THE LAMP OF CERTAINTY by 'JAM-MGON KONG-SPRUL

Translated and Annotated

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an annotated translation of *Nges-don agron-me*, a meditation text by the Tibetan eclectic 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul (1813-99). The text contains instructions and commentary on the Four Foundations, the key preliminary practices for the bKa'-brgyud tradition. These include the rituals of Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude; Meditation and Mantra of *rDo-rje Sems-dpa*; Mandala-Offering, and Guru-Yoga.

The translation elucidates these practices, and the footnotes explore the significance of key terms. The appendices contain interviews with two leading Lamas, the Venerable Kalu Rin-po-che and the Venerable sDe-gzhung Rin-po-che, and reproductions of the texts translated in our study.
PREFACE

Purpose

This thesis is a study of the "Four Foundations," the preliminary meditative practices used in the bKa'-brgyud tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

While this tradition has been the subject of several studies, its preliminary practices have received little attention. Dr. H.V. Guenther\(^1\) deals extensively with the philosophical content, but not with the actual performance of either the advanced or the preliminary rituals. Stephan Beyer\(^2\) briefly mentions the Four Foundations, but is primarily concerned with the Tārā rituals which may follow them. The present study provides a detailed description of these preliminary practices.

Although this work may be useful to Western Buddhists who wish to practice these rituals, they should be performed under the personal guidance of a Lama who is qualified to deal with unforeseen problems which may arise.

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In 1972 Kalu Rin-po-che of the Karma bKa'-brgyud sect, visited Vancouver and established a Buddhist centre. Kalu Rin-po-che is considered to be one of several contemporary incarnations or *tulkus* of 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, author of *The Lamp of Certainty*. Rin-po-che is one of the few refugee Lamas fully trained in Tibet. Born in Khams (eastern Tibet) in 1904, he was educated by his father until the age of sixteen. Thereafter, his principal teacher was Lama Norbu Don-kun-grub, a pupil of 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul. At twenty-five Rin-po-che began twelve years of intensive meditation in an isolated retreat. Subsequently, he was in charge of the meditation center at Kong-sprul's former monastery of dPal-spungs for fifteen years. There he guided monks in the Four Foundations and more advanced bKa'-brgyuda-pa practices. In the late 1950's he fled to Bhutan where he established a monastery. A few years later he moved to northern India and established bSam-'grub Thar-byed monastery at Sonada, where he now supervises thirty monks in meditation. While touring Europe and North America in 1972 and 1974-5, Rin-po-che established approximately thirty Buddhist centres.

In 1972, Dr. Shotaro Iida, my academic advisor, asked Kalu Rin-po-che to name a short Tibetan text dealing with bKa'-brgyuda-pa meditative practices. Rin-po-che recommended *Nges-don sgron-me* as a brief but thorough explanation--ideal for beginners.
Dr. Iida suggested that I translate this text as an M.A. thesis. I asked Kalu Rin-po-che for the authorization (lung)\(^3\) to read this text. Rin-po-che gave the lung for the first fifty pages (containing the Four Foundations) but withheld the final section until I should have practiced the Four Foundations. As the final section contains separate instructions on Mahāmudrā, a higher stage of doctrine and practice which I felt incapable of translating, Rin-po-che's limitation seemed reasonable.

Methods

This thesis is a study of the traditional understanding of the Four Foundations. Clarification of this understanding involved the following steps:

1. Reading *Nges-don sgron-me* and writing a "crib."

2. Consulting Lama Tshe-dbang 'Gyur-med, through interpreters Ingrid and Ken McLeod, on problems of language, theory and practice. Lama Tshe-dbang 'Gyur-med, a native of Khams and experienced meditator, is Kalu Rin-po-che's representative at Kagyu Kunkhyab Chuling, Buddhist centre, in Vancouver.

3. Consulting Lobsang P. Lhalung-pa on these same problems with greater emphasis on higher levels of interpretation and Tibetan customs. Mr. Lhalung-pa is a Tibetan scholar of broad learning and experience.

\(^3\) Traditional ceremony of authorization. See n. 382, below.
4. Preparing a rough translation and footnotes on key technical terms.

5. Consulting the Lama and Mr. Lhalung-pa about problems arising from step 4.

6. Typing a rough draft.

7. Having Ken McLeod check this draft for literal accuracy and consistency. Mr. McLeod served as official interpreter at Kagyu Kunkhyab Chuling for three years.

8. Consulting the Lama and Mr. Lhalung-pa about problems uncovered in step 7.

9. Translating and annotating relevant sections of 'Phags-lam bgrod-pa'i shing-rta through a process similar to steps 1-8.

10. Rewriting and combining the two annotated translations.

11. Checking by readers, Professor J.I. Richardson (Indian religion and culture), Dr. Shotaro Iida (Indian and Tibetan Buddhism), and Lobsang P. Lhalung-pa.

12. Rewriting.

13. Composing introductory sections. This involved questioning Kalu Rin-po-che and sDe-gzhung Rin-po-che on the historical background of the practices and their role in the religious life of a practitioner.

With the exception of some proper names and well-known terms, all Tibetan words in this thesis have been transliterated according to Turrell Wylie's system.

See Appendix A for complete transcript.
Khams, and one of today's foremost traditional Tibetan scholars.

14. Submitting introductory material to readers for comments.


I wish to thank the persons mentioned above for their help. I also wish to thank Joan Girard and Lama Phrin-las 'grub-pa for providing illustrations, and Mervin V. Hanson for criticism and encouragement.
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<td>IBHEC</td>
<td>L'Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises</td>
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<td>JAOS</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JRAS</td>
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<td>Lama</td>
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION

This thesis includes:

1. An annotated translation of the Tibetan Buddhist meditation manual *Nges-don sgron-me* by the nineteenth-century eclectic 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul (1813-99). It contains practical instructions and theoretical explanation of the "Four Foundations" (*sngon-'gro bzhi*), the most important beginner's practice of the bKa'-brgyud sect.

*Nges-don sgron-me* is a commentary on the brief instructional "root" text *Lhan-oig skyes-sbyor khrid* by the ninth Karma-pa or head of the Karma bKa'-brgyud sect, dBang-phyug rDo-rje (1556-1603). This text is reprinted (Appendix B) but not translated.

2. An annotated translation of *'Phags-lam bgrod-pa'i shing-rta*, a liturgical text used for the practice of the Four Foundations, also by the ninth Karma-pa.

The appropriate passage of liturgy has been placed before each section of the commentary.

As the final sections of both *Nges-don sgron-me* and its root text deal with Mahāmudrā, translation of them is beyond the scope of this thesis.

3. Transcripts of Kalu Rin-po-che and sDe-gzhung Rin-po-che's answers to questions about practice of the "Four Foundations."
4. Text of Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor khrid, Nges-don agron-me, folios 1-50, and 'Phags-lam bgrod-pa'i shing-rta.

NATURE OF A TIBETAN BUDDHIST SECT

Before discussing the Karma-bKa'-brgyud-pa, the sect whose practices are depicted in Nges-don agron-me, a note on the Tibetan Buddhist concept of "sect" is necessary.

The identity of a Tibetan Buddhist sect is dependent on several factors.

According to Tibetan teachers, the most important factor is the lineage (brgyud), a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

The central lineage of a sect includes the line of teachers--from the Buddha, through the Indian teachers, up to contemporary Tibetans--who transmitted the oral and written teachings comprising the sect's basic doctrines. The specialized lineages include the teachers who transmitted oral and written instructions for practices especially emphasized by the sect. These lineages will include some, but not all of the teachers in the central lineage.

A factor related to these lineages is the body of oral and written teachings produced by their members. This includes the gzhung, or body of authoritative Indian and Tibetan treatises on all topics important to the sect, as well as other commentaries, instructional texts and ritual manuals.

A third type of lineage corresponds to the notion of a tradition emphasizing a particular style practice. Thus, the bKa'-brgyud sect,
which emphasizes meditation, is commonly called a meditative lineage (sgrub-brgyud); the bKa'gdams or dGe-lugs sect is a lineage of intellectual discipline (blo-sbyong-brgyud).

A second important determinant was the monasteries in which the monks and nuns lived, studied and practiced. Usually, one monastery was the official headquarters of the sect and model for the operation of the others. Each of the four major sects had scores of monasteries, while some minor sub-sects seem to have had only one or two.

The abbots were administrators, but not necessarily spiritual leaders. Each sect had as its spiritual head, one or a small group of Lamas, usually tulkus. The influence of these tulkus has fluctuated throughout Tibetan history.

Peripheral determinants not traditionally seen as essential to a sect's identity, included: the lay community which participated in the public rites and festivals and may even have rented monastery land; wealthy patrons, often local rulers, who in some cases shared their authority with, and in some imposed it on the monastic leaders; foreign rulers who sometimes gave patronage and military support to a particular sect.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE KARMA BKA'-BRGYUD SECT

Although Buddhism was known in Tibet as early as the sixth century, the four major sects--the rNying-ma-pa, Sa-skya-pa, bKa'-gdams-pa (later absorbed into the dGe-lugs-pa) and bKa'-brgyud-pa did not emerge until the eleventh century.
The bKa'-brgyud-pa lineage traditionally begins with the Buddha rDo-rje 'Chang (Vajradhara). Unlike Śākyamuni, rDo-rje 'Chang is not an historical Buddha, but one of many Enlightened Ones considered, in the Mahāyāna, to be ever-present, continually dispensing blessings to living beings. The Indian mahāsiddha Tilopa (988-1069) is said to have received instruction directly from rDo-rje 'Chang, through visions and other extraordinary means. The Indian scholar and siddha Nāropa (1016-1100) was Tilopa's disciple. From Tilopa and Nāropa originate the meditative practices with which the sect is identified: the "Six Yogas" of Nāropa (Nā-ro'i chos-drug) and Mahāmudrā (Phyag-rgya-chen-po).

The originators of the first two divisions of the sect were Khyung-po the Yogin (1002-64) and Marpa the Translator (1012-96), both Tibetan disciples of Nāropa. Khyung-po's division was called the Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud. We will deal only with Marpa's Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud.

Marpa's most famous disciple was Milarespa (1052-1135); Milarespa's was sGam-po-pa or Dwags-po Lha-rje (1079-1153), who founded many monasteries including Dwags-po, the one from which this division took its name. sGam-po-pa became Mila's disciple only after a thorough training in the bKa'gdams-pa system with its emphasis on intellectual and moral discipline. Mila instructed him in the meditative techniques transmitted by Tilopa, Nāropa and Marpa. "sGam-po-pa combined the teachings of the bKa'gdams and the experiences of Mahāmudrā in an unique manner so that
the two streams united." Subsequent Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa writings, up to the present day, have drawn heavily on the voluminous works of sGam-po-pa.

His disciples founded the various sub-sects of the Dwags-po bKa-brgyud-pa, traditionally grouped into the "Great Four" (che-bzhi) and "Lesser Eight" (chung-brgyad).

"Great Four"

(Founded by sGam-po-pa's immediate disciples)
1. Karma bKa'-brgyud, founded by Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa (1110-93).
2. 'Ba-ram bKa'-brgyud, founded by 'Ba-ram-pa Dharma dBang-phyug (ca. 1100).
3. Tshal-pa bKa'-brgyud, founded by brTson-'grags-pa (1123-94).
4. Phag-mo bKa'-brgyud, founded by Phag-mo gru-pa (1110-70).

"Lesser Eight"

(Founded by Phag-mo gru-pa's disciples)
1. 'Bri-khung bKa'-brgyud.
2. sTag-lung bKa'-brgyud.
4. 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud or sTod-'Brug, and its sub-sects:
   5. sMad-'Brug.

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7. 'Bar-ra.

From their inception in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries until the Chinese takeover in 1959, these sub-sects have been active throughout Tibet. Some, mostly notably the Karma and 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud, now have monasteries in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Scotland. Most of the Tibetan Buddhist centres which have appeared in Europe and North America over the past five years were founded by two eclectic Karma bKa'-brgyud Lamas, Chögyam Trung-pa and Kalu Rin-po-che.

The Karma bKa'-brgyud sect was founded by Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa (1110-93), its first patriarch or Karma-pa. The Karma-pa is the highest tulku, and the spiritual head of the Karma bKa'-brgyud. According to Kalu Rin-po-che he is the supreme spiritual authority for all the bKa'-brgyud sub-sects. As such, he is the officiant at key rituals and is responsible for official recognition of all the important bKa'-brgyud-pa tulkuas.

Karma bKa'-brgyud-pas consider his spiritual status to be equal to that of the Dalai Lama head of the dGe-lugs-pa sect. Both are considered incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion. Both are addressed as, "wish-fulfilling gem" (yid-bzhin nor-bu). But unlike the Dalai Lama, the Karma-pa is not officially connected with the central government, i.e., he is not considered an incarnation of Srong-bstan sgam-po or any other Tibetan ruler, and has never shared the Dalai Lama's role as a national symbol.
Although the Karma-pa's official seat was at mTshur-phu monastery (the sect's headquarters founded by Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa in central Tibet) most of the Karma-pas were born in Khams, Eastern Tibet.

The Karma-pas exercised great spiritual and political influence in Khams. Many of them visited Yüan China where their spiritual sovereignty was acknowledged by the Emperors.⁷

A Karma-pa is referred to as "Wearer of the Black Hat" (zva-nag). This hat, a kind of mitre in which Karma-pas are always depicted, is a symbol of their spiritual authority. The original Black Hat is said to have been presented to Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa by the dakinis who wove it of the hair of a hundred-thousand of their kind.

According to Kalu Rin-po-che, this original hat was invisible to all but those of great merit. A material replica was given to the fifth Karma-pa De-bzhin gShegs-pa (1384-1415) by the Yüan Emperor Yung-lo, so that the Black Hat, whose very sight is said to guarantee the beholder's rebirth in the higher realms, might be seen by all.⁹

This material replica is thought to be the same one donned by the present Karma-pa, Rang-'byung rig-pa'i rDo-rje (b. 1924) when His Holiness performed the Black Hat ceremony in Vancouver and other North American cities in 1974. The Black Hat ceremony is the key ritual of the

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⁸ Female deities. See n. 123 below.

⁹ Related at a public lecture in Vancouver, October 11, 1974, around the time of the present Karma-pa's performance of the Black Hat ceremony.
Karma-pas. Its functions are to re-enact the original "coronation" of Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa; to re-assert each Karma-pa's place in the Karma-pa line, and to invoke Avalokitesvara as the source of that line.

There have been sixteen Karma-pas to date:

1. Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa (1110-93).
2. Karma Pagshi (1206-83).
3. Rang-'byung rDo-rje (1284-1399).
4. Rol-pa'i rDo-rje (1340-83).
5. De-bzhin gShegs-pa (1384-1415).
6. mThong-ba Don-ldan (1416-53).
7. Chos-grags rGya-mtsho (1454-1506).
8. Mi-bskyod rDo-rje (1507-54).
10. Chos-dbyings rDo-rje (1604-74).
13. bDud-'dul rDo-rje (1733-97).
14. Theg-mchog rDo-rje (1797-ca. 1845).
15. mKha'-khyab rDo-rje (ca. 1845-1924).
16. Rang-'byung rig-pa'i rDo-rje (b. 1924). 10

The present Karma-pa, who was educated at mTshur-phu, now lives at Rumtek monastery in Sikkim, the new seat of the Karma bk'ha'-brgyud sect.

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Other important *tulkus* of the sect include the Zva-dmar or "Red Hat," Si-tu, rGyal-tshab and dPa'-bo Rin-po-ches. The Zva-dmar line enjoyed periods of political power in central Tibet, but was officially terminated in the late eighteenth century due to the ninth *tulku*'s complicity in a Nepalese invasion. The line was revived by the present Karma-pa. The new Zva-dmar *tulku* was born in the early 1950's and lives at Rumtek.

All the Karma-pas are included in the "Golden Rosary of Wish-Fulfilling Gems," the specialized Karma bKa'-brgyud lineage of Mahāmudrā teachers. Most of the key Karma bKa'-brgyud *tulkus* appear in it as well. A few others are included because they were teachers or prominent disciples of a Karma-pa. 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, teacher of the fifteenth Karma-pa mKha'-khyab rDo-rje, was one of these few.

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF 'JAM-MGON KONG-SPRUL**

'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas-pa (1813-99) was a versatile and prolific scholar whose works span the entire field of traditional Tibetan learning. Characterized by Smith as a "Tibetan Leonardo," Kong-sprul was a respected physician, diplomat and politician of great consequence in his native Khams.

Along with the equally productive 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse dbang-po (1820-92), he initiated the eclectic *ris-med* movement in Khams.

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11 Most of the material in this section has been drawn from the single relevant source available in a Western language: Gen§ Smith's "Introduction" to Lokesh Chandra's edition of Kong-sprul's *Ses-byas kun-khyab*. Sata-Pitaka Series, vol. 80. Delhi: International Acad. of Indian Culture, 1-87.
which Gene Smith calls, "... the most important development during the 19th century in the Lamaist world."12

He was born in the semi-nomadic settlement of Rong-rgyab. His mother was bKra'-shis-tsho and his nominal father was bSod-nams-'phel, a Bon-po Lama. There is some evidence that his actual father was the Buddhist Lama Gyung-drung bsTan-'dzin. Kong-sprul was thoroughly schooled in Bon by bSod-nams-'phel before receiving any formal Buddhist education, and never lost interest in it. At this time he also studied medicine.

When Kong-sprul was fourteen his father bSod-nams-'phel was imprisoned due to a local blood feud. Kong-sprul followed and provided him with food. He was aided by a family allied with the nearby rNying-ma monastery at Zhe-chen. With this family's help, he studied at Zhe-chen and was ordained as a rNying-ma monk in 1832 at age nineteen.

His literary talent became obvious and his services were soon requested at the Karma bKa'-brgyud monastery of dPal-spungs. Before he could accept this position he was forced to undergo re-ordination as a Karma bKa'-brgyud monk. This pettiness and sectarianism distressed Kong-sprul, but there was little he could do except to accede to the demands of his superior.13 He was re-ordained in 1833 by the ninth Si-tu Padma Nyin-byed dbang-po (1774-1853) whom he invokes in Nges-don sgron-mey as his root-Lama.14

12 Ibid., p. 2-3.
13 Ibid., p. 30.
14 rtsa-ba'i bla-ma. See n. 26, below.
By 1843 Kong-sprul had studied with and received empowerments from sixty Lamas of a variety of sects and lineages. About this time, the Si-tu recognized Kong-sprul as the *tulku* of an outstanding monk who had served his predecessor. This recognition did not please Kong-sprul, as it was a strictly political move to prevent his conscription into the service of the sDe-dge government. As a *tulku*, Kong-sprul was exempt from such service and could remain as a valuable asset to dPal-spungs.

Kong-sprul's immense literary output of more than ninety volumes was written amidst the political chaos and religious warfare of Khams, 1832-99. His works include a wide range of teachings on theory and practice according to the rNying-ma-pa, bKa'-gdams-pa, Sa-skya-pa, Zhi-byed gcod-yul and Bon-po, as well as the many sub-sects of the bKa'-brgyud-pa. In some works, designated as "eclectic" (*Ris-med-pa*), the subject matter is treated from the viewpoint of each sect in turn.

Most of his works are included in his Five Treasuries (*mDzod-lnga*),\(^{16}\) printed at dPal-spungs in the late nineteenth century.

*Nges-don sgron-me*, written in 1844 when he was thirty-one, was one of his early works.

\(^{15}\) *dbang*. Usually translated "initiation." See n. 345, below.

\(^{16}\) For its contents, see Gene Smith, op. cit., 59-72.
In common with Bon-pos and rNying-ma-pas, Kong-sprul was inclined to accept the authenticity of *gter-ma*. In 1855 Kong-sprul was recognized as a *gter-ston* by the *gter-ston* mChog-'gyur gling-pa (1829-70).

During the many incidents of religio-political warfare between 1848 and 1865, Kong-sprul used his diplomatic skills to reconcile the hostile parties.

In 1865 when dPal-spungs, its inhabitants and lay allies were threatened with annihilation by invading dGe-lugs-pa armies, Kong-sprul used his medical skills to heal an ailing dGe-lugs-pa official. As a result, dPal-spungs was spared.

With the collapse of the sDe-dge government in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Kong-sprul and mKhyen-brtse became the real political power in that area.

According to Gene Smith, the eclectic movement grew from a strong reaction to the religious rivalry and persecution which had always plagued Buddhist Tibet. He traces the antecedents of this movement back to such renowned scholars as the rNying-ma-pa kLong-chens-pa (1308-63), the dGe-lugs-pa founder Tshong-kha-pa (1357-1419), the fifth Dalaj Lama (1617-82) and the rNying-ma-pa 'Jigs-med gling-pa (1730-98).

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*gter-ma*: Texts and teachings which express Buddhist doctrine in contemporary terms. They are traditionally said to have been composed by Padmasambhava when he introduced Buddhism to Tibet, and hidden by him until they would be needed. When required, they are rediscovered and promulgated by special teachers called *gter-ston*.

For different types of *gter-ma* and the attitudes of various sects regarding their authenticity, see ibid., 10-14.
Although Smith suggests reasons why Khams became the focus of the movement, these do not seem conclusive. It is obvious, however, that the eclectic movement has strongly influenced Tibetan Buddhism. Most of the influential Lamas in Europe and North America, including Chögyam Trung-pa, Kalu rin-po-che, sDe-gzhung Rin-po-che, Tarthang Tulku and others, identify themselves with the ris-med tradition. While emphasizing the techniques developed by their respective sects, they also uphold the validity, draw on the teachings, and encourage their students to venerate and follow the examples of Lamas of all sects.

DESCRIPTION OF TEXTS

The three texts basic to this study—Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor khrid, Nges-don sgron-mey and 'Phags-lam bgro-pa'i shing-rta—belong to a group of Karma bKa'-brgyud texts containing teachings known as "Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor," a synonym for Mahāmudrā. All the texts in this group deal with the Four Foundations, and most with Mahāmudrā.18

1. Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor khrid

Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor khrid, (see Appendix B), the instructional "root" text by Karma-pa IX dBang-phyug rDo-rje, is the shortest in this group. It consists of abbreviated verse descriptions of, and instructions for, practice of the Four Ordinary Foundations, the Four Special Foundations

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18 E.g., gDams-ngag-mdzod, Vol. VI. Delhi: N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltsan, 1971, folios 1-16; 70-104; 105-22; 123-63.
and Mahāmudrā. It contains no commentary, and is so brief as to be incomprehensible to anyone unfamiliar with the subject. We have not translated this text.

2. Nges-don sgron-me

Nges-don sgron-me (folios 1-50, see Appendix C) by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, has been translated as Chapters II-VI of this thesis.

According to Kalu Rin-po-che, Nges-don sgron-me is traditionally classified as a commentary ('grel-ba) consisting of exoteric instructions (thun-mong gi gdams-ngag) on meditation (sgom) according to the Karma bKa'-brgyud sect of Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna Buddhism.

It is a commentary on Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor khrid in the sense that it expands upon the latter to give a more detailed treatment of the practices and adds a discussion of their theoretical basis.

Each major section ends with warnings, advice and encouragement to the would-be practitioner. These are phrased in a highly expressive and personal language which contrasts with the terse, formal language used to describe the practices. Our translation reflects these fluctuations.

Throughout the text, Kong-sprul writes in a semi-colloquial style using irregular spelling, grammar and sentence structure not found in "classical" Tibetan writings, such as sGam-po-pa's Jewel Ornament of Liberation.
a. Summary of contents of Nges-don sgron-me

Chapter II. The Four Ordinary Foundations (f.1a-146)

1a.: Title

1b.: Invocation

1b.-13a: the four Ordinary Foundations (thun-mong sngon-'gro bzhis), practices involving contemplation of 1. valuable human existence (mi-lus rin-po-che); 2. impermanence (mi-rtag-pa); 3. actions, their causes and results (las rgyu 'bras), and 4. the shortcomings of samsāric existence ('khor-ba'i nyes-'digs), the "four facts which turn the mind toward religion" (blo-'gro rnam-bzhis).

13a.-14b.: Author's conclusion and comments.

Chapters III-VI (f.14b.-50a.) deal with the Four Special Foundations.

Chapter III. First of the Four Special Foundations: Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude (f.14b.-25b.).

14b.-16b.: Taking Refuge (skyabs-'gro), the first basic commitment to the goal of full Enlightenment; Engendering the Enlightened Attitude (byang-sems-bskyed), Bodhicitta commitment to a path to Enlightenment which includes all living beings.

16b.-17b.: The six Sources of Refuge (skyabs-yul).

17b.-19a.: The effect of mental attitude on the outcome of one's practice.

19a.: Beneficial results of effective practice of Taking Refuge.

19a.-25b.: Engendering the Enlightened Attitude: Commentary, theoretical discussion of Bodhicitta.
Chapter IV. Second of the Four Special Foundations: The Hundred-Syllable Mantra of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' (f. 25b.-31b.).
25b.-26a.: Other versions of the practice.
26a.-27a.: Meditation and Mantra of rDo-rje Sems-dpa', symbolic purification of former misdeeds and distorted mental attitudes.
27b.: Indications of successful practice.
27b.-31b.: Importance of purification and great efficacy of this practice.

Chapter V. Third of the Four Special Foundations: The Maṇḍala-Offering (f. 31b.-40a.).
31b.-35b.: Maṇḍala-Offering, symbolic presentation of the entire universe to the six Sources of Refuge.
35b.: Indications of successful practice.
35b.-40a.: Function of the practice, refinement of the individual through acquisition of merit and awareness ($tshogs-gnyis rdzogs-pa$); theoretical basis of this acquisition; great efficacy of this practice.

Chapter VI. Fourth of the Four Special Foundations: The Guru-Yoga (f. 40a.-50a.).
40a.-42a.: Guru-Yoga (bla-ma'i rnal-'byor) devotional practice in which the practitioner is symbolically "matured" ($smin-byed$) by receiving the blessings of the Mahāmudrā lineage.
42a.-42b.: Application of the above in everyday life.
42b.-50a.: Importance of receiving the blessings; the Lama-disciple relationship.
50a.-60a.: Mahāmudrā.
61a.: Colophon.

3. 'Phags-lam bgrod-pa'i shing-rta

'Phags-lam bgrod-pa'i shing-rta by the ninth Karma-pa dBang-phyug rDo-rje and others consists of a liturgy, including prayers and descriptions of visualizations, to be chanted while practicing the Four Ordinary and Four Special Foundations. Abbreviated instructions for practice are provided in smaller print.

