [Wylie, snying rje]; Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, bēi; Wade-Giles, pei¹: lit. sadness or mercy]), and
- (2) The one into the two aspects which are primordial purity (Tib. katak [ka dag]; hypothesized Skt., kaśuddha)—which in the threefold division corresponds to the essence aspect—and spontaneous

perfection (Tib. lhundrub [lhun grub]; Skt. nirābogha or anābogha)—which the threefold division subdivides into nature and energy.

Since the Base is the Buddha-nature, we can illustrate it with a statue of Buddha, which is an undivided unity, but in which we can distinguish its form, its color and the material of which it is made. However, we could as well distinguish a fourth aspect if we deemed it useful, which could be, say, the indivisibility of the aforementioned three aspects. To which we could add the material's brightness, its smoothness, or whatever else we deemed useful. This is why the Buddhist teachings divide the Buddha-nature into two aspects, which are the dharmakāya and the rūpakāya; or into three aspects, which are the three kāyas; or into four, if we add the svabhāvīkāya which is the indivisibility of the three kāyas; or into five if, so that the aspects in question may correspond to the five wisdoms, we add the vajrakāya to the four aspects we have already distinguished. Etc.

⁴⁵⁶ In Dzogchen, emptiness is never an object of knowledge, but a quality or aspect of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness that qua Base is called essence or nature of mind and qua Path and qua Fruit is called rigpa—or, as often stated, (is) that awareness itself. Jigme Lingpa wrote concerning emptiness in Dzogchen (alternative translations in Thinle Norbu, 2015, pp. 78-79; Nyoshul Khenpo, 2015, pp. 139-140; van Schaik, 2004, pp. 227-228; Trungpa, pp. 23-24):

“What is emptiness?”

“It (is being) primordially empty and without any self-nature / inherent entity.

“It (is being) free from the four and eight extreme views.

“This immediate Awake awareness, which is free and unbound and free from reified concepts

“is known as rigpa (Wylie, rig pa).

“This might not be [properly understood].

“For example, in the lower vehicles, conceptual awareness is used to negate existence [but by the same token] nonexistence is affirmed. And following this, you arrive at an empty, blank absence.

“Or, as in the lower Tantric vehicles with the svabhāva mantra* and so forth, through meditative absorption you purify everything into emptiness, [giving rise to a mere experience of] clarity and emptiness.

“Or, if you experience a [merely conceptual, superimposed] view that [all phenomena] are like illusions.

“These are errors.”

*om svabhāvaśuddhā sarvadharmā svabhāvaśuddho 'ham.

⁴⁵⁷ The Sanskrit term karuṇā (Ch. 悲 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, bēi; Wade-Giles, pei¹: lit. sadness or mercy], which is normally rendered into English as “compassion,” is translated into Tibetan both as thukje (Wylie, thugs rje) and as nyingje (Wylie, snying rje): both thuk (Wylie, thugs) and nying (Wylie, snying) mean “heart,” while je (Wylie, rje) may be rendered as “soft and noble.”

Why should the nonobstruction of manifestation, uninterrupted manifestation of appearances and manifest appearances be referred to by a term meaning “compassion”? After Awakening fully Awake individuals (Skt. anuttarā samyaksambuddhas; Tib. yangdakpar dzogpai sangyé [Wylie, yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas]; Ch. 正遍知 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, zhèngbiànzhī; Wade-Giles, cheng⁴-pien⁴-chih¹]) will continue to be physiologically alive rather than dying after a few days, as occurs in the case of solitary realizers or pratyekabuddhas, because of the spontaneous arising of compassion; therefore, it is as a function of compassion that the thukje aspect of the Base, corresponding to unobstructedness and uninterrupted manifestation of phenomena, will continue to function in their continuum (even though, of course, it will no longer be experienced as the succession of a multiplicity of phenomena, for fully Awake individuals are beyond experience as such and do neither interpret nor experience this aspect of the Base as such).

It could be objected that this may be so in the case of Buddhas, but not in the case of deluded individuals, to whom appearances continue to manifest inexorably even in the absence of compassion. However, the point is that the Base is the Buddha-nature with the three kāyas, and it is only because sentient beings experience themselves as creatures inherently separate from the rest of the Base that they fail to realize that appearances are the function of compassion. Despite the fact that only fully Awake Ones, who do not experience themselves as beings thrown into the world by an external power and do not feel separate from the Buddha-nature that is the Base, are fully aware that the thukje aspect of the Base continues to manifest because of compassion, the same is the case with those sentient beings in saṃsāra who fail to realize this to be so. Therefore also in their case it is correct to say that the thukje aspect of the Base is a function of the compassion inherent in Buddhahood.

⁴⁵⁸ As stated in endnote 395, a pot, a jug, a jar, a glass and all other hollow containers are said to be empty when they do not contain anything liquid or solid and therefore we can fill them with anything liquid or solid we may wish to put in them, even though they are filled with air, because containers are meant to contain something other than air. Now suppose that, in a loosely similar sense, we say that a mirror is inherently empty: the statement will make sense if what we are trying to say is that the mirror does not exhibit any fixed image, nor is filled with image-obstructing matter, and therefore it can “fill itself” with the reflection of whatever is put in front of it.

However, when a pot, a jug, a jar, a glass or any other hollow container is filled with walnuts, for it to be filled with almonds it will have to be emptied of the walnuts that had been filling it so far. This is not the case with a mirror, which does not need to be emptied of whatever had been filling it in order to “fill itself” with the image of whichever new object is placed in front of it. The fact that the mirror does not need to be actively emptied of the reflections it contains for it to fill itself with a new reflection may be taken to mean that, even when filled with images, a mirror is empty (for it is still ready to fill itself with new images), and therefore that the images that fill the mirror are also empty (in the sense in which space is said to be empty: in that they are nonobstructing). Therefore, in a very particular sense, it is possible to say that, unlike the emptiness of a pot, a jug, a jar, a glass or any other hollow container, the emptiness of a mirror is somehow inherent in it, and also that whatever fills a mirror is as empty as the mirror itself. Furthermore, one of the eight similes of illusion taught by Śākyamuni’s was that of a reflected image, used to show that despite the fact that phenomena appear, they lack a self-nature—and therefore that they are utterly empty in the “emptiness of self-existence” (Skt. *svābhāvaśūnyatā*; Tib. *rangzhingyi tongpanyi* [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid*], except for Je Tsongkhapa, who preferred *rangzhingyi madrubpa* [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa*; Ch. 自性空 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng kòng*; Wade–Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴ k’ung⁴*]) sense of the word.

The Base—or, which is the same in this context, the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness that is the essence or nature of mind—has been illustrated with the simile of the mirror precisely because emptiness in the above sense is inherent in the mirror, but so is also its disposition to manifest: just like the mirror, primordial gnosis or spontaneous awareness qua Base will manifest any content, depending on contributory conditions. (In the case of the mirror, the contributory conditions are the external objects we place in front of it; in the case of the Base, in relation to which nothing is external, the contributory conditions, which are therefore beyond the division into internal and external, are those that make it possible for particular sense data to manifest. It must be noted that all sense data are segments of the continuum of the Base’s energy [Tib. *thukje* {Wylie, *thugs rje*}] aspect, on which perception depends and which may be referred to as “objective reality.” Cf. the possibly upcoming definitive version on print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004.)

In terms of the twofold division of the Base, the above emptiness is its primordial purity (Tib. *katak* [Wylie, *ka dag*]) aspect, and the Base’s disposition to manifest phenomena—i.e. its luminosity—is a function of its self-perfection / spontaneously rectifying / spontaneously accomplishing (Tib. *lhundrub* [Wylie, *lhun grub*]) aspect. In terms of the threefold division, that emptiness is the essence (Tib. *ngowo* [Wylie, *ngo bo*]) aspect of the Base, and the Base’s disposition to manifest phenomena is its nature (Tib. *rangzhin* [Wylie, *rang bzhin*]) aspect, source of the unimpeded manifestation of phenomena that makes up the Base’s energy (Tib. *thukje* [Wylie, *thugs rje*]) aspect. As noted above, for their part the phenomena of the energy or *thukje* aspect of the Base are utterly empty in at least three senses of the term: (1) in that of lacking true, hypostatic or inherent existence (Skt. *svābhāvaśūnyatā*; Tib. *rangzhingyi tongpanyi* [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid*], except for Je Tsongkhapa, who preferred *rangzhingyi madrubpa* [Wylie, *rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa*; Ch. 自性空 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìng kòng*; Wade–Giles, *tzu⁴-hsing⁴ k’ung⁴*]); (2) in that of not obstructing the capacity of spontaneous awareness to “fill itself” with different contents; (3) in their not being substances external to the base, which is that of the Base’s emptiness of alien substances (Tib. *zhengyi ngöpo tongpanyi* [Wylie, *gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid*]; tentative Skt. trans. *para[bhava]śūnyatā*).

If the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness qua Base that is the essence of nature of mind were not empty in the sense of not having fixed forms, and if phenomena were not empty of hypostatic, inherent or true existence, the awareness in question would necessarily manifest the same phenomena all the time, and the constant change that characterizes human experience would be impossible: it is

precisely because that awareness is empty in the sense of not bearing any fixed images, and because it continues to be empty even when it is filled with images (because the images are themselves empty), that it can manifest all kinds of images. In turn, it is because these images are empty that they do not obstruct the manifestation of new images: they are empty (a) because they can manifest because of the emptiness and reflectiveness of awareness; (b) because they are not obstructing and thus need not be removed in order for the mirror to “fill itself” with new images; and (c) because they are like the empty images that arise by virtue of a play of light (so to speak). In fact, this is why they are neither self-existent nor subsistent, being empty in the rangtong sense of lacking hypostatic, inherent, true existence. The fact that all relative entities of saṃsāra can only appear and have their existence thanks to the two or three aspects of the nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness that is the essence or nature of mind and that is the Base of Dzogchen, implies that these phenomena (which in the threefold division of aspects are manifestations of the energy or thukje aspect) lack a self-nature or substance.

The emptiness of self-existence of the myriad phenomena is confirmed by the fact that, when subjected to analysis, those phenomena are not found as self-existent entities: we find that whatever we may have taken to be an entity, is in fact nothing but an aggregate of other entities (the ones constituting the parts of the entity under analysis); when we analyze the other entities (i.e. the “parts”), we find that whatever we may have taken to be an entity, is in fact nothing more than an aggregate of other entities (the ones constituting the parts of the part under analysis)... and so on and on into microscopic levels that we cannot reach with our bare senses and with regard to which, no matter how ideological the sciences may be, we have no alternative but to resort to contemporary physics—which, as we have seen, clearly implies that there are no hypostatically, inherently or truly existing entities at any level of the dimensional spectrum.

From another perspective, it is clear that no saṃsāric, relative phenomenon of our experience, whether subject or object, exists inherently or independently, because all phenomena depend on the spurious subject-object dichotomy that arises from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the directional threefold thought structure and the concomitant dualistic, directional structuring of consciousness. And those phenomena that appear as object also depend on being singled out by the mind-and-mental-factors or mind-and-mental-events complex and on being recognized and perceived in terms of a concept.

As we have seen, the concepts in terms of which we perceive our objects depend on the category that is its genus proximum and on the category that is its differentiam specificam; therefore, our phenomenon can also be said to depend on these two categories and therefore on the whole of the phenomena that, upon being grouped together, gave rise to these categories. And since the above categories are established in relation to all other categories, our phenomenon can be said to depend on the totality of categories, and on the whole of the phenomena that, upon being grouped together, gave rise to the totality of categories.

Therefore, all phenomena—including the mental subject and all of the segments of the continuum of appearance that the mind-and-mental-factors or mind-and-mental-events complex can single out and establish as objects (whether of the kind that we consider to be mental or of the type that we consider to be physical)—qua phenomena are dependent and, as such, are empty of self-existence and hence exist relatively rather than absolutely. However, in truth they all are the energy of the continuum that is the absolute reality, which as such has no genus proximum and no differentiam specificam, and therefore is absolutely unthinkable and ineffable. Furthermore, no map corresponds exactly to the territory of the given, and nothing whatsoever that can be asserted concerning any entity can exactly correspond to it or exhaust it. This fact implies the emptiness of self-existence of entities, for the fact that a cart can be equally said to be a cart and not to be a cart implies that it is not inherently a cart, and the fact that a cart can be equally said to be and not to be implies that it does not exist inherently as an entity.

(It must be noted that in the Dzogchen teachings the simile of the mirror may also be used to represent the final blending of the tsel [Wylie, rtsal] and rölpa [Wylie, rol pa] energies that takes place when a practitioner reaches the highest levels in the practices of Thögel [Wylie, thod rgal] and the Yangthik [Wylie, yang thig]: this is so because at this point, as it is proper to the rölpa mode of manifestation of energy, all manifests beyond the subject object duality and beyond the division into an internal dimension [Tib. nang ying {Wylie, nang dbyings} and an external one [Tib. chi ying {Wylie, spyi dbyings}].)

⁴⁵⁹ Some teachers insist that the energy of thukje aspect of the Base does not consist in the unimpededness that allows for the manifestation of phenomena, the ceaselessness of this manifestation, and the whole of the manifested phenomena, but exclusively in the unimpededness that makes the manifestation of phenomena possible, which may be noticed in the instant preceding manifestation.

The fact that the phenomena manifested by the Base cannot be external to or different from the Base may be easily understood in terms of the representation of the Base with a mirror and of the phenomena that manifest with the reflections in the mirror. It is self-evident that it is not permissible to claim that the reflections that manifest in a mirror are the mirror; however, neither is it permissible to claim that they are something different or separate from the mirror, for they (are) a function of the mirror, and they (are) certainly not outside the mirror or separate from it. The point is that they are nothing at all, for, in Longchenpa's words (Longchen Rabjam [1998], p. 84):

“In accordance with the eight traditional metaphors for illusoriness, an examination of phenomena as forms of emptiness, clearly apparent yet unthinkable, ineffable and void... determines their equalness in having no identity. One knows the basic space of unchanging emptiness through these natural manifestations of the nature of mind.”

Likewise (Longchen Rabjam [2001], p. 156):

“Using one of the eight metaphors for illusoriness, they are understood to be reflections that manifest clearly without existing anywhere, outwardly or inwardly.”

What the Semde teachings represent with the simile of a mirror is the essence of nature of mind which is a nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness, also referred to as bodhicitta, thigle chenpo and so on. Phenomena manifest naturally as the display, dynamic energy and adornment of this essence or nature of mind, Awake awareness or however we call it—and, as shown by the passages quoted, they (are) natural manifestations of this nature of mind or however we call it. As Longchenpa noted, one may say that the reflections are the mirror in the sense in which one uses the name “sun” to refer to the rays of the sun when one says, “Sit in the midday sun.” Furthermore, isn't it said that the world such as it presents itself to our impure vision is the *nirmāṇakāya*? And isn't it said that the *dharmakāya* (and in general the single nature of all reality) is utterly free from substances other than itself—which is what is referred to in Sanskrit by the term *paraśūnya* and in Tibetan by the term *zhentong* (Wylie, *gzhan stong*)? If phenomena were different and separate from the Base (or from the essence or nature of mind, Awake awareness, or however we call it), we could not say either that the world such as it presents itself to our impure vision is the *nirmāṇakāya*, or that the *dharmakāya* (and in general the Base that is the single true condition of all reality) is utterly free from substances other than itself, or that the whole of reality is the single sphere (Tib. *thigle chik* [Wylie, *thig le gcig*], the total sphere (Tib. *thigle chenpo* [Wylie, *thig le chen po*]), or the single condition of Dzogchen qua Base. And the Base is said to have only two or three aspects: it has never been said that it has a fourth aspect that would consist in the manifestation of phenomena and the phenomena manifested. The point is that the referent of the Tib. *zhengyi ngöpo tongpanyi* (Wylie, *gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid*; tentative Sanskrit translation, *parabhāvaśūnyatā*) or “absence of substances other than the single true condition of all reality” and the referent of the Tib. *rangzhinggyi tongpanyi* (Wylie, *rang bzhing gyis stong pa nyid*; Skt. *svabhāva śūnyatā*) or “absence of the self-existence of phenomena” imply each other, for, as previously noted, since phenomena (are) not different or separate from the single Base they cannot be self-existent or substantial (which is why it was said that phenomena [are] nothing at all) and since phenomena are not self-existent or substantial there can be no substances other than the single Base. Furthermore, if phenomena were separate or different from the thukje aspect of the Base, the Dzogchen teachings could not claim that energy manifests in the three different ways that are *dang* (Wylie, *gdangs*, which some have rendered as glow), *rölpa* (Wylie, *rol pa*, which literally means play) and *tse* (Wylie, *rtsal*, which may be rendered as projective energy), for the energy aspect of the Base would be limited to that which precedes the manifestation of any of these three forms of manifestation of energy (and in particular to that which precedes the manifestation of the *dang* energy as thoughts, since some particular instructions ask us to recognize as the thukje aspect of the Base the unimpededness preceding the manifestation of thought). The point is that although phenomena (are) manifestations of the Base's energy, they are utterly nonexistent, and as such they may not be said either to be the Base's energy or not to be the Base's energy.

In fact, since phenomena, including thoughts, visions, and material essents, (are) unthinkable and ineffable, anything we may assert concerning them—among other things, either that they (are) [the energy of] the Base or that they (are) something different from the [energy of the] Base—is a misrepresentation. Therefore, the only way we would be correct no matter what we said with regard to them, would be by being free of what Candrakīrti called “own mind,” which consists in taking as true whatever we think or assert without the intention to deceive others and taking the contrary of this as false—and which is a synonym of “affirming from one’s heart,” “making self-directed / interior-directed assertions” or “having theses of one’s own” (cf. Capriles [in press, 2005]; Chöphel & Capriles [in press]; the possibly upcoming definitive publication in print of electronic publication 2004], as well as the notes in Volume II of this book). Saying something without own mind and hence being correct is what in a not perfectly precise terminology is called “other-directed” or “exterior-directed” assertions (Tib. zhen ngo kelen [Wylie, gzhan ngo khas len]). However, it is also true that, since, as we have seen, thoughts are nothing at all, there is no process of arising and dissolution of thought and other types of appearances, and so properly speaking the energy (or compassion) aspect of the Base may not be defined as uninterrupted manifestation and dissolution of phenomena. Nonetheless, if this were the reason why it is claimed that the energy (or compassion) aspect of the Base is the unimpededness that precedes the manifestation of thought, there would be no need to specify that the energy (or compassion) aspect of the Base, rather than being the uninterrupted manifestation of phenomena, is the unimpededness that precedes manifestation—for the aspect in question does not change in any way upon the manifestation of thought (i.e. upon the manifestation of nothing-at-all) and the dissolution of thought (i.e. the dissolution of nothing-at-all).

Taking only the above into consideration, we should conclude that the instructions advising us to recognize the energy (or compassion) aspect of the Base as the unimpededness that immediately precedes the manifestation of thought respond to pith instructions that work as skillful means for recognizing the characteristic disposition of each of the three aspects of the Base, and as such does not involve the problem inherent in trying to explain the nature of phenomena, which as we have seen lies in the fact that properly speaking they can neither be or not be the [energy aspect of the] Base. In fact, as the fact that attaining realization implies no longer perceiving phenomena as separate from the energy aspect of the single Base makes it clear, these instructions would by no means imply that phenomena are not the energy aspect of the Base.

The above is made crystal clear by the noted Dzogchen Tantra of the Series of Pith Instructions, the Rigpa Rangshar Chenpoi Gyü (Wylie, rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud) (quoted by Longchen Rabjam in the Tsigdön Rinpochei Dzö [Wylie, tshig don rin po che'i mdzod] 12a/2):

“The Base’s primordial purity is manifest as essence (Tib. ngowo [Wylie, ngo bo]), nature (Tib. rangzhin [Wylie, rang bzhin]) and energy (or compassion: Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]). The essence is the ceaselessness of changeless self-Awareness, and it is called the nature of the youthful vase body (Tib. zhönnu bumku [Wylie, gzhon nu bum sku]). The nature is the ceaseless appearances of the five lights. The appearances of energy or compassion are [pervasive] like a cloudless sky.” (Alternative translation in Tulku Thöndup, 1989/1996, p. 206.)

Thus there can be no doubt that phenomena (i.e. appearances) are part of the Base’s energy aspect. And yet, if we established that previously to manifestation the three aspects of the Base should be referred to as the three primordial gnoses which are essence or ngowo, nature or rangzhin and energy or thukje, but that during manifestation they should be called dharmakāya, sambhogakāya and nirmānakāya (qua Base when saṃsāra is manifest, qua Path when nirvāṇa manifests transitorily in the Contemplation state [Skt. samāhita; Tib. nyamzhak {Wylie, mnyam bzhag}; Ch. 等引 {Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, děngyīn; Wade-Giles, teng³-yin³}] while on the Path, and qua Fruit when nirvāṇa is irreversibly manifest as the Fruit), then in spite of the above arguments making the point that there is no difference between the Base previously to manifestation and the Base during manifestation, it would it be valid to identify the thukje aspect with the unimpededness of the potentiality for manifestation as it becomes evident previously to manifestation.

In fact, as commented in paragraph before last, it is only in the context of pith instructions that are skillful means for recognizing the characteristic disposition of each of the three aspects of the Base, that there are some explanations of the energy or thukje aspect of the Base like the ones discussed in this note (or else on the basis of conventions such as those discussed in the preceding paragraph).

⁴⁶⁰ This is why often in Atiyogatantras it is stated that one Base arises as two paths, where the term “path” refers to a way of functioning. For example, in the Dzogpachenpo Kuntuzangpo Yeshe Longgi Gyü (Wylie, rdzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud), revealed by Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa (Wylie, rig ’dzin ’jigs med gling pa), we read (in van Schaik, 2004, p. 139; the terminology has been adapted to the one used in this book):

“Thus spoke Samantabhadra: ‘The manifestation of the *nirmāṇakāya* can take place in the three times: past, future and present. Thus, because I, Samantabhadra, am the inexpressible true condition, my time is unfathomable by thought. To establish an origin of Samantabhadra is merely to bind him by using the words “Primordial Lord” as an abstract term. So whenever a discrimination that conceptually analyzes *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* arises, this is called the splitting apart of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, because the single Base has arisen as two paths.’”