We have not translated the last section of 'Phags-lam, the liturgy of a meditation on rDo-rje rNal-'byor-ma or Vajrayogini. This, like Mahāmudrā, is a discrete practice, of a higher order than the Four Foundations.

OTHER TEXTS DEALING WITH THE FOUNDATIONS

According to Kalu Rin-po-che, Ngес-don sgron-me is today preferred above all other texts for beginners' study of the Four Foundations because it is thorough, concise, and easy to understand.

Other Karma bKa'-brgyud-pa texts include:

1. Ngес-don rgya-mtsho by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul. Longer version of Ngес-don sgron-me with more emphasis on Mahāmudrā.

2. sNgon-'gro'i khrid-yig thun-bshis rnal-'byor du bya-ba by Dwags-po Pan-chen bKra'-shis rnam-rgyal, sixteenth century bKa'-brgyud Lama. Contains interesting variations
on the Four Foundations as described in *Nges-don sgron-me.*

3. *Nges-don rgya-mtsho* by Karma-pa IX dBang-phyug rDo-rje in collaboration with Si-tu VI Chos kyi rGyal-mTsan (ca. 1600). Intermediate-length version of *Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor khrid.* *Nges-don sgron-me* was written to supplement this text.

4. *Ma-rig man-sel,* same authors. Long version of *Lhan-cig skyes-sbyor khrid.*


Lamas of other sects who wrote about the "Foundations" include bSod-nams rGyal-mtshan, dKon-mchog Lhun-grub, and 'Jam-byangs mKhyen-btse dBang-phyug of the Sa-skya sect; Rin-chen Tshe-dbang nor-bu,

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21 Ibid.

22 *gDams-ngag-mdzod,* op. cit., Vol. VI, folios 70-104.

23 Ibid., folios 181-7.
'Jigs-med gling-pa and mKhyen-brtse dBar-gpo of the bRnying-ma-pa, and possibly bLo-bzang Chos Kyi rgya-mtsho of the dGe-lugs-pa.  

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USE OF TEXTS IN PRACTICE

Nges-don sgron-me itself is not used during the practice of the Foundations, but is studied beforehand, and may be referred to between sessions.

Before beginning an actual practice session (thun), the practitioner excludes all distractions. He may then set before him an icon of the visualization used in that practice, e.g., an image of rDo-rje Sems-dpa,' a picture of the Sources of Refuge and so on. The length of the session is a matter of personal preference.

Actual practice of each of the Four Special Foundations involves the practitioner in an intense drama, combining physical, verbal and mental acts. As he chants the relevant section of the liturgy he visualizes the scenes described, considers the significance of the prayers, and carries out the ritual acts indicated. During all of this he tries to keep his attention exclusively on what he is doing.

To complete the practice, he must perform each of the Four Special Foundations 111,111 times. 25 Since the first, Taking Refuge, also includes 111,111 full prostrations, the total is 555,555. Hence, the practice is commonly called the "Five-hundred-thousand" (bum-linga).


25 We have not discovered the reason for this re-duplication of digits.
CHAPTER II

THE FOUR ORDINARY FOUNDATIONS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This section confronts the reader with four points, held to be undeniable facts about existence, known as the "four thoughts which turn the mind toward religion" (blo-'gro rnam-bahi). The practice, called the "Four Ordinary Foundations," consists of meditating on these facts, i.e., sitting still and carefully considering their implications and watching their operation in everyday life. Its aim is to motivate further religious practice. It is presumed that when the "four thoughts" have been internalized so thoroughly that they have become common sense, the individual will naturally shift his priorities from short-term worldly goals to long-term religious ones.

These "four thoughts" are one of the most common themes of introductory talks given by Tibetan Lamas of all sects.

1. "The Precious Human Birth," is designed to instill an appreciation of the uniqueness and value of this human existence. It is considered unique because a human being's exceptional physical, verbal and mental 'equipment' make him uniquely capable of consciously choosing and pursuing a constructive course of action. It is considered valuable because Buddhahood--supremely valuable, Enlightened existence--can be more easily appreciated and attained by a human than by any other type of being.
These ideas are presented first by contrasting human capabilities with those of less fortunate beings ("the eight unfavorable states"), and the human situation with that of beings who are technically human but subject to certain dehumanizing circumstances ("the sixteen unfavorable conditions"). Then the special bonuses ("the ten blessings") and responsibilities implicit in human existence are discussed.

2. "Impermanence," is a highly intentional treatment of this ancient Buddhist doctrine. It is designed to confront the reader with the immanence of death and the utter lack of grounds for expectation that any thing or person we now enjoy will outlast the next moment. We are urged to let the fear of death motivate religious practice. Religious practice is not said to be a remedy for death, but only for the fearful experiences which ordinarily precede, accompany and follow death.

3. "Action, Cause and Result." According to the Buddhist doctrine of karma, an "action" is anything one does, says, or thinks. A "cause" is an emotion or intention which motivates an action. A "result" is an experience arising from an action and its intention. Results are seldom experienced sooner than the next lifetime; they may be experienced much later than that. In this text, the notion that the result will resemble the action and intention is presented in a startlingly literal manner, in contrast to its presentation in texts intended for scholarly audiences, such as the Abhidharmakosā.

Actions are cumulative, and each individual "carries" his unique accumulation from life to life. This accumulation provides the motive
force which perpetuates cyclic existence. Samsāra persists until we have experienced all the consequences of our acts and ceased to generate new ones.

Actions are grouped into two main classes, according to the nature of their motivations and results. They are not seen as intrinsically good or evil. "Samsāric" acts are those which are motivated by ignorance and distorted emotions arising from ignorance, and which result in rebirth. The particular type of rebirth we receive depends on whether our samsāric actions are largely "wholesome" or "unwholesome," i.e., whether they result in health (especially mental) and happiness or ill health and misery. "Neutral" acts have negligible results. Samsāric actions are also "meritorious" or "non-meritorious," depending on whether they lead us to a higher or lower samsāric existence.

The other main class of actions, "actions which lead to Liberation," consists totally of wholesome acts motivated by a desire for freedom from samsāric existence. Although any wholesome act results in some degree of happiness, samsāric happiness is not highly valued because it is subject to impermanence. Only Liberation offers happiness which transcends samsāra's shortcomings.

This text's treatment of the doctrine of karma aims to convince the reader that since everything he does will have a definite result, he had better avoid unwholesome action and adopt wholesome action.

Although religious practice will eventually destroy the emotional "roots" of samsāric action completely, behavioral control is here advocated as a good starting point.
4. "The Shortcomings of Samsāra" attempts to consolidate the reader's growing conviction that Liberation is the only goal worth pursuing. Its approach is a systematic devaluation of samsāric existence. In conformity with the first Noble Truth, every dimension of samsāric existence examined is found to be replete with suffering and devoid of lasting satisfaction.

In the section on the human realm, the very type of existence previously extolled as the most richly endowed, is shown to imply the greatest variety of suffering.

TRANSLATION

1b. Invocation

1 To Marpa, Mila and Dwags-po, Three Chiefs of the many siddhas,
To the glorious bKa'-brgyud-pa, Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa, who received their oral transmission,
To rDo-rje 'Chang, member of the [Golden] Rosary of Wish-Fulfilling Gems,
2 To the mighty Padma Nyin-byed,
I bow my head.

Most Excellent, Perfect Buddha,
During rebirth, this lifetime and beyond,
Grant me, and each sentient being,
3 The blessing of realization of the true state of things.26

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26 The first two lines invoke the three main spiritual ancestors of the bKa'-brgyud sect: Marpa the Translator (1012-97), his disciple Milarespa (1040-1123) and his disciple, Dwags-po or sGam-po-pa (1079-1153). Upon their work, Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa (1110-93) founded the Karma bKa'-brgyud sect and became its first Karma-pa, or head. See Ch. I, pp. 6-8.

The "Golden Rosary of Wish-Fulfilling Gems" is the Mahāmudrā lineage, whose source or, first member is considered to be the Buddha
Each of us has obtained a human body. [Now] we must learn the importance of "entering the Dharma's door," and turn our thoughts to the Dharma. For this to occur, we must have profound confidence, based on knowledge of the Precious Ones' qualities. In addition to this confidence, our initial motivation must come from meditation on impermanence. If we do not think about death and impermanence, our thoughts will not even begin to turn to the Dharma. Relying also on a knowledge of the rarity of this human existence, with its opportunities and blessings, we begin the basic [practices, known as the] Four Ordinary Foundations:

rDo-rje 'Chang, the sect's supreme symbol of Enlightenment. See Ch. I, p. 9.

Si-tu Padma Nyin-byed (1774-1853) was Kong-sprul's "root-Lama" (rtsa-ba'i bla-ma), i.e., chief spiritual teacher from whom he received ordinations, important empowerments (dbang see Ch. VI., n. 345), and key teachings.

The second stanza articulates the ultimate goal of all Buddhist practice: full Enlightenment, or direct, non-conceptual awareness of the ultimate nature of all things (gnas-lugs rtogs-pa).

27 I.e., practicing the Buddhist religion.

28 I.e., Buddhist doctrine.

29 yid-ches-pa'i dad-pa.

30 The Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. See Ch. III.
1. The Precious Human Birth

"Meditate on the precious opportunities and blessings of this rare and fragile [human existence]. Make it worthwhile." 31

The eight unfavorable states of existence in which individuals are disadvantaged

First, meditate as follows: Consider the advantages of this rare human existence, with its eight opportunities and ten blessings, more precious than a wish-fulfilling gem! Unlike ourselves, the beings in the eight unfavorable states of existence [are disadvantaged in the following ways]:

1. Hell-beings suffer from heat and cold without the slightest break.

2. Spirits suffer the torments of hunger and thirst.

3. Animals are stupid and confused, [incapable of] any understanding or knowledge.

4. Barbarians, born in those numerous lands untouched by Dharma--which far outnumber Buddhist countries--cannot understand it.

5. Long-living gods of the realms of Desire, Form, and the Formless realms are distracted by their love of worldly

pleasures and samādhi, and have no interest in the Dharma.\textsuperscript{32}

6. Heretics and those who have a natural dislike for the Dharma, hold perverted views.

7. For those born in a dark kalpa in which no Buddha comes and the attributes of the Precious Ones are not renowned, the world is a desolate place.

8. Mutes, said to be ignorant of the world of language, are stupid and to not turn their thoughts to the Dharma.

None of these beings are fortunate enough to practice Dharma. All of them are tormented by their past deeds. [This is what it means to] lack leisure and opportunity.

You who have not been born into any of the eight unfavorable states in which individuals\textsuperscript{33} [are disadvantaged] possess eight

\textsuperscript{32} All the gods of the three samsāric realms (dhātu) live much longer than humans. Gods of the Desire-realm (Kāmadhātu) are attached to worldly pleasures. Those of the other two realms (Rūpa, Ārūpyadhātu) cling to the subtler delights of samādhi, meditative concentration. See L. de La Vallée Poussin, transl. and annot., "L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu," Mélanges, Vol. XVI. Bruxelles: IBHEC, 1971, ch. iii, 172-3 (lifespans of gods), 6-7 (three dhātu); ch. viii, 127-218 (dhyānas, levels of samādhi).

\textsuperscript{33} rang-rgyud; sva-saṃtana: "stream of being." According to H.V. Guenther:

"An individual, which in other systems is regarded as a combination of matter and permanent mental principle (atman), is in reality a continuously changing stream of that which from one viewpoint is said to be matter and from another a mind. However, what we call the mental and the material occurs in a unity of organization . . . something dynamic."


This stream is similar to karmic accumulation. Each one is beginningless and unique. (Lama)
kinds of opportunity. But though you have obtained a human body capable of practicing Dharma, if your practice is to be really effective, you must [first] be free of the following sixteen unfavorable conditions:

The sixteen unfavorable conditions

Eight unfavorable conditions based on present circumstances

1. Because the five [emotional] poisons\textsuperscript{34} are extremely potent, the individual is [mentally] disturbed, 2. under the influence of corrupting companions; 3. of false views and practice, or 4. subject to extreme laziness. 5. Due to previous bad deeds, a flood of obstacles now advances. 6. [The individual] comes under others' control as a slave or servant, 7. enters the Dharma\textsuperscript{35} because he fears death or [being left without a regular source of] food or clothing, but does not practice, or 8. is insincerely involved in the Dharma for the sake of profit or renown.

Eight unfavorable conditions involving mental rejection of the Dharma.

3a.
1. He has great desire and attachment for his body, wealth and so on. 2. Since his character is extremely coarse, all his

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{dug-inga:} pride (\textit{nga-rgyal}), desire and attachment (\textit{dod-ochags}), aversion (\textit{she-sdang}), jealousy (\textit{phrag-dog}), and confusion or bewilderment (\textit{gti-mug}).

\textsuperscript{35} I.e., a monastery. (Lama)
acts are mean. 3. No matter how much [the Lama] explains the
miseries of the lower realms he is not frightened. 4. No matter
how much [the Lama] explains the great blessing of Liberation,
he has no faith in it. 5. He naturally delights in unwholesome
action. 6. He has as much motivation to practice Dharma as has a
dog to eat grass. 7. The "roots" of his [Bodhisattva] resolution
and his vows are broken. 8. He breaks his sacred commitments
to the Lama and religious companions.

Had you been subject to these sixteen unfavorable conditions,
you would not have been influenced by the Dharma. Since that would
have led you to act in a manner conducive to birth in the lower
realms, rejoice in the fact that you are free of these [unfavorable
conditions], and learn how to prevent their future occurrence.

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36 **ngan-song**: the realms of hell-beings, spirits and animals.

37 **(byang-chub) sems-bskyed dang sdom-pa'i rtsa-ba nyams-pa.** All
vows include an essential clause or "root." If this is transgressed
the entire vow is destroyed. For example, the "root" of most vows in­
cludes a promise not to harm sentient beings. See Ch. III, p. 89 for the
Bodhisattva vow's "roots."

38 **dam-tshig.** All sacred oaths and promises, called "vows"
(sdom-pa) in the Mahāyāna are called "sacred bonds" or "commitments"
(dam-tshig) in the Vajrayāna. Types of dam-tshig especially characteris­
tic of the Vajrayāna include 1. the bond established by the Lama's be­
stowal of teaching or empowerment (dbang) to the aspirant who requests
it. It defines his special relationship to the Lama from that point
on. See Ch. VI., Commentary. 2. the bond established between an
aspirant and any yi-dam (See Ch. III, n. 118) upon the former's empow­
erment. Thereafter, that yi-dam and the cluster of meditative practices
associated with it will be the major focus of the aspirant's Vajrayāna
practice.
3a. The ten blessings of the precious human birth

   The five personal blessings

   1. You have obtained a human body, the reverse of the eight unfavorable states, 2. You were born in a land to which, by virtue of the Dharma's words, Buddhism has spread. 3. Since your eyes and other five sense organs are intact, you can understand whatever is taught. 4. Since you have "entered the door" of the Buddha's Dharma and not become involved with heretics, your acts are wholesome. 5. You have profound confidence in the Three Jewels.

   The five blessings received from others

   1. Although the frequent periodic rise and destruction of the many realms of this universe makes it difficult for a Buddha to come even once, to even one of them, here and now the Buddha Śākyamuni has come! 2. Although Pratyekabuddhas and others who did not preach the Dharma have come, now this Excellent One preaches the profound and extensive Saddharma. 3. The Buddha's doctrine has not declined, but endures. 4. It has many followers. 5. Other sentient beings, out of love, give food.

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39 *rang-sangs-rgyas.* Meditating in isolation to achieve Enlightenment for himself alone, the Pratyekabuddha does achieve a degree of realization. But in the Mahāyāna, he is considered inferior to a Bodhisattva, who works to help all beings reach Enlightenment, and himself achieves complete Buddhahood.

40 *dam-chos sab-rgyas.* "Profound" (sab) refers to the *prajñāpāramitā; "extensive" (rgyas), to the *sūtra, vinaya* and *abhidharma* teachings.
clothing and other items needed to maintain conditions conducive to religious practice, to those who, observing the vicissitudes of old age, sickness and the like, are determined [to leave *samsāra*]. Thus, those who practice Dharma are not destitute.

**Why the human birth is precious**

It is difficult to obtain

All sentient beings have a natural tendency to act harmfully; few act beneficially. Even among the few who do, the capacity for moral conduct required for acquisition of a human body is typically very rare. As a result, beings of the three lower realms are numerous as grains of soil in the earth, while gods and human beings are exceedingly rare. Furthermore, there are scarcely enough sentient beings with human bodies who live by the Dharma [to constitute a class of *samsāric* beings! It is impossible to count all the insects living beneath a slab of rock. But it is quite possible to count all the men living in [an entire] kingdom! Since so few human beings practice Dharma, those who behave in accordance with it are [as rare as] daytime stars.

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41 *'khor-ba las nges-par-'byung-'dod kyi blo*, or simply, *nges-'byung*: determination to quit *samsāra* based on conviction of its shortcomings, which provides a stable motivation for practice. (LPL)

42 *rang-bzhin*. Ignorance (*ma-rig-pa*; Sanskrit, *avidyā*) is the fundamental, defining condition of sentient beings. It which gives rise to the distorted emotional reactions (*nyon-mongs-pa*; *klesa*) naturally resulting in misguided behavior or bad deeds (*sdig-pa'i las*; *pāpakarma*).
It is easily lost

This body is threatened by many potentially fatal circumstances such as fire, flood, poison, weapons, malevolent planetary influences, earthquakes and so on; yet we never know when they will occur! Few conditions favor its survival. Since the only difference between life and death is the exhalation or inhalation of one rasping breath, this body more easily destroyed than a bubble.

A precious human body like this one will not be found again. Many people let it go to waste. If you had an animal's body [instead], the means to achieve Enlightenment would be beyond your reach. You would not even know how to recite one Mani but you would have the power to do the [kinds of deeds which] cause rebirth in the lower realms.

It has a great objective

Thanks to this human body, we have the ability to achieve even complete Buddhahood: This is its great objective. Up to now, we have not valued it very highly, but spent it in vain. Worldly men concerned for future happiness are able to deal with hardships in business or other worldly work. But when it comes to

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43 chi-ba'i rkyen.
44 I.e., the mantra, "Om Mani padme hum."
45 don chen-po.
46 Misprint: "phug gi bed" should be "phug gi bde."
dealing with hardships encountered in striving toward [Enlightenment], life's ever-present goal, we are completely devoid of energy. We are degenerate, dissipated and beguiled by Māra. From this day on, meditate repeatedly on the thought: "I must exert myself exclusively in religious practice! I must accomplish the objective!"

Generally speaking, one whose [past good] deeds have spread into his present life is called a "karma-carrier." A "karma-carrier" who practiced Dharma in his previous life now finds it easy to place his trust in the Lama and the Dharma. This is an indication that his [past] "white" deeds have been reawakened. But the karma of one who is accustomed to acting harmfully will simply "carry" him to rebirth in the lower realms, not to a human body.

From the Kṣūtigarbha-sūtra:

There are ten kinds of samsāric beings for whom true human birth is difficult to obtain. Who are they? They are: 1. those who have not cultivated the causes of wholesome

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47 bDud: 1. Personifications of factors which hinder or obstruct religious practice; 2. A demon of the fourth dhyāna who endangers faith. (Lama); 3. The four Māras: Skandhamāra, Kleśamāra, Mrtyumāra, and Devaputra māra, described by H.V. Guenther as, "... certain limiting factors which... have a deadening influence on life." (Jewel Ornament, 199-200).


48 las-'phro [-can].

49 'Phags-pa sa'i snying-po'i mtshan brgya-rtsa-brgyad gzung-shags dang bcos-pa. bka'-'gyur, rGyud-'bum, 327, 506. A devotional work.
1. action; 2. who have not accumulated a quantity of merit; 3. who follow the ways of corrupting companions; 4. for whom the klesas persist; 5. who do not fear suffering in future lives; 6. who are very disturbed by klesas; 7. who out of indolence and inattention are every lazy about Dharma practice; 8. who embrace Buddha's teachings but do not follow them; 9. who follow, or 10. who believe in perverted views."

Beware of these! To say, "Since I understand the great importance of this human body, I am great! I am learned! I am nobly born! I am good!," constitutes contempt for others. Take notice and desist! Since all living beings possess the tatha-gatagarbha, it is wrong to despise even a mere insect.

It is said that when [the tendency to] condemn others has fully ripened, in this life you will lose what you cherish. In the next, you will either be born among the spirits or as an enslaved human being. Since ordinary beings [like ourselves] lack the supersensible cognitions of spiritually advanced beings,

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50 dge-ba'i rtsa-ba' kuśalamūla: the reverse of the three klesas, i.e., non-attachment, non-aversion and mental clarity.


52 mgon-shes; abhijñā. According to H.V. Guenther: "There are six supersensible cognitions and faculties, of which the first five may be possessed by ordinary beings, the sixth belongs exclusively to the Āryas, who are spiritually advanced. The six are: miraculous powers (such as multiplying oneself, walking through walls and so on); hearing human and divine voices far and near; knowing others' thoughts; recollection of former lives; the vision of beings passing away and then reincarnating; and the awareness that all disturbing elements have lost their power of keeping us on low planes." Jewel Ornament, op. cit., p. 52.
we do not know who may be an Arhat and who a Bodhisattva, how such Beings may be teaching Dharma, or what special methods they may be using to help sentient beings.

Being ignorant yourself, do not judge others! Since it is said that one who despises a Bodhisattva will suffer the agonies of hell for many kalpas, do not discount the seriousness of even one unpleasant joke at another's expense.

The type of person whose faith vacillates, whose insight is limited, who is easily led astray by companions and is frightened by profound teachings will develop gradually, and be trained in a gradual path, closely [guided] by a Lama of skillful methods. Before he may be instructed on "seeing" and "meditating" he must amass and integrate the Two Accumulations. But the type of person capable of instantaneous illumination, whose insight is expansive, compassion is great, who is filled with unbending faith and devotion, lacks desire and attachment, thinks only of the Dharma and especially delights in profound

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53 thabs-mkhas-pa; upāya-kauśalya.
54 lta; dārśana: examination or perception of the nature of things; sgom; bhāvanā: meditation on, or attentive concentration to that which has been perceived. Both are essential to religious practice. See Jewel Ornament, op. cit., p. 84.
55 tshogs-gnyis; dvi-varga: 1. Accumulation of Merit (bsod-nams kyi tshogs); 2. Accumulation of Awareness (ye-shes kyi tshogs); "Merit" refers to meritorious action. "Awareness" is transcending awareness: seeing things as they really are. This double accumulation is an important prerequisite to successful higher meditative practice. See Ch. V. Introductory Remarks and pp. 159-69.
56 cig-char-ba'i rigs-can.
doctrines, merely requires a teaching which immediately points out [the ultimate nature of reality], dispensing with the many visualizations [and other practices employed by] the "path of means." Thus it is!

2. Impermanence

"The whole external world and the world of beings is impermanent. The life of beings is like a bubble. We never know when we will die. At death, we become corpses. Thus, strive to achieve the aims of Dharma."

According to the bKa'-gdams school, these are the five basic thoughts comprising meditation in impermanence:

1. "Think that nothing lasts."

First, the external world is produced, then it persists, until finally, destroyed by fire and flood, nothing remains of it, not even specks of dust!

Last year and this year are soon over. Moment by moment, this and other days, months, and years are used up.

First you were an infant; later, a child; then, a youth; now, an

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57 thabs-lam; upāya-mārga: gradual path or approach to Enlightenment such as the one described in this text, employing visualization, recitation of prayers and mantras, and so on. (Lama)

2 old man. Since each day, each month quickly brings us closer and closer to death, meditate on this now, thinking, "What should I do?"

2. "Think that many other people have died."

Although there are many who are older, younger or the same age as yourself, remember that many others, who were once [alive] like them, are now dead. This one died; that one, too, turned to dust. First they grew old, then they died! The two always seem to go together. Most of them did not die too painfully, but quickly, with no time for thoughts or reminiscences.

Sometimes, even without dying, prominent men fall; the lowly become prominent. A beggar becomes rich; a rich man becomes a beggar, and so on.

Since absolutely nothing in your daily experience overcomes impermanence, at some time it is bound to affect you, too. So right now, while there is still time, think, "I really must practice Dharma strenuously!"

3. "Think repeatedly of the many circumstances which might cause death."

Since there are a great many circumstances which might cause death--such as avalanches, falling objects, thunder or lightning, strokes, internal ailments, and the like--we do...
6a.

not know how or when we will die. But as long as we have
[accumulated] karma, death is unpreventable. Neither our food
and clothing, nor friends, attendants and servants can aid us
in dealing with the circumstances leading to death.

Since you do not know when you will die, now earnestly
meditate on the thought, "How will I die?"

The Bodhisattva-pitaka lists the nine causes of sudden
death:

"1. eating unwholesome food;
2. eating although you are full;
3. eating before digesting the previous meal;
4. not eliminating at the right time;
5. while ill, neither heeding the nurse nor taking
   his prescriptions;
6. being possessed by a fierce disease-demon;
7. taking an emetic and vomiting;
8. impulsively engaging in violence;
9. indulging in sex without restraint."

Beware of these!

4. "Meditate on what will happen
   at the hour of death."

The coming of death is unwanted, inevitable and unwelcome.
An individual who has done harm is terrified. In his dying hours,
he experiences incredibly intense pain and the shuddering sensation
of life being cut off. He sees apparitions everywhere. He cannot
control his body or mind. Since dying thoughts are so very potent,

62 Byang-chub sems-dpa'i sde-snod. Early Mahāyāna sūtra containing
   basic doctrine of the six paramitās to be carried out by Bodhisattvas.
   Part of the Ratnakūṭa group of sūtras. bka'-gyur, dKon-brtsegs, 760
   (12).
anything which enters his mind, even one careless unwholesome thought, assures his rebirth in the lower realms.

Thus, instead of acting in your usual manner, from now on, get into the habit of practicing the Dharma!

Since you cannot reverse a used-up lifetime, even with a Buddha's help—to say nothing of the impotence of methods like divination, exorcism, medical treatment, scripture-reading, or [offering of] food or money, in luring it away—there is simply no way to escape death. So instead of grieving later, set to work now!

5. "Think about what happens after death."

Think: From the moment of death, even a world-ruler lacks the power to take along one mouthful of food, one article of clothing, one cent of his money. He cannot even take along a single servant.

After your corpse has been wrapped in a shroud and bound with rope, everyone will turn away from it in disgust. After a few days, not even "the remains" will be left.