⁴⁶¹ Thought the images projected by a movie projector or a video beam are “made of” the light that has its origin inside the machine, they are perceived as being external to the latter.

At any rate, it was to a prevailing way of apprehending *tsel* energy that the first Heidegger was referring to when, in the terminology of Being and Time, he said that “in our understanding the world [being] according to the mode of being of ‘falling prey’ (*Verfallen*: “falling prey” in Heidegger’s sense; not in the Biblical sense of ‘the Fall’), being takes on the character of reality” (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 187 [first paragraph in the quote] and 188 [second paragraph in the quote]. Original German edition: pp. 201 and 202. I changed some words in order to adapt the quotation to the terminology used in this book):

“Here the being of things initially at hand is passed over and essents are first conceived as a context of things (*res*) objectively present. Being acquires the meaning of reality (Note by E.C.: As the reader knows, the word “reality” derives from the Latin *res-rei*, meaning “thing,” and *reor* (meaning “I think;” infinitive *reri*, meaning “to think”). Substantiality becomes the basic characteristic of being...

“But intuitive cognition has always been viewed as the way to grasp what is real... Since the character of the in-itself and the independence belongs to reality, the question of the possible independence “from consciousness” of what is real, or of the real possible transcendence of consciousness in the “sphere” of what is real, is coupled with the question of the meaning of reality. The possibility of an adequate ontological analysis of reality depends on how far that from which there is independence, what is to be transcended, is itself clarified with regard to its being.”

Heidegger realized that, when the entities of *tsel* energy he called “intra-worldly” manifested as “reality,” consciousness experienced them as being in themselves, independently of human consciousness, and therefore that common sense did not need the independent existence of these entities to be proven, for it was inherent in the very mode of being of human consciousness, in apprehending reality, to experience those entities as being in themselves. However, the metaphor of *tsel* energy is that of a crystal prism through which white light passes, thereby being split into a spectrum that is projected into an external dimension: this is due to the fact that, though the *samsaric* experience of *tsel* energy is as explained by Heidegger, the realization of Dzogchen shows very clearly that the phenomena of *tsel* energy do not constitute an independent, self-existing external reality. (Higher realizations of the Dzogchen practice of Thögel [Wylie, thod rgal] involve going beyond this mode of apprehension of reality because the final result of this practice involves the blending of *tsel* energy and *rölpa* [Wylie, rol pa] energy—the latter being utterly free of the illusion of reality and substantiality.)

The distinction between “reality” and “fantasy” may be reduced to that between *tsel* (Wylie, rtsal) and *dang* (Wylie, gdangs) energy. For example, hallucinations and the experience of visions of spirits and the like, which seem to manifest in an external dimension, are manifestations of *rölpa* (Wylie, rol pa) energy that are apprehended in the manner of *tsel* (Wylie, rtsal) energy: they are experienced as a self-existing external reality with the capacity to produce effects—which is precisely how we experience the so-called “physical” world. We fear the vision of a spirit to the extent to which we take the spirit to be real in Heidegger’s sense, and as such to be beyond our control (unlike the figments of our imagination, which we can control at will), and insofar as we believe it has the type of capacity to produce effects—and in particular to harm our “physical body”—physical reality in general may have (even though we think a spirit is not solid, we fear it because we believe it has supernatural powers). Conversely, so far as we recognize figments of our imagination or fantasy to be so, we do not fear them in the same way, for we can control them to some extent, and beside we are aware that they lack the type of capacity to produce effects that *tsel* energy possesses (we do not believe they can harm our “physical body” the

way “physical” reality can harm it). Therefore, even in the case of phenomena that are widely regarded as “supernatural,” but which manifest in the external dimension, we have a belief in their independent, real existence that we do not have in the case of phenomena of the internal dimension. However, as a Tantra revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa notes (**Dagnang yeshe dvapa le nelug rangjunggi gyü dorjei nyingpo** [Wylie, dag snang ye shes drva la las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po]; alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa [2015, Vol. III, p. 85]):

“When the demons that are brought into existence by [the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valorization of] thoughts [and] grasping at demons appear as your enemies, it is as if you kill yourself with your own weapons . Therefore, observe how all ritual activities of subjugating demons, protecting the living, and guiding the deceased are impotent, and recognize the importance of abandoning activities that fail...”

(The above explains why we cannot be utterly free until we have totally reintegrated the tsel energy: so long as we do not do so, we are prone to experience fear of being harmed by the independently existing reality we experience tsel energy as being, and so our Contemplation may be interrupted by occurrences taking place in this type of energy. Furthermore, so long as we have not reintegrated tsel energy we can experience pain, and thus we are prone to experience fear with regard to this possibility.)

⁴⁶² This applies to the nondual awareness inherent in Dzogchen-qua-Base acknowledged by the Dzogchen teachings. In fact, although some terms used in the Semde series of Dzogchen teachings are similar to those in Third Promulgation Sūtras that are the source of the Cittamātra School, Dzogchen does not posit a “mind only” (Skt. Cittamātra; Tib. Semtsam [Wylie, sems tsam]) view. However, this does not imply that Dzogchen agrees with Brahmanic views positing a sāksin different / separate from objects. That Dzogchen avoids both extremes is attested by the following quotation from a text on the Tekchö (Wylie, khregs chod) practice of the Dzogchen Upadeśavarga revealed by the great tertön (Wylie, gter ston: treasure revealer: a highly realized practitioner who reveals Spiritual Treasures or terma [Wylie, gter ma] that convey teachings or consist in material objects, substances and so on, for specific periods) Dūdjom Lingpa (bdud 'joms gling pa) (1994, p. 103; translation reworded in my own terminology):

“Some people hold apparent phenomena to be mind. They might wonder whether all external apparent phenomena are actually [hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized] thoughts and therefore [whether they are] their own minds, but such is not the case. This is demonstrated by the fact that while apparent phenomena change from the very moment they manifest, ceasing and passing away in a succession of later moments following former ones, ordinary mind does not take on the nature of these passing phenomena, [for if it did so it would] become itself nonexistent qua mind [the very moment it took on the nature of these phenomena].

“Through the usual progression of apparent phenomena manifesting in this manner to the eight aggregates of consciousness, cyclic existence emerges in its entirety. By tracing the process back to consciousness as the ground of all ordinary experience, one is still left stranded at the very pinnacle of conditioned existence.

“Thus the world of all possible appearances, the whole of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, is none other than [Dzogchen-qua-]Base and is of one taste with this Base. To give an example, although myriad reflections of the planets and stars appear in the ocean, in actuality they are of one taste with the water itself. Understand that things are like this. This demonstration that all apparent phenomena are inherently self-manifesting appearances is the direct transmission instruction of Vajradhāra.”

According to the above argument, it is not permissible to assert that the apparent phenomena perceived by the mind are the mind, for if they were the mind, when the latter perceived a yellow phenomenon the mind would become itself yellow, and such yellow mind would forever be unable to perceive apparent phenomena of other colors; moreover, as noted in the above quote, if the mind became the phenomena it perceives, the moment it did so it would cease being a mind. For their part, if apparent phenomena were the mind, insentient phenomena should be able to feel, experience and know as the mind does; when a phenomenon ceased to be, the mind would cease to be and subsequently it could not perceive further phenomena. This is why the Dzogchen teachings make it clear that, just as the images projected in the movies are not the process of projection, nangyül (Wylie, snang yul)—i.e. the seen, the presented, or what is experienced—is not nangwa (Wylie, snang ba)—i.e. sensory presentation. And nonetheless all phenomena are of one taste with the nature-of-mind or Base-awareness where they occur, as in a mirror or LED screen: bodhicitta is like the mirror, and its energy or thukje manifests the plethora of

phenomena, like the reflections that arise in the mirror, which are not the mirror, but are not at a distance from the mirror's reflective capacity and therefore are not external to the mirror. This is the reason why, when we realize this essence-or-nature-of-mind or Base-awareness in the manifestation of rigpa, the whole of phenomena have a single taste for us—and, contrariwise, if the whole of phenomena do not have a single taste for us, we are not in the state of rigpa.

All of the above is directly related to the reasons why, unlike the Cittamātra School, the Semde series of Dzogchen teachings asserts that sensory presentation (Tib. nangwa), whether in saṃsāra or in nirvāṇa, is the play (Skt. lila; Tib. rölpa [Wylie, rol pa]) or ornament (Tib. gyen [Wylie, rgyan]) of primordial bodhicitta (i.e. of the Base). It is also related to the fact that the Dzogchen teachings explain the samsaric perception of a seemingly external world as resulting from illusorily splitting the given into an apparently internal dimension (Tib. nang ying [Wylie, nang dbyings]) and a seemingly external dimension (Tib. chi ying [Wylie, phyi dbyings]), and then projecting (Tib. tsel [Wylie, rtsal]) a great deal of the appearances manifesting as the energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]) of bodhicitta into a seemingly external dimension, so that the phenomena of tsel energy seem to manifest outside the mirror. (Cf. Lipman [1983/1986], p. 20.)

The above is closely related to the excerpt from Longchenpa to which the reference mark for this note was appended, which I cite in full below (Longchen Rabjam [1998], pp. 84-87; the translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book):

“Although phenomena appear as they do to the mind,
they are not mind nor anything other than mind.

Given their illusory nature as clearly apparent yet inconceivable, void manifestations,
moment by moment they are beyond description, imagination or expression.

For this reason know that all phenomena that appear to the mind
are inconceivable, ineffable and empty even as they manifest.

“The apparent phenomena that manifest as the five kinds of sense objects [visual forms and so forth], and the phenomena of the universe that seem to appear in their own right, manifest to the mind and [in fact] are nothing other than [manifestations appearing to the mind]. Even though they appear to be something other [than the mind], like dreams and illusions they are by nature empty, and, [being inconceivable and ineffable, they] have never been anything other [than mind] and have never been mind [either]. In accordance with the eight traditional metaphors for illusoriness, an examination of phenomena as forms of emptiness, clearly apparent yet inconceivable, ineffable and void—whether considered to be composed of reducible or irreducible particles—determines their equalness in having no identity. One knows the basic space of unchanging emptiness through these natural manifestations of the nature of mind...

“‘Well’, you might ask, ‘aren’t you asserting everything to be mind?’ Let me clearly outline the distinction [between Mind-only and Dzogchen]. In general, when the world of appearances and possibilities, whether [as] saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, is explained to be Awake awareness, what is meant is that phenomena are alike [in that they do not waver from the single awareness] and manifest naturally as the display, projective energy and adornment of that awareness. [On the basis of this, phenomena have been said] to be mind, just as one uses the name ‘sun’ to refer to the rays of the sun when one says, ‘Sit in the midday sun’.

“There are two ways to refute the assertion [that “phenomena are mind”]. According to logical reasoning, this would require that mind exhibit color and other distinctive features, because apparent phenomena have color and such features...”

However, if mind had color and other distinctive features, it could manifest only its own color and its other distinctive features, and hence it could not manifest successively the countless colors and distinctive features of the variegated phenomena. This is obviously not the case, for awareness manifests innumerable phenomena one after the other as its display, projective energy and adornment—all of which manifest successively to the human mind. Longchen Rabjam goes on to say (1998, pp. 85-87):

“It would also require that mind be external or that apparent phenomena be internal, and so their actual relationship would be thrown into chaos. And it would require that when one died the universe would collapse at the same time. In these and other ways, the assertion is disproved by its logical absurdity [as corresponds to the method of prāsaṅga or reductio ad absurdum].

“The [confusion of the view of Mind-only with that of Dzogchen] can also be disproved by scriptural

authority. [The Atiyoga Tantra] Kuntuzangpo thugkyi melong (Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long [the extensive title of this Tantra is Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long gi rgyud ces bya ba thams cad ston pa'i rgyud]) states:

“‘To hold that apparent phenomena are mind is to stray from me.’

“...And the [Atiyoga Tantra] Ngedön düpai gyü (nges don 'dus pa'i rgyud) states:

“‘Fools who do not perceive the ultimate meaning
claim that apparent phenomena are one's own mind.

This is like taking brass to be gold.’

“In this regard, these days some who arrogantly assume that they understand the Dzogchen approach, or who follow ordinary spiritual approaches, hold apparent phenomena to be one's own mind. They speak without defining the issues involved and so commit an extremely serious error, for ordinary mind and primordial awareness are not at all the same. ‘Ordinary mind’ refers to the eight modes of consciousness and their associated mental events, which together constitute the adventitious distortions affecting beings in the three spheres [of saṃsāra]. ‘Primordial awareness’ refers to the naturally occurring primordial gnosis having no substance or characteristics [that is] the basic space of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa... While that which manifests as saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is understood to be the projective energy of awareness, one should further understand that awareness itself is an unceasing ground for the arising of things, although it has never existed as anything, whether of saṃsāra or nirvāṇa.

“Apparent objects are understood to be clearly apparent yet inconceivable and ineffable, and never to have been mind or anything other than mind, [for they are] empty and yet clearly apparent, groundless, and timelessly pure. When freedom occurs, the projective energy and display [of awareness], in being [realized to be] groundless, are [realized to be] naturally pure—which is like awakening from a dream. Thus one should understand that the [Awake] awareness that is [nondualistically] aware of itself [as well as of sense-data and so on], without ever having wavered from the unchanging dharmakāya [that is] its original state of natural rest, is uncontaminated by any substance or characteristics, [as these have never existed in truth and thus have been timelessly void, or, which is the same, pure]...

“In this regard, tsel (Wylie, rtsal) energy’ is the creative potential of awareness and accounts for the fact that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise differently, just as the very same ray of sunlight causes a lotus blossom to open and a night lily to close.”

As suggested above, saṃsāra arises on the basis of the projection of tsel (Wylie, rtsal) energy that gives rise to an apparently external dimension (Tib. chi ying [Wylie, spyi dbyings]); as soon as this occurs, dang (Wylie, gdangs) energy, which is beyond dualism and beyond the division into internal and external, appears to be an internal dimension (Tin. nang ying [Wylie, nang dbyings]), and most phenomena of dang energy (namely thoughts) appear to be objects separate and different from the mental subject—which itself is a phenomenon of this mode of manifestation of energy. Thus there arise the subject-object and the interior-exterior divides, which are key features of saṃsāra. Conversely, nirvāṇa implies the nonduality of a single, indivisible dimension beyond the subject-object split. However, both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise equally by the power and as the play (rölpa [Wylie, rol pa]) of the energy aspect of the Base, which in terms of the above may be compared to the same ray of sunlight. Longchen Rabjam (1998, p. 87) goes on:

“‘Display’ is used in the sense of the radiance of awareness displaying itself, like a lamp displaying itself as light or the sun displaying itself as sunbeams. ‘Adornment’ refers to the fact that naturally manifest phenomena, appearing in full array, arise of themselves as adornment in the light of awareness. This is similar to rainbows, the sun and moon, stars and planets being adornments of the sky.”

All of the above shows the primordial awareness of Dzogchen to be utterly different from the Brahmanic concept of the sākṣin or Witness for the sākṣin or disinterested witness is defined as being different from feelings, thoughts, sensations and images, which as shown in the quotations included above in this note is not the case with primordial awareness: these citations make it perfectly clear that apparent phenomena are neither mind nor awareness, and yet may not be said to be other than, or different or separate from, mind or awareness. Feelings, thoughts, sensations, images arise in primordial awareness just as reflections in a mirror or images in a plasma, LCD or LED screen, and thus their relation to that awareness is like that of reflections to the mirror or the images to the screen in which they appear: they cannot be said to be awareness (since awareness has no end in time, if they were awareness they would not have an end in time; since awareness has no shape or color, if they were awareness they would have

no shape or color); however, they cannot be said to be other than awareness, for they are not made of a substance other than awareness, and they cannot be said to be separate from awareness, for they cannot exist as phenomena having form, color and other perceivable qualities separately from it. As Longchen Rabjam (1998, p. 84) tells us, all of the apparent phenomena that seem to exist in their own right, are appearances manifesting to the mind and are nothing other than manifestations appearing to the mind; though they appear to be other than the mind, like dreams, illusions and so forth, they are by nature empty, and, being inconceivable and ineffable, they have never been anything other than mind, nor have they ever been mind either: they are empty and yet clearly apparent, groundless, and timelessly pure. The *sākṣin* is supposed not to be any of the apparent phenomena it witnesses, and to be different from these, and thus it could not be the primordial awareness featuring the three *kāyas* that is introduced by Dzogchen pith instructions, which may not be said to be different from the phenomena it manifests: we must conclude that the *sākṣin* (is) the illusory, seemingly separate and autonomous knower-experiencer-thinker-agent that, according to Dzogchen Atiyoga and the Inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation, arises through the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of the threefold directional thought structure (Skt. *trimaṇḍala*; Tib. *khorsum* [Wylie, 'khor gsum]; Ch. 三輪 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, sānlùn; Wade-Giles, san¹-lun⁴]), for only such illusory subject is seemingly separate and different from all that appears as object—there being no true entity or principle that may be validly said to be separate and different from what appears as object. To conclude, in purportedly nondual Hindu systems such as the Upaniṣads, the Vedānta Sūtra, Gauḍapāda's Māyāvāda view and Śaṅkarācārya's Advaita Vedānta philosophy, the concept of *sākṣin* seems to partly correspond to what Kant called “pure apperception,” which according to the philosopher that never left the little town of Königsberg is the condition of possibility of “empirical apperception” or awareness that one is perceiving, and which as such may partly correspond to my understanding of Sartre's (1980) definition of the *Soi* or *Self* as non-thetic, non-positional awareness (of) consciousness—i.e. non-thetic, non-positional awareness (of) there being a consciousness that is aware of an object different and separate from itself. At any rate, in the last chapter of Capriles (2007a vol. I) I explained in great detail how Sartre's *Soi* or *Self*, thus understood, referred to the dualistic delusion inherent in *saṃsāra* and as such radically contrasted with the nirvanic conditions that I am calling Dzogchen-qua-Path and Dzogchen-qua-Fruit, which correspond to my redefinition (Capriles, 2007a Vol. I) of Sartre's *Self* and Sartre's *Self qua holon*, respectively.

⁴⁶³ This is why the phenomena of the *rōlpa* mode of manifestation of energy are the key to some of the higher Dzogchen practices (in the context of the Series of Pith Instructions (Tib. *Menngagde* [Wylie, *man ngag sde*; Skt. *Upadeśavarga*], they are the condition of possibility of the practices of Thögel [Wylie, *thod rgal*] and the Yangthik [Wylie, *yang thig*]).

⁴⁶⁴ The translation by W. Allan Wallace (in *Dūdjom Lingpa*, 2015, pp. 29-9) is:

“Some people take appearances to be the mind, and they may think that all outer appearances are (...) thoughts and really their own minds, but this is not so. This is demonstrated by the fact that appearances change from the very moment they arise, with former moments sequentially passing away and giving rise to later ones, while the mind does not take on the nature of any of these moments, which would render it nonexistent. Thus, as appearances to the eight types of consciousness sequentially emerge in their natural order, *saṃsāra* fully manifests. As they reabsorb back into the substrate consciousness [note by E. C.: this is the term Wallace uses for the Tib. *kunzhi namshé* or *kunzhi nampar shepa* (Wylie, *kun gzhi rnam [par] shes [pa]*; *ālayavijñāna*; Tib. *kunzhi namshé* or *kunzhi nampar shepa* [Wylie, *kun gzhi rnam {par} shes {pa}*]; Ch. 阿賴耶識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *ālāiyē shí*; Wade-Giles, a¹-lai⁴-yeh¹ shih⁴] or 藏識 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zàngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsang⁴-shih⁴*]), they subside into the peak of mundane existence [note by E. C.: this is the term Wallace uses for the Tib. *sīdṭse* or *sīdpai tsemo* (Wylie, *srid [pa'i] rtse [mo]*; Skt. *bhavāgra*; Ch. 有頂天 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *yǒudǐngtiān*; Wade-Giles, *yu³-ting³-t'ien¹*)].

“In this way the whole world of appearances of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is none other than the ground (...) [note by E. C.: this is the term Wallace uses for the Tib. *zhi* (Wylie, *gzhi*), *thish* I render as *Base*], and it is of one taste in that very ground. As an analogy, you must understand that even though various reflections of the planets and stars appear in the ocean, in reality they are of one taste in the water. The revelation of all phenomena o be your own appearances is the essential teaching of Vajradhāra.”

⁴⁶⁵ Candrakīrti (1970), as rendered and cited in Candrakīrti (2003, p. 219, n. 16). The whole note reads: In MKV 492–93, Candrakīrti examines the two truths in detail. See May 1959, 225–29, and Sprung 1979, 230–32. Candrakīrti also discusses the two truths in MA 101–19, 175–78. See Huntington 1989, 160–

61, 166–67, 231–34 (nn. 38, 47, 49), and 246–47 n. 109. “In reality,” Candrakīrti concludes (MA 119), “there are not two truths but only one since the Buddha has said: ‘Monks, this is the unique ultimate truth, namely, Nirvana which is nondeceptive’.” Lang takes the quotation from Candrakīrti (1970).

At any rate, the above clearly follows from Madhyamakāvatāra VI-28, which may be rendered from its Tibetan version as follows (corresponding yet not identical translation in Chandrakīrti & Mipham, 2002, p. 72):

“The true condition of phenomena (Tib. chönyi [Wylie, chos nyid]), enshrouded by delusion, is ‘all concealed’ (Tib. kunzob [Wylie, kun rdzob]), yet what is conditioned by this delusion appears as true, and so the Buddha spoke of ‘concealed truth’ (Tib. kunzob denpa [Wylie, kun rdzob bden pa]).”

The above is one rendering of the Tibetan translation of Candrakīrti’s text. If we took as our references the Sanskrit terms *saṃvṛti* and *saṃvṛtisatya*, rather than their Tibetan translations (which are *kunzob* [Wylie, *kun rdzob*] and *kinzob denpa* [Wylie, *kun rdzob bden pa*], respectively), then—as clarified by Gendün Chöphel (Cf. Chöphel & Capriles, in press; Capriles, in press 1; Chöphel, 2005; López, 2006; Capriles, 2013b)—what Candrakīrti asserted in Madhyamakāvatāra VI:23 and especially VI:28 was that relative truth is an “obscuration to correctness” or the spurious fruit of a “thoroughly confused” perspective—for these two phrases express the etymological meaning of *saṃvṛti*. This understanding is shared by nearly all Tibetan Masters—with the sole exception of Je Tsongkhapa and his followers. In fact, the great bulk of Masters of the Nyingma, Sakya and Kagyü schools (and even some unorthodox Gelug Masters) agree that the relative has no existence whatsoever and that relative truth is a deception rather than a truth, and hence that there (is) a single truth, which is the absolute truth that (is) the only truth there (is). In the words of Gendün Chöphel (as rendered in Chöphel & Capriles, in press):

“Early translators rendered into Tibetan the Sanskrit term *saṃvṛti*, which [etymologically] means ‘obscuration to correctness’ or ‘thoroughly confused,’ as *kun rdzob*, which literally means ‘all-concealed’ (and which is the term that Gelug translators render as ‘conventional’ and non-Gelug translators render as ‘relative’). Since [the experience of relative truth is] deluded, we must understand relative truth as ‘mistaken truth.’”

And also:

“We must admit that relative phenomena (Tib. *kunzobgyi chö* [Wylie, *kun rdzob gyi chos*]), which are by nature false, can be appraised only by the source of all falsity, which is our own mind. Those who search wholeheartedly for the absolute truth (Tib. *döndampai denpa* [Wylie, *don dam pa'i bden pa*]) must understand at the very outset that this master of falsity, the mind, cannot go beyond relative / all-concealing / all-distorting (Tib. *kunzob* [Wylie, *kun rdzob*]) [pseudo-]truth (Tib. *denpa* [Wylie, *bden pa*]).”

For his part, the Karmapa Mikyö Dorje (Wylie, *kar ma pa mi kyod rdo rje*, in *dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dpal ldan lus gsum mkhyen pa'i shing rta*, ff. 5, 306, cited in Thakchoe [2007, p. 177, n. 62]), wrote that there are not two truths in the Mādhyamaka system, for truths are posited only from the perspective of ordinary beings.

Gorampa agrees (corresponding yet not identical translation in Thakchoe, 2007, pp. 144-145a):

“The relative truths enunciated in those contexts [e.g., in the texts of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti] are nonexistent. Since [in absolute truth] there is no erroneous apprehending subject, this subject’s corresponding object—[relative truth]—does not exist.”

⁴⁶⁶ Many teachings, especially in the Vajrayāna, rather than positing *nirvāṇa* as the Fruit, assert the latter to consist in going beyond fear of *saṃsāra* and desire for *nirvāṇa*. However, such a Fruit can only result from the recurrent realization of the single taste of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* that takes place when the true nature of *saṃsāra* (and of *nirvāṇa* as well) is realized in the manifestation of *nirvāṇa*. Furthermore, since it is in *nirvāṇa* that the single taste of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is realized, to identify realization with going beyond fear of *saṃsāra* and desire for *nirvāṇa* would only make sense in the case of individuals who are so familiar with *nirvāṇa* or so firmly established in it that, firstly, they no longer can be enticed by the projects of *saṃsāra*, and secondly, they no longer hope for *nirvāṇa* or fear *saṃsāra*. Since this amounts to being utterly beyond hopes and fears, it can only result from having become free from the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought through the repeated dissolution of delusion in the manifestation of *nirvāṇa*. At any rate, so long as we discriminate between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* and prefer one to the other, it would be a lie to say that we have attained the realization of the sameness of both conditions.

Though the above conception is in full agreement with the Dzogchen teachings, the latter have radical methods whereby the total surpassing of saṃsāra in the uninterrupted manifestation of nirvāṇa can be achieved, and finally one of the modes of death exclusive to the Dzogchen teachings can be attained. In order to reach such Fruits, Dzogchen practitioners will have to spend periods facing conditions that are most effective in activating the manifestation of saṃsāra, so that again and again delusion arises and immediately, liberates itself instantly and spontaneously—until the propensities for the manifestation of saṃsāra are fully burned out and finally the individual, even under these conditions, can remain unwaveringly established in the condition of nirvāṇa.

⁴⁶⁷ As stated in the section “Terminology and Titles of Eastern Texts,” Plato emphasized the etymological sense of the Greek term for presence (παρουσία), which is of “being before.”

⁴⁶⁸ The nondual, delusion-free state in which the nondual primordial gnosis that is the Base has become perfectly evident is designated in the Dzogchen teachings by the term rigpa (Wylie, rig pa), which may render the Sanskrit vidyā or, often when the particle rang is placed before it (rang rig), Sanskrit terms such as svasaṃvedana or svasaṃvittiḥ (Ch. 自證 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìzhèng; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-cheng⁴] or 自覺 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, zìjué; Wade-Giles, tzu⁴-chüeh²]), and which in this book I translate as “Awake awareness,” as “absolute Presence” (where the term is capitalized to make it clear that it should not be understood in the dualistic Platonic sense of “being before”), as “instant Presence” or “instant Awake awareness” (where “instant,” which renders the Tib. kechikma [Wylie, skad chig ma], means that, (1) awareness is free from the division of the temporal continuum into past, present and future that arises when the reification / hypostatization / absolutization / valuation of the threefold directional thought-structure sunders the uninterrupted Base into subject and object, and thus into space, time and knowledge as different dimensions (cf. the explanation above in the regular text), and (2) sense data are apprehended without mediation by concepts and hence without the lapse that it takes for recognition (Skt. saṃjñā; Pāli saññā; Tib. dushé [Wylie, ’du shes]; Ch. 想 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, xiǎng; Wade-Giles, hsiang³]) to occur.

For a thorough discussion of this, cf. endnote 33 to this volume.

⁴⁶⁹ For a thorough discussion of this, cf. endnote 33.

⁴⁷⁰ Therefore, as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has remarked and as will be shown in Part Two of this book, it is a crass error to assert that “Not to remain in doubt” consists in “deciding upon this single point:” deciding that the nature of reality is that which unveiled in the state of tawa or Direct introduction is an activity of mind qua nucleus of delusion, and hence if we make a decision in this regard the core of delusion will be sustained rather than transcended. Not to remain in doubt means that the certitude attained in the state of rigpa beyond mind has filtered into the state of mind, so that the latter does not have to decide but has a spontaneous, absolute certitude concerning the true nature of reality.

⁴⁷¹ In other words, the chöpa (Wylie, spyod pa) or Behavior of Dzogchen does not imply to “be having oneself” (which if my memory does not fail me, is how at some point Alan Watts spelled “behaving oneself”), which would be a function of dualism and of the directionality of mind, for it is a function of the spontaneous flow of the nondual state of rigpa. (However, as will be shown below in the regular text, even though strictly speaking the eventual manifestations of delusion are not part of the chöpa or Behavior of Dzogchen, in practice Dzogchen practitioners use these manifestations of delusion in order to spontaneously—rather than premeditatedly or self-consciously—cast a contradictory self-image that subverts the drive to cast a consistent image that, when perceived by those who matter for us, may be a source of pride and thus of unauthentic, momentary well-being.)

⁴⁷² In fact, in order to integrate all experiences of daily life into the state of Contemplation first we must have a state of Contemplation into which they may be integrated—which can only be developed if we practice Contemplation in sessions (Tib. thun [Wylie, thun]) and, ideally, spend a period in strict retreat.

⁴⁷³ The condition for this to work is that we have a sense of shame and restraint (Tib. ngotsa threlyö [Wylie, ngo tsha khrel yod]) of the type emphasized by the teachings of the Sūtrayāna—which implies that we have a wholesome integrity and that we have a profound respect for the sensitivity of others—and also that we have a genuine understanding of the meaning of samaya.

The above may seem strange because Dzogchen must make us immune to shame, for Milarepa’ statement that “this Path of Milarepa is such that one is not ashamed of oneself” expresses an essential trait of the Path of Dzogchen Atiyoga. The point is that in order to attain such a Fruit at some point, initially the yogi must have a sense of shame, as the only way in which one can become immune to shame is by

initially relying on the propensity for shame to manifest, and in particular on being ashamed of a specific type of ways of behavior that are not always among those that common sense views as shameful. For its part, this sense of shame depends on the degree to which we are committed to the Path—which in turn depends on the extent to which we do not remain in doubt but, contrariwise, we have developed the faith that derives from realization.

⁴⁷⁴ As stated in a previous note, the Tibetan term *semnyi* (Wylie, *sems nyid*), which I am rendering as Base-awareness, Awake awareness qua Base, essence of mind or nature of mind, is the common Base of both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and has the potentiality to manifest both possibilities—which is expressed by the assertion that in the single Base two paths can manifest: that of *saṃsāra* and that of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*.

In *saṃsāra*, this nondual awareness is veiled by the manifestation of the illusory subject-object duality; therefore, the ensuing delusion impedes spontaneous liberation, and the awareness designated by the Tibetan term *she* (*shes*) manifests as the eight dualistic consciousnesses: (1) consciousness of the all-ground or *kunzhi namshe* (*kun-gzhi nram-shes*), (2) defilement-consciousness or *nyönmongpachen yikyī namshe* (*nyong-mongs-pa-can yid-kyi nram-shes*), (3) consciousness of thoughts and mental contents, and (4 to 8) the consciousnesses of the five senses widely acknowledged by Western Philosophy, Psychology and common sense.

In nonstatic *nirvāṇa*, this nondual awareness is not veiled, and thus, since its all-liberating quality is not impeded, it manifests as *chikshe kundröl* (Wylie, *gcik shes kun grol*) or “all-liberating single gnosis.”

Therefore, it is utterly wrong to understand the example of the mirror to mean that in *saṃsāra* our awareness is also like a mirror in which reflections leave no traces. In fact, in *saṃsāra* our clinging to appearances through acceptance, rejection or indifference (and their various subclasses, which are the five, six, and so on up to eighty-four-thousand passions) establishes karmic traces that reaffirm and sustain *saṃsāra*, and so it would be utterly wrong to speak of spontaneous liberation in this regard.

In fact, when a subtle thought (Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* [Wylie, *don spyi*]; Ch. 總事 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-shih⁴*] or 總義 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*]) is reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, rather than liberating itself while leaving no traces it leaves a karmic imprint that gives rise to a drive to express it and possibly to clarify it discursively in binary, conceptual terms. When a discursive thought (Skt. *śabdāsāmānya*; Tib. *drachi* [Wylie, *sgra spyi*]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *lùnshēngzǒng*; Wade-Giles, *lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³*]) is reified / hypostasized / absolutized / valorized, rather than liberating itself while leaving no traces, it leaves a karmic imprint that gives rise to an interest in the next thought in a reasoning and thus impels us toward the next thought at each stage of the reasoning: this is what is called “the chain of *saṃsāra*.”

⁴⁷⁵ In Gö Lotsawa Zhönnupel's (2d English Ed. 1976) *Blue annals* (R 167) we read: (Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi* [Wylie, *don spyi*]; Ch. 總事 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngshì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-shih⁴*] or 總義 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *zǒngyì*; Wade-Giles, *tsung³-i⁴*])

“At *Idan glong thang sgron ma* there appeared an ascetic named a *ro ye shes 'byung gnas*, who possessed the secret precepts of the seventh link in the chain of the Indian Lineage, as well as those of the seventh link of the Chinese Lineage of *hwa shang* (*ho shang*). He preached the system to *cog ro zangs dkar mdzod khur* and to *ya zi bon ston*. These two taught it to *rong zom*. This (Lineage) is called the ‘(Lineage) of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) according to the *kham* method...’ Further, (the teachings) which were known by the name of the ‘Mental’ Class (*sems sde*) of the ‘Great Perfection’ (*rdzogs chen*): *ban de chung ma can* (*Dārika*), the teacher of the *ācārya sangs rgyas ye shes zhabs* (*Buddhajñānapāda*), was a manifestation of *Mañjuśrī*.”

⁴⁷⁶ The practices that may be said to correspond to *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* are applied successively in the *Kham* (Wylie, *Khams*) tradition of the *Semde*, which posit four *yogas* (Tib. *naljor zhi* [Wylie, *nal 'byor bzhi*]) or four *samādhis* (Tib. *tingdzin zhi* [Wylie, *ting 'dzin bzhi*]). The original form of the Series of [the Essence or Nature of] Mind did not involve either practices of concentration or a sequential order of practices that could be regarded as a gradual Path.

⁴⁷⁷ *Vase-breathing* (Skt. *kumbhaka*; Tib. *bumchen* or *lung bumpa chen* [Wylie, {*rlung*} *bum* {*pa*} *can*]) is a yogic technique for holding, retaining and possibly rotating the inhaled air, in such a way as to achieve that which the Tantric teachings refer to as injecting the winds into the Central Channel and in this way bringing the manifestation of dualism to a halt for the lapse during which the air is retained. That which this term refers to is at the root of practices such as the famous mystic heat (Skt. *caṇḍālī*; Tib. *tummo* [Wylie, *gtum mo*]; Ch. 旃陀利 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, *zhāntuóli*; Wade-Giles, *chan¹-t²-o²-li⁴*]) practiced by

Milarepa and by scores of other yogis, the three varieties of the last of the seven mind trainings (Tib. lojong dün or lojong dön dünma (Wylie, blo sbyong [don] bdun [ma])) of the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions and many other Tantric and Dzogchen practices (note that whereas in the Tantric teachings of the path of Transformation practices based on the vase-breathing are main practices, in Dzogchen all such practices are secondary practices).

⁴⁷⁸ This is merely a generalization. For example, it is a fact that the semdzins (Wylie, sems 'dzin) of the Semde (Wylie, sems sde) series of Dzogchen teachings require practitioners to act directly on the organism's energetic systems by means that loosely correspond to those used in the Tantric path of Transformation.

⁴⁷⁹ Originally, the whole of the teachings of Ati were referred to as pith instruction (Skt. upadeśa; Tib. menngag [Wylie. man ngag]). However, nowadays the terms upadeśa and menngag [Wylie. man ngag] are automatically taken to refer to the Series of Pith Instructions established by Mañjuśrīmitra on the basis of Garab Dorje's testament.

⁴⁸⁰ Some translators have rendered the term "Thögel" (Wylie, thod rgal) as "taking the leap," which is far more imprecise because it mistakenly suggests that it involves an action (like that of leaping) on the part of the illusory mental subject. Probably for this reason, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has remarked that a more precise translation of the term would be "as soon as you are here, you are there." However, such a long title would be encumbering if found again and again in a text, and so I opted for a term that expresses most correctly the essence of Thögel, for it responds to the Tibetan sense of the term, which gives the idea of crossing over a mountain pass to the other side, and to the essence of the practice, which is its swiftness, because it catalyzes the spontaneous liberation proper to Tekchö (Wylie, khregs chod), forcing it to occur as soon as dualism manifests and hence making the process of Awakening much swifter.

⁴⁸¹ In Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, Ed. unpublished), we are told that when we see someone coming toward us, or when a plane first becomes visible over the horizon, the first thing we see is a thigle, which is the potentiality for these things to appear later on as a person or a plane, respectively. Likewise, subatomic particles are thigles. For a longer and more thorough discussion of the term thigle see Part Two of this book.

⁴⁸² Another alternative translation of Yangthik would be "kernel of the innermost potentiality."

⁴⁸³ In this volume I have distinguished three main types of thought, which are: (1) coarse, among which most significant are discursive ones (Skt. arthasāmānya; Tib. dönchi [Wylie, don spyi]; Ch. 總事 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, zǒngshì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-shih⁴] or 總義 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, zǒngyì; Wade-Giles, tsung³-i⁴]); (2) subtle or intuitive (Skt. śabdāsāmānya; Tib. drachi [Wylie, sgra spyi]; Ch. 論聲總 [simplified 论声总] [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, lùnshēngzǒng; Wade-Giles, lun⁴-sheng¹-tsung³]); or (3) super-subtle, the paradigmatic instance of which is the threefold directional thought structure (Skt. trimaṇḍala; Tib. khorsum [Wylie, 'khor gsum]; Ch. 三輪 [Hàn'yǔ Pīnyīn, sānlùn; Wade-Giles, san¹-lun⁴]).

And I have also distinguished three modes or capacities of spontaneous liberation, which are: (1) liberation through reGnition of the stuff and essence of thoughts which are already established as object (Tib. cherdröl [Wylie, gcer groll]); (2) liberation on the very arising of thought (Tib. shardröl [Wylie, shar groll]); and spontaneous liberation properly speaking, in which thoughts at no point yield delusion.

The example of the spontaneous rupture of the string tying a hack of firewood, or of hay, etc., which Chögyal Namkhai Norbu used in the teachings he offered in the retreat that took place in Lhundrubgar, Venezuela, from November 28 to December 2, 1996, and which he employs recurrently in the retreats on Tekchö he has led throughout the world, refers to the first of the above three modes or capacities of spontaneous liberation, which were briefly discussed in the discussion of Tekchö in the regular text, and which will be dealt with in some detail in Part Two of this book, for it does not apply precisely to the other two. However, no matter what capacity or mode of spontaneous liberation manifests, or what kind of thoughts the practitioner is dealing with among the three main classes distinguished in this volume, in all cases spontaneous liberation will dissolve whatever thoughts were concealing the Base—and, in particular, it will dissolve the supersubtle thought reification of which gives rise to the subject-object duality: this is the reason why it is said that, upon reGnition (of) the phenomena of dang energy as the dharmakāya, subject and object dissolve like feathers entering fire—which is why tensions instantly break in the first mode of spontaneous liberation. (It must be noted, however, that in the practices of Tekchö and the Nyingthik [Wylie, snying thig] one deals mainly with coarse thoughts of the discursive

kind, and that it is in the practices of Thögel and the Yangthik [Wylie, yang thig] that the yogin deals mainly with subtle and supersubtle thoughts.)

⁴⁸⁴ In the long run, calm abiding may allow the individual to transcend all conceptuality in the state known as the base-of-all (Tib. kunzhi [Wylie, kun-gzhi]), in which relaxation may be absolute. However, this state is neither Awakening nor liberation, but a condition that, since it involves avidyā, clearly pertains to saṃsāra, but in which neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are actively functioning, and therefore abiding in it can in no way be useful on the Path. In fact, the Dzogchen teachings often compare abiding in this thoughtless condition to “cutting one’s own head,” for so long as one remains in it one’s possibilities of proceeding on the Path will be blocked and hence one will be squandering one’s precious human birth.

⁴⁸⁵ The mahāsiddha Sarahapāda wrote (in Guenther, 1993, p. 39 [Kāyakośāmṛtavajragīti (Kāyakośa-amṛta-vajragīti), fol. 81a.]; all citations in this note were adapted to the terminology used in this book):

“The proposition that the phenomenal has subsided means

that tenpa (Wylie, dran pa) has been swept away and tenme (Wylie, dran med) has increased its vitality.”

In terms of the Dzogchen teachings, the above is due to the fact that the uncontrived true condition cannot be sustained or grasped with mindfulness (Tib. tenpa mazung [Wylie, dran pa ma bzung]). However, it does not mean that tenme (Wylie, dran med) is for Saraha the absolute, primordial and final condition, for in the same text he writes (same text, fol. 80a, cited in Guenther, 1993, p. 33):

“Mahāmudrā’s precise characteristic is [its]

unorigination (Wylie, skye med) in view of the fact that it neither ten (Wylie, dran) nor tenme (Wylie, dran med) are involved;

[Being] beyond the intellect (lolende [Wylie, blo las ’das]), it does not abide as one thing or another.”

Saraha also wrote (same text, fol. 82a, cited in Guenther, 1993, pp. 33-34):

“By tenpa (Wylie, dran pa) as a necessary condition divisive concepts come about in an incidental manner —[tenpa’s (Wylie, dran pa’s)] antecedent, tenpame (Wylie, dran pa med), as well as unorigination (kyeme [Wylie, skye med]) and beyond the intellect (londe [Wylie, blo ’das]) [are] alike in [their] wondrousness.”

And also (same text, fol. 83a, cited in Guenther, 1993, p. 33):

“Inflated by divisiveness and addictivity, tenpa (Wylie, dran pa) becomes the cause of saṃsāra.”

For a discussion of tenpa (Wylie, dran pa) and tenme (Wylie, dran med) and their relationship with unorigination and Mahāmudrā in Saraha’s Mahāmudrā teachings, cf. Guenther (1993, Chapter 2 [pp. 16-43]).

⁴⁸⁶ At any rate, the constant recurrence of this type of liberation sets the condition for thoughts to cease arising, so that one may remain in the natural abiding condition of the [essence or nature of] mind (Tib. sem rangzhinkyi necha [Wylie, sems rang bzhin kyi gnas cha])—the primordial gnosis of nonthought (Tib. mitokpai yeshe [Wylie, mi rtog pa’i ye shes]), which is the expression (Tib. tsel [Wylie, rtsal]) of the essence which is emptiness (Tib. ngowo tongpa [Wylie, ngo bo stong pa])—in which “the natural face of Awake awareness (Tib. rigpai rangngo [Wylie, rig pa’i rang ngo])” / “the intrinsic essence of the true condition of phenomena” (Tib. chönyidkyi rangngo [Wylie, chos nyid kyi rang ngo]) remains patent, vividly clear and totally alert (Tib. dwang sengngé [Wylie, dvangs seng nge]), so that one may use the term self-illuminating [nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake] self awareness (Tib. rangrig rangsel [Wylie, rang rig rang gsal]).