Lacking mental control, like a feather carried off by wind, you walk the dangerous narrow path of the terrifying

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63 Divination (mo) and exorcism (gto) were part of the standard medical practice in Tibet. First the demon who was causing the illness would be identified by divination, then it would be exorcized. (LPL)

64 'khor-las sgyur-ba'i rgyal-po; cakravartin: see Ch. V., n. 248.

65 This is because the corpse has been left on a deserted hilltop as food for vultures, a common practice in mountainous regions of Tibet. (LPL)
You wander aimlessly in an unfamiliar place, another world. Your "black" and "white" deeds follow you.

There is simply no way to undo the harm you have done, but the Saddharma and wholesome action will help you. Now, meditate, "If I do not strive to achieve these aims right now, after death [it will be too late] for anyone to grant me an extension!"

In short, there is nothing for you to do but practice Dharma from now on. You cannot simply "let it be!" You should make it part of your very existence. You should meditate on making it part of your existence. As a result, your hour of death will be a happy one, and everyone else will say, "He was a truly religious man!," and surely make you an object of veneration.

Someone is always crying, "A man has died! Oh, no! Oh, Lama, help him!" In the same way, death will stealthily and quickly catch up with you, too! You know that you will die some day, but you imagine that it will not happen for quite a while.

Intellectually you know that death may come at any time, but you are not really convinced of this. Whenever something

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66 The state experienced by each individual between the time of his death and entry into a womb, during which he sees himself acting in various ways which reflect his past deeds, but is unable to do anything to change this. This drivenness and helplessness is symbolized by the feather (the individual) tossed about by the wind (of karma). An individual who is spiritually prepared for these experiences is not helpless, and may attain Enlightenment directly from the bar-do instead of being conceived anew. See W.Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., Tibetan Book of the Dead. Oxford University Press; New York, 1960.

67 Su-zhig shi-song a-kha-kha/ Ga-shad gcig tshang-ma lo-shad bla-ma mkhyen.
goes wrong, you are distracted by samsāra's appearances and act in opposition to the Dharma. Since such behavior cannot do you any good, you have already wasted the greater part of this lifetime!

Think: "Right now, since death is at my door, I must forget about things like food, money, clothes and fame. There is no time to spare!" and fit yourself in to the path of the Dharma in body, speech and mind.

You should always have pity for those who simply "take it easy" and do not focus their minds on [the fact that] they will die sooner or later. What are their inmost thoughts? Alas! they are not afraid of death!

3. Action, Cause and Result

"At the hour of death, our powers are dissipated, and former deeds take their course. To overcome this, abandon harmful deeds and practice wholesome ones. With this in mind, scrutinize the stream of your existence everyday."  

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68 rkyen-ngan re dang 'phrad-pa'i dus.

69 'jig-rten gyi snang-ba: the distorted ways in which things ordinarily appear to us, due to our ignorance and bewilderment. Especially heightened in times of emotional stress. (Lama)

70 gshen-dag so-sa dal-du 'dug-pa dang.

71 snga-chis phyi-chis blo-la-bkram-pa-rcas.

72 "gSum-pa shi-tshe rang-dbang mi- 'du-bas/ Las ni dbag-gir-bya phyir sgig-pa snga/ dGe-ba'i bya-bas rtag-tu 'da'-bar-bya/ Zhes-beam nyin-re rang-rgyud nyid-la btag."

'Phags-lam, op. cit., 107/3-4.
Since [the doctrine of] "action, cause and result" contains the fundamental message of the limitless collection of Buddha's teachings, it is extremely profound and extensive. Only a person who has reached the "one-valueness" realization will have cleared up his doubts about "action, cause and result." Ordinary people will not really understand it. But generally, this sums it all up: A wholesome cause yields a pleasant result; an unwholesome cause yields an unpleasant result.

First we will discuss the causes and results of samsāra, then the causes and results of Liberation.

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7b. **Action which leads to samsāra.**

1. The accumulation of bad deeds is the root of suffering in samsāra. The klesas are to blame for bad deeds. Ignorance or mental darkness is the root of all the klesas. Because of mental darkness, we do not know where samsāra comes from, what its nature is, what types of actions, causes and results are helpful, and what types are harmful, and so on: We are in the dark! For example,

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73 *ro-goig; eka-rasa*: third of the four stages in Mahāmudrā realization. According to H.V. Guenther:

"One-valueness is the experience of everything that appears as nothing, though not in the sense that appearance is mere illusion and that . . . there is no need for serious action. On the contrary, one-valueness is the spontaneous interest in the several situations of life which man encounters. This interest has been purified of all vested interests through the preceding phases of the concentrative process, and hence is more suited for beneficial activity. However . . . this stage is not the final realization . . . "

*Life and Teaching of Naropa*, op. cit., p. 195.
if the Lama explains [the nature of reality], after listening and thinking about [what he said] we may reach a conceptual understanding. But just as when we day-dream of a land we have never visited, when we apply conceptual designations to [ultimate reality], which is not a "thing," we are simply playing with concepts. By this [same] process, we apply the designation "I" to that which is not [a solid, separate self] and cling to that "I." Based on this, doubt about ultimate reality and many other perverted attitudes arise. Then, attachment toward [any thing which supports the "self," such as] your body, wealth and so on, and consequently pride, jealousy and greed spring up.

Aversion to what is "other," and consequently, burning anger, malice and the like erupt.

If you are free of [mental darkness, attachment and aversion], the three emotional poisons, you will not accumulate actions. Since results do not come about without actions, you must do what you can to dig up these three roots of wandering in samsāra.

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74 The ultimate nature of reality, which the mentally-oriented bKa'-brgyud-pas term "the ultimate nature of mind" (sems gyi gnas-lugs) is openness or emptiness (stong-pa-nyid; śūnyatā), and cannot be understood through concepts or characterized by conceptual designations.

75 Doubt about ultimate reality, i.e., about the ultimate nature of reality, leads ordinary people to look upon the various, loosely-connected, ever-changing factors (dharmas) of their existence as if these comprised a solid, unitary, unchanging self or ego. This mis-apprehension leads to defensive and aggressive emotions (klesas) and actions (karma) in behalf of that non-existent "I."

76 dod-chags; raga. 77 she-sdang; dveša.
To briefly summarize [the topic of] "action which leads to samsāra": Non-meritorious action, grouped into "ten unwholesome acts," leads to rebirth in the lower realms. Meritorious action, including generosity and so on, if not motivated by the desire to achieve Nirvāṇa leads to rebirth in the higher realms as a god or human. The neutral action\(^{78}\) of samādhi leads to rebirth [as a god], in the realm of Form or the Formless realm.

In short, until our propensities for conceptualization\(^{79}\) have been exhausted, this continuous pattern of karmic accumulation will not be interrupted, thus insuring perpetuation of the illusion which is samsāra. A stupid person who, since his meditation is blank, says "Ah! I have understood [the ultimate nature of mind], so I need not keep an eye on my actions or their consequences," is a great thief of the doctrine.\(^{80}\)

**Unwholesome action**

These are the ten unwholesome acts:\(^{81}\)

1. Do not consciously take the life of any living being,

\(^{78}\) mi-gyo-pa'i las; āniṅjya-karma: "... action invariable ... en vue de la sensation d'indifference des étages supérieurs ..." or "... action non-agité" of the Rupa and Ārūpyadhatu. See L. de La Vallée Poussin, "L'Abhidharmakośa," op. cit., Ch. III, p. 84; Ch. IV, p. 106.

\(^{79}\) rnam-rto gyi bag-chags.

\(^{80}\) Because he steals or distorts the spirit of the doctrine by mistaking his "blank" meditation for the realization of the ultimate nature of mind, openness or emptiness. (Lama)

\(^{81}\) mi-dge-ba bou.
even an ant, for when it comes to life there is no "big" or "small." 82

2. Do not secretly take another's property when it hasn't been offered to you.

3. Do not indulge in sexual intercourse with an inappropriate partner: one who has taken vows; at an inappropriate time: when your wife is pregnant; in an inappropriate place: near a Lama, shrine-room or stūpa; or in an inappropriate manner: orally or anally. These are the four unchaste acts. All of the above constitute the three unwholesome physical acts.

4. Do not consciously lie, that is, say what is untrue.

5. Do not slander, that is, say things which will promote discord.

6. Do not speak ill of others, that is, call a man a thief or half-wit, or hurt his feelings by cruelly pointing out his faults.

7. Do not engage in idle chatter about military or business matters, about women, or in the form of songs, dances, jokes and so on. These are the four unwholesome verbal acts.

8. Do not covet someone else's money, wife, reputation, and so on, thinking, "Oh, if only I had that!"

9. Do not resent others, that is, be displeased at their happiness or good fortune.

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82 Refers especially to animals. It is more serious to kill a human being than an animal. (Lama)
10. Do not hold perverted views, that is, doubt the existence of past or future lives; or action, cause and result; or of the special qualities of the Precious Ones. These are the three unwholesome mental acts.

To sum up, when each of these ten unwholesome acts has fully matured, you will be reborn in the lower realms. Even if you are reborn in the human realm, since you have taken life, your life will be cut short. Since stealing leads to many sorrows, such as falling into poverty, simply do not steal! Turn away from others who commit [unwholesome acts]; regret those acts which have been committed.

**Wholesome action**

Reject these unwholesome acts.

1. Instead of killing, save lives.
2. Instead of stealing, distribute your own food and money.
3. Preserve moral conduct whether anyone is watching or not.
4. Speak truthfully.
5. Patch up quarrels caused by slander.
6. Use gentle words.
[7. Speak only of meaningful things].
8. Rejoice in the good fortune of others.
9. Think only of their benefit.
10. Even on hearing the views of [another] religious sect,
instead of denouncing it, have faith in the Buddha's words. These are the ten wholesome acts. Do your best to carry them out. Bid others to do the same. Rejoice at those which have already been done.

As a result, you will live long in the higher realms, possessing many comforts such as great wealth.

**Neither wholesome nor unwholesome action**

You might "kill time" walking, moving, sleeping or sitting: ineffectual acts which are neither wholesome nor harmful, and mature into neither good nor bad experiences. But since such actions simply waste this human life, instead of throwing your ability away in idle amusements, make a conscious effort to devote your time exclusively to wholesome action. Avoid carelessly committing even minor harmful acts, recalling that "Even a small amount of poison may be fatal." Do not underestimate the power of even a minor wholesome act, recalling that, "Enough grains of barley will [eventually] fill the bag."

**The eight heavenly qualities**

You should develop a character endowed with the renowned "eight heavenly qualities," the basis for the accumulation of a great deal [of merit] in lives to come. [This includes]: 1. Long life, since you have stopped harming others; 2. a pleasing form, 83

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83 lung-ma bstan.
since you have offered lamps, clothing and so on; 3. a noble birth, since you have humbly paid homage to the Lama and religious companions; 4. the power of wealth, since you have given poor learned men, the sick and other needy ones all they wished; 5. authoritative speech, since you have only spoken constructively; 6. great power and influence, since you have made fine offerings and prayers to the Precious Ones and your parents; 7. a male body, since you have befriended men and saved [animals] from castration, and 8. all types of strength in abundance, since you have helpfully befriended others without hoping to fulfill religious obligations thereby. Cultivate [the kind of behavior which] will give you these [qualities].

Until you have no more desire for samsāra, you must learn to abandon its cause: unwholesome action. And, whether anyone is watching or not, do not cheat in the performance of these and other wholesome acts which accumulate merit, [or in the preservation of] vows, sacred commitments and other wholesome acts which lead to Liberation.

**Action which leads to Liberation**

To achieve Liberation, you must first become a learned man who unfailingly adheres to moral conduct because he is determined to leave samsāra. Consequently, you will achieve the samādhi in which the attention remains one-pointed. As a result, through
insight which realizes "non-self," you will know the general and specific characteristics of impermanence, suffering, emptiness and so on, and your previously accumulated [deeds], which now obstruct [your spiritual progress], will be removed. They will not recur. When your suffering is finally used up, you will rest in the realization beyond extremes, which is called "Liberation." [Achieving] "Liberation" or "Nirvāṇa" does not entail going to another place or becoming someone else.

Summary

In brief: The result of wholesome action is happiness; the result of unwholesome action is suffering, and nothing else. [The results] are not interchangeable: When you plant buckwheat [you get buckwheat. When you plant] barley [you get barley].

Actions and intentions

Killing a living being as an offering to the Precious Ones, or beating and insulting someone "for his own good" are examples of blending "white" intentions with "black" actions. Building a temple out of desire for fame, or getting an education out of an urge to compete, are examples of blending "black" intentions with "white" actions. Along with pretending to be a monk out of fear of embarrassment, all these are fundamentally unwholesome actions. We have stated that you must reject the poisonous tendencies which

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85 shes-rab; prajñā:
86 mtha'-bral gyi rig-pa.
will later become concrete unwholesome acts. But how are you to do this? Be content with wholesome acts [which have been done]; confess\(^{87}\) harmful acts and so on. If you do not conquer them with these remedies, the deeds you have done will "ripen" only for yourself, and no one else. They cannot possibly be lost or used up, even with the passing of many kalpas. Furthermore, actions always increase, even those arising from the slightest motivation. You could kill out of fierce anger, or save a doomed man out of pure benevolence. Major actions increase unboundedly. Even the most weakly motivated wholesome or harmful word or deed increases a hundred, even a thousandfold. If you yourself have not acted or had intentions, it is impossible for someone else's acts to affect you. Thus, if you can live by the doctrine of "cause and result" pronounced by the Buddha Himself, no matter how bad other people are, it will be absolutely impossible for them to throw you into the lower realms.

Scrutinize every one of your own faults, and no one else's, and see others as pure. Since this is the root of [the entire doctrine of] "action and result," it is said to have been highly prized by the Great bKa'-brgyud-pas.\(^{88}\)

\(^{87}\) shags. For the practice of Confession, see n. 168, below and Ch. IV, pp. 110; 116-18.

\(^{88}\) bKa'-brgyud gong-ma-rnams: eminent bKa'-brgyud Lamas of the past.
Figure 2. Wheel of Existences
4. The Shortcomings of Samsāra

"Due to the constant torture of the three types of suffering [experienced therein], the friends and pleasures of samsāra are like a feast held for a condemned man as he is led to the gallows. Sever desire and attachment, and strive to attain Enlightenment." 89

Hell-beings

The eight hot hells

For those born in the eight hot hells, all the mountains and valleys are red-hot iron and tongues of flame, violently burning. The rivers and lakes are molten copper and bronze. Even the trees are swords and other sharp weapons. The beings cannot rest for even a moment, but are [repeatedly] slaughtered by wild beasts and horrible demons.

Life in the Avīci hell is the most intensely painful of all the eight [hot hells]. Even the Bhagavān 90 cannot bear to speak of its miseries. For when He does, it is said, the merciful Bodhisattvas vomit blood and come dangerously close to dying.

89 “bZhi-pa 'khor-ba'i gnas grogs bde-'byor sogs/ sDug-bang-gsung gyis rtag-tu mnar-ba'i phyir/ bSod-sar khrid-pa'i gshed-ma'i dga-ston ltar/ Zhen-'khris boad-nas brtson-pas byang-chub sgrub.” 'Phags-lam, op. cit., 107/4-5

90 bcom-ldan-'das: "Conquerer," i.e., Buddha. Many Mahāyāna sutras take the form of narratives delivered by the Bhagavān to a crowd of Bodhisattvas.
The eight cold hells

For those born in the cold hells, all the mountains and valleys are snow and ice. Due to the bitter cold of wind and storms, their bodies are covered with tiny cracks. Even before their billion-year lifespan ends, they die again and again and are instantly reborn, only to undergo the same suffering once more.

Miscellaneous hells

The miseries [experienced by] those in the "occasional" and "neighboring" hells are as bad as the rest.

Spirits

The spirits cannot find any food or drink. Increasingly hungry and thirsty, they find only mucus and feces, and are wearied by their hopeless search. Unclothed, they burn in summer and freeze in winter. When it rains, live coals fall and burn them. They see water as pus. Flames shoot up from their dislocated joints. They continually fight and beat each other, each one thinking that the other is his enemy. They may live for fifteen-thousand [human] years.

Animals

Animals in the sea are [as crowded as grains of] malting barley. They survive by eating each other. Constantly tormented

91 nye-tshe-ba. 92 nye-'khor-ba.
by fear, they wander about uncertainly, carried along by waves. Even animals whose habitats are spread throughout the mountains are unhappy, always fearing some enemy's approach. They kill each other.

Even the domesticated ones are hitched to ploughs or killed for meat and hides. They are stupid. In addition to the misery of stupidity, they suffer as badly from heat and cold as do the hell-beings and spirits.

Gods

The gods of the realm of Desire are distracted by the pleasant lives they lead, so they do not think about the Dharma. Seven god-days before their lives are over, they perceive five different death-omens. They see that their future birthplaces will be in the hells and elsewhere, and experience the misery of their own downfall, like fish writhing on hot sand.

When they have exhausted their store of good deeds, even the gods of the four dhyānas and the Formless realm gradually degenerate and fall from samādhi.

93 "... his dress becomes soiled; his garlands of flowers fade; perspiration breaks forth from his arm-pits [for the first time]; an evil smell rises from his body and he is dissatisfied with his seat." H.V. Guenther, *Jewel Ornament*, op. cit., p. 68.

94 I.e., the realm of Form (Rūpadhātu).
Asuras

Since Asuras are naturally envious of the [superior] splendor of the gods, they do nothing but fight with them. Their accumulated merit is weak, and they dislike the Dharma. They are defeated in battle, suffering the extreme pain of the slaughter.

Humans

The misery of birth in this human realm resembles that of a little bird carried off by a hawk. The misery of ageing is like that of a mother camel losing her young. The misery of illness is like that of a guilty man going to jail. The misery of death is like being pursued by an executioner. And each of these includes five kinds of misery.

The five miseries of birth

Due to the violent pain which accompanies it, 1. birth entails the misery of being born. Because anyone who is born has sown viable klesa-seeds, 2. birth [may] entail the misery of receiving a low status. Because old age, sickness and death come after it, 3. birth entails the misery of changes of state. Because the klesas gradually expand and we accumulate actions, 4. birth entails the misery of actualization of the klesas. Because of momentariness and impermanence, 5. birth implies the misery of being powerlessly destroyed.
The five miseries of ageing

The miseries of ageing include: 1. fading of the complexion; 2. deterioration of the form; 3. dissipation of energy; 4. impairment of the senses, and 5. the decline of wealth.

The five miseries of illness

The miseries of illness include: 1. the increase of frustration and anxiety; 2. the body's natural changes; 3. the inability to enjoy pleasant things; 4. the inability to get rid of what is unpleasant, and 5. the approaching separation from life.

The five miseries of death

The miseries of death include: 1. separation from wealth; 2. from influence; 3. from attendants and friends, 4. and even from your own body, and 5. violent anguish.

The misery of not finding what you seek

Furthermore, if you have not avoided harmful acts and malicious talk, no matter how hard you try to obtain food, money or fame, you will not succeed. This is the misery of not finding what you seek.

The misery of not retaining what you have

Dreading the approach of an enemy, thief or a strong robber who might leave you with only the stars for a hat, and the frost for boots; fearing that too much work will leave you in a state of exhaustion; worrying about your ability to protect [your
dependents, or worrying that your enemies will not be punished: This is the misery of not retaining what you have.

The misery of separation from what is dear

Loss of a mother, brother, mate, servants, students and so on; decline of wealth and power; loss of a large sum of money; anxiety about slander you have incurred through bad deeds or another's jealousy: This is the misery of separation from what is dear.

The misery of encountering the undesirable

Encountering illness, dangerous enemies, the arm of the law, murder of a living being, bad reputation, evil rumors; harming others when you try to help them; having lazy servants, and so on: This is the misery of encountering the undesirable.

The above eight categories of misery pertain chiefly to human beings.

Three types of misery common to all *samsāric* beings

The misery of misery itself

In brief, humans, gods and beings in the three lower realms [experience the pain of] disease, malicious gossip, and so on.

95 ma 'khyongs dogs. 96 ma nyen dogs.
97 rgyal-po'i chad-pa.
98 The first is actual painful experience; the second is anxiety based on the transitoriness of pleasant experience; the third is the misery "latent" in all types of *samsāric* life, since *samsāric* beings may encounter any of the above-mentioned miseries at any time.
This is the misery of misery itself.

The misery of change

When you lead a wealthy, peaceful existence, life seems to be very pleasant. But soon, because of impermanence, comes the misery of change.

The misery of all conditioned existence

The two [kinds of misery mentioned above] are grounded in the fact that five skandhas have come together. This is the misery latent in all conditioned existence.

Finding their foothold in the five skandhas, the many kinds of misery of the three dhatus arise. Thus, no matter how high or low your state of birth may be, you cannot avoid samsara's very nature: The three types of misery! Even if your life seems to be endowed with happiness, [and you possess] a [healthy] body, a house, wealth, friends and servants, this is but the deceitful procession of misery. It is like food offered to a nauseated man; like a hangman's feast honoring a condemned prisoner.

Turn your back on longing! Root out attachment! Destroy desire [for conditioned existence] from its foundation! Reflect for a moment on the great blessing of Liberation, the reverse of [samsara with its obvious] shortcomings. Then, energetically apply the methods for achieving Enlightenment [presented below].
Conclusion

Generally speaking, the Four Ordinary Foundations are found in all instructions in the graded path [to Enlightenment]. Our version is based on Atiśa's [system, known as] "the graded path for the three types of religious aspirant," which was elaborated by mNyam-med Dwags-po, who joined the two streams of the bKa'-gdams-pa and Mahāmudrā systems.

If you do not apply these four with some fortitude, instead of strengthening all the actual meditative practices [described below], you will only strengthen the "eight worldly dharmas." The root of the entire Dharma is mental rejection of [the concerns of] this life. But all your religious practice up to now has not destroyed your attachment for this life. Your mind has not turned away from desire. You have not given up longing for relatives, friends, attendants and servants. You even retain some desire for food, clothing and conversation. [This is] not the way to reject [the concerns of this life]! You have missed the whole point of applying wholesome action; the stream [of your existence] is on the wrong course! You do not consider the extent to which [your practice] has weakened the kleśas, but only the

99 skies-bu-gsum gyi lam-rim: Atiśa's classification of the three types of religious aspirant and the practices which suit them. Tāranātha wrote a book by that name.

100 chos-brgyad: the eight major concerns of a worldly person, i.e., 1. profit, 2. loss, 3. fame, 4. notoriety, 5. slander, 6. praise, 7. happiness, and 8. misery.
number of months and years you have been working at it. You scrutinize others' faults, but not your own. You are proud of every [good] quality [you possess]. Your thoughts are lost in [trivialities like] your reputation and amusements. You indulge in a lot of meaningless chatter. You imagine that you have integrated religious and worldly achievements when in fact, one of these goals has not been met. You have not kept impermanence in mind from the start, and so are in the clutches of your brutish mind. 101

The Excellent One of 'Bri-khung has said: "The [Four Ordinary] Foundations are more profound than the actual practice [of Mahāmudrā]." It follows that it is better to instill these Four Foundations in the stream [of your existence], even to a limited extent, than to practice all the recitations and meditations of the four tantras of today.

An individual who practices Dharma in a half-hearted manner 102 is cheating himself and others, and wasting his human life.

In short, if you lack the determination [to leave samsāra], all the meditation [you may practice in your mountain retreat will

101 blo dred-pa.

102 'angos-gshi: the "thing itself." For the beginner, these Foundations are far more accessible and potent than the remote Mahāmudrā meditation. They are essential prerequisites for Mahāmudrā practice. (Lama)

103 rang-rgyud tha-mal-du lus-pa'i byas byas kyi chos de.
accumulate no merit. All it will accumulate is a pile of feces on the mountainside! So, consider the miseries of samsāra and the uncertainty of [the time of] death. Then, no matter how scattered your thoughts are, make them converge!

They say that when a person begins to travel the religious path, if Māra has thrown obstacles in his way, his faith will diminish. Thus, examination of the Lama's or Spiritual Friend's faults is a sign of Māra's embrace. [Such a person] notices serious faults in most people who practice Dharma, befriends ordinary people, is unconcerned with strenuous application [of the teachings], satisfied with worldly pleasures and lacks devotion and reverence for the Precious Ones. Such a person should think about the positive qualities of the Lama and the Precious Ones, and learn to see those who practice Dharma as pure. Seeing bad qualities in others indicates that your own acts have been impure. It is just like seeing your own dirty face in a mirror.

Do not associate with ordinary people or listen to their talk! Remember the shortcomings of worldly pleasures! Generally speaking, if you have no faith you will not develop "white" qualities. Hence, faith must precede all religious practice. Furthermore, though there are many kinds [of faith], deep confidence and sincere respect [for the Precious Ones] are included in all of them.

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104 dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen; kalyāṇa-mitra: religious teacher.
105 I.e., non-religious people.
Experiencing the vicissitudes of life and death and the misfortunes of illness, and listening to spiritual biographies of the Great Ones and stories of the Buddha's previous lives, will encourage the development of faith. Engender faith by turning them over in your mind daily.

Some people seem to have great faith while they are with their Lama. When separated from him, they forget. When they encounter [certain] circumstances, they have [faith]; later, it is gone. When they receive desired teachings or gifts, or are tormented by disease-demons or other misfortunes, they have great faith. Afterwards, they have none. They have no really deep faith in one particular root-Lama or one profound teaching, and [often] throw one aside in favor of a [new] one.

Reject such practices. Learn [to develop] unchanging faith. Stop looking to external things. Internalize [the foregoing teachings]. And when some religious qualities arise in the stream [of your existence], you will truly comprehend these instructions. Then, you will be absolutely certain about the Dharma. If at that time, you think about your Lama's kindness, devotion and reverence toward him will spring up on their own. As a result, all the positive qualities associated with the [religious] path will spontaneously arise, without any effort [on your part].

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106 dad-pa skye-ba'i rkyen yin-pa.
107 yid-la brtseis-bgrang.
108 nges-shes.
Figure 3. The Refuge Tree
CHAPTER III

FIRST OF THE FOUR SPECIAL FOUNDATIONS: TAKING REFUGE
AND ENGENDERING THE ENLIGHTENED ATTITUDE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

After internalizing the "four thoughts which turn the mind to religion," the aspirant Takes Refuge and Engenders the Enlightened Attitude, the two rituals dealt with in this chapter. The heart of the first ritual is the Refuge Vow, recited in the visualized presence of the Six Sources of Refuge, i.e., Buddhist doctrine and the five types of Enlightened beings. In making this commitment to strive toward Buddhahood and become like these Enlightened beings, the aspirant becomes a Buddhist and gains their protection from the vicissitudes of samsāra.

In this tradition, a further ritual, Engendering the Enlightened Attitude, always accompanies Taking Refuge. The core of this ritual is the Bodhisattva Vow, in which the individual resolves to devote himself fully to the Liberation of all beings. In making this resolution, he becomes a Bodhisattva: a socially-oriented Buddha-to-be.

The actual practice of Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude involves the following steps:

1. Sitting cross-legged before an icon of the Sources of Refuge, and chanting the liturgical description of the Sources arranged in the
Refuge Tree (pp. 65-71 below), while imagining that all beings are doing the same.

2. Reciting the Refuge Vow (p. 71) and performing full prostrations, each a total of 111,111 times.

3. Reciting the Bodhisattva Vow (p. 72) and related prayers (pp.

4. Dissolving the visualization (p. 75), and letting the mind rest (p.

5. Dedicating merit (p. 75).

TRANSLATION

Taking Refuge

Visualization

After [you have practiced the Four Ordinary Foundations, begin the practice called] "Taking Refuge," first of the Four Special Foundations, [by chanting the liturgy] as you gradually visualize the following:

"In front of me, in the midst of a lake, is a wish-granting tree, With one root and one trunk, which divides into five branches. On the central branch, on a lion-throne, atop a lotus, Sun, and moon, sits my root-Lama As rDo-rje 'Chang, surrounded by the bKa'-brgyud Lamas. In front of them, are the yi-dams; to their left is the Saṃgha, Below the throne are the dharmapālas, each surrounded by a sea of attendants of his own kind. On the grassy shores of the lake, in numbers which would fill the sky,
Are all my grandmothers.
With one-pointed thoughts, we Take Refuge
and Engender the Enlightened Attitude.\(^{109}\)

On a wide, spacious plain in a pure land, is the "mNan-na-nem-bstegs-na-spar" forest. In the middle of a rich, green flower-bedecked meadow is a lake whose water has eight fine qualities.

[The lake is] inhabited by heavenly birds whose songs are most pleasing to the ear. In the midst of this lake stands a wish-granting tree laden with leaves, flowers and fruit of precious gems. Its single-rooted trunk divides into five branches like a parasol, one [pointing in] each of the four directions and one [pointing straight up] at the center.\(^{110}\)

\(^{109}\) "mDun-du mtsho-dbus dpa'g-bsam-ljon-shing gi/
sDong-bo rtsa-ba goig-la yal-ga lngar/
Gyes-pa'i dbus-mar seng-khri padma dang/
Nyi-sla steng-du rtsa-ba'i bla-ma ni/
rDo-rje 'Chang-la bka'-brgyud bla-mas bkor/
mDun-du yi-dam gyas-su sanga-rgyas dang/
rGyab-tu dam-chos gyon-du dge-'dun dang/
gDan-khri'i 'og-tu ohos-skyong srung-ma-mams/
Sso-so'i rigs-mthun 'khor tshogs rgya-mtshos bkor/
mTsho-mtha' ne'u-seng steng-du mkha'-khyab kyi/
Ma-rgan thams-cad 'khod-par gyur-pa las/
rTse-goig yid kyis skyabs-'gro sems-bskyed gyur."

From 'Phags-lam, op. cit., 107/6-108/3. "All my grandmothers" refers to all sentient beings.


Each component represents the finest of its kind.

The forest is a lush, green garden of delights. The water in the lake, like that of the legendary Ganges, is cool, sweet, gentle, clear, free of impurities, soothes the stomach and clears the throat.

The wish-granting tree, a key symbol in ancient Indian Literature, bears any fruit one desires. Possession of such a tree is a traditional
Lamas

2 Resting on the central branch, at the point at which all the branches converge, is a jewelled throne upheld by eight lions. [The throne is] covered with priceless silks, [on which rest] a thousand-petal lotus and [above it], a full moon [lying flat]. [On top of this] sits your own root-Lama in the form of rDo-rje 'Chang (Vajradhara), His Body blue as the autumn sky. rDo-rje 'Chang has one face and two hands, crossed at his breast; the right holds a golden vajra and the left a silver bell. His gaze is peaceful. He wears the diadem, earrings and the rest of the "thirteen peaceful articles." His upper garment is made of many kinds of silk, his lower is red. He sits with legs [crossed] in the vajra-position.

3 His Body, endowed the [thirty-two] major and [eighty] minor marks of physical perfection, shines with a lustrous glow, as He meditates with a joyful heart.

sign of power, and is one of the marks of a world-ruler ('khor-las sgyur-ba'i rgyal-po; cakravartin, see n. 248 above). In our context, reliance on the Sources of Refuge visualized in this tree will lead to the fulfillment of man's highest wish, the attainment of Buddhahood.

111 The vajra (rdo-rje) and bell (dril-bu), the key tantric ritual implements, generally symbolize the integration of insight (shes-rab; prajña, the rdo-rje) and skillful means or compassion (thabs; upāya, the dril-bu).

112 Ornaments of royalty worn by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, generally symbolizing the enriching, enlivening influence of the Sambhogakāya. They include eight pieces of jewelry and five silk garments.

113 I.e., full-lotus position.

114 Traditional physical attributes of a Buddha or a cakravartin, including long earlobes, webbed fingers, a small bump on the top of the head (usnīsa) and so on.
On the crown of His head, seated one above the other in a vertical column [starting with the first named and going upwards] are [the Lamas of the Mahāmudrā lineage]: Padma Nyin-byed dbang-po, Mi-pham Chos-grub rgya-mtsho, bDud-'dul rDo-rje, Chos kyi 'byun-gnas, Byang-chub rDo-rje, Chos kyi don-grub, Ye-shes sNying-po, Chos-dbyings rDo-rje, Chos kyi dbang-phyug, dBang-phyug rDo-rje, dKon-mchog yan-lag, Mi-bskyod rDo-rje, Sangs-rgyas mNyan-pa, Chos-grags rGya-mtsho, dPal-'byor don-grub, 'Jam-dpal bzang-po, mThong-ba don-lDan, Rig-pa'i ral-gri, De-bzhin shegs-pa, mKha'-spyod dbang-po, Rol-pa'i rDo-rje, gYung-ston rDo-rje dpal, Rang-byung rDo-rje, O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen-dpal, Grub-chen Pagshi, sBom-brag bSod-nams rDo-rje, 'Gro-mgon Ras-chen Sangs-rgyas-grags, Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa, mNyam-med Dwags-po, rJe-btsun Mila, Marpa Lotsa, Maitripa, Shabari, 'Phags-pa klu-grub, Saraha, and bLo-gros Rin-chen.115

Surrounding [the column of Lamas] in the upper part of the sky, are the Six Ornaments of Jambudvīpa,116 Tilopa and Nāropa, and the learned and spiritually accomplished Lamas of 'Bri-khung, 'Brug-pa, Tshal-pa, sTag-lung117 and other [Lamas] of India and Tibet, who sit like a cluster of clouds.

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115 These Lamas, named in reverse chronological order, comprise the Mahāmudrā lineage (see Ch. I, p. 9). See Ch. VI, pp. 180-90, for a more up-to-date list and information on each Lama.

116 Six great Indian Mahāyāna teachers: Āryadeva, Āsanga, Vasumitra, Dignāga, Dharmakirti and Nāgendra.

117 Names of four bKa'-brgyud-pa sub-sects. See Ch. I, pp. 5-6.
On the eastern branch, on a lotus, sun and corpse stands rDo-rje Phag-mo (Vajravarāhī), with 'Khor-lo bDe-mchog (Cakrasamvara), dGyes-pa rDo-rje (Hevajra), and sKu-gSang-ba grub-pa (Guhyasamāja); 'Phrul-sgyu chen-mo, rGyes-rdo Thod-pa-can and rDo-rje gdan-ma (Vajrāsana); gShin-rje dgra-nag, gShin-rje gdong-drag and rDo-rje 'jigs-byed (Vajrabhairava), and the rest of the yi-dams of the four or six tantras, surrounded by hosts of [attendant] deities.

On the right hand branch, [seated] on a lotus and moon [on top of a] lion throne is our Teacher, Sakyamuni, surrounded by the thousand Buddhas of the fortunate kalpas and all the other Buddhas of the three times and the ten directions.

118 yi-dams, male and female tutelary or meditational deities, are "direct manifestations" or symbols of Enlightenment who can provide ordinary beings with means of conceiving of and identifying with that far-off goal. An aspirant communicates with a yi-dam by receiving that deity's empowerment (dbang, see Ch. VI, n. 345), practicing his meditation, reciting his mantra and praying to him. Each aspirant specializes in the body of practices associated with one particular yi-dam whom he chooses, with his Lama's help, to suit his disposition and spiritual needs.

rDo-rje Phag-mo and 'Khor-lo bDe-mchog are the chief bKa'-brgyud-pa yi-dams.

119 bskaI-btsang: any era in which a Buddha appears. (Lama)

120 dus-gsum: past, present and future. phyogs-bcu: north, south, west, east, the "four corners" and the "top" and "bottom" of the traditional Buddhist universe. (LPL)
Dharma

On the rear branch are the twelve divisions of the Buddha's Dharma-teachings, particularly the Mahāyāna and the secret tantric mantras. The various books, [whose ends] face you are [wrapped in fine cloth] of all colors of the rainbow, with golden title-flaps. The vowels and consonants [which comprise the written words] murmur aloud [of their own accord].

Saṅgha

On the left-hand branch sit the countless Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Saṅgha. [They include] the Lords of the Three Families, and the rest of Buddha's Eight Sons, Bodhisattvas of fortunate kalpas; the [Buddha's] Excellent Pair [of disciples]; Ānanda; the Sixteen Elders and others.

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121 gdong-khra. Rectangular cloth draped over the end of a Tibetan book, which bears its title. Books are stacked with this end facing front for easy identification. (LPL)

122 Lords of the Three Families (rigs-geu mgon-po): Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva of insight; Vajrapāṇi, Bodhisattva of siddhi or spiritual attainment, and Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion.

The other five of the Eight Sons or chief Bodhisattvas are Kṣitigarbha, Sarvanivāraṇavīskambhi; Akāśagarbha, Maitreya and Samantabhadra. The Excellent Pair were Śākyamuni's chief disciples, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.

Ananda was Śākyamuni's cousin and personal attendant.

The Sixteen Elders (sthāvira) were disciples of Śākyamuni who preached Buddhism in various lands after the parinirvāṇa.
Dharmapālas, dākas and dākinīs

3 Beneath [the Refuge Tree] are the inconceivably numerous "awareness-deities," including dharmapālas, dākas and dākinīs.

4 Among them are rDo-rje Ber-can (Mahākāla) [flanked by] Rang-byung-ma [dPal-ldan Lha-mo] (Śrīdevi) and the four and six-armed [Mahākāla].

   [Visualize] yourself standing on the ground, facing [all these sources of Refuge]. Your father and mother, most important of all the limitless sentient beings who now surround you, stand at your right and left [respectively]. [The crowd of sentient beings includes] in particular, hated enemies, harmful demons, and various demonic beings beginninglessly afflicted with anger and desire. The whole crowd of beings, led by [you], who have brought them together, physically, mentally and verbally venerates [the

123] choe-skyongs dpa'-bo mkha'-'gro. All three are termed "awareness deities" (ye-shes kyi lha) because they personify certain aspects of Enlightened beings, particularly of Bodhisattvas. Six-armed Mahākāla is, for example, the wrathful aspect of Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion. These Enlightened dharmapālas are thus distinguished from the "worldly deities" ('jig-rten-pa'i lha), samsāric demons who are not Sources of Refuge.

Dharmapālas help the aspirant clear away all types of obstacles to his practice, and often appear in threatening forms until those obstacles have been overcome. As with the yi-dams, the aspirant and his Lama choose the dharmapāla most applicable to his personal situation, the Lama gives him the empowerment, and he concentrates on the dharmapāla's rituals.

rDo-rje Ber-can or Ber-nag-che is the main bKa'-brgyud-pa dharmapāla.

Dākas (male) and dākinīs (female) share some of the dharmapālas' functions. Dākinīs or yoginis (rnal-'byor-ma) are female Bodhisattvas who sometimes act as messengers or mediators who facilitate communication between ordinary beings and fully Enlightened Buddhas.

Sources of Refuge by] joining palms, [performing prostrations, engendering] faith and devotion, and reciting [the following Vow, called] "Taking Refuge" more than one hundred thousand times:

"I, and all sentient beings, numerous as the sky is vast, [Take Refuge] in the kind root [Lama] and the [Lamas] of the lineage, who encompass the Body, Speech, Mind, positive qualities, and Buddha-activity of all the Tathagatas in the ten directions and the three times; who are the source of the eighty-four thousand Dharma teachings; who are the Lords of the Noble Samgha." 124

"We Take Refuge in the glorious, holy Lamas. We Take Refuge in the yi-dams, deities of the mandala. We Take Refuge in the Buddha Bhagavan. We Take Refuge in the holy Dharma. We Take Refuge in the noble Samgha. We Take Refuge in the dākas, dākinīs and dharma-pālas, guardians Who possess the "eye of awareness." 125

This prologue to the Refuge Vow is recited only once per session.

124 "bDag dang mnam-kha'i mtha' dang mmyam-pa'i sems-od thams-cad phyogs-bou dus-gsum gyi de-bzhin gshegs-pa thams-cad kyi sku gsung thugs yon-tan phrin-las thams-cad goig-tu bsdus-pa'i ngo-bor-gyur-ba/ Chos kyi phung-po stong-phrag brygyad-cu rtsea-bshi'i 'byung-gnas/'Phags-pa'i dge-bdun thams-cad kyi mda'-bdag/ Drin-can rtsea-ba dang brygyud-par bcas-pa'i ... " Phags-lam, op. cit., 108/3-4.

125 "dPal-ldan bla-ma dam-pa-rnams-la skyabs-su-mohi'o/ Yi-dam dkyil-'khor gyi lha-tshogs-rnams-la skyabs-su-mohi'o/ Sangs-rgyas bcom-ldan-'das-rnams-la skyabs-su-mohi'o/ Dam-pa'i choe-rnams-la skyabs-su-mohi'o/ 'Phags-pa'i dge-dun-rnams-la skyabs-su-mohi'o/ dPa'bo mkha'-'gro choe-skyong-srung-'ma'i tshogs ye'shes kyi spyan dang ldan-pa-rnams-la skyabs-su-mohi'o." 'Phags-lam, op. cit., 108/4-5.

The Refuge Vow is recited while performing full prostrations. Since the recitations take longer than prostrations, and both must be performed a total of 111,111 times, the missing recitations may be added either after completing all the prostrations, or after completing each session of prostrations. (Lama)

This particular Refuge Vow is the most elaborate of several Tibetan versions. Earlier Indian versions invoke only the Buddha, Dharma and Samgha. The Lama may have been added by the Tibetans. The invocation
[While you recite the words], think about what they mean, and do not let your mind stray from a reverent attitude.

[Then] engender the aspiration [to reach Enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, by reciting the Bodhisattva Vow three times]:

"Until [I reach] Enlightenment itself, I Take Refuge in the Buddhas, And likewise in the Dharma and assembled Bodhisattvas.
Just as the Tathāgatas of the past Engendered the Enlightened Attitude, Were trained as Bodhisattvas, And gradually came to dwell in the [ten] Bodhisattva [stages], So will I, for the sake of beings, Engender the Enlightened Attitude, Undertake the same training, And gradually, as they did, become proficient." 126

of the other three Sources identifies this as a Vajrayana Vow. According to the Lama, the Tibetans' elaboration of the basic Refuge formula reflects the fact that, unlike the fortunate early Buddhists, who actually met Sākyamuni or His immediate disciples and could practice Dharma with the sole guidance of the Three Jewels, contemporary people encounter great obstacles in their religious practice and need the help of every available Source of Refuge.


'Phags-lam, op.cit., 180/5-109-1.

The Bodhisattva Vow is recited following completion of the desired number of Refuge Vows and prostrations for each session. (Lama) This version of the Bodhisattva Vow is from Sāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra (Byang-chub spyod-'jug). bsTan-'gyur, dbU-ma, 3871.
Then, think that you have taken the Bodhisattva Vow and recite:

"Today, my life is fruitful!
I have obtained a human existence,
And joined the Family of Buddha.
From now on, everything I do
Will reflect this fact,
And leave no stain
Upon this flawless, noble Family.

Today, before all the protectors,
I have invited all beings to become Tathāgatas,
And until they do, I have called them
To a celebration of this goal.
May all beings rejoice!" 127

[Then recite these prayers]:

"May the precious Enlightened Attitude
Arise wherever it has not arisen.
Where it has arisen, may it not deteriorate,
But steadily increase. 128

127 Deng-dus bdag-tshe 'bras-bu yod/
Mi yi srid-pa legs-par-thob/
De-ring sangs-rgyas rigs-su-skyes/
Sangs-rgyas eras-su bdag deng gyur/
Da ni bdag-gis ci-nas kyang/
Rigs dang mthun-pa'i las brtsams te/
skyon-med btsun-pa'i rigs 'di-la/
NWyog-par mi-'gyur de-ltar-bya.

bDag gis de ring skyob-pa thams-cad kyi/
spyan-sngar 'gro-ba bde-gshegs-nyid dang ni/
Bar-du bde-la mgon-du bos-zin gyis/
Lha dang lha-min-la sogs dga'-bar-gyis."

"Phags-lam, op. cit., 109/1-3.

128 "Byang-chub sems-ni rin-po-che/
Ma skyes-ba-rnams skyes gyur cig/
Skyes-ba nyams-ba med-pa dang/
Cong-nas gong-du 'phel-bar-shog."

"Phags-lam, op. cit., 109/3-4.
"May beings never lose the Enlightened Attitude.
May they apply themselves to the Bodhisattva-conduct.
May they be embraced by the Buddhas.
May they reject the deeds of Mara.
May the Bodhisattvas succeed in helping sentient beings.
May the Buddhas' wishes
Bring happiness to sentient beings.
May all sentient beings be happy.
May the lower realms be always empty.
May the earnest wishes of Bodhisattvas of all stages
Be fulfilled!"129

[Recite this prayer three times]:

"May all sentient beings gain happiness
and the cause of happiness. May they
be safe from suffering and from the
cause of suffering. May they never
be cut off from the highest bliss,
which is devoid of suffering. May they
come to rest in the great impartiality,
free of attachment and aversion."130

129 "Byang-chub-sems dang mi-'bral oing/
Byang-chub-spyod-la gshol-ba dang/
Sangs-rgyas-rnams kyis yongs-bzungs zhung/
bDud kyi las-rnams spong-par-shog/
Byang-chub-sems-dpa'-rnams kyis ni/
'Gro-don thugs-la dgongs-'grub shog/
mGon-po-yis ni gang dgongs-pa/
Sems-can-rnams-la bde-'byor shog/
Sems-can thams-cad bde dang ldan gyur cig/
Ngan-'gro thams-cad rtag-tu stong-par-shog/
Byang-chub-sems-dpa' gang-dag sar-bshugs-pa/
De-dag kun gyi smon-lam 'grub-par-shog."

'Phags-lam, op. cit., 109/4-7.

130 "Sems-can thams-cad bde-ba dang bde-ba'i rgyu
dang ldan-par-gyur cig/
sDug-bsgan dang sDug-bsgan gyi rgyu dang
'bral-bar-gyur cig/
sDug-bsgan-med-pa'i bde-ba dam-pa dang
mi-'bral-bar-gyur cig/
Nye-ring chags-sdang dang 'bral-ba'i btang-snyoms chen-po-la gnas-bar-gyur cig."

Abridged in 'Phags-lam, op. cit., 109/7-8.
16b. [Recite]:

"Finally, the Sources of Refuge dissolve into light and blend into myself." [131]

The Sources of Refuge, the throne, and the rest, dissolve into light and are absorbed into yourself. Think that your own body, speech and mind have become inseparable from the Body, Speech and Mind of your root-Lama as rDo-rje 'Chang. [132] Let your mind rest naturally. [133]

Share the merit [by reciting this prayer]:

"Once I have quickly achieved Mahāmudrā, May every single sentient being Be placed in that same state By virtue of my [practice]." [134]


[132] More precisely: the Body, Speech and Mind of all the Enlightened Beings dissolves into light and merges into rDo-rje 'Chang's. rDo-rje 'Chang then dissolves into light and merges into your own body, speech and mind. (Lama)

[133] sms rang-babs-su bzhag.


This is one of may "Sharing Merit" prayers which may be used following any practice, by inserting the name of the goal of the practice in the place of "phyag-rgya-chen-po."

Sharing or dedicating merit is the essential conclusion of all Mahāyāna practices, as it serves to broaden the practitioner's field of activity to encompass not only himself but all living beings.

Although all religious practice accumulates merit, if the practitioner tries to keep this merit for himself, it can be easily destroyed by a burst of anger or a harsh word on his part. But merit which has been dedicated to all beings cannot be destroyed by any act of his. Sharing merit also increases the efficacy of a practice by transforming it from a meritorious samsāric act into one which leads to Liberation. (Lama)
Commentary

[The following] points should be understood in relation to Taking Refuge: In this world, we [naturally] seek someone capable of protecting us or providing refuge from sources of fear and anxiety, including demons of disease and the like. [Preoccupied as we are] by the countless fears which plague us throughout this life, future lives and in the bar-do, we could sink forever in the ocean of samsāric suffering. Neither our father, mother, relatives, friends, nor powerful gods, nāgas or similar beings are capable of giving us refuge from samsāric suffering. Nor are we capable of driving it off on our own. If we do not find some [effective source of refuge], we will be utterly helpless.

Only the Precious Ones have the ability to draw us out of samsāra. And in order to save others, we must first gain the ability to save ourselves.

The Six Sources of Refuge

[The Six Sources of Refuge consist of the Three Jewels and the Three Roots]. The Three Jewels are the Buddha, Dharma and Samgha. According to the Mantrayāna, to these, the Three Roots should be added:

1. The Lama is the root of all blessing.135

135 byin-rlabs: Process by which one individual introduces some of his accumulated merit into the "stream of being" of another individual. Ability to bestow blessing depends both on the donor's degree of spiritual attainment and the recipient's faith, or receptiveness. Generally, the
2. The yi-dam is the root of all siddhi.  

3. The dakinīs and dharmapālas are the root of all Buddha-activity.

These three are included in the Three Precious Ones. The Mantrayāna holds that all six are encompassed in the root-Lama alone.

Furthermore, Buddha [manifests in the three following ways]: the Dharmakāya, which knows [all things], both as they appear donor is the root-Lama, whose blessing is said to contain that of all the Sources of Refuge combined.

Although actions are the "seeds" (rgyu) which shape our future experiences, the root-Lama's blessing can create certain conditions (rkyen) favorable to the maturation of any religious predispositions our past acts may have generated, giving us the inspiration and energy we require to undertake religious practice. Unless our acts have been unwholesome, the Lama can intervene to help us overcome the kleśas and other obstacles. Like the sun, Enlightenment is always present. Just as the sun's rays focussed through a magnifying glass can burn a piece of paper, Enlightenment, "focussed" through the Lama's blessing, can destroy the kleśas. Thus, the Lama's blessing helps us realize the Buddha-potential we all possess. (Lama)

136 dngos-grub: attainment or power. The ordinary (thun-mong) type includes worldly influence or wealth. The supreme or special (mohog, thun-mong ma-yin) type is spiritual attainment, such as Mahāmudrā realization. Any yi-dam can bestow both types to anyone who sees or experiences the yi-dam's presence as the result of receiving the empowerment, practicing the meditation, reciting the mantra and saying the prayers for that yi-dam. (Lama)

137 phrin-las: application of dngos-grub. For ordinary people, it is physical, verbal or mental religious activity, including spreading the Dharma and carrying out Buddha's precepts. (Lama) For Buddhas, "It is scripturally defined as the unbroken stream of spontaneous fulfilment of the Bodhi-vows." (LPL) For the four types of Buddha-activity (phrin-las mnam-bshis), see n. 347 below.
and as they are [ultimately] found to be; the Sambhogakāya, possessed of the "five certainties," and the Nirmāṇakāya, which takes the form of [any type of] worldly art or skill, [the form of a being, [who is an incarnation of an Enlightened being] or of a Buddha. ["Buddha"] thus includes the three kāyas.

"Dharma" refers to the scriptural Dharma, that is, the names, words and letters in the [Buddha's] verbal teachings.

138 sku-gsum. The three kāyas are not physical bodies (lus) or beings dispatched by the "real" Buddha as avatars, but are symbols of three ways in which Buddha acts, three "existential norms" which we hope to achieve through religious practice.

The Nirmāṇakāya (sprul-sku, pronounced tulku) represents the variety of roles Buddha may play among ordinary people. He may appear for example, as a type of art or artistic talent (bzo-ba'i sprul-sku); as an apparently ordinary being who is an incarnation of an Enlightened one, such as the Karma-pa, considered an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara; or as a Buddha born in a given era, such as Śākyamuni. The latter is the supreme type of Nirmāṇakāya (mchog gi sprul-sku). (Lama) The Nirmāṇakāya is often called the sgyu-lus, the "transformation" or "illusory-body," based on its ability to appear and function exactly as do the beings who surround it, enabling Buddha to communicate with all types of beings and influence them most effectively.

The Sambhogakāya (longs-spyod rdzogs-pa'i sku) symbolizes Buddha's activity among higher beings, i.e., tenth-level Bodhisattvas. Its "five certainties" are: 1. The Sambhogakāya Buddha abides only in the highest Buddha-realm (shing-nges-pa or 'og-min-shing), where he 2. appears as the Sambhogakāya (sku-nges-pa or longs-spyod-sku), and 3. teaches only the Mahāyāna (chos-nges-pa or theg-chen kho-na), while 4. surrounded only by tenth-level Bodhisattvas ('khor-nges-pa or sa-bcu byang-chub-sems-dpa'). 5. He abides until samsāra is empty (dus-nges-pa or 'khor-ba ma-stong-bar). (Lama)

The Sambhogakāya is sometimes characterized as srog-tsol, "enlivening," because it excites and inspires beings to achieve Buddhahood. This life-enriching function is illustrated in the iconographical depictions of Sambhogakāyas as richly adorned royalty.

The Dharmakāya, (chos-sku) the only one of the three considered to be ultimately real and thus incomprehensible through concepts, is pure Enlightened Awareness (ye-shes; jñāna), devoid of characteristics.

139 lung gi chos: includes all scriptures to be read, learned and applied. (Lama)
and the recited [prayers and mantras].