The point is that in Dzogchen, and in particular in the Series of Pith Instructions, the terms thoughtlessness (Tib. mitokpa [Wylie, mi rtog pa]) or emptiness, clarity (Tib. selwa [Wylie, gsal ba]) and pleasure or bliss (Tib. dewa [Wylie, bde ba]), rather than referring to illusory experiences that arise in saṃsāra but that on the Path may be used to reGnize the Base in the state of rigpa, refer to qualities that manifest in the state of rigpa. In fact, in rigpa the primordial gnosis of clarity (Tib. selwai yeshe [Wylie, gsal ba’i ye shes]), which is self-arisen (Tib. rangselwai yeshe [Wylie, rang gsal ba’i ye shes]) and which is the expression of the clear nature (Tib. rangzhin selwa [Wylie, rang bzhin gsal ba]), coincidentally manifests with the primordial gnosis of thoughtlessness, and with the primordial gnosis of bliss or pleasure (Tib. dewai yeshe [Wylie, bde ba’i ye shes]), also called primordial gnosis of all-embracing capacity (Tib. thugs rje kun khyab pai yeshe [Wylie, thugs rje kun khyab pa’i ye shes])— which involves the bliss of the true condition of phenomena (Tib. chönyikyi dewa [Wylie, chos nyid kyi de ba]), which is the one that arises from resting in the continuity of the natural state (Tib. nelug deinang [Wylie, gnas lugs bde’i

ngang]) and which is the expression of all-pervading energy (Tib. *thukje kunkhyab* [Wylie, thugs rje kun khyab]).

In his Commentary to Jigme Lingpa's *The Lion's Roar* (Senggei Ngaro [Wylie, seng ge'i nga ro]), Nyoshul Khenpo (2015, p. 189) stated those three primordial gnoses—the primordial gnosis of thoughtlessness of the dharmakāya, the primordial gnosis of clarity of the sambhogakāya, and the primordial gnosis of bliss or pleasure of the nirmānakāya—develop from the corresponding experiences (Tib. nyam [Wylie, nyams, yet the gnoses in question correspond to the kāyas themselves.

⁴⁸⁷ What is progressively neutralized by the repeated spontaneous liberation of delusion is the power of the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization to charge thoughts with illusory truth, illusory existence, illusory importance and so on, rather than the arising of thoughts themselves. However, when thoughts manifest but there is absolutely no hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization they can no longer be called concepts. At any rate, the final realization of Dzogchen while the body is still alive is the implicit working of concepts beyond any hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization whatsoever; therefore the individual automatically makes the distinctions that are necessary for life, but does so without experiencing fire as fire, water as water, the floor as floor, shoes as shoes, and so on.

⁴⁸⁸ As the Samten Migdrön (Wylie, bsam gtan mig sgron) notes, Ati Dzogpa Chenpo (Wylie, a ti rdzogs pa chen po) is the primordial ancestor of all vehicles. In fact, the Anuyoga practice of zhitro arose to fulfill different functions, but a main one is to make the individual familiar with the association of the wrathful with the head and the peaceful with the heart that will serve as a catalyzer to practices such as that of the Yangthik, in which one practices in the dark with successive visualizations—a final one being based on association of the wrathful with the head and of the peaceful with the heart, for once the individual has developed a capacity for the natural arising of rölpa visions, this will catalyze the spontaneous zhitro proper to the practice in question. (Other of their functions are that of preparing individuals who will not practice Thögel or the Yangthik, for meeting the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena after physical death; that of helping dead practitioners who had no Thögel or Yangthik realizations; etc.).

⁴⁸⁹ For a more extensive and in-depth explanation of Phowa Chenpo, see Part Two of this book.

⁴⁹⁰ As noted in the discussion of the Path, in it the practitioner successively deals with the three forms of manifestation of the energy or *thukje* aspect of the Base; therefore, with regard to these three aspects there is also a continuity, which results in no longer experiencing them as discontinuous—i.e. in no longer experiencing them as being separate and independent from each other.

⁴⁹¹ This concept was taken from Jean-Paul Sartre's (1980) phenomenological, existentialist ontology. As stated in a previous endnote, Sartre distinguished between identifying with and establishing a link of being with, offering as an example of the latter a man who is looking through a keyhole and suddenly realizes someone is looking at him: the man "feels touched in the heart by the Other's look," becoming the shameful object that the Other perceives as him.

⁴⁹² Sera Khandro explained this gnosis of variety as follows:

"Even while dwelling in the essential nature of rigpa, and without slipping into an unknowing state of bewilderment, the state of not being tainted by objects, neither grasping at them nor cutting them off, and not falling under their influence, is the primordial gnosis of variety" (in Rangzhin Dzogpa Chenpo magom sanggyékyi zindri palden lamai zhalgyün nakdrö suköpa tsikdön rabsel kalden gyepai gülgyen [Wylie, rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi zin bris dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun nag 'gros su bkod pa tshig don rab gsal skal ldan dgyes pa'i mgul rgyan]; alternative translation in Dūdjom Lingpa (2015, Vol. II, p. 152).

The term also has been taken to refer to a primordial gnosis that is able to discern and determine anything that may be known in the relative realm, without thereby falling into the experience of relative truth.

However, on the basis of Buddhist sources of provisional meaning (Skt. *neyārtha*; Tib. *drangdön* [Wylie, drang don]): texts having an implicit, occult and nonliteral meaning, for they have secret intentions [Skt. *āhiprāyika*] and motivations [Skt. *paryāyadeśita*], taking literally the translation of the Skt. *sarvākārajñatā* and the Tib. *nampa thamche khyenpa* (Wylie, rnam pa thams chad mkhyen pa) as Buddha omniscience, some authors have taken this gnosis to be an extrasensory capacity to perceive all phenomena in the universe simultaneously, without needing to move from one's place.

⁴⁹³ It is important to note that in each of these levels of realization all three kāyas are realized. For example, the first level of realization is the realization of the dharmakāya because it is the realization of the true condition of the dang (Wylie, gdangs) form of manifestation of energy, which is the dharmakāya and which illustrates the essence or ngowo (Wylie, ngo bo) aspect of the Base or zhi (Wylie, gzhi), which from another standpoint (which, however, is also adopted by the Dzogchen teachings), since it is the emptiness aspect of the Base, is also identified with the dharmakāya. However, in this level we realize the emptiness of dang energy simultaneously with its clarity and with its unceasing manifestation, and therefore in the sense in which realization of the Base's emptiness (its essence or ngowo aspect) is realization of the dharmakāya, realization of the Base's clarity (its nature or rangzhin aspect) is realization of the sambhogakāya, and realization of the Base's unobstructedness and unceasing manifestation (its energy or thukje aspect) is the nirmāṇakāya, the realization of the three kāyas is complete in the realization of the true condition of dang energy that, in the special sense proper to the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions (Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde [Wylie, man ngag sde]), is the dharmakāya.

Likewise, the second level of realization is the realization of the sambhogakāya because it is the realization of the true condition of the rölpa (Wylie, rol pa) form of manifestation of energy, which is the sambhogakāya, and which illustrates the nature or rangzhin (Wylie, rang bzhin) aspect of the Base or zhi (Wylie, gzhi), which from another standpoint (which, however, is also adopted by the Dzogchen teachings), since it is the clarity aspect of the Base is also identified with the sambhogakāya. However, in this level we realize the emptiness of rölpa energy simultaneously with its clarity and with its unceasing manifestation, and hence in the sense in which realization of the Base's emptiness (its essence or ngowo aspect) is realization of the dharmakāya, realization of the Base's clarity (its nature or rangzhin aspect) is realization of the sambhogakāya, and realization of the Base's unobstructedness and unceasing manifestation (its energy or thukje aspect) is the nirmāṇakāya, the realization of the three kāyas is complete in the realization of the true condition of rölpa energy that, in a special sense proper to the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions (Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde [Wylie, man ngag sde]), is the sambhogakāya.

Similarly, the third level of realization is the realization of the nirmāṇakāya because it is the realization of the true condition of the tsel (Wylie, rtsal) form of manifestation of energy, which is the nirmāṇakāya, and which illustrates the energy or thukje (Wylie, thugs rje) aspect of the Base or zhi (Wylie, gzhi), which from another standpoint (which, however, is also adopted by the Dzogchen teachings), since it is the unceasing manifestation aspect of the Base, is also identified with the nirmāṇakāya. However, in this level we realize the emptiness of tsel energy simultaneously with its clarity and with its unceasing manifestation, complete in the realization of the true condition of tsel energy, and hence in the sense in which realization of the Base's emptiness (its essence or ngowo aspect) is realization of the dharmakāya, realization of the Base's clarity (its nature or rangzhin aspect) is realization of the sambhogakāya, and realization of the Base's unceasing manifestation (its energy or thukje aspect) is the nirmāṇakāya, the realization of the three kāyas is complete in the realization of the true condition of tsel energy that, in a special sense proper to the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions (Skt. Upadeśavarga; Tib. Menngagde [Wylie, man ngag sde]), is the nirmāṇakāya.

Thus we could say that in a sense specific of the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions realization of the true condition of dang energy is the dharmakāya, but that this dharmakāya has a dharmakāya, a sambhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya aspect in a sense that is not limited to the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions. Likewise, we could say that in a sense specific of the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions realization of the true condition of rölpa energy is the sambhogakāya, but that this sambhogakāya has a dharmakāya, a sambhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya aspect in a sense that is not limited to the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions teachings. And we could say that in a sense specific of the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions realization of the true condition of tsel energy is the nirmāṇakāya, but that this nirmāṇakāya has a dharmakāya, a sambhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya aspect in a sense that is not limited to the Dzogchen Series of Pith Instructions.

⁴⁹⁴ So far as I know, in the gradual Mahāyāna only the Mahāmādhyaṃka School acknowledges that the rūpakāya is not the result of the accumulation of merits, and that the dharmakāya is not the result of the accumulation of wise knowledge (referred to as primordial gnosis). However, Tathāgatagarbhasūtras of the Third Promulgation and the treatises based on them have acknowledged this by noting that the three

dimensions of Buddhahood are inherent in the Buddha-nature qua Base, and that the accumulation of wise knowledge (referred to as primordial gnosis) is the dharmakāya qua Base and the accumulation of merits is the rūpakāya qua Base.

For an explanation of this, see the possibly upcoming edition in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004).

⁴⁹⁵ Furthermore, for the rūpakāya to be the result of the accumulation of merits carried out in the post-Contemplation state (Skt. *prṣṭhalabdha*; Tib. *jethob* [Wylie, *rjes thob*]; Ch. 後得 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, hòudé; Wade-Giles, hou⁴-te²]), and for the dharmakāya to be the result of the accumulation of wise knowledge (lit. primordial gnosis) carried out in the Contemplation state (Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* [Wylie, *mnyam bzhag*]; Ch. 等引 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, dēngyǐn; Wade-Giles, teng³-yin³]), the practice would have to comprise these two stages. However, in Atiyoga one has to go beyond the distinction between a state of Contemplation or *nyamzhak* in which the base is unveiled, and a state of post-Contemplation or *jethob* in which it is again hidden.

As will be shown in the possibly upcoming edition in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004), the Dzogchen teachings do not particularly value samsaric states, even when they are of a kind in which delusion is less pronounced. In fact, these teachings are not concerned with a division into absolute and relative truth, or, regarding the latter, into correct and inverted relative truth, but with the basic division into: (1) *samsāra*, (2) nonstatic *nirvāṇa* (*apratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa*; Tib. *minpai myangdé* [Wylie, *mi gnas pa'i myang 'das*]; Ch. 無住涅槃 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúzhù nièpán; Wade-Giles, wu²-chu⁴ nieh⁴-p'an²]), and (3) the samsaric conditions wherein neither of these two functional possibilities is active. The contents of a post-Contemplation state being strictly samsaric, in Dzogchen they have to be reGnized the same way as any other samsaric state, so that they liberate themselves spontaneously and nonstatic *nirvāṇa* manifests: the point is to maintain uninterruptedly the state of Contemplation, from the standpoint of which it is not possible to go either forwards or backwards.

⁴⁹⁶ In Mahāyogatantra, the maṇḍala of symbolic attributes is held to be the rūpakāya; however, the Mahāyoga maṇḍala of symbolic attributes is not the Atiyoga rūpakāya. In fact, as we have seen, what the vehicles of the Path of Transformation regards as the three kāyas are not so regarded by the Atiyoga Path of Spontaneous Liberation: in order to attain the rūpakāya in the Atiyoga sense of the term, the yogin still will have to go through the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. *chönyi bardo* [Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*]) in practices such as Thögel (Wylie, *thod rgal*) or the Yangthik (Wylie, *yang thig*), in which lights and visions of *rölpa* energy are projected into the external dimension (Tib. *chi ying* [Wylie, *spyi dbyings*]), as corresponds to the *tsel* (Wylie, *rtsal*) mode of manifestation, and thereafter the dynamics associated with the *rölpa* (Wylie, *rol pa*) mode of manifestation of energy unleash a process of uninterrupted spontaneous liberation that results in the manifestation of the rūpakāya in the Atiyoga sense of the term, and that leads the *tsel* and *rölpa* modes of manifestation of energy to fuse. (This is directly related to the different sequence of manifestation and the different meaning of the terms *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *nirmānakāya* in the Tantras of the Path of Transformation and in the Atiyoga Path of Spontaneous Liberation, which was discussed above in the regular text of this section.)

⁴⁹⁷ In the Bön tradition, a symbol of Dzogchen Atiyoga seems to have been the mythological *khyung* bird, related to the family of eagles, from whose name, according to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, the word *zhung* that appears in duplicate in the name *Zhang-zhung* probably derived (Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal], E. Capriles, Ed. unpublished). This bird is none other than the Persian *simurgh*, called *kerkes* by the Turks, which is also part of Chinese mythology (if I remember correctly, the name of the bird in Mandarin is *k'i*), and which possibly may have corresponded to the Phoenix of Greek mythology.

Later, in Moslem times, Attar, the famous Persian Sufi poet, in his work *The Conference of the Birds*, symbolized the Sufi search for the “Master of the times” (i.e. the greatest teacher of a given period, possessing the teachings corresponding to his time) in terms of the search for the *simurgh* by different types of common birds—and, even though Attar was a Moslem, this extremely special bird was finally found... in non-Moslem China! (Note that in the book in question a play of words is used to show that the supreme bird called *Simurgh* or *Simorgh* was the thirty birds [*sī morgh*] that were looking for him: the supreme bird was the true condition of all of them.)

In Indian mythology, the king of the birds is the *garuḍa* (Pāli *garuḍa* or *garuḷa*; Tib. *khyung* [Wylie, *khyung*, which was the name of the pre-Buddhist firebird of Bön], *khalding* [Wylie, *mkha' lding*] or

namkhai ding [Wylie, nam mkha'i lding]; Ch. 迦樓羅 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, jiālóuluó; Wade-Giles, *chia¹-lou²-lo²*], who serves as a mount for the god Viṣṇu and who feeds on serpents (which, as a result of his mother's quarrel with Kadru, the mother of serpents, he is always intent on destroying) and on and nāgas (Tib. lu [Wylie, klu]; Ch. 龍 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, lóng; Wade-Giles, lung²]; note that the Ch. 龍, unlike the Tibetan translation, also renders the English word "dragon," which corresponds to the Tib. druk [Wylie, 'brug]: beings which are partly anthropomorphic, partly serpent-like). It is very likely that the origins of the Indian garuḍa be linked to those of the Tibetan khyung and their Persian, Turk and Chinese equivalents; whatever the case, as a result of the assimilation of Indian Buddhism, Tibetans fused their khyung bird with the garuḍa, giving rise to the kalding (Wylie, mkha' lding) or namkeding (Wylie, nam mkha'i lding), which occupies an important place in Tibetan Buddhist mythology and which, in Buddhist Dzogchen Atiyoga, symbolizes the manner in which the practitioner of Dzogchen obtains realization: the kalding is said to be born ready to fly, fully developed, and self-reliant.

It may be pointed out that the eggshell the garuḍa breaks upon hatching represents the unawareness of the true condition and delusion referred to as avidyā and the whole of the conditionings that keeps us from apprehending reality as it truly is, and that limit our movements. Once freed from this shell, nothing blocks our correct apprehension of reality and nothing obstructs our free flight.

⁴⁹⁸ At any rate, it is a fact that in the supreme vehicle development through the levels is swift and the characteristics of each successive bhūmi do not manifest in a clear-cut sequence.

⁴⁹⁹ With the exception of the hair and nails, the totality of the human body is sensitive—including the teeth and bones, which are highly so (as anyone who has had a cavity fixed without anesthetic and anyone who has needed traction after breaking a bone knows from personal experience). Moreover, nails and hair are always growing into the outside, thus being regarded as execrations and as such, in a particular sense, as impurities.

⁵⁰⁰ In the case of the sudden Mahāyāna, the direct source is not any of the three promulgations, but the "transmission of Mind" that, according to the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch (Ch. 壇經 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Tánjīng; Wade-Giles, T'an²-ching¹], 六祖壇經 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Liùzǔtánjīng; Wade-Giles, Liu⁴-tsu³ T'an²-ching¹], which abbreviate 六祖大師法寶壇經 [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, Liùzǔdàshī fábǎotánjīng; Wade-Giles, Liu⁴-tsu³-ta⁴-shih¹ Fa²-pao³-t'an²-ching¹]; full title: 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經), Mahākāśyapa received from Śākyamuni.

⁵⁰¹ As we have seen, the Hīnayāna schools do not accept the validity of the Mahāyāna, and assert that the latter's teachings did not originate from Śākyamuni's. However, the Mahāyāna and the rest of the higher vehicles as taught in Tibet assert that, after giving the teachings that constitute the Hīnayāna and that make up the First Promulgation, Śākyamuni's taught two further series of teachings in the Second and Third Promulgations, which conform the basis of the Mahāyāna.

The Pāli Canon, which conforms the doctrinal foundation of the Hīnayāna and which is based on the first Promulgation, was compiled before the Sanskrit Canon, doctrinal basis of the Mahāyāna, which is based on the Second and Third Promulgations. According to the Mahāyāna, the Buddha Śākyamuni preached some of the teachings of the Ample vehicle while living, entrusted others to the King of the nāgas to be delivered later on to Nāgārjuna, and so on. Therefore, the teachings of the Mahāyāna arose shortly after those of the Hīnayāna and, just like the latter, we must accept that they were taught directly by Śākyamuni—even though they were compiled at a later time.

In particular, we are told that, as outlined above, upon realizing that his immediate disciples were of the śrāvaka type, who would panic before the teachings on śūnyatā or emptiness, Śākyamuni's decided to give the sūtras of the Prajñāpāramitā in custody to the King of the nāgas (elementals who live in the bottom of the waters and also under the earth, represented as having a human shape from the waist upwards and the shape of a snake from the waist downwards), who kept them as "hidden treasures" (Tib. terma [Wylie, gter ma]) until the time of Nāgārjuna (according most Western scholars, around the second century CE; according to Tibetan tradition, from about 80 BCE to circa 520 CE), who was the prophesized revealer (Tib. tertön [Wylie, gter ston]) who revealed them in the human world.

As already noted, the sudden or abrupt Mahāyāna is "a transmission beyond the scriptures" and as such is not based on any particular set of scriptures. However, as we have already seen, Chán or Zen prizes a set of canonical sources in which it sees clear references to the principles of the sudden Mahāyāna (such as various Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, the Laṅkāvatārasūtra, the Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra and so on). At any rate, according to Chán or Zen, its own "transmission beyond the scriptures" originates from the

nirmāṇakāya Śākyamuni, who passed on this transmission to his disciple Mahākāśyapa in the so-called “silent sermon.”

⁵⁰² In the original transmission of the inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation, the saṃbhogakāya manifestations appeared out of the state of dharmakāya.

⁵⁰³ The texts I am using state that the two subdivisions of the Hīnayāna and also the gradual Mahāyāna have Śākyamuni as their source, but do not refer to the sudden Mahāyāna. However, we have seen that according to the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch the sudden Mahāyāna also has Śākyamuni’s as its root.

⁵⁰⁴ In the original transmission of the inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation, the saṃbhogakāya manifestations appeared out of the state of dharmakāya.

⁵⁰⁵ This is referred to in Tibetan as gongpe thug su gyü (Wylie, dgongs pas thugs su brgyud), which has been wrongly understood as implying a “telepathic” transmission. In truth no telepathy is involved, for the “transmission” takes place in a dimension beyond distances, in which the separation of space and time has utterly dissolved together with the illusion that there are two different individuals. Furthermore, “telepathy” usually refers to the purported transmission of thought, but here neither thought nor anything else (information, energies or anything else) is transmitted. There is simply the state of dharmakāya in which there are no distances and in which there is neither duality nor plurality.

⁵⁰⁶ As we have seen, Yogatantra cannot be classified either as pertaining completely to the outer Tantras, or as pertaining completely to the inner Tantras.

⁵⁰⁷ This explanation is found in many sources, including several texts translated either fully or partially into Western languages.

⁵⁰⁸ Adriano Clemente writes in Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, p. 22):

“The Vairo Drabag, which is believed to relate an ancient tradition, speaks of the transmission of the teaching through four kāyas or dimensions: svabhāvikāya, or dimension of the fundamental nature, dharmakāya, saṃbhogakāya and the secret kaya or dimension (gsang-ba’i sku). However, this subdivision takes into consideration only the transmission of the Tantric and Dzogchen teachings.”

For an explanation of this tradition, see Appendix One to Namkhai Norbu and Clemente (English 1999, pp. 237-238).

⁵⁰⁹ According to the story, Śākyamuni manifested in his usual nirmāṇakāya form as a monk surrounded by a retinue of śrāvakas, and began to expound the teachings of the Path of Renunciation. However, the King objected that he wasn’t ready to renounce his kingdom, for then his subjects would lose the trustworthy protector they had in him, and there would be the possibility that subsequently they could fall prey to unscrupulous rulers; moreover, he did not see the reason why in order to attain Awakening he should renounce his royal wife and secondary consorts, his delicacies, his palace, his clothes and so on. Realizing that the King had a definitely superior capacity, Śākyamuni’s magically sent his retinue of śrāvakas back to Central India, and instantly transforming into Śrī Guhyasamāja in union with his consort, granted the King the initiation of the Guhyasamājantra. However, even though it was the Sage of Śākyas who granted the transmission, he did so as a saṃbhogakāya deity and hence the source of the transmission may be said to have been the saṃbhogakāya.

⁵¹⁰ Here the word “energy” refers mainly to the rölpa (Wylie, rol pa) form of manifestation of the energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]) aspect of the Base. As was pointed out in a previous note, in Part Two of this book, the three forms of the manifestation of energy, which are the dang (Wylie, gdangs), rölpa (Wylie, rol pa) and tsel (Wylie, rtsal) energies, will be explained in greater detail.

⁵¹¹ In the case of the fire element, everyone will agree that, on the level of the “physical” world in general, the latter is represented by all that is in an incandescent state. On the level of our own “physical” body, this element corresponds to the heat of our body, that manifests so long as we are alive and our human organism functions normally. Qua function in general, it represents that of ripening. Qua Buddha-family it is the Padma family and qua direction in the maṇḍala it is the West. On the other hand, in the dimension of the true nature of the elements, corresponding to energy, the fire element is simply the color red. Etc.

⁵¹² In the same place (Düdjom Rinpoche, English 1991, vol. I. p. 460) the following prediction found in a Tantra (Tibetan Text 16) is quoted:

“The Mahāyoga Tantras will fall on the palace of King Ja.”

King Ja is King Indrabhūti (AKA King Indrabodhi); Tib. Gyalpo Dza [Wylie, rgyal po dza]). Reference to these Tantras falling on the Palace of Indrabhūti is also found, among many other texts, in Tulku Thöndup (1984, p. 13).

⁵¹³ Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, vol. I. p. 460) bases himself on the prediction found in a Tantra (Tibetan Text 16), which reads:

“The Mahāyoga Tantras will fall on the palace of King Ja. The Anuyoga Tantras will emerge in the forests of Siṃgāla.”

⁵¹⁴ Dharmabodhi of Magadha, author of the Doi dob duwa (Wylie, mdo'i dob bsdu ba), of the Sherab Drönma (Wylie, shes rab sgron ma) and of the Kōl do (Wylie, bkol mdo).

⁵¹⁵ Vasudharā, King of Nepal; Tib. Nordzin (Wylie, nor 'dzin).

⁵¹⁶ According to Giuseppe Tucci (English 1980, p. 214), this country corresponds to Gilgit and neighboring areas.

⁵¹⁷ Furthermore, as stated in the section on the Anuyoga, even in this, the highest Tantra of the Path of Transformation, practitioners lack the capacity to perform the practice in the state of rigpa (Awake Awareness or Truth) corresponding to the dharmakāya.

⁵¹⁸ 55 CE is perhaps the most widely accepted date for Garab Dorje's birth (in the West, this date was offered in Tarthang Tulku, 1977b, p. 182). Moreover, according to some of the accounts of the way Mañjuśrīmitra received the Atiyoga transmission from Garab Dorje (for one such account, see Namkhai Norbu (Ed. J. Shane, 1986, revised edition 1999), Mañjuśrīmitra was much older than his Master, as he was a highly respected ācārya from Nālandā University at the time he went to debate against Garab Dorje, whereas the latter was still a child.

⁵¹⁹ The Tibetan term zakpa (Wylie, zag pa) refers to all that is contaminated by the worldly sphere of interests and actions, and thus particularly to all that is contaminated by passion delusive obstructions (Skt. kleśāvaraṇa; Pāli kilesāvaraṇa; Tib. nyön[mongpai] drib[pa] [Wylie, nyon {mongs pa'i} sgrib {pa}]); Ch. 煩惱障 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, fán nǎo zhàng; Wade-Giles, fan²-nao³-chang⁴] and cognitive delusive obstructions (Skt. jñeyāvaraṇa; Pāli ñeyyavāvaraṇa; Tib. shé[chai] drib[pa] [Wylie, shes {bya'i} sgrib {pa}]); Ch. 所知障 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn suǒ zhī zhàng; Wade-Giles so³-chih¹-chang⁴]). The term does not refer to material existence, which, in itself, is not viewed by any school of Buddhism as being contaminating or evil; in particular, in the teachings of the Dzogchen Atiyoga, in the experience of sentient beings matter is the most common manifestation of the tsel (Wylie, rtsal) form of manifestation of the energy (Tib. thukje [Wylie, thugs rje]) aspect and wisdom or primordial gnosis of the Base; therefore, it must be regarded as sacred. For a criticism of Greek antisomatic traditions, see Capriles (2000b; work in progress; etc.).

⁵²⁰ The title “tönpa” (Wylie, ston pa), literally meaning “(Primordial) Revealer,” but usually translated as “Primordial Master,” is given to Masters who introduce or reintroduce to the physical world a teaching directed toward true Awakening, after teachings of the kind have disappeared from our world. For example, Śākyamuni, Shenrab Miwo and Garab Dorje are all considered to be tönpas; however, of these three, only Śākyamuni figures in the Buddhist Dzogchen list of the Twelve Primordial Masters: Garab Dorje is not included in it because he is regarded as an emanation of Śākyamuni's, and Shenrab Miwoche is excluded because he was not a Buddhist (however, the latter sometimes has been regarded as an independent emanation of the same tönpa as Garab Dorje, for he reintroduced Dzogchen teachings for roughly the same period of humankind as Garab Dorje, even though he did so earlier than the latter).

⁵²¹ Though this is not the standard method of Atiyoga practice, it is often used for directly Introducing rigpa (Wylie, rig pa). The standard method of Atiyoga practice is best exemplified by the principle of Tekchö and Thögel: when delusion is active, as charged thoughts are manifesting, and often in situations of great intensity (in Tekchö the intensity is emotional), there is an instant rupture of conceptuality and hence of dualism, as the dharmakāya instantly manifests in a perfectly clear manner.

⁵²² According to this tradition (Namkhai Norbu, Italian 1988), he did so after receiving Dzogchen teachings from the second Mañjuśrīmitra.

⁵²³ According to the Bönpo sources favored by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche lived some 3.800 years ago—or, which is the same, around year 1.800 BC. If Tönpa Garab Dorje was born in 55 CE, then he lived over 1800 years after Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche.

However, other accounts offer quite different dates for tönpa Shenrab Miwoche, ranging from some sixteen thousand years BC to the eighth century CE. In fact, according to a Bönpo chronicle put into writing by

Nyima Tenzin in his *Tentsi* (Wylie, *bstan rtsis*: see Kvaerne, 1971), Shenrab Miwoche lived some eighteen thousand years ago. However, since all researchers agree that Tönpa Shenrab's teachings were imparted in the language of Zhang-zhung, which was a Tibeto-Burman language, in order to ascertain the plausibility of the different datings of Tönpa Shenrab we must establish the time of arrival of Tibeto-Burman languages to the region of Mount Kailāśā and Western Tibet in general, perhaps as far as Ladakh (Wylie, *la dvags*). Alejandro Gutman and Beatriz Avanzati (2013) write:

“The ancestral language [predating current Chinese and Tibeto-Burman languages], Proto-Sino-Tibetan, would have been spoken to the east of the Tibetan Plateau, perhaps in the Yellow River valley, at least 6,000 years ago (a time-depth comparable to that of Proto-Indo-European). From there, migrations to the west and south carried what would become the Bodish or Tibetan languages to Tibet, while a different wave of migrations from the homeland, in a southwesterly direction, following the river valleys down into Myanmar, India, and Nepal, produced the other branches of the family.”

According to Cordaux, Weiss, Saha & Stoneking (2004), the arrival of Tibeto-Burman speakers and hence languages to Northeast India occurred not longer than 2,100 BC:

“...Our coalescence analysis suggests that the expansion of Tibeto-Burman speakers to northeast India most likely took place within the past 4,200 years...”

Even if we assume that the migrations from the region “to the east of the Tibetan Plateau, perhaps in the Yellow River valley” to Eastern, Central and Western Tibet, were earlier than migrations to our time's Northeast India, the establishment of a Tibeto-Burman speaking people in the region of Mount Kailāśā by 16,000 BCE (or before, since the ethnic community to which Tönpa Shenrab belonged must have been established in the region where he was born by the time of his birth and probably long before that) would have been simply impossible, and hence 16,000 BCE would have been an impossible dating for Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche. On the other hand, 1,800 BCE, which is the dating calculated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, seems quite plausible for a Tibeto-Burmese speaker to have been born in the area in which tradition tells us that Tönpa Shenrab was born.

For their part, most Buddhist Masters give us a much later date for the origin of Bönpo Dzogchen, which they claim originated about the eighth century CE, for according to them at the time Bön assimilated Buddhist teachings in Tibet (some of them claiming that Shenrab Miwoche lived in the eighth century CE and that he was the Master who appropriated the teachings of Buddhist Dzogchen). A Bönpo tradition that Bönpo Master Lopön Tenzin Namdak has communicated to his disciples also posits a genetic link between Buddhist and Bönpo Dzogchen, but asserts transmission to have taken place in the opposite direction: Buddhist Dzogchen would have derived from Bönpo Dzogchen, for in truth Garab Dorje would have been the famous Bönpo Dzogchen Master Rasang Tapihritsa (Wylie, *ra sangs ta pi hri tsa*), who would have given teachings to a group of Buddhist Masters, thereby giving rise to the Buddhist transmission of Dzogchen Atiyoga. Other Bönpos (whose views were quoted in Namkhai Norbu, 1997, p. 27) have identified Garab Dorje with Zhang-zhung Garab, the thirteenth link in the lineage of the Oral Transmission of Dzogchen of Shang Shung. The view I deem most reasonable and methodologically sound is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's. Concerning the claims that the Dzogchen of the Bönpos derived from Buddhist Dzogchen, this Master and scholar tells us that this is not so: Bönpo Dzogchen was taught by Shenrab Miwoche long before the rise of Buddhism, but rather than doing so eighteen thousand years ago, he did so around 1,800 BC (moreover, the Dzogchen teachings transmitted by Shenrab were extremely simple and succinct, and as such they contrast with the sophistication of present day Buddhist Dzogchen). Concerning the claims that Buddhist Dzogchen derived from Bönpo Dzogchen, this Master tells us that whoever may be interested in asserting this hypothesis would have to demonstrate it with scientifically sound evidence—but that presently there is no evidence whatsoever that may sustain this thesis.

⁵²⁴ In Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, ed., unpublished) Rinpoche asserts the town of Khyunglung (Wylie, *khyung lung*) to be the capital of Zhang zhung as a whole. However, a more recent work by the same Master on the kingdom or empire of Zhang zhung—namely *The Light of Kailāśā*, Vol. I (Namkhai Norbu, 2012) asserts Zhang zhung to have included Persia, where he seems to place its capital—even though he continues to assert the region of Mount Kailāśā to be the place where the Primordial Revealer Shenrab Miwoche taught the Dzogchen Zhangzhung Nyengyü (Wylie, *rdzogs chen zhang zhung snyan rgyud*), which is the seminal Dzogchen of Bön.

⁵²⁵ Śaivism was the religion of the Dravidians—i.e. of the pre-Indo-European civilization that thrived in the Indus valley. It was centered in the god Śiva and it is supposed to have featured the methods that later on became associated with Tantrism. After the Indo-European invasion, Śaivism was replaced by the Vedic religion, which implemented the Caste system, ending the egalitarianism and the celebration of the body and its impulses proper to Śaivism and introducing a tight sexual repression. Then at some point Hinduism was compounded, which featured the god Śiva as the Destroyer (of illusion) in a trinity in which Brahmā was the Creator and Viṣṇu was the Conserver. Of these three only Śiva was not an Indo-European deity.

⁵²⁶ Tucci writes (p. 214):

“[The evolution of Bön into a sophisticated, elaborate structure of teachings] took place under the influence, not only of Buddhism, but also of other religious concepts and doctrines, knowledge of which the Tibetans owed to their Central Asian conquests, and to their contacts with China and India. The Bön traditions themselves preserve allusions to particular places of origin of the most famous masters and codifiers of their doctrine. Areas named include Bru zha (Gilgit and neighboring regions) and Zhang zhung, a geographical term normally used for West Tibet but which also served as the name of a very much larger region extending from the west of the country to the north and north-east (a region within which eight main languages and twenty-four less important languages were spoken). In addition masters from Ka che (Kashmir), from China and from the Sum pa are named. Gilgit (the same goes for Kashmir) indicates an area whose religion was strongly affected by Śaivism, and in the immediate neighborhood of which, in Hunza, gnostic teachings of origin both Iranian and Shaivite had spread. These gnostic teachings found their expression in a famous book of the Ismaili schools, and enjoyed great popularity in this area. Zhang zhung also, that vast frontier land, was destined to transmit not only its indigenous religious ideas but also the echoes of foreign concepts. The Bönpo tradition also knows a country called Tagzig (sTag gzig), a name which in Tibetan literature refers to the Iranian (or Iranian-speaking) world, or even the world of Islam. From all this we can deduce the influence of Śaivism in the doctrinal field... Admittedly some agreements with Shaivite ideas can be explained indirectly through the mediation of Dzogchen (rDzogs chen); in other words they may have taken place after this sect, which had much in common with Śaivism, had exerted an influence on the systematization of the Bönpo teachings. Other, clearly older, elements indicate perceptible influences of Iranian beliefs, especially, it would seem, those of Zurvanism (cf. Gabain, A. von [1961], *Das uigurische Königreich von Chotscho 850-1250. Sitzungsberichte Dtsch. AdW zy Berlin, Kl.f.Sprachen, Literatur u. Kunst, Jg. 1961 Nr.5, Berlin*).”

Tucci acknowledges that all that he wrote in this chapter was based on Bönpo literature available before 1970. And in fact, upon coming to Italy at Tucci's invitation, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu challenged most of the ideas expressed in this quotation, for the direction Tucci ascribes to the influences between traditions often was not the correct one: compare with the quotation from Namkhai Norbu (Chögyal) 1997 below in the regular text and the continuation of the quotation in one of the immediately following notes. (Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has also noted that the land of Drusha [the correct spelling of the term is Bru sha rather than Bru zha] roughly corresponded to the present ex-Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan.)

At any rate, it is significant that Tucci acknowledges that the posterior doctrines of the Buddhist Tantras were already present in ancient Bön. He writes (pp. 221-222):

“Often the primal state of nonbeing or of the pure potentiality of being consists simply of a light—an indication of the extremely ancient origin of the ‘photism’, that doctrine of light, which was later organized into a theoretical system through the Tantras, but which had long been an object of reflection for the Tibetans, who had populated their indigenous Olympus with numerous gods of light.”

Is it so strange and difficult to accept that the teachings of the Tantras may have come from Tibet? In Bharati (1972), we are told that the Śaiva Hindu Tantric tradition contains three Tantras that assert that the Tantric methods were imported into India from Bhoṭa (a term that still today is used in Nepal and some regions of North India in order to refer to Tibet, for in Nepal Tibetans are referred to despairingly as Bothe), Cina (China) and Mahācina (Great China). Moreover, D. C. Bhattacharya (in Tan Chung, ed. 1998, p. 198), acknowledges that Bhoṭa is Tibet and quotes the *Tantratattvasamuccaya*—a Nepalese work—as saying that the people of Bhoṭa are called lamas and are associated with the Kambojatantra, whereas those of Mahācina—which in the preceding page the author associated with non-Tibetan Central Asia—are called vratyas and are associated with the Misratantra (however, the Kamboja people

has been associated with the Sakas and with Balkh or Bactria). According to one of these stories, Brahmā's own son had been meditating for one thousand years by the sea, yet had not managed to obtain the vision of the goddess; therefore the yogin went to his father for advise, and Brahmā told him to go to the countries in question in order to seek the Tantric teachings. Also in the other two Tantras referred to by Bharati the hero of the story is advised to seek the Tantric methods in those countries. It must be noted that according to two of those Tantras it was Śiva who, in the form of Buddha, was teaching the Tantras in Bhoṭa, whereas according to the other of the three Tantras it was Viṣṇu who, in the form of Buddha, was teaching them.

Likewise, it is important to remember that the tradition of the Kānphaṭa yogins and their lay associates, the Ughyur, derives from Macchendranātha and his disciple Gorakhnātha (cf. Briggs, 1974), both of whom are listed by the Tantric Buddhist tradition as two of its own 84 mahāsiddhas (cf. e.g. Dowman, Ed. and Trans. 1985). (There is also a myth according to which a Buddhist mahāsiddha attained realization by applying the secrets that Śiva transmitted to his consort, Pārvatī, which he had overheard by swimming under the floating home of the famed god and goddess; however, this might as well be intended to suggest that Buddhism took its Tantric teachings from a pre-existing tradition, common to Bön, Śaivism and other traditions. At any rate, in the lack of solid, concrete proofs demonstrating that the Buddhist Vajrayāna and the Buddhist Dzogchen were the result of the assimilation by Buddhism of pre-existing non-Buddhist traditions, we must continue to assume that they originated independently of such traditions.)

For his part Abhinavagupta, the master who reintroduced and/or revitalized Kashmiri Śaivism, had among his fifteen plus teachers at least one Buddhist master (Pandey, 2d revised and enlarged ed. 1963; Reynolds, 1996). This is extremely important, because Kashmiri Śaivism is widely seen as the most authentic form of Śaivism, in the sense of being most faithful to original Śaivism, and its Kashmiri form is the one that Tucci posited as the source of Buddhist Dzogchen: moreover, it was in that variety of Śaivism that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (E. Capriles, ed. unpublished) identified a series of terms having a clear Tibeto-Burman etymology and a clear Dzogchen origin. Note it was during the eighth century CE that Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and shortly thereafter Pagor Bērotsana (Wylie, ba gor bē ro tsa na) taught Dzogchen in Tibet, and was just over one century after that time that Abhinavagupta and his Buddhist teacher lived. At any rate, Abhinavagupta's time was also that of the rise of the Sarma or New Buddhist schools in Tibet, and Rinchen Zangpo himself (Wylie, rin chen bzang po: 958-1055)—the master who initiated the New Translations—travelled to Kashmir, where he studied under and received transmission from his main teacher, Śrāddhakaravarman, and then proceeded to (other parts of) India and studied with several important teachers.

⁵²⁷ As we know, in the language of Oḍḍiyāna, Ati, meaning “primordial,” is an abbreviation of Atiyoga, the name of Dzogchen qua vehicle, corresponding to the Path of Spontaneous Liberation. Chiti (Wylie, spyi ti) is the name given to the more general methods of Ati and in particular to certain terma (Wylie, gter ma) teachings transmitting methods considered more essential and important than the more common ones of that tradition. In turn, the terma teachings of the Yangthik (Wylie, yang thig) are deemed even more important than the ones called “Chiti.”

⁵²⁸ The English version of this book (Namkhai Norbu, 2004) reads “apex” instead of “final aim.” I kept the term “final aim” that appears in the Italian version (Namkhai Norbu, Chögyal, 1997) because “apex” conveys the idea that Śākyamuni's himself taught Dzogchen, which is certainly not the case.

⁵²⁹ Chögyal Namkhai Norbu goes on:

“Some could object that Dzogchen arose in Oḍḍiyāna and that therefore it could not have been taught by Shenrab Miwoche. The origin of the Dzogchen [of the Buddhist tradition] no doubt has its source in the Master from Oḍḍiyāna Garab Dorje, and Oḍḍiyāna has been traditionally considered as the birthplace of all Buddhist Anuttaratāntras, but it is difficult to establish the precise geographical location of this country.

“Many Western scholars have identified Oḍḍiyāna with the Swat region of Pakistan, and other scholars are still carrying out research in this regard, but all ancient sources agree in localizing Oḍḍiyāna vaguely at the North-West of India. Likewise, the legendary country of Shambhala [referred to in] Buddhist literature has never been really identified, but by examining the texts that refer to it we would be led to place it in the same region as Oḍḍiyāna. In many texts it is explained that at some point Oḍḍiyāna and Shambhala became pure dimensions, disappearing from ordinary vision, but in truth it seems more

logical to think those countries were conquered by Turkish Islamic peoples that in some texts are called Turuka. Therefore, all Buddhists were converted to Islam and the Buddhist teachings and the various branches of their culture were radically annihilated. Later on, with the passing of time, all traces of the history and even of the existence of this civilization were lost. Consequently, it is likely that the countries known in antiquity as Oḍḍiyāna and Shambhala, where the Indian siddhas went overcoming countless risks and difficulties, belonged to Zhang-zhung or bordered on it. This in turn could lead to speculate that the archaic Dzogchen taught by Shenrab Miwoche may have later on developed [as Buddhist Dzogchen], because in the history of the Oral Transmission of Zhang-zhung we read that the thirteenth Master of the Dzogchen lineage having its source in Shenrab Miwoche was a certain Zhang-zhung Garab, who could have been the same person as Garab Dorje, whereas the tradition of the “Twelve Primordial Masters” quoted in Buddhist Dzogchen literature could have derived from the lineage of twelve Masters who preceded Zhang-zhung Garab in the lineage of the Dzogchen of Zhang-zhung.

“These hypotheses simply outlined could surprise and disturb many Tibetan scholars, but it is indispensable to research and reflect accurately concerning the true origins of the culture and the spiritual traditions of Tibet.