"Dharma" also includes the realization-Dharma,\(^1\) that is, the Ground, Dharmadhātu, Tathatā; or the Noble Truth of Cessation [of suffering] which is the result, and the Noble Truth of the Path—all of which lead to Enlightenment. "Dharma" thus includes both scripture and realization.

["Saṃgha" includes] the real Saṃgha,\(^2\) which consists of Bodhisattvas, and the provisional Saṃgha,\(^3\) which consists of Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas and Arhats.

Since Buddha has demonstrated what should be accepted and what should be rejected, regard Buddha as your teacher. Since His teachings motivate practice, regard the Dharma as the path. Since this path is unfamiliar, you need the constant instructions and examples of the Holy Ones. Thus, seek companions in the Saṃgha.

When you reach the path's end, [your awareness] will be the same\(^4\) as the Enlightened Awareness\(^5\) of all Buddhas. You

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\(^1\) rtogs-pa'i chos: the realization which comes with Buddhahood.

\(^2\) dge-'dun āngos: includes only those members of the spiritual community who have all the characteristics (mtshan-nyid) of fully Enlightened beings. (Lama)

\(^3\) gnas-skabs dge-'dun: includes anyone who has joined the Buddhist community by Taking Refuge or ordination, as well as Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas and Arhats who are above samsāra but have not reached full Enlightenment. (Lama)

\(^4\) ro-gaig.

\(^5\) dgongs-pa.
1. will no longer need the Dharma and Saṅgha. The ultimate Refuge is Buddha alone.

   The philosophical literature of today contains much discussion of what is and what is not an [effective] source of Refuge. But all you must do is practice [Taking Refuge], establish good habits and instill faith and devotion as much as possible.

   [Certain] factors will promote the awakening of faith.

3. In the śūtras that which is termed the "Buddha to be placed before you"\textsuperscript{145} is identified as a [symbol of] Buddha such as an image or stūpa. By implication, the Dharma [to be placed before you is a symbol of the Dharma, such as] a volume of the śūtras or tantras; the Saṅgha [to be placed before you is a symbol of] the ethical human Saṅgha. If you meditate that these are the real Precious Ones, you will Take Refuge with faith and devotion.

4. Taking Refuge in the Hinayāna or worldly manner\textsuperscript{146} is not the proper way, and will not do you much good. It is extremely important that you think, "I Take Refuge [in the Precious Ones] from this day until all sentient beings, immeasurable as the sky, \textsuperscript{145} mdun-tu bzhag-pa'i sāṅsā-rgyas.

\textsuperscript{146} Hinayāna: 1. Taking refuge in beings who are not fully Enlightened, such as Arhats, Śrāvakas or Pratyekabuddhas; 2. Taking refuge for one's personal safety or Liberation.

Worldly: Taking refuge in \textit{sāṃsāric} beings, such as gods or demons. (Lama)
have reached Enlightenment." Through this [thought, your practice] becomes Mahāyāna Refuge.

Because you understand the sūtras' conception of the Precious Ones [on which our account is based], 1. You appreciate Their qualities, 2. You appreciate the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha's superiority to non-Buddhist teachers, wrong paths and heretics. 3. Due to this appreciation, when you take the Refuge Vow, you are sincere. 4. Even if your life is at stake, you do not seek refuge in anyone but the Precious Ones.

It is said that when you Take Refuge with these four excellent [attitudes], you are really doing it properly. It is not enough to Take Refuge verbally; you must also have the deepest confidence in the Precious Ones. If you have this kind of confidence, you will never lack the protection of Their Compassion.

There is no doubt that you will suffer the effects [of former deeds] in this life. When you are suffering these results, you may feel that the Precious Ones' Compassion has been vanquished. But if you have deep faith in Them, They will certainly protect you in your next life. If, when experiencing some slight unpleasantness, you say, "The Precious Ones have no Compassion!" or you expect to be helped by such things as divination, exorcism or medical treatment—these are signs of stupidity.

147 khyad-par-bshi dang ldan na skyabs-'gro rnam-dag-tu 'gyur-bar-gsungs.
If Their Compassion has not emerged in your life, it is not because They have no blessing to bestow! You yourself are to blame for not praying for it!

Therefore, continually think of the Precious One's qualities, meditate with faith, and pray intently. Do not accumulate bad deeds by talking nonsense or slandering others. Pay homage to symbols of [Buddha's] Body, Speech and Mind, as well as to people who wear the yellow robes [of a monk or nun] with faith and devotion, conceiving of them as the real Precious Ones. Restore old images and make new ones. Do not lay them on bare ground or in a spot where they may be disturbed. It is unthinkable to trade an image for food or pawn it for cash. It is wrong to walk on even a scrap of tsha-tsha or a single letter.

Remembering [the Precious Ones'] kindness, offer homage, praise and other devotions with your body, speech and mind.

Remembering [Their] compassion, encourage others to Take Refuge, and tell them about the Precious Ones' great qualities.

Remembering the advantages [of doing so], repeat the Refuge meditation six times during the course of one day and night.

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148 rtan: "container." sku-rten: statue or picture which in a sense "contains" the Body of Buddha. gsung-rten: book or saying which "contains" His Speech. thugs-rten, also called m hod-rten (stupa): contains relics of a Buddha or other Enlightened being, a tangible which represents the Buddha-Mind itself. (Lama)

149 tsha-tsha are miniature stupas or figures of Buddhas or other Enlightened beings, made either of clay or ground bones of an animal you have eaten, pressed into a mould. If made of the latter, it brings blessing to the animal. (Lama)
Remembering the shortcomings [of samsāra], never reject the Sources of Refuge, even if your life is at stake.

No matter what comes your way--happiness, misery, prominence or degradation--think of the Precious Ones with profound confidence. Do not rely on anyone else for even a moment.

In short, once you have Taken Refuge in the Buddha, you will not rely on worldly gods. Once you have Taken Refuge in the Dharma, you will reject thoughts and acts injurious to sentient beings. Once you have Taken Refuge in the Saṃgha, you will no longer associate with heretics or their sympathizers. 150

Done properly, Taking Refuge includes most of the practices of the gradual paths [to Enlightenment] of the Sūtra- and Mantrayāna. But if you merely "act it out" without becoming deeply involved, even if you talk about "emptiness" in lofty language, you have strayed from the path [and fallen into] a deep chasm.

Results of Taking Refuge

If you practice Taking Refuge continuously, and it never leaves your thoughts, you become a Buddhist. Your minor wrongdoings are purified; your major ones are decreased [in potency]. Human and non-human obstacles cannot harm you. Your vows, studies

150 The three prohibitions expressed in this paragraph comprise the essential clause or "root" of the Vow of Refuge, which, if transgressed, will result in the Vow's destruction. According to Kalu Rinpo-che, "heretics" here refers to irreligious people, i.e., those who doubt the possibility of Liberation, the existence of Enlightened beings, and so on.
and your fundamentally wholesome activities become more and more [fruitful]. If you truly rely on the Precious Ones, you will not be reborn in the lower realms.

According to the Saddharma-pundarika-sūtra, 151 "Even lay disciples and counterfeit monks 152 who embrace this teaching of mine will totally pass beyond sorrow within this very kalpa. Not one will be left behind!"

To this we add that you will benefit immensely from Taking Refuge and retaining this frame of mind [in between sessions].

Engendering the Enlightened Attitude

Engendering an Enlightened Attitude (Bodhicitta) follows Taking Refuge.

Generally speaking, once an individual's thoughts have turned toward the Dharma, if he develops the Enlightened Attitude, he will travel the Dharma-path; if he does not develop it, he will not travel the Dharma-path. Whether his wholesome acts have been many or few, once he has acquired the means of attaining Buddhahood, 153 he is said to have embarked on the Dharma-path.

151 Dam-pa'i chos padma dkar-po. bk'a'-gyur, mDo-sde, 781.

152 Lay disciples (dge-benyen; upāsaka) are those who have Taken Refuge and vowed to observe some or all of the "five precepts" which prohibit killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and taking intoxicants. "Counterfeit monks" (dge-sbyong ltar-boos-pa; sramana-pratirūpaka) pretend to be monks or do not live up to their monastic vows. (LPL)

153 I.e., the Enlightened Attitude, Bodhicitta.
19b.  How could we possibly measure the merit accumulated by wholesome acts undertaken in an Enlightened Attitude? Even commonplace actions become means of attaining Buddhahood [when accompanied by the Enlightened Attitude]. Thus, a sutra says, "If you desire complete, perfect Buddhahood, you are not to be trained in many aspects of the Dharma, but only in one. Which one? The Enlightened Attitude!"

The two types of Bodhicitta

There are two types of Bodhicitta: the relative and the ultimate. These two are the basis of the entire extensive and difficult collection of the "eighty-four thousand Dharma-teachings." But at this time, when you should be immersing yourself in meditation, you have no need for the many teachings about the two [types of Bodhicitta]. If you want to know about them, study the six standard reference works of the bKa'-gdams-pa sect and other texts.

154 kun-rgzob; saṃyṛta.
155 don-dom; paramārtha.
156 The number traditionally used to designate the total number of Buddhist teachings.
157 'jog-sgom.
158 bKa'gdams gshung-drug: Six books used by that sect to prepare monks for, and train them in meditation. They include: 1. Buddha-Sūtaka (skyes-rabs. bka'-gyur, 748); 2. Expanded version of the Dhammapada, the Udānavarga (Tehome. bka'-gyur, 992; bsTan-'gyur, 5600); 3. Sañtideva's Bodhicaryavatāra (Byang-chub-spyod-'jug. bsTan-'gyur, mDo-'grel, 5272); 4. Śikṣāsāṃuccaya (bsLab-pa kun-las btus-pa. bsTan., mDo-'grel, 5336); 5. Bodhisattvabhiṣam and Śrāvakabhiṣam (Byang-chub sens-dpa'i sa and Nyan-thos-pa'i sa. bsTan-'gyur, Sens-tsam, 5538 and 5537); and 6. Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra (Theg-chen mdo-sde-rgyan. bsTan-'gyur, Sens-tsam, 5521). (LPL)
In brief, relative Bodhicitta is essentially compassion. Ultimate Bodhicitta is essentially insight. The arising of the second type depends on the first. Pha-dam-pa said, "A fish will take to water but not to dry land; realization will not arise in the absence of compassion." Just so, the ultimate [Bodhicitta], realization of the undistorted true nature of things, depends on the [presence of] relative [Bodhicitta]. A person who has not yet realized [the ultimate nature of things], but has awakened the force of genuine compassion, will be quite capable of working physically, verbally and mentally for the welfare of others.

20a. **Engendering the relative Bodhicitta: the Bodhisattva Vow**

1 The presence or absence of the relative type is the sole determinant for the presence or absence of Bodhicitta *per se*. First, a means of engendering it is required. Specific observances must be performed to engender its "aspiration" and "perseverence" aspects.

2 A superior type of person engenders it by simply reciting the Bodhisattva Vow three times, with sincerity and understanding,

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159 Pha-dam-pa, an eleventh century Tibetan teacher.
160 *smon*.
161 *'jug*. 
while facing any representation [of the Three Jewels].\textsuperscript{162}

Ordinary people should receive the Vow from a spiritual teacher belonging to an unbroken [lineage of transmission of this Vow].

Then, the most capable persons are expected to repeat the Vow six times [a day], intermediate persons four times, and inferior persons twice--once during daylight and once at night.

Aspiration and perseverance in Bodhicitta

To aspire to the Enlightened Attitude is to constantly think, "I will attain omniscient Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings." [Aspiration] is like desiring to go somewhere. To persevere in [developing] the Enlightened Attitude is to perform wholesome acts which will actualize that promise, while thinking, "To that end, I will apply the instructions for Sahaja Mahāmudrā meditation."\textsuperscript{163} [Perseverence] is like actually starting out on a path.

After you have engendered the aspiration for Bodhicitta by thrice reciting [the Bodhisattva Vow] while [visualizing] that

\textsuperscript{162} A person of superior capability need never undergo the formal ceremony of receiving the Bodhisattva Vow from a Lama. He may simply recite it three times before representations of the Three Jewels, or while visualizing Them in the sky, imagining that They are actually present. However, aspirants are generally advised to take the beneficial Vow as many times, and from as many Lamas as possible. (Lama)

\textsuperscript{163} Phyag-rgya-chen-po than-cig skyes-sbyor: Mahāmudrā meditation, one way of persevering in the Enlightened Attitude.
excellent realms, with Buddha Śākyamuni and His Sons facing you, before you dissolve the [visualization of the] Sources of Refuge into yourself, train yourself to persevere in an Enlightened Attitude. How is this to be done? By thinking as follows: "I must engender an Enlightened Attitude and gradually train myself in the Six Perfections\(^\text{164}\) for the sake of my parents: all sentient beings." Then, joyfully meditate that the Enlightened Attitude has in fact been engendered. Pray that its blessing be transferred to others. Finally, dissolve the Sources of Refuge into yourself.\(^\text{165}\)

Continue to nurture the Bodhisattva vow as long as you live, [by visualizing] the lion-throne in the sky before you, with the lotus and moon upon it and the Teacher Śākyamuni surrounded by the Saṃgha including the Eight Sons, Sixteen Sthāviras, Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, and attentively taking the Bodhisattva Vow. Finally, rest in non-conceptualization.\(^\text{166}\)

Training in the aspiration for Bodhicitta

Keeping the Bodhisattva vow

The training involved in Engendering the Enlightened Attitude is very broad because it draws from all aspects of religious

\(^{164}\) pha-rol-tu phyin-pa; pāramitā: Six "transcending functions" or clusters of attitudes and actions which help lend us (phyina-pa) to the other shore (pha-rol-tu), i.e., Buddhahood. See H.V. Guenther's Jewel Ornament, op. cit., pp. 148-231, and Ch. V. below.

\(^{165}\) All the instructions in this paragraph refer back to pp. 73-4, above.

\(^{166}\) See p. 75, above.
practice. But briefly, training to aspire for Bodhicitta consists of [keeping the Bodhisattva Vow].

Since 1. mentally abandoning sentient beings and 2. adopting attitudes contrary to Bodhicitta will uproot and destroy the Bodhisattva Vow, once you have taken the Vow it is crucial that you reject both of these.

Regardless of the number of sentient beings it concerns, to think malicious thoughts such as: "Even if I have a chance to help you, I will not!"; or to be overcome by hate, envy or anger toward others is the transgression called "mentally abandoning sentient beings."

Likewise, thinking: "I am just an ordinary layman; I cannot do anything to help myself or others! Complete Buddhahood is so hard to attain that it does not matter if I engender Bodhicitta or not! I cannot possibly help sentient beings!"; adopting the attitude of a Śrāvaka or Pratyekabuddha who are merely concerned with their own welfare; thinking, "The benefits of Bodhicitta are not that great," or giving up on the Vow--all these are attitudes contrary to Bodhicitta.

If you do not correct either of these [attitudes] within three hours, the vow is broken.\textsuperscript{167} Be constantly wary of them!

\textsuperscript{167} Many vows are broken by overt contrary actions. But the Bodhisattva Vow is exceptionally fragile because it may be broken by mere thoughts. Constant awareness of one's thoughts is crucial for its preservation. (Lama)
Even if they arise unconsciously, immediate Confession will repair the vow.

5. In brief: Never let the excellent Attitude—the desire to establish even enemies and harmful demons in Buddhahood—deteriorate. Even an offense as serious as a Śrāvaka's worst misdeeds cannot destroy Bodhicitta. Thus, carry out all the truly beneficial acts you can. Even if you are incapable [of actually helping others], always think [of how you might] help them in the future.

Remembering the Enlightened Attitude

21b.
1 Throughout your life, you should reject the "four black deeds," the causes of forgetting the Enlightened Attitude, and train yourself in the "four white deeds," the causes of remembering it.

2 [The first black deed is] to consciously lie in order to deceive a Lama or other worshipful person. Whether he hears you

168 shags. There are two types: 1. spyi-shags or general Confession; and 2. nyes-ltung-shags, Confession of a specific misdeed, such as breaking the Bodhisattva Vow in either of the two above-mentioned ways. According to the Lama, Confession entails facing symbols of the Precious Ones or visualizing Them before one, and 1. personally recognizing the misdeed, 2. sincerely regretting it, and 3. resolving to never repeat it.

See Ch. IV., pp. 116-18 for author's detailed account of Confession. Certain long prayers may be recited after Confession of a violation of the Bodhisattva Vow, but the prayer for the development of the Enlightened Attitude, which appears on p. 73 above, will suffice.

After Confession and prayer, one visualizes the Sources of Refuge dissolving into light and then into one's self. Then, one rests without conceptualizing, for as long as possible. (Lama)

One need not confess to a Lama or to any other person.

169 nyan-thos kyi phas-pan: killing, stealing, lying about his spiritual attainments and indulging in sex. (LPL)
or not, whether your words are many or few, it is wrong to slander and lie, even as a joke.

[The first white deed is to tell the truth under all circumstances].

[The second black deed is] to make others regret their wholesome acts. You ought to make others regret their harmful acts, but [wholesome acts are] no grounds for regret. You will be at fault whether or not you succeed in making them regret [their wholesome acts].

[The second white deed is] to urge all sentient beings to undertake the three yānas, especially the Mahāyāna, in combination with fundamentally wholesome action. Pray for the universal achievement of Supreme Enlightenment.

[The third black deed is] to publicly or privately use a single word of censure against any sentient being who has even verbally engendered Bodhicitta. [This is because by engendering Bodhicitta] he has joined the Bodhisattvas.

[The third white deed is] to praise, not condemn, even ordinary sentient beings. Since all sentient beings possess the "Heart of Buddha" and are capable of gathering the [Two] Accumulations and removing obscurations, it has been declared that they do not differ from Buddhas.

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170 I.e., Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna and Mahāyāna.

171 М. _sangs-rgyas kyi snying-po_; here used as a synonym for _de-bzhin-gshegs-par'i snying-po_ (tathagatagarbha). See n. 51 above.
[The fourth black deed is] to physically, mentally or verbally cheat, deceive or double-cross others, even a little, to further your own interests.

[The fourth white deed is] to make others' welfare your personal concern by desiring to establish all sentient beings in a blessed and happy state for their present and future lives. In everything you say, you should speak sincerely, like a father to his son [and a son to his father].

Briefly, everything [you must do to aspire for Bodhicitta] is encompassed [in the following statement]: Give all profit and victory to others; accept all loss and defeat [as your own].

Since the intention of the Bodhisattva vow is the most important thing, try to continually keep [the Enlightened] Attitude, [in your mind], in everything you do or say. Since increasing the Two Accumulations leads to the steady growth of Bodhicitta, train yourself to do this.

Training in the perseverance of Bodhicitta

1. Carrying out the Bodhisattva's ten tasks

From the Sāramatiparipṛcchā-sūtra:172

"A Bodhisattva is said to have ten tasks. They are: 1. To abide in faith, which is the root, and rely on a spiritual teacher; 2. to greatly exert himself in single-mindedly seeking the Saddharma; 3. to earnestly exert himself in wholesome action, [impelled] by the earnest

172 bLo-gros rgya-mtsho shus-pa'i mdo. bKa'-gyur, mDo-sde, 819.
desire [to help others]; 4. to carefully avoid any wasteful acts; 5. to help sentient beings develop [spiritually], free of attachment to personal [accumulation of] merit; 6. to adhere to the Saddharma without concern for life and limb; 7. to never be satisfied with his accumulation of merit; 8. to assiduously accumulate transcending awareness; 9. to always remember the highest goal, and 10. to completely attain that goal, using the skillful means of the path of his choice."

Carry out these tasks assiduously! As for the training in perseverance, just as a farmer who wants a good crop must not simply plant seeds, but cultivate them as well, if you want to attain Buddhahood you need more than the aspiration. You must carry out Enlightening activity to the best of your ability.

2. **Practicing the Six Perfections**

1. Give gifts; 2. observe moral conduct; 3. practice patience; 4. exert effort [in all of these]; 5. cultivate meditative concentration and 6. insight. Practice the Six Perfections!

In brief, since "There are no true Sons of Buddha who have not practiced the Six Perfections," single-mindedly perform fundamentally wholesome acts; joyfully think about those which others have performed.

3. **Applying the Four Immeasurables**

[To apply] the Four Immeasurables is to think of [all] sentient beings, immeasurable as the sky is vast--without distinguishing between an "enemy," "friend" or "mother"--with these [four attitudes]:

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173 I.e., Bodhisattvas. 174 tshad-med-bshi; catvāra-apramāṇa.
1. Benevolence: the desire to establish all sentient beings in a state of happiness which they have not previously enjoyed, and to establish them in the cause of happiness, wholesome action.

2. Compassion: the desire to free them from suffering from this day forward, and to remove the cause of their suffering, unwholesome action.

3. [Sympathetic] joy: delight in the physical and mental happiness of others.

4. Equanimity: [the attitude that] all sentient beings are like one's own mother; that not one of them is more or less important than another; that they are equal. Neither attachment nor hostility is felt toward a single one, [whether he is] near or far. All are regarded equally.

To persevere in Mahāyāna practice, henceforth apply [the Four Immeasurables] with all your heart. They are the essence of the Dharma.

According to the bKa'-gdams-pas' instructions, thinking about the connections between [certain] causes and results leads an individual to develop Benevolence, and the rest.

[Think as follows]:

"I must attain Buddhahood above all else.

I must engender the Enlightened Attitude, the cause [of attaining Buddhahood].
"Compassion is the cause of [engendering the Enlightened Attitude].

Benevolence is the cause of Compassion.

Remembering and returning kindness is the cause [of Benevolence].

Appreciation [of the fact that] all sentient beings have been my parents is the cause of [remembering and returning their kindness].

I must do this!

Having appreciated [this fact], remembering my present mother's kindness is the primary source [of Benevolence].

I must remember my mother's kindness!

I must regard her with Benevolence!

Since all sentient beings are just like her, I must broaden this attitude to include all who live and breathe!"

The two "roots of degeneracy"\(^{175}\) are: 1. To pretend to be a Bodhisattva but act hypocritically, hoping to be regarded as a "good Buddhist"; desiring food, clothing and fame; or hoping to be regarded as nobler than others. 2. To call yourself a "realized being" or "siddha." Apply the antidote: meditation on the rarity of the opportunities and blessings [of the human birth], and on impermanence.

To carry out wholesome acts or religious practice merely because you want godly or human happiness in future lives is

\(^{175}\) *phung gi rtsa-ba.*
contrary to Bodhicitta. [Apply the antidote]: recollection of action and result, and of samsāra's shortcomings.

To think only of your own welfare instead of the welfare of others is to ignore what is fundamental. [Apply the antidote]: meditation on exchanging your own [wholesome acts and happiness] for the [unwholesome acts and suffering] of others. This is most important.

Moreover, [remember that] all sentient beings are the same as you, since they want to be happy and do not want to suffer. Like yourself, they are [ultimately] "just-so" lacking any real nature of their own.

Since you are but one, and sentient beings are many, they are not merely equal to but much more important than you. Thus, with confidence and determination--and not as a mere intellectual exercise--think: "For their sake, once I have obtained Buddhahood, I will establish all sentient beings in Buddhahood."

To do this profitably, instead of cherishing yourself, regard any other sentient being as much more important than yourself.

Undergo even severe suffering to bring happiness to others.


177 chos-nyid; dharmaṭā.

178 rang-bzhin med-pa; niḥ-svabhāva.
Expanding these attitudes and applying them, act solely for the sake of others.

Nowadays, even if we carry out a few wholesome acts, most of us do it for our own sake. But carrying out your appointed task only for the sake of its appointee will not get you anywhere! You should move, walk, sleep, and sit—to say nothing of practicing religion—with the sole intention of helping others!

4. **Sending and Receiving**

When you are beset by illness or demons, tormented by gossip or by an upsurge of the kleśas, gather up and take on the misfortunes of all other sentient beings. Knowing that your former deeds are the cause [of present sorrow], do not be depressed when sorrow strikes, but take up the sorrows of others.

When you are happy, do not sit idly by, but use your wealth, influence and merit to urge others to perform wholesome acts.

Pray for the happiness of all sentient beings.

In brief: Do not do anything for your own benefit, but turn all your religious practice into an antidote to ego-clinging.\(^{179}\)

As you inhale through your nose, take in the black mass\(^{180}\) of all the misery, harmful acts and obscurations of all sentient beings, and let it melt into your heart. As you exhale through your nose, send out the "white rays"\(^{181}\) of all the merit and happiness

\(^{179}\) *bdag-'dzin* gyi gnyen-po.  
\(^{180}\) *nag-'ub*.  
\(^{181}\) *dkar-lam*. 
you have accumulated through beginningless time. Think that
after each sentient being has received his share, all of them
attain Buddhahood. Joyously meditate, and continuously recite:

"When I am happy, may my merit bless others!
May its blessing fill the sky!
When I am unhappy, may the sorrows of all beings
be mine.
May the ocean of suffering evaporate!"

Even when you are on your deathbed and cannot perform any
other type of practice, [as long as] you can breathe, spend your
[remaining] time Sending and Receiving.

When subject to any misfortune, such as physical illness,
mental disturbance, disputes or lawsuits, do not blame others, but
blame yourself, thinking that it is simply the fault of your own
eo-clinging.

Since [all sentient beings], your enemies, friends, and
those who are in between the two, provide you with a basis for
[Sending and Receiving, the] mental discipline which rids you
of your harmful acts and obscurations, think about how very kind
they are.

Do not say or do anything simply because you want others
to think that you are free of ego-clinging. All your acts must
be pure as the vinaya.

Do not discuss the faults of others. Realize that
their "faults" are actually your own impure projections.

Do not call attention to human failings or use fierce
mantras against non-humans\textsuperscript{182} or other creatures. Do not relegate troublesome duties to others or have them do your dirty-work for you.

6 It is wrong to enjoy the prospect of an opponent's defeat, to be glad when an enemy dies, or to think about how you will profit from a competitor's illness. Without concern for the state of your health or your capacity [to stand up to] gossip,\textsuperscript{183} meditate on the Enlightened Attitude. Intently meditate on [engendering compassion for] difficult objects of compassion,\textsuperscript{184} such as enemies and obstructive creatures.

Since you are not yet absolutely certain about the Dharma, practice it with regularity. Since it is to your own advantage to practice Dharma, do not boast about the hardships you are undergoing.

When others harm you by calling attention to your faults, by humiliating, beating or getting angry at you, instead of responding, simply meditate with compassion.

Never display your happy or unhappy moods.

If you will not endure any self-sacrifice, or help others even a little, you have missed the significance of Engendering the Enlightened Attitude. Exchanging your [wholesome acts and happiness] for [the unwholesome acts and suffering of] others is an especially

\textsuperscript{182} mi-ma-yin. Troublesome spirits who may appear human.

\textsuperscript{183} mi-kha thub mi-thub.

\textsuperscript{184} snying-rje bskyped-dka'-rnam.
forceful type of skillful means and must be applied with strong determination.

Results of Engendering Bodhicitta

Merely Engendering the Enlightened Attitude purifies countless harmful acts and immeasurably enlarges wholesome acts. The merit [you accumulate] in one instant of Bodhicitta exceeds [the merit you would accumulate by] offering each of the Buddhas as many vast realms, filled to the brim with precious gems, as there are grains of sand in the Ganges! We need not even mention its measureless blessing! It is the heart of the entire Dharma.

Subsequent action: the two types of moral conduct befitting a Bodhisattva

Since all Bodhisattva-activities, such as the Six Perfections and the like, arise from compassion alone, do not think "I have meditated for this many months," or "I have compassion for this suffering sentient being." Continually cultivate great compassion for [all] beings, free of bias or partiality. [Cultivate the two types of moral conduct]:

1. Cultivate all types of wholesome action for the sake of your own spiritual development. This is the "moral conduct of collecting wholesome dharmas."

2. Set out to perform all possible wholesome deeds for the sake of others' spiritual development. This is the "moral conduct which benefits others."
The Bodhisattva Vow [which you have received] applies to both of these [types of moral conduct]. Anyone who does not practice them as much as he can is said to fail as a Bodhisattva. Thus, engage in fundamentally wholesome acts at all times, and encourage others to do the same.

Anyone who feels it is sufficient [to apply] only one [type of moral conduct] without the other is merely clinging to an insubstantial meditative experience⁹⁸⁵ which will not withstand adverse circumstances. [Such a person surely] does so out of ignorance of the Buddha's words and the spiritual biographies of holy men!

¹⁸⁵ nyame-mong mag-mog. Since he has not meditated with the correct attitude he will neither develop Bodhicitta nor come to act as a Bodhisattva. (LPL)
Figure 4. rDo-rje Sems-dpa' (Vajrasattva)
CHAPTER IV

SECOND OF THE FOUR SPECIAL FOUNDATIONS: THE HUNDRED-SYLLABLE MANTRA OF RDO-RJE SEMS-DPA' WHICH PURIFIES HARMFUL DEEDS AND REMOVES OBSCURATIONS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

After Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude, the newly committed aspirant is symbolically purified by practicing the meditation and reciting the mantra of the Buddha rDo-rje Sems-dpa' (Vajrasattva). This purification insures the efficacy of his future religious endeavors.

The impurities to be removed include the accumulated influences of all the unwholesome thoughts, words and deeds he has committed throughout his samsāric career, as well as their cause: ignorance or bewilderment.

While this purification removes past unwholesomeness, it does not insure the individual against future defilement. Any new unwholesome act necessitates Confession (pp. 116-8) and renewed purification prior to further religious practice. Therefore, recitation of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' s mantra normally precedes other Vajrayāna rituals.

According to Kalu Rin-po-che, the efficacy of this practice is greatly enhanced if one has received its empowerment (dbang). In the empowerment ritual, the Lama plays the part of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' and, using ritual implements, scented water and incense, purifies the aspirant for the first time.
The practice involves the following steps:

1. Sitting cross-legged before an icon of rDo-rje Sems-dpa', and visualizing Him seated on one's head (pp. 106-8).
2. Praying to Him for purification (p. 108).
3. Visualizing the process of purification (p. 108-9).
4. Reciting the hundred-syllable mantra while counting the number of recitations on a rosary.
5. Reciting prayers of Confession (p. 110).
6. Imagining rDo-rje Sems-dpa''s bestowal of blessing (p. 111).
7. Dissolving the visualization and letting the mind rest (p. 111).
8. Dedicating merit.

TRANSLATION

Prologue

25b. 5 Generally speaking, two "hundred-syllable" mantras exist. One is the "hundred-syllable mantra of the Tathāgata," which is said to come from the Trisamayavyūharāja-tantra.186 The other is the "hundred-syllable mantra of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' (Vajrasattva)."

[This is the one we will discuss here].

[The hundred-syllable mantra of] rDo-rje Sems-dpa' exists in two forms. The first one is a "hundred-syllable name-mantra" which incorporates the boundless family of peaceful deities who

186 Dam-tshig-gsum bkod kyi rgyud. bk'u', rGyud-'bum, 134. A kriya-tantra. The mantra invokes the name of Śākyamuni. (LPL)
26a. are beyond samsāra. The second is the "hundred-syllable mantra of the wrathful Heruka," said to come from the Abhidhānottara-tantra. These mantras are known as "hundred-syllable" mantras by our school of the Mantrayāna despite the fact that they may actually contain either more or less than one hundred syllables.

At this time we will describe, in stages, the visualization which accompanies the peaceful rDo-rje Sems-dpa's hundred-syllable mantra.

There are two different ways of visualizing [the peaceful rDo-rje Sems-dpa]: 1. Alone, as a universal ruler according to the yoga-tantra; 2. In sexual embrace, according to the anuttarayoga tantra. Here we will follow the yoga-tantra.

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187 "Name-mantras" or "adaptable name-mantras" (mtshan-sngags spo-chog-pa) including all the mantras mentioned here, consist of a basic mantra, into which the name of any Buddha, yi-dam or other Enlightened being may be inserted. One version of the mantra is designed for peaceful, and another for wrathful deities. In the peaceful mantra mentioned above, rDo-rje Sems-dpa stands for all peaceful yi-dams combined. (LPL)

188 Mgon-briod bla-ma'i rgyud. bKa', 17. "Heruka" is a generic term for wrathful male yi-dams. Here it denotes the wrathful aspect of rDo-rje Sems-dpa'. (LPL) This mantra is used in the version of this practice which appears in Dwags-po bKra'-shis rnam-rgyal's sNgon-'gro'i khrid-yig thun-bzhi'i rnal-'byor du bya-ba. gDoms-ngag-mdzod, Vol. V. Delhi: N.Lungtok and N. Gyaltsan, 1971, folios 547-58.

189 'khor-los sgyur-ba; caukravartin. See n. 248, below.

190 E.G., see H.V. Guenther's Life and Teaching of Nāropa, op. cit., pp. 131-4.
Practical Instructions

26a. Visualization and Mantra

[Recite]:

"On a lotus and moon-seat on the crown of your head,
Sits the excellent rDo-rje Sems-dpa', white and ornamented,
With one face and two hands; in the right he holds
a vajra.
In the left, a bell." 191

Think: On the crown of your head is the syllable " (pam) which changes into a lotus. Above the lotus is an which changes into a moon [lying flat]. Resting on top of the lotus and moon is a (hum) which changes into a white, five-pronged vajra marked with a where the prongs converge. Light radiates from this as an offering to the Noble Ones, fulfils the aims of sentient beings and then returns [into the ]. The entire vajra changes into rDo-rje Sems-dpa' (Vajrasattva), who is not separate from your own root-Lama.

His Body is white, with one face and two hands. His right hand holds a five-pronged [golden] vajra at his heart. His left holds a silver bell at his side.

191 "Rang gi spyi-bor pad-zla'i gdan gyi steng/
Bla-ma rDo-rje Sems-dpa' rgyan-ldan dkar/
Zhal-goig phyag-gnyis gyas-pas rdo-rje dang/
'gyon-pas dril-bu 'dzin cing skyi-lkrung-bzhugs."

For vajra (rdo-rje) and bell (dril-bu), see n. 111, above.
He sits in the Bodhisattva posture\textsuperscript{192} with the right foot slightly extended and the left fully drawn in. His upper and lower garments are of precious silks. He wears the jewelled diadem and the other peaceful ornaments. On the crown of his head, on his topknot [sits] the Excellent [Buddha] Mi-bskyod-pa (Aksobhya), symbol of his Family.\textsuperscript{193}

His Body, adorned with the [thirty-two] major and [eighty] minor marks [of physical perfection], is clear and emits measureless light. It appears to lack all substantiality,\textsuperscript{194} like a reflection of the moon in water. Three syllables [are located] at the three [usual] places.\textsuperscript{195}

Above the lotus and moon, encircling a white \(\text{\textasciitilde} \) at His heart like a snake coiled clockwise, are the letters of His hundred-syllable mantra. The letters are white; their fronts face outward, [away from rDo-rje Sems-dpa'].

Light radiates from the mantra, inviting the Buddhas of the ten directions and three times and Their Sons. They all dissolve

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{sems-dpa'i skyil-krung}: a more relaxed posture than the vajra posture of deep meditation assumed by rDo-rje 'Chang.

\textsuperscript{193} Mi-bskyod-pa is rDo-rje Sems-dpa's root-Lama. rDo-rje Sems-dpa' is his "Son" and Sambhogakaya form.

\textsuperscript{194} \textit{snang-la rang-bshin med-pa}.

\textsuperscript{195} \textit{gnas-gsum bru-gsum}: 1. a white (\textit{om}) at the eyes; 2 a red (\textit{ah}) at the throat; a blue (\textit{hum}) at the heart. Standard way of depicting Enlightened beings.
[into rDo-rje Sems-dpa'] who thus becomes the unity of all the Precious Ones.  

Pray to Him for the removal of harmful acts and obscurations:

"Excellent rDo-rje Sems-dpa',
I pray that you remove and purify
All my harmful deeds, obscurations
and transgressions,
And those of sentient beings,
Numerous as the sky is vast."

Then the [white] elixir of awareness pours down from the seed-syllable and circle of mantra-letters at His Heart, filling up His entire Body. The excess streams out through the big toe of His right foot, and enters [your body] in the form of

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196 At this point, 'Phags-lam instructs: "Meditate that light from His Heart invites the ye-shes-pas. They dissolve and He becomes the essence of all the Precious Ones combined" (110/1).

The incorporation of all Enlightened beings into the visualized deity makes him a truly effective purifier. (Lama)

For further explanation of these meditational or "sacred bond" deities (dam-tshig-pa'i lha) and Enlightened Ones who exist "independent" of one's meditation (ye-shes-pa'i lha), see n. 233, below.

197 sdig-sgrīb sbyong. For "harmful acts" see n. 207, below. Obscurations (sgrīb-pa; avarana) are of two basic types: 1. kleśavarana, disturbing effects of the kleśas or conflicting emotions, and the distorted attitudes and actions motivated by them; 2. jñeyavarana, "obscurations of knowledge," i.e., the ignorance (ma-rig-pa; avidyā) underlying the kleśas which obscures the true nature of things.

For a four-fold classification of obscurations, i.e., physical, verbal, mental and meditational, see Ch. VI, pp. 199-202.

198 "Bla-ma rDo-rje Sems-dpa' bdag gzhan nam-mkha'i mtha' dang mnyam-pa'i sems-can kyi sdig-sgrīb nyes-ltung gi tshogs thams-cad byang zhing dag-par-mdzad-du-gsol." 'Phags-lam, op. cit., 110/1.

199 ye-shes kyi bdud-rtsi; jñāna-amṛta.
light, through the crown of your head.

All the harmful deeds and obscurations you have gathered throughout your beginningless lifetimes, such as violations of sacred commitments and so on, take the form of soot and sludge. All diseases [infecting your body] take the form of pus and blood. All the demons [inhabiting your body] take the forms of different insects.

All the substances [comprising your physical body], including flesh and blood, stream out like bubbles through the orifices of the sense-organs and the pores, and dissolve into the mighty golden ground. Visualize that after your body has been purified by the elixir of awareness, the excess elixir overflows [at the crown of your head] and comes in contact with rDo-rje Sem-spa''s foot.

Visualize this very clearly again and again. It is said: "If your mind is distracted [during visualization], recitation [of the mantra] even for a kalpa will be fruitless." Thus, do the visualization without a moment's distraction, and continuously recite the hundred or the six-syllable [mantra] clearly and softly, at a moderate pace:

\[
dbang-chen gser gyis gzhi; kana-car-mayi-bhumi. \]

200  See n. 243, below.

The Lama instructs that at this point the meditator should think that he retains only the insubstantial, clear "rainbow body" (ja'-lus) of an Enlightened being. This body looks like a transparent container, into which the white elixir is poured.
"Om benza sato samaya, manu palaya,  
benza sato te no padiktra dri dho me bha wa,  
suto kaiyo me bha wa, supo kaiyo me bha wa,  
anu rato me bha wa, sarwa siddhi metra ya tsâ,  
sarwa karma sur tsâ me tsu tam shriya kuru hum  
ha ha ha ha hoh bha ga wan,  
sarwa ta tha gâ ta benza ma me mutsa benza bha wa  
ma ha sa ma ya sato âh."

Or,

"Om benza sato hûm."201

Finally, join your palms [in front of you] in a gesture of devotion.

4

Recite the prayers of Confession:

"Lord, because of my ignorance and bewilderment
I have broken and neglected my sacred commitments.
Great Lord, grant me Refuge!
Supreme vajra-bearer,
Personification of Great Compassion,
Chief of beings, I Take Refuge in You!"

I admit and confess having broken and destroyed the root and the branches of all the sacred commitments of body, speech and mind.
I pray that You will remove and purify all my harmful deeds, obscurations and transgressions."202

201 Both versions are found in 'Phags-lam, 110/3-5, in transliterated Sanskrit. Our transliterations represent the Tibetan pronunciation.
Recitation of the long version is required when the mantras are being counted with the intention of completing the entire practice of 111,111 recitations. At other times the short version may be used. (LPL)

202 "mGon-po bdag ni mi-shes zmongs-pa yis/  
Dam-tshig las ni 'gal zhiing nyams/  
bLa-ma mgon-pos skyabs-mdsod cig/
Then, pleased by [your recitation], the smiling rDo-rje Sems-dpa' calls out, "Oh, son of good family, all your harmful deeds, obscurations and transgressions are purified from this day forward."

[Then recite]

"rDo-rje Sems-dpa' breathes on me, 
Dissolves into light, and is absorbed into me. 
Thus, we become one."\(^{203}\)

Then, He dissolves into light, which melts into yourself. Now, rDo-rje Sems-dpa' s Body, Speech and Mind are non-separate from your own body, speech and mind. Let your mind rest, without conceptualizing.

At the close of each meditation session, share the merit:

"Once I have quickly become 
rDo-rje Sems-dpa', 
May every single sentient being 
Be placed in this state 
By virtue of my practice."\(^{204}\)

\(^{203}\) "rDo-rje Sems-dpas bdag-la dbugs-dbyung zhing/ 'Od-zhu bdag-la thim-pas gnyis-med-gyur."

\(^{204}\) "dGe-ba 'di yi myur-du bdag/ rDo-rje Sems-dpa'i 'grub-gyur nas/ 'Gro-ba'i gtso-la bdag-skyabs-ma'i."
Indications of successful practice

The signs of the purification of your harmful acts are elucidated in the authoritative treatises \textsuperscript{205} of this tradition. \textsuperscript{27b.}

In particular, it is said that you will experience a feeling of physical buoyancy, little need for sleep, good health, clear thinking and glimpses of realization \textsuperscript{206} of the ultimate nature of things.

Commentary

The overall significance of this [practice] is: Abandon all harmful deeds; accomplish wholesome ones.

Only the Perfect Buddha knew what to reject and what to adopt, and demonstrated this to others. One who has deep faith in His Teachings and then applies them, has grasped their most essential meaning.

Action and result

Although a wholesome or harmful act may have been minute while it was still merely a motivation, by the time it yields its result it will have grown considerably. Harmful deeds lead to lower states of existence; wholesome deeds lead to happy ones.

None of your deeds will be impotent. You will not experience [the results] of that which you have not done.

\textsuperscript{205} \textit{gzhung}. \\
\textsuperscript{206} \textit{nyame-rtogs thal-thol}.
27b. **The source of all actions**

4 Actions which are wholly motivated by attachment, aversion and stupidity but have not assumed a concrete physical or verbal form, are mental actions. Those which have assumed concrete form are physical and verbal actions. All actions, then, begin as mental actions. Therefore it is said: "The mind is the source of the poison which leads the world into darkness."

5 "Harmful action" includes the "five most heinous acts," "five less heinous acts," "ten unwholesome acts," "four burdens," "eight deviations" and others. 208

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207 I.e., the klesas.

208 The "five most heinous acts" (mtshams-med-pa lngag panca-canantarya-karma), often called the "five inexpliables," literally, "five acts which bring immediate retribution" are: matricide, parricide; killing an Arhat or Lama; creating discord in the Saṃgha, and willfully making a Tathāgata bleed.

The "five less heinous acts" (nye-ba'i mtshams-med) are killing a novice or monk; seducing a monk or nun; destroying or mutilating images of Buddha, scriptures, or shrine-rooms.

The ten unwholesome acts (mi-dge-ba bou) have been explained in Ch. II, 3, above.

The "four burdens" (lo'i-bzhi) or four weighty acts, consist of four sets of acts: 1. Four burdens of perversity: a. Looking down on learned people; b. treating holy persons, monks or nuns in a condescending manner; c. stealing food belonging to someone in meditation retreat; d. stealing a yogin's ritual implements. 2. Four burdens of degeneracy: a. Swearing in order to conceal your guilt; b. violating the srotanka precepts; c. the Bodhisattva precepts, d. tantric precepts. 3. Four burdens of verbal abuse: a. Denouncing sacred images; b. belittling the knowledge of learned people; c. deriding words of truth; d. engaging in religious polemics out of prejudice. 4. Four burdens of blasphemy: a. Holding perverted views; b. injuring a holy person; c. insulting your equals; d. accusing an innocent person of wrongdoing. (LPL)

The "eight perversions" (log-bregyad): despising the wholesome; glorifying the unwholesome; disturbing truth-seekers; abandoning your spiritual teacher; dividing the Saṃgha; abandoning spiritual brothers and sisters, and desecrating a sacred mandala. (LPL)
28a.

1. breaking any of the three types of vows [Hinayāna, Mahāyana, or Vajrayāna], encouraging others to do so, and delighting in or praising their violation.

In short, besides carrying with us the mountain of misdeeds we have accumulated during beginningless past lives, we add to it in the present life, as most of our motives are transformed into physical, verbal and mental actions by virtue of the three klesas.

2. Even in this life, gods and men will curse and slander you for your bad deeds. You will be besieged by sorrows. Your protecting deities will grow lazy, and demons will take advantage of this and obstruct [your religious practice]. You will join the lower classes of men. [Living] in the shadow of your bad deeds, you will have bad luck. Even your dreams will be bad. You will be unhappy. Potentially fatal accidents will crop up; disease-demons will attack you.

3. You will suffer intense pain, fear and frustration while dying, and great mental disturbance in the bar-do.

After death [and rebirth] you will have to undergo a long period of suffering in the three lower realms, proportionate to your great, moderate or small misdeeds.

4. Even if you are reborn in the higher realms, your life will be brief and disease-ridden.

You will be hated by hostile enemies, although you have done them no wrong. Your homeland will be plagued by epidemics, crop failures and war.
Because of the similarity between a cause and result, if you are proud of your harmful acts your suffering will continually, uninterruptedly increase.

28b. 1 You are absolutely wrong [if you imagine] any harmful act to be necessary or profitable. [You are mistaken if you think that you must commit one] to subdue enemies or protect friends, or for money, property, fame, food, clothes and so on. No matter how rich you are in these things, at death they will be more useless than a sesame seed! You will not be able to take along a morsel of food or scrap of clothing, to say nothing of your fame, wealth, son, wife and the rest.

When you wander alone in the lower realms, the painful consequences of your harmful acts cannot be transferred to others—you alone must suffer them!

[Think as follows: "In this uncertain world], enemies may become friends and friends may easily become enemies. I, who have dared to do harm, may be seized by Māras, possessed by harmful spirits and become a dull-witted and ignorant person. In the past, I never thought about the consequences [of my acts], and there was no one to tell me what not to do. Since death may come at any time, I may not even have a chance to purify my harmful acts! If I have not purified them at all, what awful miseries await me in the lower realms after death takes me away!" There is no harm in letting self-disgust motivate
You should meditate unhappily.

Furthermore, concealed misdeeds grow larger and larger, as the seeds of harmful acts are mixed with the water and manure of deception.

If you do not conceal your faults, but recognize them and reveal your sad state to others, [your faults] will not grow but will diminish in strength, for, "The truth curtails."

Harmful acts may be easily uprooted by assiduous application of the means of purification of misdeeds: intense regret and sincere Confession. When you perfect the use of these skillful means, each wholesome deed you do will have the capacity to undo heaps of harmful ones.

Confession

To say, "I committed this misdeed" is to admit to wrongdoing. To do so with strong regret and mental anguish is to Confess.

Confession entails [visualizing] the wonderful, worshipful Excellent Ones, [the Sources of Refuge], who are free of wrongdoing; feeling dismayed and ashamed of your misdeed, and straightforwardly, sincerely saying, "Please regard me with Compassion, and purify this deed of mine!"

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209 rang-la khrel bdas-’dug mi-tshugs.
210 bden-pas mtha’-sdoms-pa.
The four powers

[Your Confession will be effective if you apply these four powers]:

1. The power to renounce and regret your previous misdeeds as vigorously as if you had swallowed poison.

2. The power to desist from doing any more harm, even at the cost of your life, and to firmly resolve to think before you act.

3. The power to rely on Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude.

4. The power to carry out all types of remedial wholesome acts to purify harmful ones, including the "Six Gates of Remedy" and others.

You ought to apply all four powers. [If you do not apply them, the following conditions will result]:

1. If you merely go through the motions of Confession, without regretting your former misdeeds, these deeds will not be purified.

2. If you have not ruled out future [misdeeds],\(^1\) Confession and wholesome action will be a complete waste of time.

3. A single Confession by one who has truly Taken Refuge and Engendered the Enlightened Attitude has more power to purify harmful acts than a hundred-thousand Confessions by one who has phyin-chad sdom-sems med-na.

\(^1\) phyin-chad sdom-sems med-na.
not Taken Refuge or Engendered the Enlightened Attitude. Furthermore, one day of Confession by one who has received [Vajrayāna] empowerment clears away more harmful acts than many years of Confession by one who has received only [Hinayāna and Mahāyāna vows]. This is because [Vajrayāna empowerment] greatly increases the power of reliance.

4. The same [reasoning] applies to increasing your wholesome acts and [eliminating] harmful ones.

The Six Gates of Remedy

1. to remove karmic obscurations, say the name of

6 'Od-dpag-med (Amitābha), sMan-bla (Bhaiṣajyaguru), Mi-'khrugs-pa (Aksobhya) and other praiseworthy Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and recite [their names] to others.

2. Set up images, holy books and stūpas, [symbols of Buddha's Body, Speech and Mind].

3. Make offerings to these three symbols; serve the Saṅgha; offer the mandala [of the universe]. If you have joined the Mantrayāna, practice dkyil-'khor meditations and participate

212 dbang: See Ch. VI., n. 345.
213 See Ch. V.
214 dkyil-'khor is the usual Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit word "mandala." But in this text, the transliterated Sanskrit word mandala and the Tibetan dkyil-'khor are not used interchangeably. A "mandala" (pronounced "man-dal" by Tibetans) is a symbol of
in community offering festivals. Especially, honor the Lama with the "five pleasing offerings."

2

4. Recite the sūtras and tantras taught by Buddha, such as the Prajñāparamitā and Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtras.

5. Recite the "hundred-syllable mantra of the Tathāgata," [the mantras of] Kun-rig (Sarva-vid Vairocana), Miʿkhrugs-pa (Aksobhya) and other profound mantras.

3

6. Confident in the [presence of the] tathāgatagarbha, meditate on the significance of non-self. Recite (rDo-rje Sems-dpa'is mantra] without thinking of the "three spheres."

The universe offered to the Sources of Refuge, as in Ch. V. below.

Dkyil-'khor refers to a genre of Vajrayāna meditation aimed at the gradual transformation of the meditator from an ordinary being into a Buddha. "Maps" of Enlightenment (dkyil-'khor; mandala) are employed, in which the highest Buddha, the ultimate goal, is the central figure. He is surrounded by various yi-dams who represent that goal as it appears at various stages of the meditator's spiritual development. The yi-dams are arranged in a geometric pattern dominated by a circle within a square.

215 'khor-lo'i mchod-pa: Devotional services consisting of prayer and mantra chanting, offering and feasting, held bi-monthly, on the waxing and waning moon days, by tantric Lamas and their close disciples. (LPL)

216 bla-ma-la mnyes-pa lnga: 1. to show him respect; 2. offer him service and needed goods; 3. have faith and confidence in him; 4. obey him, and best of all, 5. to practice Dharma. (LPL)

217 See n. 51, above.

218 bdag-med-pa'; anātman.

219 'khor-gsum dmigs-med. Any action is said to consist of three factors or "spheres": 1. an object; 2. an instrument; and 3. a subject or actor. Religious acts performed in a spirit of disinterestedness, with no preconceived notions about any of these three or about the outcome of the action, are uninfluenced by the kleśas and therefore conducive to Liberation.
1. obstructions to be purified; 2. an instrument of purification: the deity's *mantra*, or 3. a purifier: yourself. This is the application of profound openness (*sūnyatā*). Alternatively, after meditation sessions, concentrate on the unreality, the illusoriness [of all phenomena].

The hundred-syllable *mantra* of rDo-rje Sems-dpa'

Any of these six remedies, if sincerely applied, can [eventually] put an end to the causes and results of harmful action. But for immediate purification of the formidable misdeeds and obscurations which block Mahāmudrā realization—the actual practice—we have explained the meditation and *mantra* of rDo-rje Sems-dpa'.

The great mental confusion we experience in this life is due to misdeeds and obscurations we have amassed in recent lifetimes. Violations of the Three Vows are particularly [serious misdeeds]; transgressions of the Body, Speech and Mind of the Lama are extremely serious.

[Misdeeds such as] violation of sacred Mantrayāna commitments, trading images for cash or food, and so on, tend to weaken the effects of previous meditative experiences, and to inhibit the arising of new ones. The hundred-syllable *mantra* of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' is the most praiseworthy [of all remedies] because it clears away such misdeeds.

According to Lord Atiśa:
"Just as a freshly-cleaned mandala placed in a very dusty spot immediately becomes smeared with dust again, many minor violations of Mantrayāna [commitments] constantly crop up."\textsuperscript{220}

But if you ask [in despair], "Will the time never come when the Path [to Enlightenment] will truly become part of me?" the answer is: The Mantrayāna employs a great variety of skillful means, yet many minor misdeeds may be purified by employing just one of them for a single moment!" For this reason, we have provided a detailed account of the meditation and hundred-syllable mantra of rDo-rje Sems-dpa'.