“At any rate, the true principle of the Dzogchen teaching is Knowledge, that is, the Understanding of the Primordial State, natural and unmodified, of each and every individual, male or female. Therefore Dzogchen cannot be assimilated to a religion or a philosophical doctrine, nor to the content of some sacred scriptures. Ancient Dzogchen texts assert that also among primitive peoples, where the Buddhist teachings never arrived, there could be many yogins and yoginīs possessing the perfect knowledge of the state of Dzogchen. Hence one should not be surprised that, both in Bön and in Buddhism, there may be teachings that explain how to realize this state of true Knowledge, and there is no need to keep the limited mentality of wanting to attribute by all means the origins of Dzogchen to Bön or to the Nyingma [Buddhist] tradition. Dzogchen is a knowledge that transcends the limits of time: in fact, it is said that countless Masters possessing this Knowledge and their teachings are present throughout the universe. In particular, the Tantra All-surpassing Sound (Tib. Drataljur [Wylie, sgra thal ’gyur]) asserts that the Dzogchen teaching is diffused in thirteen dimensions called thalwa (Wylie, thal ba) or “beyond our solar system.” Therefore, it is fundamental to surpass the sectarianism of a limited vision.”

Concerning the assertion that after the Islamic invasion all Buddhists from Oḍḍiyāna and Shambhala were converted to Islam and the Buddhist teachings and the various branches of their culture were radically annihilated, so that later on, with the passing of time, all traces of the history and even of the existence of this civilization were lost, it must be noted that some of the Buddhist Masters who were given the choice of dying or converting to Islam opted for the second possibility as a means to give continuity to their own soteriological traditions within Šūfīsm (the esoteric tradition within Islam, which thrived especially among Sunnī [سُنِّي] Islam) and the Ismā’īlī tradition (the most esoteric branch of Shi’ah [شيعَة] Islam, often regarded as heterodox and even as non-Islamic). Sayed Idries Shah, who was the head of the Khwājagān (Naqshbandī) school of Sufism, writes (Shah, 1964, Spanish translation 1975, p. 197):

“Jabir Ibn el-Hayyam was for a very long time an intimate associate of the Barmakies (or Barmecides), viziers to Harun ar-Rashid. These Barmakies were descendants from the priests of the Afghani Buddhist temples, and it was believed that they possessed the ancient teaching that had been transmitted to them from that area...”

According to Shah, Jabir Ibn el-Hayyam transmitted to his Šūfī disciples the doctrines he received from the Barmakies, which therefore had their continuity within Šūfīsm. But what does the term Barmakies mean? In Parain (Director of the collection, 1969, Spanish translation 1972, p. 244), we read:

“Associated with the region of Bactria (or Zariaspa) and its capital, Bactra (or Bactra-Zariaspa = Balkh), are the names of the Barmakies (Barmecides), who gave a determinant impulse to the penetration of Iranianism in the Abbaside court and to the ascension of this Iranian family to the first ranks of the Caliphate (750-804). Their name comes from the term Barmak, which designated the hereditary dignity of the supreme priest of the Buddhist temple of Nawbahar (in Sanskrit, Nova Bihara, “New Monastery”) in Balkh, which later on legend transformed into the “Temple of Fire.” In Balkh, the “mother of cities” (destroyed, and then reconstructed in 726 by the Barmak), there co-existed the Greek, Buddhist, Mazdean, Manichean and Nestorian Christian cultures, accumulated in the course of the centuries. Mathematics and astronomy, astrology and alchemy, medicine and mineralogy, and, next to

these sciences, a vast apocryphal literature, saw their birth in the cities located in the great route to the East, which Alexander had traveled in the past. From these cities, beginning in the middle of the eighth century, astronomers, astrologers, physicians and alchemists moved to the new center of spiritual life created by Islam.”

With regard to Śūfism, it must be born in mind that Khwājagān (Naqshbandī) Śūfis have a most secret “Swift Path” that might perhaps have some genetic relation to the Dzogchen Atiyogatantrayāna that had been transmitted by Buddhists Masters in Oḍḍiyāna and Bactria, and possibly also in Sogdīa and so on. With regard to the Ismā‘īlī connection, it may perhaps be relevant to mention that Shah also tells us that (Shah, 1964, Spanish translation 1975, p. 197):

“Who was Jafar Sadiq, teacher of [the great Sufi Master and alchemist] Jabir [Ibn el-Hayyam]? No one less than the Sixth Imam [of Islam]. . .”

For an ampler discussion of all of this and an exploration of possible connections between Dzogchen and Western traditions via Śūfism cf. Capriles (2011a).

⁵³⁰ Creel (1970, I, p. 22) and Watts (1975, written in 1973 with the collaboration of Al Chung-Liang Huang, p. 91) note that in the Bào pǔ zǐ (抱朴子; Wade-Giles, Pao⁴ P¹u²-tzu³) or Nèi piān (內篇; Wade-Giles, Nei⁴-p’ien¹), Gě hóng (葛洪; Wade-Giles, Ko³-hung²) tells us that Zhuāng zǐ (莊子; Wade-Giles, Chuang¹-tzu³) . . .

“...says that life and death are just the same, brands the effort to preserve life as laborious servitude, and praises death as a rest: this doctrine is separated by millions of miles from that of [the] shen-hsien (holy immortals).”

(A partial English translation of Gě hóng’s writings appeared in 1967 in the book now available as Ware, trans. 1981.)

⁵³¹ As noted above, what Herrlee G. Creel (1970) called “Contemplative Daoism” and that I have called “Daoism of Unorigination” encompassed the teachings and praxis of Lǎo zǐ (老子; Wade-Giles, Lao³-tzu³), Zhuāng zǐ (莊子; Wade-Giles, Chuang¹-tzu³) and Liè zǐ (列子; Wade-Giles, Lieh⁴-tzu³)—and, I believe, the Masters of Huáinán (淮南; Wade-Giles, Huai²-nan²) as well. I have not found the metaphor of the snake shedding its skin or any reference to any of the special modes of death resulting from Dzogchen practice in the extant texts attributed to these Masters. However, as shown in the main text of this note, the Primordial Revealer of Bönpo Dzogchen (Wylie, bon po rdzogs chen), Shenrab Miwoche (Wylie, gshen rab mi bo che), had disciples from China, India, Kashmir, and Persia or surrounding areas, who diffused their Master’s teachings in their respective countries. In this light, the coincidence between the views of Daoism (Taoism) of Unorigination and those of Dzogchen, and the fact that some forms of Daoism used the image of the snake shedding its skin, may be taken to suggest that Daoism of Unorigination derived from Dzogchen Atiyoga via Shenrab Miwoche’s Chinese disciple (whose Tibetan name was, as we have seen, Legtang Mangpo). Were it true that Unorigination Daoism led to the attainment of the body of light, since the latter can only be attained through spontaneous perfection / self-rectification / spontaneous accomplishment (Tib. lhundrub [Wylie, lhun-grub]), which is utterly beyond action and as such may correspond to the Daoist principles of wú wéi (無為; Wade-Giles wu²-wei²: nonaction), wéi wú wéi (為無為; Wade-Giles wei²-wu²-wei²: action through nonaction) or zì rán (自然; Wade-Giles tzu⁴-jan²: spontaneity or “self-so”), the relevant practice must have been based on the principle of spontaneous liberation rather than on that of Tantric transformation or on that of Sutric renunciation, which do not lead to the special modes of death. (The fact that in the extant texts of Daoism of Unorigination there is no reference to the snake shedding its skin or any other of the four modes of death attained through Dzogchen practice, or to the methods for attaining these modes of death, could be explained by the fact that these texts were intended to be public treatises, which should not deal with the innermost methods of this type of Daoism and their results.)

Most scholars associate the image of the snake that sheds its skin with what Creel termed Xiān (神仙; Wade-Giles, hsien¹) or Shén xiān (神仙; Wade-Giles, shen²-hsien¹) Daoism, which since the eighth century BCE has been using generative means comprising visualization, recitation, retention of the seed-essence, erotic relationships, alchemy, breathing exercises, diet and so on, in order to prolong the human lifespan and allegedly produce an immortal body (since, as shown in the main text of this note, this is impossible because whatever is produced, created, born, compounded or conditioned is impermanent, in general practitioners of this form of Daoism felt satisfied with attaining long lifespans). This system must have been concocted by deluded individuals who, after seceding from Daoism of

Unorigination, appropriated methods from Tantrism or analogous doctrines in order to pursue aims contrary, not only to those of Daoism of Unorigination and Dzogchen, but to those of Tantrism as well. Furthermore, as stated in the regular text of this section, after seceding from Daoism of Unorigination, Hsien pseudo-masters turned against the greatest Masters of the latter form of Daoism.

However, as shown in the regular text, the term *shénxiān* (神仙; Wade-Giles, *shen²-hsien¹*) and the image of the snake that sheds its skin were not exclusive to so-called Hsien Taoists such as *Gěhóng* (葛洪; Wade-Giles, *Ko³-hung²*) and his like. In fact, in the doctrines of what later on came to be known as *Quánzhēn* (全真; Wade-Giles, *Chuan²-chen¹*: Complete Reality) Daoism, there seemed to coincide the views (and therefore perhaps also the methods) of what I have called Daoism of Unorigination—which rather than proposing that we create or produce something, exhort us to discover our unborn and undying true nature or condition of everything—with the image of the snake that sheds its skin and with the use of the term “holy immortal” or *shénxiān* to refer to those who attain the highest realization possible. As also shown in the regular text, if the hypothesis according to which Daoists of Unorigination practiced Dzogchen and therefore had the possibility of attaining the body of light (which as we have seen is the attainment illustrated with the image of the snake that sheds its skin) were correct, *Quánzhēn* Daoism may have been the form of Daoism that in later times gave continuity to the views, doctrines and practices of the Daoism of Unorigination (independently of whether or not it maintained the original doctrines and methods and therefore could lead to the body of light).

In fact, *Quánzhēn* Daoism made it perfectly clear that in their system “becoming an immortal” did not refer to the production of a new conditioned state or condition. According to the eighteenth century commentator *Líu Yīmíng* (劉一明; Wade-Giles, *Liu I-ming*) (*Liu I-ming*, trans. Thomas Cleary, 1988), the term referred to the unveiling of the pure and perfect primordial (“pre-natal”) awareness that... “is not born and does not die.” In *Quánzhēn* terminology this primordial state is variously referred to as the “precious pearl,” the “pre-natal mind,” the “triplex unity of essence, energy, and spirit” (essence, nature and energy?) or simply the “Way” (*Dào*: 道; Wade-Giles *Tao⁴*). *Líu Yīmíng* tells us that “awake or asleep, it is always there,” and the same applies to stillness and movement, which are the *yīn* (陰; Wade-Giles, *yin¹*) and *yáng* (陽; Wade-Giles, *yang²*)—passive and creative, dark and light, empty and full—facets of the ever-present primordial state, comparable to waves rising and falling on the sea, or wind stirring the air. *Líu Yīmíng* describes the realization of the primordial condition as “a stateless state... tranquil and unstirring, yet sensitive and effective—call on it and it responds [with movement]; in quietude it is [perfectly] clear.” Since movement is an indivisible aspect of the primordial state, in order to integrate it, Daoism has *tàijíquán* (太極拳; Wade-Giles, *t'ai⁴-chi²-ch'üan²*), the eight pieces of brocade, and other moving *Qìgōng* (氣功; Wade-Giles, *Ch'i⁴-kung¹*) forms.

For a period, the aspiring *Quánzhēn* adept retires from the world and goes into seclusion in the mountains in order to practice the teachings and attain spontaneous perfection—a process known as *Xiūdào* (修道; Wade-Giles, *hsiou¹-tao⁴*: “cultivating the Way”). Finally, when the “complete reality” of *Dào* (道; Wade-Giles *Tao⁴*) has been realized, the adept “returns to the towns and markets” to apply the Way “among ordinary people” in all the myriad activities of daily life. Despite the fact that, as noted above, *Quánzhēn* Daoism referred to its own realized ones as *shen-hsien*, the contrast between this system and that of *Gěhóng* and other forgers is further evidenced by the following words by *Líu Yīmíng*: “The *Dào* is a treasure... having nothing to do with material alchemy. It is utterly simple, utterly easy... It is completely spiritual, true goodness. The ridiculous thing is that foolish people seek mysterious marvels, when they do not know enough to preserve the mysterious marvel that is actually present.” (Quotes from *Líu Yīmíng* were taken from Reid (2002/2003), who for his part took them from *Liu I-ming* (trans. Thomas Cleary, 1988).

For a more extensive discussion of this matter, cf. Capriles (2009a).

⁵³² In fact, the paradigmatic expression of *thiñle* (Wylie, *phrin las*) and *dzepa* (Wylie, *mdzad pa*) qua manifestations of the dynamics of the *lhundrub* aspect of the Base, is the dynamics of *rölpa* (Wylie, *rol pa*) energy in the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. *chönyi bardo* [Wylie, *chos nyid bar do*]) known as *thiñle drakpo* (Wylie, *phrin las drag po*), as they manifest in the practices of *Thögel* and the *Yangthik*. *Longchenpa* and *Rongzompa* do not coincide in their usages of the two terms; cf. *Longchenpa's Tekchog* (Wylie, *theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod I*, p. 17, II, pp. 47ff) and *Rongzompa's Rongdrel* (Wylie, *rong 'grel: rgyud rgyal gsang ba snying po'i 'grel pa dkon cos 'grel*, fol. 115a). Cf. also *Yungtön Dorje Päl Zangpo* (Wylie, *gyung ston rdo rje dpal*

bzang po), Sälche Melong (Wylie, gsal byed me long [dpal gsang ba snying po'i rgyud don gsal byed me long], fols. 163a f.), whose interpretations are widely accepted. For a discussion of interpretations in these texts, cf. Guenther (1984, pp. 251 note 27, 277 note 3 and 278 note 8).

⁵³³ As shown in a previous note, there are quite different dates for Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche, ranging from some sixteen thousand years BC to the eighth century CE.

In Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, English 1999, Note 244 by Adriano Clemente, p. 215, we read: The traditional lineage of the rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud is as follows: Kun tu bzang po, gShen lha 'od dkar, rGyal ba gShen rab, Tshad med 'od ldan, 'Phrul gshen snang ldan, Bar snang khu byug, bZang bza' ring btsun, 'Chi med gtsug phud, gSang ba 'dus pa, Yong su dag pa.

⁵³⁴ In Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, English 1999, Note 247 by Adriano Clemente, p. 217, we are told that in Tibetan the twelve verses read: rang rig gnyug ma kun gyi gzhi / rtsol bral bgrod med lhun grub lam / ci bzhin lhun grub 'bras bu ste / yang dag don la lta ru med / yang dag don la bsgom du med / yang dag don la spyod du med / sems kyi dpe ni nam mkha' 'dra / sems kyi rtags ni sems nyid yin / sems kyi don ni bon nyid do / skye ba med pa'i bon dbyings na / 'gag pa med pa'i ye shes gnas / skye 'gag gnyis med thig le gcig. Their translation in full is:

Regarding the condition of the base, (op. 24, p. 171, 5) says:

“One’s original state of rigpa is the base of everything.”

Regarding the nature of the path, (op. 24: p. 171, 5) says:

“The path is spontaneously perfect / self-rectifying / self-accomplishing beyond effort and progress.”

Regarding the nature of the fruit, (op.24: p.171, 5) says:

“The fruit is spontaneously perfect in its own condition.”

Thus is explained the nature of base, path and fruit.

Regarding the nature of the Vision (Tib. tawa [Wylie, lta ba], (op. 24: p. 171, 5) says:

“In terms of the real meaning there is no view to uphold.”

Regarding the nature of Contemplation, (op. 24: p. 172, 1) says:

“In terms of the real meaning there is nothing to meditate or contemplate.”

Regarding the nature of the Behavior, (op. 24; p. 172, 1) says:

“In terms of the real meaning there is no conduct to adopt.”

Thus is explained the nature of view, meditation and behavior.

Regarding the nature of the example, (op. 24: p. 172, 1) says:

“The example of mind is space.”

Regarding the nature of the characteristic sign, (op. 24: p. 172, 1) says:

“The characteristic sign of mind is the essence or nature of mind.”

Regarding the nature of the meaning, (op. 24: p. 172, 1) says:

“The meaning of mind is the ultimate nature of phenomena.”

This is the explanation of the nature of the example, of the characteristic sign and of the meaning.

Regarding the nature of the unborn, of the uninterrupted and of the non-duality between birth and cessation, (op. 24: p. 172, 1) says:

“In the ultimate unborn dimension

Abides primordial gnosis without interruption,

The single sphere beyond the duality of birth and cessation.”

⁵³⁵ In Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, English 1999, Note 249 by Adriano Clemente, p. 217, we read: “Gyer chen snang bzher lod po* ([Cherchen Nangzher Löpo], seventh to eighth centuries CE) received the teachings of the Zhang zhung snyan brgyud from a nirmāṇakāya manifestation of the ‘rainbow body’ (’ja’ lus) of Tapihritsa, a teacher who had lived some centuries earlier.” Therefore those interested in asserting that Dzogchen leaked into the Bön tradition from Buddhist Dzogchen could adduce that Cherchen Nangzher Löpo received Dzogchen teachings from Buddhist Masters and then put their essence into writing, claiming that he had received them from a nirmāṇakāya manifestation of the ‘rainbow body’ (Tib. jalü [Wylie, ’ja’ lus]) of Tapihritsa.

*The Wylie transliteration of this name had to be amended; in the original it appeared as “Gyer chen snang bzhed lhod po.”

⁵³⁶ Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991; Trans.: G. Dorje and M. Kapstein. pp. 706-7) notes that he possessed both the instructions of seven successive Masters of India and those of seven successive Masters of

China, and notes that it was from him that the Kham tradition of the Semde series of Dzogchen teachings arose (which continued through Chokro Zangkar Dzökur and Yazı Pöntön, to Rongzompa).

⁵³⁷ As previously remarked, different types of Akaniṣṭha are spoken of according to the different manifestations of wisdom.

⁵³⁸ Keep in mind that, in many texts of the Dzogchen Atiyoga, the term dagnyi chenpo (Wylie, bdag nyid chen po; Skt. mahātma), which could be translated as “total I-ness,” is used to refer in a poetic and metaphorical way to the single true condition of all individuals and of all entities in the universe (which would be inexpressible in literal terms), in order to emphasize the fact that there is nothing external to this single true condition. This usage of the term occurs in root Tantras of the Dzogchen Atiyoga, and in particular in the root Tantra of the Series of [the Essence or Nature of] Mind (Tib. Semde [Wylie, sems sde]; Skt. Cittavarga) series of Dzogchen, the Kunje Gyälpo, in which it recurs throughout the text (cf. Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, English 1999). Since this Tantra exists in English and so the reader may easily confirm the facts by reading the book, let me quote another example of this way of using the term “I,” which appears in Tibetan Text 18:

“Great Master, we See the I.”

The most ancient Dzogchen texts from the Bön tradition, on the one hand, and the Śaiva tradition, on the other, designated the true condition of everything as “I.” In order to make it more difficult for people to conceive of this true condition as a substance, or for them to attribute anthropomorphic characteristics to it such as those that monotheistic religions attribute to their God, in Buddhism the existence of a universal “I” is negated, and a great emphasis is placed on the concept of selflessness or “not-I” (Skt. anātman / nairātmya; Pāli anattā; Tib. dagme [Wylie, bdag med]; Ch. 無我 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, wúwǒ; Wade-Giles, wu²-wo³]). Nevertheless, neither of the two terminologies—the one that designates the true condition of everything as “I” and the one that emphasizes that an “I” may not be spoken of in this respect—is either totally correct or totally incorrect. In fact, as the master Buddhapālita put it in the Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti (cf. Guenther, Herbert V. 1957, 2d. Ed. 1974):

“A position (Skt. pakṣa; Tib. phyog [Wylie, phyogs]) implies a counter-position (Skt. pratipakṣa; Tib. nyenpo [Wylie, gnyen po]), and neither of them is true.”

As we have seen, no concept can correspond exactly to the true essence and nature of everything, for every concept is defined per genus proximum et differentiam specificam, and this implies that the concept necessarily has to establish a limit in order to exclude something that could not be included in it unless it were destroyed qua concept (which, as Buddhapālita pointed out well, implies that it has to have its counterposition or pratipakṣa). Therefore, if a concept is used to refer to this true condition, it is indispensable to keep in mind that it cannot be totally precise, and that the opposite concept would be just as valid and as imprecise as the one we have chosen to refer to it: it is equally valid and at the same time equally imprecise to designate the true condition as “I” as to call it “not-I,” for the first of these terms implies that there is something “other” in relation to it, which is erroneous, while the second implies that it is “other” with respect to itself, which is equally erroneous.

⁵³⁹ The “lords of the three families” (Tib. **rigsumgyi lha** [Wylie, rigs gsum gyi lha]) are: Ārya Mañjuśrī (from the tathāgata family), Ārya Avalokiteśvara (from the padma family) and Śrī Guhyapati Vajrapāṇi (from the vajra family), who represent, respectively, the essence of the three vajras—Body, Voice and Mind—of all Awake ones. In the cycle Desheg kagye (Wylie, bde gshegs bka’ brgyad) from the Old School tradition they correspond to Mañjuśrī the Body (Tib. Jampelku [Wylie, ’jam dpal sku]), Lotus the Voice (Tib. Pemasung [Wylie, pad ma gsung]) and Great Glorious Awake Awareness (Tib. Yangdakthug [Wylie, yang dag thugs]). According to the texts, these three Masters transmitted the teachings to gods, nāgas, yakṣas, rākṣasas and humans.

⁵⁴⁰ An example of this type of classification of the lineages of the kama transmission is what is known as **do gyü sem sum** (Wylie, mdo rgyud sems gsum), which distinguishes between: (1) the gyü (Wylie, rgyud) section of Mahāyoga, which is the one containing the eighteen Tantric cycles of this vehicle, which has the Guhyagarbha Tantra as its root text; (2) the do (Wylie, mdo) or sūtra (a term that in this case does not refer to the sūtras of the Path of Renunciation, but to Anuyoga Tantras) section, which comprises five texts, and which has as its root text the Düpe do (Wylie, ’dus-pa’i mdo); (3) the sem (Wylie, sems) section, which includes the three subdivisions of Dzogchen Atiyoga.