\textbf{In praise of the hundred-syllable mantra}

The measureless immediate and ultimate advantages [to be gained from reciting rDo-rje Sems-dpa''s mantra] are unanimously proclaimed in both the new and old tantras. An Indian work sums it all up:

"Although they embody the five transcending awarenesses, Practices called dhārani, mantra, mudrā, stūpa and mandala Do not yield as much merit As one good recitation of the hundred-syllable mantra, Adorned by all the Buddhas, Numerous as specks of dust."\textsuperscript{221}

\textsuperscript{220} Since Mantrayāna commitments are extremely easy to break, the purificatory meditation and mantra of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' is especially important for a Mantrayāna aspirant, enabling him to immediately repair and renew his vows.

\textsuperscript{221} The practices named are various ways of relating to (rDo-rje
31a.

1 And further:

"Whoever chants the hundred syllables
Is struck neither by sickness, sorrow,
Nor untimely death.

2 Whoever chants the hundred syllables
Is not beset by poverty or suffering,
His enemies are destroyed,
All his wishes are fulfilled.

3 Whoever chants the hundred syllables
Obtains a son if he wants a son,
Or wealth, if wealth he wants,
If land he lacks, then land he finds.

Whoever wants longevity
Should chant the hundred syllables,
And, pleased to die when his time comes,
He'll live [another] three hundred years.
[The same man], pleased with this [long] life,
Will be reborn in bDe-wa-can. 222

Whoever chants the hundred syllables
Cannot be made forgetful
By mkha'-gro, byung-po ro-langs,
Or defiling demons. 223

Sems-dpa' as) a yi-dam.

Dhārani (gsungs): most general term for mantra.
Mantra (sngags): here refers to Vajrayāna practice for trans­
formation of ordinary consciousness into ultimate awareness through
meditation on, visualization of, and recitation of mantras.
Mudrā (phyag-rgya), stūpa (mchod-rten) and mandala (dkyil-'khor,
see n. 213 above) are also tools of the Vajrayāna. (LPL)

222 This man's wishes are fulfilled beyond his expectations.
bDe-wa-can (Sukhāvati): The "Land of Bliss," Buddha Amitābha's
Paradise. Unlike the deva-heavens, Buddha Realms are not places of
sensory enjoyment. Their inhabitants enjoy the best possible conditions
for religious practice, including instruction in the Dharma by the
resident Buddhas, and easily obtain Enlightenment.
Entire Buddhist traditions in China and Japan stem from the
quest for rebirth in Amitābha's Paradise.

223 These mkha'-gro are not the ye-shes mkha'-gro of the Refuge
Tree, but sha-za mkha'-gro or flesh-eating dākinīs, who, along with
byung-po ro-langs are samsāra demons whose destructive tactics include
robbing beings of their memory. (LPL)
If they recite the hundred syllables,
Even great wrongdoers
Will surely see the Buddha.

If he recites the hundred syllables,
A fool will gain intelligence,
A luckless man turn fortunate.
Change and frustration will be destroyed,
The worst wrong doer,224 purified.

31b.
1 In this and other lives as well
He will be a cakravartin,
And finally, in Freedom rest,
And Buddhahood attain."

It is said that if you [practice this meditation and
6 recite this mantra] assiduously, your minor and moderate mis-
dees will be totally purified. Your major misdeeds will not
increase, but be suppressed and gradually purified.

Generally speaking, if you firmly believe in [the doctrine
3 of] action and result, you will inevitably regret your harmful
deeds. Then, your Confession will be genuine.

All this points to the fact that purification will in-
4 evitably lead to realization. On the other hand, monks who have
no firm belief [in action and result] or feeling of regret [for
their misdeeds], and merely go through the motions without really
[Confessing], will achieve as much realization as a tortoise has
hair.225

224 mtsham-med Inga dang-ladan-pa. See n. 208, above.
225 I.e., none.
CHAPTER V

THIRD OF THE FOUR SPECIAL FOUNDATIONS: THE MAÑḌALA-OFFERING
BY WHICH THE TWO ACCUMULATIONS ARE PERFECTED

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In preparation for the Guru-Yoga and further practices, the aspirant must be purged of negative qualities, and enriched with positive ones. The purging is achieved by the rDo-rje Sems-dpa' ritual of the last chapter; the enrichment, by the Mañḍala-Offering which "perfects" the Two Accumulations (tshogs-gnyis). These are the Accumulation of Merit (bsod-nams kyi tshogs), and the Accumulation of Transcending Awareness (ye-shes kyi tshogs).

"Merit" refers to the cumulative effects of "meritorious actions" (see Ch. II, 3).

"Transcending Awareness" is direct understanding of ultimate reality.

PERFECTION OF THE TWO ACCUMULATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCUMULATION OF MERIT</th>
<th>ACCUMULATION OF AWARENESS</th>
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<td>2. Perfection of moral conduct</td>
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<td>3. Perfection of patience</td>
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<td>4. Perfection of strenuousness</td>
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SKILLFUL MEANS | INSIGHT

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As illustrated above, "perfection," or complete acquisition, of the Two Accumulations is equivalent both to the fulfillment of the Six Perfections and the integration of skillful means (compassion) and insight (realization of emptiness), the goals of the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna respectively.

In this practice, the aspirant perfects his Accumulation of Merit through the supremely meritorious act of repeatedly offering the entire universe to the Sources of Refuge. He perfects his Accumulation of Transcending Awareness by understanding all the while that this offering, its recipients, and the giver himself are no things-in-themselves, but ultimately empty.

A short version of this practice is generally performed at the start of Vajrayāna rituals. In it, the mandala-mudrā is used to symbolize the universe. (See Beyer, The Cult of Tara, p. 168).

Throughout this chapter, the word "mandala" has four referents: 1. the metal disk (resembling an inverted pie plate) on which the piles of rice are placed; 2. the small piles of rice (tshom-bu); 3. the visualization, and 4. the three together.

Practice of the Manḍala-Offering entails:
A. Preparation of the sgrub-pa'i manḍala (preliminary manḍala) representing the Sources of Refuge. This involves:

1. Holding a metal disk in the left hand while cleaning it by three clockwise movements of the right wrist, and reciting two purificatory mantras (p. 128).

2. Placing five piles of rice on the disk and visualizing them as the five Sources of Refuge (p. 129).
3. Imagining the union of these deities with the "real" Sources of Refuge (p. 129).

4. Placing the sgrub-pa'i mandala on a high covered table or altar.

B. Preparation of the mchod-pa'i mandala, representing the ideal universe, to the Sources of Refuge. This involves:

1. Holding a second disk in the left hand while cleaning it as before, and purifying it by reciting rDo-rje Semd-pa''s mantra.

2. Chanting the "ground"-mantra (p. 134); sprinkling perfumed water on the disk, and visualizing it as the golden ground.

3. Chanting the "rim"-mantra (p. 134); dropping rice around the rim of the disk, and visualizing it as the circular iron mountain which surrounds the universe.

4. Chanting the liturgy (p. 132; 134-46) while dropping piles of rice on the disk and visualizing them as the thirty-seven features of the ideal universe.

5. Visualizing the additional features of this universe reciting the four line prayer (pp. 148-9); praying for acceptance of the Mandala-Offering, and for universal Enlightenment (pp. 150-1).

6. Reciting the "mandala-mantra"; tossing some rice into the air, and praying for universal Liberation (p. 151).

7. Clearing the rice off the disk.

8. Reciting the four line prayer (p. 152); dropping piles of rice on the disk to represent a simplified universe of seven features, while visualizing the same elaborate universe as before.
9. Clearing the rice off the disk; repeating steps 8 and 9 as many times as desired for the session.

10. Praying for universal realization of Mahāmudrā (p. 154); reciting the Seven Branches of Religious Service (p. 155), and the concluding prayers.

11. Dedicating merit.

The practice is complete when 111,111 long or short mchod-pa'i mandalas have been offered.

TRANSLATION

31b. **Practical Instructions**

**Construction of mandalas**

There is nothing wrong with offering a small mandala if it is made of some fine material, such as precious metal. But a mandala made of a poor material, such as clay or wood, ought to be large.\(^{226}\)

If you lack [such materials], you may use a slab of wood or stone. If you lack even these, a mentally-created mandala will suffice. The most important thing is the visualization [which accompanies construction of any mandala].

[To practice this Maṇḍala-Offering] you will need two mandala-[disks]. Use the finer or larger of the two [as the base

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\(^{226}\) *Maṇḍala* here denotes the circular disks upon which sgrub-pa'i and mchod-pa'i mandalas are built.
for the] sgrub-pa'i mandala. Use the other one for the mchod-pa'i mandala. [To construct both mandalas], use piles of precious (gold or silver), semi-precious (tortoise or cowrie shell) or slightly precious (rice) grains, moistened with scented water. If you can afford it, change [all] the grains for fresh ones each time [you offer a mandala]. If you cannot afford it, change some of the grains for fresh ones put aside [for this purpose]. These grains are not for your own consumption later on, but should be offered to the Precious Ones. 227

Construction and visualization of the sgrub-pa'i mandala

3 Visualize the Sources of Refuge as you clean and purify the sgrub-pa'i mandala. 228 [Meanwhile, recite the mantras]: "Om Benza Amrita Hûm Pheh" and "Om Sabhawa Shuddha Sarwa Dharma Sabhawa Shuddho Ham" three times. 229

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227 This may be done by using the rice for some religious activity, such as giving it to monks to eat, or to poor people, wild birds or animals, as an exercise in generosity. The crucial point is that it must not be used for one's own enjoyment. (Lama)

228 A mandala is symbolically cleaned by running the inner part of the wrist around its rim thrice clockwise, while chanting the purificatory mantras.

In some other traditions, this is done counterclockwise, or first counterclockwise and then clockwise. See F.D. Lessing, "Miscellaneous Lamaist Notes I: Notes on the Thanksgiving Offering." Central Asiatic Journal, II: 1, Berkeley, 1956, p. 65.

229 Two purificatory mantras, correct Sanskrit spelling: "Om Vajra Amrta Hûm Phat," and Om Svabhava-Suddhâ Sarva-Dharmâ Svabhâva-Suddho Ham." The first removes the impurities of the materials which comprise the sgrub-pa'i mandala; the second removes that mandala's substantiality, reducing it to "pure emptiness." It then reappears "out of emptiness" (stong-pa'i ngang las) as the palatial abode of the Sources of Refuge.
Meditate that out of emptiness, [on top of the *mandala*-disk] a magnificent palace appears, endowed with all the special attributes.\(^{230}\)

In the center [of the disk], place five small piles of rice. Visualize these as the five Sources of Refuge just as they were in the Refuge meditation,\(^{231}\) except that the lake and the wish-granting tree may be omitted, and the *dharmapālas* should be in between [the five Sources, instead of below Them]. Light radiates from the three seed-syllables located at the three places,\(^{232}\) inviting the numberless *ye-shes-pa* deities [to come forth from the *Dharmadhātu*], their natural abode. Meditate that [the *ye-shes-pa* deities and the deities whom you have visualized on the *mandala*] dissolve into one.\(^{233}\) Place [the *mandala* on a high, covered table in front of you. Surround it

\(^{230}\) According to Kalu Rin-po-che, it has four sides and four storeys and is made of magnificent materials.

\(^{231}\) See Ch. III, pp. 66-70.

\(^{232}\) I.e., on the Bodies of the Lamas, *yi-dams*, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and *dharmapālas*, not on the Dharma texts. See n. 195, above.

\(^{233}\) Any *yi-dam*, including the Sources of Refuge, is said to exist in two respects: 1. as a *ye-shes-pa'i lha* or "awareness-deity," the "real" *yi-dam* whose existence does not directly depend on a meditator's visualization but who, like all beings, "abides in" or "emerges from" the *Dharmadhātu*; 2. as a *dam-tshig-pa'i lha* or "sacred bond deity," who exists only for aspirants who have undertaken the sacred commitment (*dam-tshig*) to keep him as a personal *yi-dam* by meditating on him, reciting his mantra, and praying to him. (LPL) Meditating that these two aspects of a deity have merged is said to greatly increase that deity's effectiveness as a Source of Refuge. (Lama)
with the five types of offerings,\footnote{Each offering corresponds to a sense-faculty: 1. sight: a mirror; 2. smell: incense; 3. taste: water; 4. hearing: bell or other musical instrument; 5. touch: silk cloth. Any five fine offerings appreciated by the sense faculties may replace these traditional ones. (Lama)} if you possess them.

If you do not have a sgrub-pa’i mandala\[\text{-disk}], or if you perform the Mandala-Offering\footnote{"Mandala-Offering" here refers to the symbol of the ideal universe described in this section.} very regularly, simply meditate that the deities to whom you are about to offer it are present in the sky before you [as in the Refuge visualization].

Construction and visualization of the mchod-pa’i mandala

Then, hold the mchod-pa’i mandala\[\text{-disk}] in your left hand and flower petals [or some scented water] in your right. Recite the hundred-syllable mantra [of rDo-rje Sems-dpa’] while you dust the mandala three times in a clockwise direction [just as you cleaned the sgrub-pa’i mandala]. Meditate that the illnesses, misfortunes, harmful acts, obscurations and impurities of all living beings, and [the impurities] of all objects are wholly and completely removed. Just like the mind, whose nature is stainless,\footnote{"Mind" (rang-sems) here does not refer to the ego-centered perception comprising the mental faculty (sems; citta) or, in fact, to any entity at all. "Mind" in this context signifies emptiness seen from the mentalistic Yogācāra-Vijnānavāda perspective. H.V. Guenther describes it as, "noetic nothingness as a necessary condition for the attainment of knowledge." \textit{Jewel Ornament}, op. cit., 227.} your mandala must be thoroughly clean, utterly free of dirt and other impurities.
Since this Maṇḍala-Offering is of great consequence, you must use the finest materials you can afford, and carry out the practice with the utmost cleanliness.

As for the main visualization, two different arrangements of the universe are commonly used. One is based on the Kalacakra-tantra and the other on the Abhidharma literature. Because Mahāmudrā is the consummation of the essentials of all the tantras, in practicing these Foundations [of Mahāmudrā], it makes no difference which of the two you use. However, our description of the visualization follows the Abhidharma version, since the latter is so well known.

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237 rten-'brel che-ba.

238 I.e., the room, the meditator's hands and body, the mandala-disk and the rice or other grain used, must be spotless. (Lama)

239 This important document reached Tibet in the eleventh century. See G.N. Roerich, transl., The Blue Annals, Vol II, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1953, pp. 753-838 for the traditional account of its origin and transmission.


240 Since the end result of practicing the Foundations (sngon-'gro) is the realization of Mahāmudrā, which is beyond distinctions, it does not matter which of the two tools one uses to achieve that realization. (Lama)
Liturgy, visualization and construction of the mandala of the universe of thirty-seven features

Liturgy

"Om Benza Bhūmi Āḥ Hūm.
The ground is the pure, mighty golden ground.
Om Benza Re-khe Āḥ Hūm.
The circular iron mountain surrounds it.

[1] In its center is the king of mountains,
Meru the supreme.

[2] In the east is Videha,
[3] In the south is Jambudvīpa,
[4] In the west is Godāniya,
[5] In the north is Uttara-Kuru,
[6] [Videha is flanked by its] satellites, Deha
and Videha,
[8,9] [Jambudvīpa by] Cāmera and Upacāmera,
[10,11] [Godāniya by] Śāthā and Uttara-mantriṇa,

[14] The mountain of jewels,
[15] The wish-granting trees,
[16] The wish-granting cows,
[17] The crops which need no cultivation.

[18] The precious wheel,
[19] The precious wish-fulfilling gem,
[20] The precious queen,
[21] The precious minister,
[22] The precious elephant,
[23] The precious horse,


[26] The goddess of laughter
[27] The goddess of garlands,
[28] The goddess of music,
[29] The goddess of dance,
[30] The flower-goddess,
[31] The incense-goddess,
[32] The goddess of lamps,
[33] The goddess of perfume.
The sun and moon

The precious parasol,

The victory-banner.

I have set before You
All the flawless goods possessed by gods and men,
Incalculable as the drops of water in the ocean.

Oh Lamas, yi-dams, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas,
dāmas, dākinis and dharma-palas,
I offer all this to You.
Please accept it out of Compassion for all beings,
And then, grant us Your blessing!"241

241 This is to be recited while visualizing the universe as described below, and constructing the mchod-pa'i mandala of thirty-seven features:

"Om Benza Bhūmi Āḥ Huṁ/g2hi rmam-par dag-pa dbang-chen geer
gyis gahi/
Om Benza Re-khe Āḥ Huṁ/Phyi-lcags-ri'i 'khor-yug gi rabs yongs-su-
bakor-ba'i dbus-su ri'i rgyal-po ri-bo mchog-rab/
[1]
Shar Lus-'phags-po/ Lho Dzam-bu-gling/ Nub-ba Lang-spyod/
[2]
Byang sGra-mi-snyan/
[5]
Lus dang Lus-'phags/ rNga-yab dang rNga-yab gzhan/gYo-ldan dang
[10]
Lam-mchog-'gro/ sGra-mi-snyan dang sGra-mi-snyan gyi zla/
[14-16] Rin-po-che'i ri-bo/ dPa-gbang gyi shing/ 'Dod-'jo'i-ba/
[17] Ma-rmos-pa'i lo-tog/
[21-3] bLon-po rin-po-che/ gLang-po rin-po-che/ rTa-mchog rin-po-che/
[25] gTer-chen-po'i bum-pa/
[26-30] sSeg-mo-ma/ Phreng-ba-ma/ Glu-ma/ Gar-ma/ Me-tog-ma/
[31-3] bDug-spos-ma/ sNang-gsal-ma/ Dri-chab-ma/
[34-5] Nyi-ma/ Zla-ba.
[36-7] Rin-po-che'i gdugs/ Phyogs-las rmam-par-rgyal-ba'i rgyal-mtshan.

"dBus-su lha dang mi'i dpal-‘byor phun-sum-tshogs-pa
ma tshangs-ba med-pa/
Rab-'byams rgya-mtsho'i rdul gyi grangs-las-'das-pa
mgon-par bskod-de/
bla-ma yi-dam sang-rgyas byang-chub sems-dpa' dpa'-bo
mkha'-’gro chos-skyong-srug-ma'i tshogs dang bcas-pa
mama-la 'bul-par-bgyi'o/
Thugs-rjes ’gro-ba'i don-du bzhes-su-gsol/ bzhes-nas
byin-gyis-bzlab-tu-gsol."

'Phags-lam. gDams-ngag-mdzod, op. cit., 110/8-112/1.
Visualization and Construction

While reciting the mantra "Om Benza Bhumi Âh Hûm," sprinkle the maṇḍala[-disk] with the scented water [which you have been holding in your right hand], to represent its being moistened with the "dew" of Bodhicitta. If you do not have scented water, scatter flower petals [on the disk].

Meditate that [the maṇḍala-disk] is the wide and spacious golden ground, with plains smooth as the palm of your hand, on which there is an ocean whose swirling, fragrant waters have the eight fine attributes.\(^{242}\) You need not visualize the circles of water and wind beneath the ground.\(^{243}\)

While reciting the mantra, "Om Benza Re-khe Âh Hûm," scatter some rice counterclockwise around the rim [of the disk, with your right hand]. Meditate that this is the circular iron mountain which surrounds [the universe].

In some versions of this practice you would now recite "Hûm" and place a drop of scented water or a circle of petals in the center [of the maṇḍala]. In the present version this will not be done.

\(^{242}\) See n. 111, above.

\(^{243}\) According to Abhidharma cosmology below the earth's surface is a circular ground of gold. Thousands of yojanas below the golden ground there is a circle of wind, 1,600,000 yojanas thick, created "... par la force des actes des êtres." Above this is a circle of water 1,200,000 yojanas thick, created as follows: "Par la souveraineté ... des actes des êtres, tombe des nuages amoncelés sur le cercle du vent, une pluiue dont les gouttes sont comme des timons de char. Cette eau forme le cercle de l'eau ... " Louis de La Vallée-Poussin, transl. "L'Abhidharmakośa," Mélanges. Bruxelles: IBHEC, 1971, Ch. III, 45-6, 138-9.
Similarly, in some versions you would visualize Mt. Meru and the other [topographical features] growing out of various seed-syllables. But in this version you meditate that they are complete from the moment at which you call them to mind.

Then, gradually chant the words as you meditate on their significance.

[Recite]:

"Om Benza Bhūmi Āh Hūm.
The ground is the pure, mighty golden ground.
Om Benza Re-khe Āh Hūm.
The circular iron mountain surrounds it.

[1] In its center is the king of mountains,
     Meru the supreme."245

In the midst of the ocean stands Mt. Meru, with its four square steps and four sides. Its eastern slope is made of crystal, its southern of lapis lazuli, its western of ruby, its northern of emerald. The lakes, sky and continents [surrounding Meru] reflect the colors of its respective slopes.246

At its borders are the seven gold mountains surrounding Meru on all four sides. Each mountain is one-half as high as

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244 The "words" comprise the liturgy, which appears in its entirety on p. 132, above, and in sections before corresponding sections of commentary on pp. 134-46, below.

245 The numbers in square brackets placed to the left of the lines of the liturgy correspond to the order in which piles of rice representing those features are to be placed on the disk in construction of the mandala of the universe of thirty-seven features.

246 For example, the blue color of Meru's southern slope gives our southern continent of Jambudvipa its blue color and blue sky.
Figure 5. Traditional Depiction of the Main Features of the Ideal Universe, for Visualization

a. iron mountain  
b. ocean  
c. golden ground  
d. seven lakes  
e. Mt. Meru  
f. city of Visnu  
g. Indra's palace  
h. deva-realms  
i. sun  
j. moon  
k. Videha and satellites  
l. Jambudvipa and satellites  
m. Godāniya and satellites  
Not visible: Uttara-Kuru and satellites.
Figure 6. F.D. Lessing's Diagram of the Mandala of the Universe of thirty-seven features, for Construction (From Yung-Ho-Kung, p. 106).

The numbers correspond to those which we have inserted into the liturgy, and indicate the order in which the piles of rice are to be dropped on the mandala-disk. The practitioner imagines he is facing east (arrow).
Figure 7. Traditional Tibetan Diagram of the Mandala of the Universe of thirty-seven features, for Construction.
the preceding one. [They are named] Yugandhara, Īśādhara, Khaḍiraka, Sudarśana, Aśvakama, Vinataka and Nimindhara.

Interspersed among these mountains are the [seven Sītās], swirling lakes whose waters have the eight fine attributes. They are full of wish-fulfilling gems and other treasures belonging to the nāgas [who live there].

Surrounding [the gold mountains and the lakes are the continents. Recite]:

[2] "In the east is Videha, 
[3] In the south is Jambydvīpa, 
[4] In the west is Godāniya, 
[5] In the north is Uttara-Kuru. 
[6] [Videha is flanked by its] satellites, Deha and Videha, 
[8,9] [Jambydvīpa by] Cāmara and Upacāmara, 
[10,11] [Godāniya by] Sāthā and Uttara-mantriṇa, 
[12,13] [Uttara-Kuru by] Kuṇava and Kaurava."

Videha, in the east, is white and semi-circular. Jambydvīpa, in the south, is blue and trapezoidal. Godāniya, in the west, is red and round. Uttara-Kuru, in the north, is green and square.

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247 Nāgas, snake-like nature deities, were widely worshiped in ancient India as dispensers of rain and other natural treasures, who were easily offended. In several Indian Buddhist myths, local nāga kings were converted by Buddha, which restricted their freedom to withhold their goods. In many myths nāgas acted as personal guardians of Buddha, His relics and the stūpas which housed them. There is iconographic evidence that the nāga became a symbol of the Buddha's power, and perhaps even identified with Buddha. See L.W. Bloss, "The Buddha and the Nāga: A Study in Buddhist Folk Religiosity," History of Religions. XIII: 1 Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, Aug. 1973, pp. 36-53.

The Tibetan nāga king is believed to live in a palace of jewels and precious metals underwater. See R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet. S'Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956, p. 290.
33b.

Each of the four main continents has two similarly shaped and colored "satellite" continents, one to its left and one to its right.

[Recite]:

[14] "The mountain of jewels,
[15] The wish-granting trees,
[16] The wish-granting cows,
[17] The crops which need no cultivation."

In the four continents, above Mt. Meru and in the various quarters of the sky [are the following features]:

The mountain of jewels [in the eastern sky] is made of diamond, lapis lazuli, sapphire, emerald, pearl, gold, silver and [clear] crystal.

The grove of wish-granting trees from which everything desired falls like rain [is in the southern sky].

The herd of wish-granting cows, from whose every pore springs anything you desire, [is in the western sky].

The inexhaustible, satisfying food which grows with no cultivation [is in the northern sky].

There are also the "seven possessions of the aakravartin."

[Recite]:

[18] "The precious wheel,
[19] The precious wish-fulfilling gem,
[20] The precious queen,
[21] The precious minister,
[22] The precious elephant,
[23] The precious horse
The precious general."

The thousand-spoked wheel [in the eastern sky] is made of gold from the river Jambud.

The eight-sided wish-fulfilling gem [in the southern sky] is bright as the sun's rays, and can be seen to shine from a distance of several yojanas.

The beautiful queen [in the western sky] possesses the thirty-two marks of feminine perfection.

The minister [in the northern sky] excels in both physique and intelligence, and can spot treasures buried underground.

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According to Heinrich Zimmer in *Philosophies of India*, Princeton: Bollingen, 1951, the idea of the cakravartin or universal ruler had its roots in pre-Aryan India. As a Buddhist symbol, it connotes worldly supremacy, the secular equivalent of the Buddha's spiritual supremacy. The cakravartin bears the same "major and minor marks of perfection" as the Buddha. Just as the latter "turns the wheel" (cakram vartayati) of the Dharma, the cakravartin "... sets the sacred wheel (of the world-pacifying monarchy) in motion." (p. 129).

The "seven possessions" are symbols associated with this worldly supremacy, the central one being the wheel or cakra. "The day when this first appeared to him, coming before his pure vision in ... his morning prayer and meditation, it stood as the sign that he was to undertake the campaign of unifying the whole earthly realm. He rose and followed the symbol, which now moves before him as he marches." (p. 129).