If we took the first of the groups referred to above as an example, it would have to be noted that the Buddha Śākyamuni’s had prophesized the manifestation, after his parinirvāṇa (physical death of a Buddha), of

an “essential doctrine that Śrī Guhyapati Vajrapāṇi would reveal to King Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna” (it is not clear which of the Kings bearing this name received this transmission, but since the one in question was a contemporary of the mahāsiddha Kukurāja [the “Lord of the dogs”], to whom he transmitted this lineage, it is presumed that it must have been an intermediate Indrabhūti). After the king had marvelous dreams foretelling something exceptional, he received the volumes of the eighteen Mahāyoga Tantras (the root Tantra, which is the Guhyagarbha; the five principal Tantras; the five Tantras of sādhana [which should not be confused with the eight sādhana of the section with this same name]; the five Tantras of action, and the two supplementary Tantras). As we have seen, Indrabhūti transmitted this lineage to Kukurāja, and then it continued to pass through successive links until it was established in Tibet, where it has continued to be transmitted until our days.

⁵⁴¹ Even the present day Dzogchen teachings of the Bön tradition originate from Garab Dorje, because, with the passing of time, the Bönpos gradually appropriated the totality of the teachings of all Nyingmapa vehicles, until, finally, they came to have a canon nearly identical to that of the Old School of Tibetan Buddhism (including the totality of the Buddhist Sūtras and Tantras). Since the Buddhist Dzogchen teachings were far more sophisticated than the Bönpo ones, after having received them the Bönpos seem to have gradually forgotten their own, much older Dzogchen teachings. (As stated in a previous endnote, some Bönpo Masters, such as Lopön Tendzin Namdak and his disciples, give an inverted account of the above, according to which in reality Garab Dorje was the Bönpo Master Tapihritsa, and the teachings of Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna and Atiyogatantrayāna Buddhism were all introduced by Bönpo Masters. It is not clear to me whether, according to this view, the Bönpo Masters are supposed to have written their texts in Buddhist terminology because Buddhism had become the official religion in the region of Zhang-zhung where they resided [probably the land that at the time was known as Oḍḍiyāna], or whether they were originally written in Bön terminology and then translated into Buddhist language when the Indian-originated new religion became dominant. However, what is crystal clear to me is that this Bönpo interpretation is not sustained by any historical or archeological evidence, and that so long as this continues to be so this interpretation should be seen as a partisan concoction.)

Nevertheless, not all current Dzogchen Atiyoga teachings originate from Garab Dorje. In particular, the teachings of the Series of Pith Instructions (Tib. Menngag[gyi]de [Wylie, man ngag [gyi] sde]; Skt. Upadeśavarga) series of Dzogchen Atiyoga that Garab Dorje bequeathed us were extremely brief and bare, but the teachings of this section gradually multiplied and became more and more sophisticated as the greatest Masters of each period codified their experience of the practice. It may also be noted that (as will be seen in the second part of the book and was already suggested in a previous footnote), as the teachings of the “vajra bridge” (Tib. Dorje Zampa [Wylie, rdo rje zam pa]) of the Series of Space (Tib. Longde [Wylie, klong sde]) gradually lost their power to rapidly eradicate or neutralize the delusory valorization of subtle and super-subtle thoughts and thereby lead practitioners to levels of realization as complete as the rainbow body, progressively more and more emphasis was placed on the Series of Pith Instructions and in particular on the Nyingthik (Wylie, snying thig), which developed as series of treasure teachings (Tib. terma [Wylie, gter ma]) were successively revealed, and as the greatest Masters codified the instructions they discovered in the course of their own practice. As a consequence of this, supreme forms of realization continue to be common—in particular, the one giving rise to dissolution into space by means of the integration of the thatness (Skt. tathatā; Tib. dezhinnyi [Wylie, de bzhin nyid]) of one’s own intrinsic awareness in the ultimate natural sphere or rangzhin chökyi ying (Wylie, rang bzhin chos kyi dbyings), just like the inner space of a jar fuses with external space when the jar breaks (for an explanation of this, see Part Two of this book). Likewise, the Thögel and Yangthik practices of the Series of Pith Instructions kept on developing and even becoming more precise and sophisticated, so that the body of light (ökyiku [Wylie, ’od kyi sku] or öphung [Wylie, ’od phung]) and perhaps even the total transference (Tib. phowa chenpo [Wylie, ’pho ba chen po]) continue to be real possibilities for practitioners (as already noted, I am not sure about the total transference, for the last case registered was that of Jetsun Senge Wangchuk (Wylie, lce btsun seng ge dbang phyug), who lived between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries CE).

Traditionally, perhaps the most important Nyingthik teachings have been:

(a) Those of the Bima Nyingthik (Wylie, bi mai’i snying thig) originating from Vimalamitra. This great Master transmitted the instructions of the Explanatory Tantras to Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo (Wylie, myang ting ’dzin bzang po), who transmitted the pith instructions to his disciple Dro Rinchenwar

(Wylie, 'bro rin chen 'bar), who bequeathed them to Be Lodrö Wangchuk (Wylie, sbas blo gros dbang phyug), who for his part transmitted them to Dangma Lhungyel (Wylie, ldang ma lhun rgyal) the elder. Seeing that conditions were not right to hand over the root text at that time, Vimalamitra hid it as a treasure teaching (Tib. terma [Wylie, gter ma]) at the Gegung of Chimphu near Samye. For his part, Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo hid the Explanatory Tantras in the Zhwe temple that he built in Uru, and these were later revealed by Dangma Lhungyel the elder, who between the eleventh or twelfth century CE communicated the two forms of the teaching he possessed—the oral instruction and the Explanatory Tantras—to the above-mentioned Jetsun Senge Wangchuk, who as a result of his direct encounters with the vajra body of Vimalamitra, received the Nyingthik teachings directly from him and later revealed the original texts that the latter had concealed in Chimphu—and then, at the age of hundred and twenty five, demonstrated the total transference (Tib. phowa chenpo [Wylie, 'pho-ba chen-po]). Then, at a later stage, Longchen Rabjampa edited these teachings into their present form.

- (b) Those of the (Menngag) Khandro Nyingthik (Wylie, [man ngag] mkha' 'gro snying thig) originating from Padmasambhava. The great Master from Oḍḍiyāna hid the eighteen Tantras of this transmission, which were extensive pith instructions (Skt. upadeśa; Tib. menngag [Wylie, man ngag]), in a rock in lower Bumthang (in the current kingdom of Bhutan), and the profoundly condensed upadeśas in Dwagpo (in the south of current Tibet); the texts in Dwagpo were revealed centuries later by revealer (Tib. tertön [Wylie, gter ston]) Pema Ledreltsel (Wylie, pad ma las 'brel rtsal, who had been recognized as the Tulku of the daughter of King Trisong Detsen to whom Padmasambhava had entrusted them (after her early death, upon summoning her back to life), while the Bumthang texts were revealed later by Longchen Rabjampa (recognized as the Tulku of revealer Pema Ledreltsel), who edited the teachings into their definitive form.
- (b) In our times, the most practiced Nyingthik teachings are perhaps those of the Longchen Nyingthik (Wylie, klong chen snying thig or, to use the complete name, thus gter klong chen snying thig gzhung rtsa ba gsal byed dang bcas pa) revealed by the great revealer (Tib. tertön [Wylie, gter ston]) Jigme Lingpa (who had visions of Longchen Rabjampa, as well as of Mañjuśrīmitra and Padmasambhava, among others).

For an account of the lineages of the Bima Nyingthik and the (Menngag) Khandro Nyingthik, see Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Foreword to: Reynolds (trans., 1996).

⁵⁴² Some teachings of the Sūtrayāna were also transmitted as treasure teachings (Tib. terma [Wylie, gter ma]): as already noted, it is said that Śākyamuni's left the sūtras of the Prajñāpāramitā in the custody of the nāgas for Nāgārjuna to take them out as termas when the times were ripe.

⁵⁴³ This is a well known fact, diffused in the West at a relatively early date thanks to the publication, in Evans-Wentz (ed.; Sangdup, trans. 1954), of the translation of a terma by Padmasambhava revealed by Karma Lingpa. In this publication it is asserted that "the supreme revealer cannot be a eunuch," which is an obligatory reference when presenting the translation of a treasure teachings discovered by that revealer, who died prematurely as a result of not having been able to unite with the consort prophesized to him and not having obtained certain required omens. One of the footnotes from the most recent translation of the same terma of Karma Lingpa, which is Reynolds (1989b), reads (p. 130):

"If a tertön discovers a complete cycle of terma teachings, he must then meet with his secret consort (gsang yum) in order to pursue certain secret practices; and if (the tertön has until then been) a monk, generally he will have to give up the robe and become a ngagpa (sngags pa) or Tantric yogin."

⁵⁴⁴ In Tulku Thöndup's essay "The Terma Tradition" (in Tulku Thöndup, 1995, pp. 100-101) we read:

"Most of the tertöns, before discovering any ter, seem to be ordinary people. They do not necessarily appear as scholars, meditators or tulkus. However, due to their inner spiritual attainments and the transmissions they have received in their past lives, they suddenly begin discovering mystic ters at the appropriate time, without the need of any apparent training. At the beginning, skeptics often raise doubts about these discoveries from such unexpected people. In some cases, a tertön's natural directness and honesty may appear as unconventional or even impolite to those who hold conservative values. But gradually, if they are true ter discoveries, they gain the recognition of higher spiritual authorities and the respect of the people, whom they benefit. It is important to understand this cultural context; otherwise a great tertön may be mistaken for a charlatan. For example, it is unfortunate that a Western author recently disparaged a great tertön of the Nyingma tradition by citing criticism of the tertön by some of his unqualified contemporary detractors and by portraying the tertön's expressions of humility (on the

one hand) and confidence in realization (on the other hand) as contradictions, even though these are characteristics of the writings of many Buddhist sages.”

⁵⁴⁵ According to some accounts, Yeshe Tsogyäl was a Chinese consort of King Trisong Detsen; however, the most widely accepted version is that she was a Tibetan noble lady (or princess). According to some accounts, she was married to the King.

⁵⁴⁶ As we have seen repeatedly, the dharmadhātu is primordial space, where everything that manifests and can be known arises. The counterpart of the dharmadhātu is an awareness that pervades it and that is absolutely indivisible from it.

⁵⁴⁷ If the dharmadhātu is namkha (nam-mkha') or boundless space, and rang rig or self-arisen rig pa is the source of treasures, then rang rig is like a norbu (Skt. cintāmāni; Tib. yizhin norbu [Wylie, yid bzhin nor bu] or wish-fulfilling jewel. In this sense, it may be said that the source of treasures is Namkhai Norbu (Wylie, nam mkha'i nor bu).

Furthermore, there is a direct relation between the discovery of terma and the original Greek meaning of the term “symbol:” two friends would tear a piece of cardboard in such a way that the two resulting sides would fit, so that by putting the two pieces of cardboard together they could either recognize each other in the future, or send someone unknown to the other party to seek help. A tertön receives from outside what could be compared to the other side of the cardboard, and this awakens him to the existence and meaning of his own side of it—and thus the whole comes out in the form of the treasure. The mutual recognition of the tertön and the one providing a key for his discoveries, or of the tertön and the holder of the treasures (i.e. his lineage holder), is also related to the original Greek meaning of the term “symbol.” And so on.

⁵⁴⁸ For an “intermediate” explanation of treasures or termas, I particularly recommend Tulku Thöndup's essay “The Terma Tradition,” reproduced in Tulku Thöndup (1995). For a more extensive discussion, Tulku Thöndup (1986), may be consulted.

⁵⁴⁹ Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 93).

⁵⁵⁰ In Namkhai Norbu and A. Clemente (English 1999), Note 9 by Adriano Clemente, p. 275, we read:

“The mantras called rigs sngags have the characteristic feature of always having specific functions related to diverse requirements or needs.”

⁵⁵¹ In Chán or Zen there is another esoteric explanation of the Three Jewels (Skt. ratnatraya or triratna; Pāli ratanattaya or tiratana; Tib. köncko sum [Wylie, dkon mchog gsum]; Ch. 三寶 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, sānbǎo; Wade-Giles, san¹-pao³]; Jap. sanbō), which posits three levels of meaning: (1) “the three precious ones as one single body;” (2) “the three precious ones as manifestation;” and (3) “the three precious ones as verification.” For an explanation of these, see: Fischer-Schreiber, Erhard, & Diener (1989, entrance on Sambo, pp. 183-184). (Also Schumacher & Woerner (1993, entrance on Sambo, p. 302).

⁵⁵² When the three Paths are taken into account, the Path of Renunciation of the Sūtrayāna is the outer Path, the Path of Transformation of the Vajrayāna is the inner Path, and the Path of Spontaneous Liberation of the Atiyogatantrayāna is the secret Path; therefore, in this context Sūtrayāna-style Refuge is the outer Refuge, Vajrayāna-style Refuge is the inner Refuge, and Atiyogatantrayāna-style Refuge is the secret Refuge.

⁵⁵³ The Dzogchen teachings (and also the sudden Mahāyāna, consisting in Chán or Zen) emphasize the fact that beings are our own hypostasized / reified / valorized / absolutized thoughts. When we are possessed by malevolent thoughts, we are beings of the purgatories (Skt. nāraka; Pāli nerayika; Tib. myälwa [Wylie, dmyal ba]; Ch. 地獄有情 or 地獄衆生 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, dìyù yǒuqíng or dìyù zhòngshēng; Wade-Giles, tí⁴-yü⁴ yu³-ch'ing² or tí⁴-yü⁴ chung⁴-sheng¹); when we are possessed by craving thoughts, we are craving spirits or Tantaluses (Skt. preta; Pāli peta; Tib. yidag [Wylie, yi dwags]; Ch. 餓鬼 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, èguǐ; Wade-Giles, o⁴-kuei³]); and so on. Insofar as we become a certain kind of individual due to being consistently possessed by various classes of recurrent thoughts, which succeed each other in consistent ways, we make ourselves continuous individuals, becoming a given “seed of direction of energies” (Skt. bīja; Tib. sabön [Wylie, sa bon]; Ch. 種子 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhǒngzǐ; Wade-Giles, chung³-tzu²]). Furthermore, whenever we act under the influence of hypostasized / reified / absolutized / valorized thoughts of any of the six realms, it is ourselves (rather than the thoughts) who create karma for rebirth in that realm, for it is our consciousness that volitionally puts itself under the influence of a given type of thoughts and then acts under their sway. In fact, by acting under the influence of a given

- type of thoughts we create the cause for putting ourselves under the influence of the same type of thoughts in the future, and thus to take birth in the corresponding realm.
- In Dzogchen, in particular, “emptying saṃsāra” does not mean that there are no longer human beings, animals and so on in a physical, external reality; what it means is that the uninterrupted process of spontaneous liberation of thought burns out the seed for delusory thoughts to manifest, and therefore such thoughts can no longer arise. Once this happens, as Jigme Lingpa, among other realized masters, remarked, though sentient beings having the right view and propensities perceive the fully realized individual as acting on their behalf, the latter no longer perceives sentient beings to be helped or Awakened.
- ⁵⁵⁴ As noted in a previous endnote, when the three Paths are taken into account, the Path of Renunciation of the Sūtrayāna is the outer Path, the Path of Transformation of the Vajrayāna is the inner Path, and the Path of Spontaneous Liberation of the Atiyogatantrayāna is the secret Path; therefore, in this context Sūtrayāna-style Refuge is the outer Refuge, Vajrayāna-style Refuge is the inner Refuge, and Atiyogatantrayāna-style Refuge is the secret Refuge.
- ⁵⁵⁵ The Refuge of the Path of Renunciation only lasts until our death in the present life, as only the level of body is taken into account—and the level of the body, unlike that of energy, ends up when this life ends.
- ⁵⁵⁶ I used the Tibetan term thigle (Wylie, thig le) because, as we have seen, it comprises the meaning of the Skt. term bindu (seed-essence) and also has a sense similar to that of kuṇḍalinī (energetic volume determining the scope of awareness).
- It must be noted that according to an ampler interpretation of the term thigle, the whole of the “physical” world is made out of thigle. Since thigle is energy, this interpretation is reminiscent of Einstein’s Field Theory. (However, Einstein’s theory may be interpreted as assuming that there is an objectively existing universe external to the individual, which is not the case in the Dzogchen teachings: though they also posit the Base as an “objective” reality, they do not assert the universe to exist objectively as a reality that is external to the individual.)
- ⁵⁵⁷ Skt. prāṇavāyu (combination of the terms vāyu and prāṇa), prāṇa (Tib. sog [Wylie, srog]; Ch. 波那 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, bōnà; Wade-Giles, po¹-na⁴]) or vāyu (Pāli vāyu or vāyo; Tib. lung [Wylie, rlung]; Ch. 風大 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, fēng dà; Wade-Giles, feng¹-ta⁴]), according to context. In this context the Tib. and Ch. seem to be the terms that render the Skt. vāyu.
- It has been stated that these energetic “winds” carry “red and white” drops along the structural pathways called tsa (Wylie, rtsa) (discussed in the immediately following note), and that the ovum and the sperm are the gross referents of these “drops.” This should not be understood literally: the “winds” do not carry drops of different colors, and if they are said to do so this is a symbolic statement proper to the Tantric Path of Transformation. The point is that it is the thigle (Wylie, thig le) energy discussed in the preceding note that, in a polarized form, is said to circulate through the “structural pathways” called tsa (Wylie, rtsa: see following note for a consideration of the mode of existence of these pathways) as the different types of lung (Wylie, rlung) or sog (Wylie, srog). Since, as we have seen, the energetic volume determining the scope of awareness is directly related to retention of the thigles or bindus consisting in the ovum and the sperm, one pole of the energy called thigle is symbolically represented with the color of sperm and the other pole is represented with that of menstrual blood. Furthermore, some particular experiences associated with these colors are directly related to the subtle energetic winds. (The translation of the terms thigle and bindu as “drop” seems to be mainly related to the fact that both semen when ejected and menstrual blood when it oozes out, do so as drops.)
- In terms of the interpretation according to which the whole universe is made out of thigle, which in a previous note was compared to Einstein’s Field Theory, all moving patterns of this constituting energy may be referred to as lung, and all structures associated with or generated by these moving patterns may be referred to as tsa. (Though in note before last I compared this interpretation to Einstein’s Field Theory, I warned that the Dzogchen teachings posit the Base as an “objective” reality, but do not assert the universe to exist objectively as a reality external to the individual.)
- ⁵⁵⁸ Skt. nāḍī; Tib. tsa (Wylie, rtsa). These are not materially existing channels, but possible structure-functions of the circulation of energy. In fact, Rigdzin Changchub Dorje (Wylie, rig ’dzin byang chub rdo rje), root teacher of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, asserted that the fact that these structural pathways

- are not physical channels is proven by the fact that different Tantras describe their structure differently, and yet the practices taught in the different Tantras are effective in producing their respective results.
- As stated in the preceding endnote, in terms of the interpretation according to which the whole of reality is made out of thigle, the tsa correspond to the structures of reality.
- ⁵⁵⁹ As stated in a previous endnote, the state free from delusion in which the nondual primordial gnosis that is the Base has become evident is designated in the Dzogchen teachings by the term *rigpa* (Wylie, *rig pa*), which corresponds to the Sanskrit *vidyā*, and which I translate in this book as “Awake awareness” (because it refers to the patency of *semnyi* [Wylie, *sems nyid*], which is best translated as “nature of mind,” “essence of mind,” or “Base Awareness,” and which is the essential awareness that is the Base of all experiences of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*), or as Presence (the term is capitalized to make it clear that it should not be understood in the dualistic Platonic sense of “being before”, for it is an absolute Presence beyond dualism rather than the dualistic, relative presence of some entity). As stated in a previous note, the Master Namkhai Norbu generally translates the same term as “Knowledge,” which in translations of his teachings I write with a capital letter in order to contrast its meaning with the one the word has in ordinary language, which corresponds to its dualistic etymology (as we have seen, according to Paul Claudel, knowledge [la connaissance] is the co-birth [la co-naissance] of the subject and the object—which clearly refers to the state characterized by dualism and delusion).
- For a more exhaustive explanation of the reasons why I translate the term *rigpa* by three different English words, the reader may refer to the relevant note to the Chapter on the Path of Spontaneous Liberation.
- ⁵⁶⁰ As we have seen repeatedly, when the three Paths are taken into account, the Path of Renunciation of the *Sūtrayāna* is the outer Path, the Path of Transformation of the *Vajrayāna* is the inner Path, and the Path of Spontaneous Liberation of the *Atiyogatantrayāna* is the secret Path; therefore, in this context *Sūtrayāna*-style Refuge is the outer Refuge, *Vajrayāna*-style Refuge is the inner Refuge, and *Atiyogatantrayāna*-style Refuge is the secret Refuge.
- ⁵⁶¹ I have used the term “element of Refuge” rather than “object of Refuge” because the word “object” could not be validly applied to the condition that is free from the subject-object duality.
- ⁵⁶² In Namkhai Norbu (1999/2001, p. 102), Padmasambhava’s words were rendered as “gompa should be based on experience;” however, the great Master of *Oḍḍiyāna* did not mean that gompa should be based on dualistic, conditioned appearances that veil our true condition (which as we have seen is the meaning of the word “experience”), but on the continuity of the direct, nondual unveiling of the latter condition.
- ⁵⁶³ As stated repeatedly, concepts are limits because they automatically and by their own nature: (1) include whatever they refer to into a higher-level, larger category (*genus proximum*), and (2) exclude a category or set of categories of the same level and extension (*differentiam specificam*). Limits are represented with corners because corners confine space (just like concepts create limits), and the absence of limits is represented with circles, spheres and so on, because such geometrical figures have no corners.
- For example, the *dharmakāya* is represented with a circle for one of same the reasons why the state of Dzogchen (whether as Base, as Path or as Fruit) is represented with a total sphere (Tib. *thigle chenpo* [Wylie, *thig le chen po*]):* because it cannot be confined into concepts. It so happens that *dharmakāya*, Dzogchen qua Path, Dzogchen qua Fruit and so on, are the state beyond the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of concepts, and therefore they are is totally beyond limits (which in terms of the above way of representing reality, means that it is free from corners). Furthermore, the state of Dzogchen qua Path or of Dzogchen qua Fruit is the unveiling of the Base that is the true condition of ourselves and the universe and that, since it encompasses everything and thus has neither *genus proximum* nor *differentiam specificam*, cannot be cast into the Procrustean bed of concepts. The same is the case with the *dharmakāya*, which since it consists in the direct unveiling of the *ngowo* (Wylie, *ngo bo*) or “essence” aspect of the Base, also cannot be cast into the Procrustean bed of concepts.
- *As we have seen, another reason why the totality of reality is represented with a total sphere is because the term *thigle* refers to the energy that makes up the whole of reality. This is not the place to list all of the reasons why the term “*thigle chenpo*” is used to refer to the condition of Dzogchen.
- ⁵⁶⁴ In particular, the Behavior (Tib. *chöpa* [Wylie, *spyod pa*]) of *Chö* (Wylie, *gcod*) has always been an excellent catalyst of the practice of Dzogchen. Practitioners of *Chö* traditionally hanged around with outcasts, lepers (as will be shown in Part Three of this book, the successful practitioners of *Chö* become immune to infectious illnesses) and in general the most despised individuals, and therefore they were object of extremely negative judgments on the side of the respectable members of society and of

whoever was not an outcast, a leper and so on. Furthermore, in the case of beginners, the contact with lepers, with septic charnel grounds, with filth and so on, would easily elicit judgments giving rise to apprehension and fear. Since all such things may cause contradiction to turn into conflict, giving rise to unpleasant feelings, anguish and so on, this mode of conduct was an excellent catalyst for the practice of the Path of Spontaneous Liberation of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo.

Likewise, as shown in Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente (English 1999), quite a few of the female lineage-holders of the Dzogchen teachings earned a living as prostitutes. This allowed them not to be confined to a home as fully-time housewives or to be under the power of a husband as her lord, and served the same purpose as the behavior of the practitioners of Chö because it made them object of the negative judgments of “respectable” members of society, and forced them to have recurrent contact with sources of contamination and filth.

⁵⁶⁵ The Vajra Essence (Tib. **Dagnang yeshe dvapa la nelug rangjunggi dorje nyingpo** [Wylie, dag snang ye shes drva pa las gnas lugs rang byung gi rgyud rdo rje'i snying po])—a treasure teaching revealed by Dūdjom Lingpa—notes (alternative trans. by A. Wallace in Dūdjom Lingpa, 2015, Vol. 3, pp. 182-183):

“Until you reach the state of extinction into the absolute condition [(i.e. the fourth vision of the practice of Thögel)], you must rightly avoid the bad and adopt the good in terms of actions and their consequences. Until you obtain the four kinds of great, fearless confidence that are the indications of having attained liberation, suffering will result from non-virtue and joy will result from virtue.”

For his part, Atīśa’s guru from Suvarṇadvīpa (a name often taken to designate the island of Sumatra) known as Dharmakīrti or Dharmapāla told his excellent disciple:

“So long as there is the slightest grasping [in you], you must [most] carefully observe the law of cause and effect.”

⁵⁶⁶ However, in this case the practice may be much simpler than in Tantrism, for rather than visualizing a complete Refuge tree, it may suffice to have one’s own teacher in the form of the supreme Master Garab Dorje, lord of all rigdzins, who was the historic source of the transmission and teachings of the Buddhist form of Dzogchen Atiyoga by directly transmitting the effortless single state in which our own primordial condition of total plenitude and perfection (ati dzogpa chenpo) is unveiled, and teaching the means to stabilize this unveiling. If one so wishes, to the Master’s right (from our perspective, to his left) one may visualize the deva, devatā or yidam (Wylie, yi dam) one uses most in one’s practice, and to his left (from our perspective, to his right) one may visualize the ḍākinī or khandro Wylie, (Wylie, mkha’ ’gro) one uses most in one’s practice. (If one so wishes, in addition to one’s own Master in the form of Garab Dorje and to the devatā and the ḍākinī, one may visualize other teachers, other devatās and other ḍākinīs.)

If one so prefers, one may visualize the image of one’s own teacher instead of Garab Dorje’s, but this is less common, since it is more difficult to maintain pure vision with regard to a teacher whom we see in a physical body just like ours, than with respect to a Master whom we have never met in this life and who has a legendary spiritual stature for us—and who, moreover, left the human existence in a most extraordinary way. At any rate, if one’s own teacher is visualized as the central figure, Garab Dorje should be visualized in the center of his/her heart, or above his/her head, as a symbol of our connection with the Dzogchen lineage through our teacher.

In any case, another difference of this practice with regard to those of Tantrism is that here we consider that the image of Garab Dorje represents, not only the Master from whom we receive Dzogchen teachings, but the unification of the totality of the vajra Masters that we may have had in our present lifetime, no matter the school, tradition or transmission lineage to which they may have belonged.

⁵⁶⁷ As we have seen, there are also those pratyekabuddhas who live at a time when there is neither a living nirmāṇakāya Buddha, nor dharma, nor saṃgha, and who, nonetheless, attain realization by meditating on the twelve links of interdependent origination. An example of this was given in a previous endnote.

⁵⁶⁸ As we have seen, according to a Mahāyāna explanation of the outer, inner and secret meaning of the term saṃgha, the outer saṃgha consists of the whole of the Buddhist monks and nuns, the inner saṃgha is constituted by the superior (Skt. ārya; Tib. phagpa [Wylie, ’phags pa]; Ch. 聖 [Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, shèng; Wade-Giles, sheng⁴]) bodhisattvas (i.e. the bodhisattvas who have attained the first bhūmi and the corresponding third path, but who have not yet reached the eleventh bhūmi and the corresponding fifth path), and the secret saṃgha is the nirmāṇakāya of Buddha. In this sense, lay superior bodhisattvas not

only are counted among those “true helpers of the practice” from whom one receives teachings, information and example, but, moreover, may be helpers of this kind in a more effective way and in a truer sense than monks and nuns.

⁵⁶⁹ Tib. rigdzin (Wylie, rig-'dzin) Skt. vidyādhara. As we have seen, the first element of this composite term, which in Tibetan is rig (the root syllable of the word rigpa) and in Sanskrit is vidyā, refers to the state of nonconceptual and hence nondual Awake awareness, instant Presence or absolute Presence in which the most complete form of nonstatic nirvāṇa manifests. In both languages the second element of the term (Tib. 'dzin; Skt. dhara) means “to hold” or “to possess.”

Four principal types of rigdzin (Tib. rigdzin nam zhi [Wylie, rig 'dzin nam bzhi]) are listed: the rigdzins of maturation (Tib. nammin rigdzin [Wylie, nam smin rig 'dzin]), the rigdzins of the power of long life (Tib. tsewang rigdzin [Wylie, tshé dbang rig 'dzin]), the rigdzins of Mahāmudrā or total symbol (Tib. chagchen rigdzin [Wylie, phyag chen rig 'dzin]) and the rigdzins of spontaneous perfection / self-rectification / spontaneous accomplishment (Tib. lhundrub rigdzin [Wylie, lhun grub rig 'dzin]). The key point to hold in mind is that, although there are different types of rigdzin, the supreme rigdzins are those whose condition corresponds to the etymological meaning of the term: the realized ones who are established in the unveiling of the primordial state transmitted by the Dzogchen teaching and the inner Tantras. In Atiyoga zhitro (Wylie, zhi khro) terms, rigdzins of this type are those who have mastered the dynamics of the peaceful and wrathful deities in practices such as Thögel or the Yangthik (for which reason they are visualized between both types of deities in the Tantric versions of the practice of zhitro). (Wrathful deities symbolize the conflict resulting from the manifestation of aversion (dveṣa; Pāli dosa; Tib. zhedang [Wylie, zhe sdang]; Ch. 瞋 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, chēn; Wade-Giles ch'en¹]), and peaceful ones here represent the state of nonduality in which there is neither conflict nor aversion: see my own brief explanation of the Dzogchen Menngagde or Upadeśavarga as a lhundrub zhitro in the discussion of the practice of Thögel and the Yangthik in this volume and, in greater detail, in Vol. II (and perhaps Vol. III) of this book and in Capriles [2013b].)

⁵⁷⁰ Fuel for the Guru-yoga is provided by the Master's manifesting apparent contradictions, or scolding and / or berating the disciple, for such occurrences make the disciple's contradictions to turn into conflict, potentiating the practice of Guru-yoga. This is so because the disciples' tendency to incur in mental violations of the samaya will create a greater awareness of their contradictions, and as these become conflict they will be incapable of ignoring them and thus will be forced to deal with them the Dzogchen way. (It seems important to note that the Master's behavior is not planned, but responds to the needs of disciples and is based on the spontaneous activation of the Master's propensities, which have become skillful means manifesting as vehicles of wisdom.)

⁵⁷¹ In fact, in the case of some especially gifted or advanced students, the external teacher might even go so far as to offer them instructions that do not correspond to the true meaning of the teaching, in order to determine if they have or have not acquired sufficient confidence in the View and skill in the practice as to point this out, or as to act differently than they are told. Since snakes quite often show themselves as such precisely when they are trying to act like dragons, thereby the teacher may succeed in having the former and latter stand apart and show their true colors. (Snakes symbolize the ego, which always leaves its trail, just as snakes inevitably do by slithering on the earth. Dragons represent Awakening, with its qualities of power and energy, and in this case symbolize the impossibility of determining the mental state of the Awake Ones through their activities: since dragons fly through the skies, they do not leave any tracks, and even as they glide through the skies they cannot be seen, for they hide within a cloud, which moves along with them.)

⁵⁷² Dzogchen Masters teach their students to live without rules: so long as the state of rigpa (Awake Awareness, Presence or Truth) is manifest, their behavior flows through the selfless spontaneity of that state; when it is not manifest, their behavior must be based on “the presence of responsible awareness” (Skt. smṛtisamprajanya; Pāli satisampajañña; Tib. tenpa dang shezhin [Wylie, dran pa dang shes bzhin]; Ch. 正念慧 [Hàn yǔ Pīnyīn, zhèngniàn huì; Wade-Giles, cheng⁴-nien⁴-hui⁴]; Italian, “presenza della consapevolezza”). With regard to the latter, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has given in a book on practice that is now of restricted circulation the following examples: responsible awareness is to know that a glass full of poison is indeed full of poison, and that if we drink it we will die or suffer a serious intoxication; presence is not to be distracted, for otherwise even if we know the glass is full of poison we might drink it inadvertently. In this example, drinking the poison represents producing harm, no

matter whether the harm is suffered by ourselves or others (the latter being doubly toxic because it harms both those others and ourselves equally).

The statements of Dzogchen Masters arise to cut through the limits established in their students by the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thoughts, which constitute a mental prison, rather than being intended to establish either a philosophical viewpoint concerning reality, or a series of norms to follow (which may be illustrated very well by the answers that the Chán Master Dàzhū Huìhǎi (大珠慧海; Wade-Giles, Ta⁴-chu¹ Hui⁴-hai³; Jap. Daishu Ekai) gave a Tripiṭaka Master who tried to ridicule him, which will be reproduced in the possibly upcoming definitive version in print of Capriles (electronic publication 2004.) However, in general all that Masters say in order to free their disciples from clinging to laws and to allow them to overcome the hypostatization / reification / absolutization / valorization of thought, is turned into a law by their unrealized disciples. This has been compared to prisoners using the instructions given by a liberator who sneaked into a jail to which they are confined with the intent to allow them to escape, in order to establish a “prison cult” that would keep anyone else from escaping from jail. (In the simile, the liberator manages to help a group of prisoners to escape from jail, and it is after his or her death that those who remain in jail use his or her teachings to build the prison cult.)

⁵⁷³ There are seven sets of *prātimokṣasaṃvara* (Tib. *sosor tharpai dompa* [Wylie, *so sor thar pa'i sdom pa*) or *prātimokṣa* vows: (1) that of the *bhikṣu* or *gelong* (*dge slong*), for those who have been fully ordained as monks; (2) that of the *bhikṣuṇī* or *gelongma* (*dge slong ma*), for those who have been fully ordained as nuns; (3) that of the *śrāmaṇera* or *getsül* (*dge tshul*), for novice monks who have not been fully ordained; (4) that of the *śrāmaṇerikā* or *śrāmaṇerī* or *getsülma* (*dge tshul ma*), for novice nuns who have not been fully ordained; (5) that of the *upāsaka* or *genyen* (*dge bsnyen*), for laymen; (6) that of the *upāsikā* or *genyenma* (*dge bsnyen ma*), for laywomen, and (7) *śikṣamāṇā* or *gelobma* (*dge slobs ma*), for nuns who aspire to the vow of *gelongma*. If we also consider the sets of temporal vows for lay practitioners known as *upavāsa* or *nyenngge* (*bsnyen gnas*) in the case of the male, and as *upavāsi* and *nyenngema* (*bsnyen gnas ma*) in the case of the female, but we list them as a single set of vows, there are a total of eight sets of *prātimokṣa* vows.

In a different listing of these vows that also enumerates seven of them, that of *śikṣamāṇā* or *gelobma* is excluded, and the temporal vows for lay practitioners of the two sexes are listed as one. In this case, when the set of vows of the *gelobma* is added, we have eight sets of vows of the *prātimokṣa*.

⁵⁷⁴ I am using the term “ejaculate” in a particularly ample sense. It is universally known that normally the word refers to the emission by males of their seed-essence, and since the seed-essence of females only comes out in menstruation, there is no exact equivalent of ejaculation in their case. However, the analogy between the emission of liquid by females upon vaginal orgasm and the emission of semen by males seemed to justify the use of the term “ejaculation” in the case of women also.

⁵⁷⁵ Note 284, written by the author, in Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (1999/2001, p. 253), reads:

The terms translated here (as) ‘ascetic practice’ and ‘resolute conduct’ are *dka’ thub* and *brtul zhugs*, respectively. In their regard Rongzompa comments (Tibetan Text 4: p. 265, 5):

“The term *dka’ thub* (asceticism) corresponds to the (Sanskrit) *tapasya* [note by the author of this book: more properly, *tapas*], and means self-sacrifice: a particular conduct in which, wishing to realize the fruit of the supreme qualities, one mortifies one’s body. The word *brtul zhugs* (resolute conduct) instead corresponds to the (Sanskrit) *vrata* and means ‘(to) alter’: a particular conduct in which, wishing to realize the fruit of the supreme qualities, one alters one’s past attitude in order to acquire a new one.”

In Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, Vol. I, p. 277), we read:

“Above all, the distinctive feature of skillful means is that, if one is endowed with the foundation of the View, and practices the discipline of Behavior which directly overpowers the three poisons (ignorance, aversion-fear and attachment-desire) without renouncing them, (one) is not only unfettered but also obtains swiftly the result (that consists in) liberation. If, on the other hand, one who is not so endowed were to practice (this discipline), liberation would not be obtained and there would be a great risk (that he or she may fall) into evil existences, so that there is a great danger, as in the (alchemical use of) mercury* (for the sudden transformation of iron into gold).”

*Note 267, by the translators, in Dūdjom Rinpoche (English 1991, Vol. II, p. 19), reads:

“Skt. *mākṣika*. This is a specific kind of mercury that is reputedly employed as a catalyst for the transmutation of iron into gold. Refer to Mipham Rinpoche, *sPyi-don’od-gsal snying-po*, pp. 48-49.”

⁵⁷⁶ In the ritual known as *gaṇapūja* (to which reference will be made in Part Three of this book), practitioners are constrained to drink alcohol and eat meat, in spite of the first being absolutely forbidden by the Vinaya (the “basket” or section of the Tripitaka that regulates conduct on the Path of Renunciation and, in particular, in the Hīnayāna) and the second being allowed (and, moreover, being compulsory) only when the meat is put in the begging bowl of a monk or nun (provided that the recipient knows for certain that the animal was not sacrificed with the specific aim of offering him or her the meat, and that the animal involved is not a dog, a viper, a tiger, a bear or a hyena).

Despite the above, a series of Mahāyāna sūtras including the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, the *Śūraṅgamasūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, the *Hastikakṣyasūtra*, the *Mahāmeghasūtra* and the *Aṅgulimāliyasūtra* strongly discourage the consumption of meat and, in many cases, that of other “nonwhite” foods (in terms of the Hindu *guṇas*, “nonsattvic” foods).

Furthermore, traditionally a Tantric practitioner would have to consume the mixture of menstrual blood and semen that the Master and his or her consort periodically produce in order to provide disciples with the means for maintaining their *samaya*. However, nowadays this and the consumption of other substances such as faeces and urine are not carried out by the bulk of a Tantric Master’s disciples.

⁵⁷⁷ The state of *Mahāmudrā* may be attained by means of the practice of the *Anuttarayogatantras* or by means of the formless practice associated with the Tantric teachings that is also called *Mahāmudrā*, and which in its formless form is most widespread in the *Kagyū* School (which incorporated both Tantric and Sutric forms) and the *Sakya* School (which teaches a purely Tantric form); Gelug texts bearing the title *Mahāmudrā* seem to me to differ widely from both the *Kagyū* and *Sakya* forms of *Mahāmudrā*.

The state of *Mahāmudrā* is the same no matter which way we follow for attaining it; however, the methods whereby it is attained in the practice with form of *Anuttarayogatantra* could hardly be more different from those whereby it is attained in the formless practices called *Mahāmudrā*.

⁵⁷⁸ Here reference is being made to the meaning of the word when body, energy or voice and mind are spoken of.

⁵⁷⁹ Wylie, *thig le*. It has been repeatedly stated that this Tibetan term translates the Sanskrit word *bindu* and also has a meaning similar to that of the Sanskrit word *kuṇḍalinī*. Since there are various types of *bindu*, it is important to note that in this case the term makes specific reference to the seminal *bindu*; however, it must be clear by now that the reason for retaining the seminal *bindu* is in order to maintain a high *thigle* in the sense that is near to that of *kuṇḍalinī*.

⁵⁸⁰ The stopping of menstruation is achieved by means of practices of *tsa-lung-thigle* (*rtsa-rlung-thig le*) associated with *yantra* yoga, and the oral ingestion of a traditional medicine.

⁵⁸¹ In *Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente*, English 1999, Note 146 by Adriano Clemente (in p. 275) reads:

“The most common classification of the “ten natures of Tantra” (*rgyud kyi rang bzhin bcu* or *rgyud kyi dngos po bcu*) consists of: *lta ba*, *spyod pa*, *dkyil ’khor*, *dbang*, *dam tshig*, *’phrin las*, *sgrub pa*, *ting nge ’dzin*, *mchod pa*, *sngags*. See, for example, the chapter of the *Changchubkyi sem sheja tachökyi gyü* (Wylie, *byang chub kyi sems shes bya mtha’ gcod kyi rgyud*) titled *gyükyi ngöpo tenpai leu* (Wylie, *rgyud kyi dngos po bstan pa’i le’u*; in *rNying-ma rgyud ’bum*, *mTshams brag* edition, vol. Ka, pp. 288-352, Thimpu 1982). The list given by Longchenpa (*You Are the Eyes of the World*, pp. 34-35) has: *lta ba*, *sgom pa*, *dam tshig*, *’phrin las*, *dkyil ’khor*, *dbang*, *sa sbyang ba*, *lam bgrod pa*, *sgrub pa sbyang ba*, *ye shes dam sangs rgyas*. Also see *Düdjom Rinpoche* (English 1991, vol. II, p. 164). Sometimes there are variations in the chapters of the *Kun byed rgyal po* and in other *Sems sde* texts also regarding the “ten absences” (Tib. *mepa chu* [Wylie, *med pa bcu*]) that are the true meaning of the ten natures.”

⁵⁸² In *Anuyoga* four aspects of the *samaya* commitment are also spoken of that imply something similar to the four *mepa*: (1) there are no limits to abide by because the essence of the supreme commitment is freedom with respect to transgressions and violations; (2) there is total equality and equanimity because the subject-object duality has been overcome; (3) there is nothing more than the expanse of the nature of mind; (4) the state of *rigpa* or Truth is never abandoned. Cf. *Tibetan Text 11, B*: vol. 2, p. 189; quoted in *Düdjom Rinpoche*, English 1991, Vol. II, p. 138.

⁵⁸³ In fact, if we judge the Master and/or other practitioners we will be violating the *Dzogchen samaya*, which requires us to continue uninterruptedly in the state of *rigpa* beyond judgments and all types of dualism. For this reason, this *samaya* with the Master is not totally apart from the *Dzogchen samaya*

requiring us to be in the state of rigpa beyond judgments and dualism—which as we have seen is violated by the dualistic attempt to keep one’s various samayas or commitments.

⁵⁸⁴ The ten nonvirtuous actions are the most general actions to be avoided by Buddhists. They comprise three actions that are carried out with the body, four that are carried out with the voice, and three that are carried out with the mind. In Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (1991/2001, pp. 55-56), we read:

“The ten nonvirtuous actions include three actions related to the body: 1. Killing. 2. Stealing. 3. Sexual misconduct (in the case of ordained persons this means indulging in sexual intercourse, and in the case of lay people indulging in those forms of sexual conduct that may be harmful to others or that are ruled out by their respective precepts).

“Four actions related to the voice: 4. Lying. 5. Slandering. 6. Insulting. 7. Speaking in vain.

“Three actions related to the mind: 8. Craving other people’s property. 9. Malevolence. 10. Upholding an erroneous view (the most important erroneous view being not believing in the law of cause and effect of karma).”

Other forbidden actions are: the five actions with immediate result, the five actions near to those with immediate result, the four groups of four heavy actions each, and the eight contrary actions. Cf. Namkhai Norbu [Chögyal] (1991/2001, pp. 54-62).