According to Kalu Rin-po-che, propelled by the monarch's great stock of merit, the cakra efficiently transports himself and his entire retinue to his desired destination, all of them riding on its huge hub; and the wish-fulfilling gem not only takes care of his desires, but grants the wishes of all who are within range of its great radiance.

Each of the remaining "possessions" is the best in its class and brings happiness, peace and prosperity to the cakravartin and his realms. See H. Zimmer, Ibid., pp. 127-39.

One yojana possibly equals nine miles.
The seven steadfast limbs²⁵⁰ of the golden-necklaced white elephant [in the southeastern sky] can take [the oäkravartin] anywhere at all.

The excellent horse [in the southwestern sky], the colors of a peacock’s neck, can travel the four continents in an instant.

The mighty general [in the northwestern sky] possesses the sixty-four special skills.

[Recite]:


³⁴a.

There is a beautiful treasure-vase [in the northwestern sky] containing inexhaustible quantities of jewels of seven kinds, including sapphires and others.

[There are eight goddesses with offerings. Recite]:

[26] "Goddess of laughter,
[27] Goddess of garlands,
[28] Goddess of music,
[29] Goddess of dance,
[30] Flower-goddess,
[31] Incense-goddess,
[32] Goddess of lamps,
[33] Goddess of perfume."

The white goddess of laughter [in the eastern sky] stands in the vajra-muṣṭi-saṃdhi posture.²⁵¹

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²⁵⁰ I.e., four legs, head, tail and trunk.

²⁵¹ rdo-rje khu-tshur. In this posture, the goddess stands with closed fists resting on her hips. (Lama)
Figure 8. The Seven Possessions of the Cakravartin
The yellow goddess of garlands [in the southern sky] holds garlands of flowers and jewels.

The white goddess of music [in the western sky] plays a vīṇa.

The green goddess of dance [in the northern sky] is dancing.

The yellow flower-goddess [in the southeastern sky] holds a bunch of flowers.

The white incense-goddess [in the southwestern sky] holds a censer of burning incense.

The red goddess of lamps [in the northwestern sky] holds a butter-lamp.

The green goddess of perfume [in the northeastern sky] holds a conch shell full of perfume.

[Recite]:

[34,35] "The sun and moon."

In the northeastern sky above Mt. Meru is the fiery crystal disk of the sun, emitting brilliant rays. [In the southwestern sky above Meru] is the cool, refreshing disk of the moon. The palaces of planets and stars emit their varied radiances.

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252 Indian stringed instrument resembling the lute.

253 The sun, whose nature is that of the element fire, looks like a clear lens through which hot rays are being focussed. The moon, whose nature is that of the element water, looks like a lens of frosted glass, cool and soothing to the eyes. (Lama)
On top Mt. Meru are Indra's palace (Vaijayanta) and Sudarśana, the city of Viṣṇu. At the four corners of this city are Caitraratha and the rest of the four parks. [In these parks] are Pariyatra and other wish-granting trees, a slab of stone much like [the legendary magic stone called] Pāṇḍukambalaśilātala, and Sudharma, assembly-hall of the devas.

In the sky above these, perched upon magnificent clouds, in ascending order are the Yāmas, Tuṣitas, and the other deva-realms, filled with the measureless array of gods and their possessions.

[Recite]:

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254 The "gods of the thirty-three," the first level of devas of the Kāmādhātu, inhabit Viṣṇu's city of the top of Mt. Meru. The walls of the city surround Indrā's palace in the manner of a mandala (dkyil-'khor, n. 214). The palace is square and multi-storied, each storey slightly narrower than the preceeding one (see illustration, p. 136, above).

Pariyatra is the same wish-granting tree found in depictions of the srid-pa'i 'khor-lo, "wheel of existences" (see illustration, p. 50, above). Its roots are in the asura-realm but its leaves, fruit, flowers and all the riches they produce, grace only the deva-realm. This predicament, the cause of the constant strife between asuras and devas, epitomizes the frustration of a life ruled by jealousy.

The magic white stone (Tib., Ar-mo-ni-ka or A-mo-li-ka) appears in the life story of the Buddha, in the episode in which He went to the above-mentioned deva-realm to preach to his mother, Queen Māyā. While He spoke she sat on the stone. (LPL) It also appears in the story of Milarespa, as the relic he left for his disciples. See W.Y. Evans-Wentz, Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957, p. 301.

The above-mentioned features are visualized, but not represented by any rice-construction.

255 For names and descriptions of the deva-realms of the Kāma-. Rūpa- and Ārūpyadhātus, see La Vallée-Poussin, "L'Abhidharmakośa," op. cit., ch. iii, pp. 159-174.
Interspersed between the levels [of deva-realms] are the "eight auspicious symbols," including the precious parasol [in the south], the golden fish, the vase, the lotus, the white conch-shell whose swirls go clockwise, the magnificent knot, the victory banner [in the north], and the golden wheel.

There are the "eight auspicious objects," including the mirror, vermilion dye, the white conch-shell, medicine extracted from an elephant's brain, ārava-grass, bīlva-fruit, yoghurt and white mustard seed.

There are also the "seven semi-precious articles" [associated with royalty], including the sleeping-couch, throne, cushion, sword, shoes, snakeskin and robe.

There are the "special substances which prolong life," such as the "six good medicines" and many other cures and

256 See illustration on following page. Of the eight symbols, only two--the parasol and the victory banner--are mentioned in the liturgy. The placement of those two piles of rice on the disk completes the construction of the mandala. The other six auspicious symbols, and the rest of the offerings described in the commentary, are simply visualized here and there in the sky above the universe, and are summed up by the chanted phrase, "All the flawless goods possessed by gods and men."

257 Some of these articles are considered generally auspicious in Indo-Tibetan culture. Some derive their importance from the role they played in episodes of Śākyamuni's life. (LPL) When He rejected extreme asceticism, His first meal included yoghurt. When He attained Enlightenment, He sat on a bunch of ārava or kūsa-grass under the Bo tree. See p. 107 of Foucher's Life of the Buddha. Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1963.

258 bzang-po drug: six types of beets or roots renowned in India and Tibet for their amazing curative powers, mostly for digestive ailments. They are grown in India and were imported into Tibet. (LPL)
Figure 9. The Eight Auspicious Symbols
Figure 10. The Eight Auspicious Objects
nutritious substances; a beautiful vase of amṛta, and other elixirs.

There is the sword [of prajñā], the book [Prajñāpāramitā], the vīṇā and other musical instruments, and other "articles which bring insight and renown."

There is a rain of rainbow-colored flowers, a pond of perfumed water, a lotus grove, a magical bird and antelope, and other "wonderful offerings."

With your mind, offer all things which gratify the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, as well as [things offered by] the servants of gods and goddesses. In short, imagine that you are offering all the flawless possessions of gods and men that can possibly be piled up, as well as all the wonderful things not owned by anyone in particular, to the Precious Ones in the ten directions.

[Then recite]:

"I have set before You
All the flawless goods possessed by gods and men,
Incalculable as the drops of water in the ocean.
O Lamas, yi-dams, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas,
dākas, dākinis and dharma-pālas,
I offer all this to You.
Please accept it out of Compassion for all beings,
And then, grant us Your blessing!"

[Then recite the four line prayer]:

"I have offered the ground, sprinkled with perfume, strewn with flowers,
Adorned by Mt. Meru, the four continents,
the sun and moon,
And visualized it as [being perfect as] the Buddha-realm.
Thus, may all beings enjoy that utterly pure realm!"259

Ten million times one hundred, or a billion worlds260 like the one made up of the four continents, Mt. Meru and the rest, comprise this "trichiliocosm." This is one whole universe.

Immeasurable as it is, repeatedly offer it to the Excellent Precious Ones. Fill it to the brim with Samantabhadra's clouds of offerings,261 the bodies and possessions of all sentient beings, yours and others', and all the wholesome acts of your parents and relatives. Then, pray for [universal], unobstructed attainment of Enlightenment and the supreme siddhi of Mahāmudrā in this very lifetime:

"Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Lamas, Vajrayāna masters,
Yi-dams and attendants
In the ten directions and the three times,
Every Tathāgata of the three times,
I have assembled the four continents,

259 "Sa-gshi spos-ohus byugs shing me-tog bkram/
Ri-rab gling-bshi nyi-slas brgyan-pa 'di/
Sangs-rgyas shing-du dmigs-te 'phul-ba yis/
'Gro-kun rnam-dag shing-la spyod-par-shog."
'Phags-lam, 112/6-7.

260 Misprint: "bye-ba phrag-brgya sto" should be "bye-ba phrag-brgya ste."

Mt. Meru [and the rest], a billion times, in this mandala,
And offered it to You with devotion,
Oh Great Ones.
Please accept it with Love and Compassion,
And then, grant us Your blessings!262

[Then, hold up the mandala while you recite the mantra.

"Om Mandal Pudza Meghasa Mudra Sparana Samaye
Āh Hūm"263

and toss a little rice into the air as an offering. Then recite
this prayer for the achievement of the aims of the Mandala-
Offering]:

"As I have offered this fine, pleasing mandala,
May I experience no obstacles in the Path
to Enlightenment,
May I understand the Intentionality of
Tathāgatas of the three times,
May I not stray into samsāra,
May I not rest in the Nirvāṇa [of Arhats and
Pratyekabuddhas],
May beings, numerous as the sky is vast,
be freed!"264
[After offering one mandala of thirty-seven features, sweep the rice off the disk with your right hand. To offer the "short" mandalas, simply] offer the seven piles of rice with your hand while you visualize [the universe] with your mind, and recite the four line prayer [once for each construction and visualization] without interruption:

"I have offered the ground, sprinkled with perfume, strewn with flowers, adorned by Mt. Meru, the four continents, the sun and moon, and visualized it as [being perfect as] the Buddha-realm. Thus may all beings enjoy that utterly pure realm!"

[After offering one "long" mandala], when you are repeating the practice many times [in a session], if your mind cannot cope with the elaborate visualization [described above], simply visualize the ground, the iron mountain, Mt. Meru, the four continents, and the sun and moon. [Visualize these] clearly and in the proper

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265 Same as n. 259 above.

266 However, according to Kalu Rin-po-che, even while one is constructing "short" mandalas of seven features and reciting the four line prayer, one should try to visualize the "long" mandala of thirty-seven features, described above.
Figure 11. Diagram of the Mandala of the Universe of seven features for Construction

order, filling the universe and the sky with all the offerings they can possibly hold. Intently imagine that these offerings are actually present.

There are many kinds [of mandalas], both short and long, ranging [in size] from five piles of rice to thirty-seven features. The construction of this particular mandala of thirty-seven features must be learned by means of a "visual transmission." When you are offering a great number [of mandalas] simply offer mandalas of seven features.

[Then, at the end of a session, recite]:

"O Excellent Ones, O three perfect kāyas, I have given You the outer, inner and secret offerings, and the offering of tathātā. Please accept my body, my wealth, all appearances and possibilities, Then, grant me that unsurpassable supreme siddhi, Grant me the attainment of Mahāmudrā."

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267 mthong-brgyud: demonstration of the mandala's construction by a Lama or trained fellow Buddhist. (LPL)

268 I.e., in a regular practice session.

269 "sku-gsum yongs-rdzogs bla-ma'i tshogs-rnams-la/
Phyī nang gsang gsam de-bshin-nyid kyis mohood/
bdag lus longs-spyod snang-srid yongs-bzhes-la/
bla-med mohog gi dngos-grub sistar-du-gsol/
Phyag-rgya-chen-po'i dngos-grub sistar-du-gsol."

'Phags-lam, 112/7-8.

"Outer," "inner" and "secret" offerings here denote three traditional classifications of offerings; tathātā is a fourth.

"Outer" (phyī) refers either to actual material things, such as the seven offerings placed in bowls on a Tibetan altar, or to anything perceivable by the six senses, offered through visualization. This may include things which have not been personally perceived by the giver, but which he has seen depicted in pictures, and so on. The object of this type of offering is to give the greatest quantity of the most
[Recite this list of the Seven Branches of Religious Service]:

[1] "I perform prostrations,
[2] Present offerings,
[3] Confess [harmful deeds],
[4] Rejoice [in wholesome deeds],
[5] Urge [that the Dharma be preached],
[6] Beseech [Enlightened Ones not to pass into final Nirvāṇa],
[7] Dedicate any merit I have accumulated to the Complete Enlightenment of all."270

[Then recite]:

wonderful and valuable things imaginable. Presentation of the "inner" and "secret" offerings requires prior empowerment to do so. (LPL)

The "inner" (nang-ba) offering, not actually represented in this mandala practice, is the symbolic presentation of the normally distasteful "five kinds of flesh" (sha-lnga) and "five bodily fluids" (bdud-rtsi-lnga), and their mental transformation into an ocean of elixir. (LPL) See Beyer's The Cult of Tara, p. 158.

The "secret" (gsang-ba) offering, also absent in this practice, is the mental presentation of the sixteen dākinīs of sensual enjoyment. (LPL) See Beyer, Ibid., p. 159.

The offering of tathātā (de-bshin-nyid, de-kho-na-nyid), is the "presentation" of the awakened cognition--the perception of the co-emergence of ultimate reality and blissful awareness--attained by the yogin involved in esoteric Vajrayāṇa practice. (LPL)

For more on the classifications of offerings, see Beyer, Ibid., 148-64, and Alex Wayman, The Buddhist Tantras. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973, pp. 71-81.

270 "Phyag-'tshal-ba dang mchod cing bshags-pa dang/ rJes-su yi-rang bskur zding geol-ba-yi/ dGe-ba cung-sad bdag-gis ei bsags-pa/ Thams-cad rdzogs-pa'i byang-chub chen-por-bsngo."

'Phags-lam, 112/8, abbreviated version.

There are many versions of this prayer. See the more elaborate one in Ch. VI, p. 179. For details on this key Mahayāṇa practice, see pp. 166-9, below.
"Through my offering of all my own wealth
and that of countless others,
May all beings come to gather the Two Accumulations.
May the light issuing from the Great Assembly [of
Enlightened Ones]
Transform me into one like Them!"271

Finally, light radiates out from the deities visualized
on the *sgrub-pa'i mandala* to whom you have been offering [the
*mahod-pa'i mandalas. This light] strikes yourself and all other
sentient beings, resulting in everyone's complete acquisition of
the Two Accumulations.272

Imagine that these deities dissolve into light and are
absorbed into yourself.

35b.
1 Share the merit [by reciting this prayer]:

"Once I have quickly achieved Mahāmudrā,
May every single sentient being
Be placed in that same state,
By virtue of my practice."273

Signs of successful practice

The signs which indicate perfection of the Two Accumula-
tions are elucidated in the authoritative treatises [of this
tradition].

271 *Bdag-gzhan mkha'-mnyam bdag-pa kun phul-nas/
'Gro-kun tshogs-gnyis rab-tu gang-gyur te/
Tshogs shing 'od-shu bdag dang ro-mnyam-gyur."

272 *tshogs-gnyis; dvi-varga. See Introductory Remarks to this
chapter, and n. 55, above.

273 See n. 134, above.
In particular, your thoughts will spontaneously turn toward the Dharma. Best of all, you will find yourself surrounded by conditions favorable to Dharma practice, without even trying.

Commentary

When you achieve proficiency in Mahāmudrā meditation, the Accumulations are gathered and all your harmful deeds and obscurations removed as a by-product [of this achievement]. However, unless you have previously gathered the Accumulations, you will not achieve proficiency in meditation.

Very few people have gathered the Accumulations; very few people are "karma-carriers." Each individual who has begun to practice Dharma and acquired a degree of faith, certainly has propensities toward wholesome conduct. But just as a spark cannot be made to burst into flame without the right conditions, these propensities cannot be awakened in an instant. And until they have been awakened [or transformed into] wholesome conduct, the individual will experience no realization. If he does experience some, it will not

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274 I.e., when you achieve a degree of Mahāmudrā realization. (Lama)

275 las-'phro. See Ch. II., p. 32.

276 bag-chags; vāsanā. Although this term is interpreted in various ways by Buddhist schools, it generally indicates an individual's tendency, generated by his former deeds, toward particular types of behavior. See David S. Ruegg, Théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra, op. cit., pp. 472-95.
grow. But if he practices wholesome conduct anew, he will thereby provide the proper conditions for the awakening of his propensities. And as soon as they have been awakened, he will experience a great surge of realization. 277

The Accumulations

The Three Accumulations and the Ten Perfections

The Sems-'grel texts state that there are Three Accumulations to be acquired. [They consist of the Ten Perfections].

Generosity, skillful means and intense longing comprise the Accumulation of Merit. Moral conduct, patience and strenuousness compare the Accumulation of Moral Conduct. Meditative concentration, insight, the [five] forces, and transcending awareness comprise the Accumulation of Transcending Awareness.

277 nyams-myong rlas-chen.

278 Byang-chub sems kyi 'grel-ba; Bodhicitta-vivārana. bsTan., 2665-6: commentaries by Nagārjuna on the ten levels (sa; bhūmi) of Bodhisattva-hood. This scheme of three, instead of the usual two Accumulations, is a very uncommon one. (LPL)

279 Bodhisattvas specialize in applying one of the Ten Perfections at each bhūmi. The Perfections not included in the more common group of six are four higher achievements attained only by Bodhisattvas.

Bodhisattvas: 1. apply skillful means (thabs; upāya) on a universal basis; 2. generate intense longing (smon-lam; prāṇidhāna) to reach Enlightenment and liberate others; 3. apply the five forces (stobs-lnga; pañca-bala): confidence, strenuousness, inspection (dran-pa' smrti), samādhi and insight; 4. possess transcending awareness (ye-shes; jñāna). (LPL)

For details on the Ten Perfections, see H.V. Guenther's Jewel Ornament, op. cit., pp. 239-256.
The Two Accumulations and the Six Perfections

The sutras hold that there are Two Accumulations. [They consist of the Six Perfections]. Generosity and moral conduct comprise the Accumulation of Merit. Insight comprises the Accumulation of Transcending Awareness. Patience, strenuousness and meditative concentration are included in both [Accumulations].

The Two Accumulations

Meritorious acts undertaken without the Enlightened Attitude are not conducive to Liberation, only to higher rebirth. [The same actions], undertaken with the Enlightened Attitude, are conducive to Liberation and lead to Buddhahood.

Furthermore, [meritorious acts] undertaken with no concern for the "three spheres" of activity\textsuperscript{280} comprise the Unsullied Accumulation,\textsuperscript{281} the gathering of which is the principal means of attaining Enlightenment.

The Six Perfections

1. Generosity

Generosity is threefold:

(1) "Material generosity" involves giving as much food, clothing, furnishings, even ink and paper, as you can afford.

\textsuperscript{280} 'khor-gsum yongs-dag; tri-mandala-pariśuddha. This term seems to be synonymous with 'khor-gsum dmigs-med, n. 219, above.

\textsuperscript{281} zag-med kyi tshogs; anāsrava-varga.
At the very least, give food to a beggar instead of turning him away empty handed. Think about how you will give your body and all your wealth when, in the future, you possess a *cakravartin's* realm.

(2) "Giving fearlessness" means curing disease, protecting others from misfortune, directing them out of chasms, escorting them out of danger, and removing hindrances to their achievement of *siddhi* and moral conduct. Truly, practice this type of generosity as much as you can. Protect others from the "four injuries": legal punishment, enemies, thieves and wild animals. Then, pray for the ability to save them from the miseries of the three lower realms.

(3) "Giving the Dharma" means that—provided you are competent—you explain those aspects of the Dharma which you feel capable of explaining, and which will really benefit others, both immediately and in the long run. [This you should do] without arrogance or desire for esteem. If you cannot do this, pray that the Dharma be explained to [all beings], human and non-human, and recite the *sūtras* aloud.

2. Moral conduct

Moral conduct is threefold.

(1) "Renunciation of harmful action" involves both

[rejection of] the ten unwholesome acts which are reprehensible in themselves, and unconditional adherence to the Three Vows, whose transgression is reprehensible.
(2) The moral conduct of "gathering wholesome dharmas" includes refusing to be content with performing just a few wholesome acts; application of wholesome conduct in the broadest sense possible, and prayer for the achievement of any wholesome acts which you have not yet achieved.

(3) The moral conduct of "acting for the benefit of sentient beings" means adopting the Enlightened Attitude, and then doing all you can to help others. Develop a great longing for the fulfillment of any [helpful acts] you have not yet achieved. It is not enough to be personally free of wrongdoing.

3. Patience

Patience is threefold.

(1) The first kind of patience is the "ability to bear any injury inflicted by others," such as verbal abuse, beating, striking, robbery or murder, [without retaliating].

(2) The second kind of patience is the "ability to bear the difficult circumstances which may accompany Dharma practice"—such as illness, pain, hunger, thirst, weariness or fatigue—with no concern for your own suffering.

(3) The third kind of patience is intellectual receptivity to religious truths and [willingness to] contemplate them thoroughly. It implies the ability to fearlessly accept such

282 chos-la nges-par-sems-pa'i bzod-pa; dharma-nidhyānādhimukti-ksānti: intellectual openness typical of a Mahāyāna type of person. This
[religious truths] as the profound skillful methods used in the Mantrayāna, the great and mighty deeds of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and the significance of "emptiness which is beyond verbalization."

Meditate with patience!

4. **Strenuousness**

Strenuousness is threefold.

1. The first kind is the "strenuousness which constitutes a Bodhisattva's armor." [A Bodhisattva] delights in wholesome conduct. He is never satisfied until he has fully applied every aspect of wholesome conduct, and never so lax as to think himself incapable of achieving this great goal.

2. The second kind is the "strenuousness involved in pursuing a constructive undertaking to its completion" without slacking off.

3. The third kind is the "strenuousness involved in refusing to take the easy way out," [and pursuing a practice] until gives him the impetus to undertake meditation aimed at a personal discovery of meaning in the religious "truths" explained to him or encountered in the sūtras. A Hinayāna type, on the other hand, feels threatened by exposure to such profound doctrines as "emptiness" and closes his mind to them. (Lama; LPL)

Here "Hinayāna" and "Mahāyāna" refer to attitudes, not sects. The three kinds of patience counteract the three kinds of obstacles to religious practice: the first kind counteracts "outer" (phyi) obstacles; the second "inner" (nang) obstacles such as illness or difficulty in concentration; and the third, "secret" (gsang) obstacles such as doubt or non-belief. (Lama)
it has had some effect. Even if you do not experience the "signs of warmth" immediately, instead of losing your temper, practice more and more assiduously.

Apply strenuousness!

5. Meditative concentration

[Meditative concentration is threefold].

(1) The first kind is the "meditative concentration in which you remain at peace throughout the present life," having greatly disciplined your body and mind.

(2) The second kind is the "meditative concentration in which you acquire the positive qualities [of spiritually advanced beings]," including the supersensible cognitions and the ability to mentally create apparitional beings.

(3) The third kind is the "meditative concentration in which you benefit sentient beings" by relying on samādhi.

[In order to practice] the three kinds of meditative concentration, you must first achieve a state of flawless
drod-rtags: sensations experienced by a meditator which indicate that his meditation is genuine and is having some effect. Similar to the sensation experienced when blessing (byin-rlabs) is received. Some meditators take vows to remain in solitary meditation until such signs do occur. (Lama)
mgon-shes; abhijñā. See n. 52, above.

rdzu-'phrul; vṛddhi: the miraculous ability to create benevolent apparitions, such as forms of Buddhas. Often contrasted with cho-'phrul; prātiḥārya, ability to create demonic apparitions. (Lama)
2 tranquility. It is absolutely essential to master this tranquility, since it is the foundation for the acquisition of all positive qualities.

To achieve a state of tranquility, the mind requires solitude. Mental solitude springs from physical solitude.

3 Physical solitude results from keeping your goals and activities down to a minimum. This results from having few desires and being content with even the most meager food, clothing and shelter.

In short, the sources of tranquility [and hence, of the three types of meditative concentration and the acquisition of all positive qualities] are: 1. having few desires and 2. being content.

4 5. Insight

[Insight is threefold].

(1) The first type is the "insight of understanding ultimate reality" by realizing its true nature—openness.

(2) The second is the "insight of understanding relative reality," that is, the inescapable fact that causes and results will give rise to one another.

286 gzhi-gnas; śamatha: withdrawal of the attention from the normal confusion of external and mental stimuli, by means of such methods as concentration on a single object, "watching" one's own breathing, and so on. Prescribed, by this tradition, as an important preliminary to other meditative practice.

287 shes-rab; prajñā.
(3) The third is the "insight of knowing what will benefit others," and applying the "four means of attracting others."  

Alternatively, [the three types of insight are]:

(1) "insight arising from hearing; (2) from pondering and (3) from meditating."

Achieve all of these as well as you can.

Results of acquiring the Two Accumulations by practicing the Six Perfections

Acquisition of the Accumulations yields the measureless, delightful rewards of godly or human existences. The complete
and perfect acquisition of the Two Accumulations and the Six Perfections ultimately results in the attainment of Omniscient Buddhahood. A person who has gathered the Two Accumulations will never feel himself lacking in the necessities of life.

Accumulation of Merit: the Seven Branches of Religious Service

1 It is said that a person who has some faith and insight has an incredibly great capacity for accumulating merit. If, motivated by the Enlightened Attitude, he simply offers the Seven Branches of Religious Service, all his obscurations will be destroyed, and his Accumulation [of Merit] becomes limitless as the sky.

It is said that a person who performs but one prostration will gain these ten benefits:

1. a handsome face
2. a good complexion
3. influential speech
4. influence over his associates
5. the affection of gods and men
6. the companionship of holy men

yan-lag bdun-pa; sapta-anga. See p. 155 above, for the list of seven. According to Beyer, this practice is an expansion of Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude. The three, which are present in some form, at the start of any Vajrayāna practice, effect the "ritualization of morality" which insures the inseparability of Mahāyāna moral attitudes from that practice. The Cult of Tārā, op. cit., p. 30.

The practice of the Seven Branches has its canonical origin in the last chapter of the Gandavyūha-sūtra, called Samantabhadra-prāṇidhāna, the "All Beneficient One's Vow of Conduct." Ibid., p. 30.

The practice of the Seven Branches alone achieves the Accumulation of Merit. (Lama)
4 It is also said that a person who performs but one prostration with great reverence will be born as a *cakravartin* as many times as the number of atoms in the piece of ground over which his five limbs [are extended in full prostration], all the way down to the golden foundation.

5 It is said that a person who merely folds his hands [in a gesture of devotion] to the Precious Ones receives ten benefits, including a beautiful form, many attendants, and the like.

Numerous rewards of this kind are elucidated in detail in the *sutras*.

6 The great dGe-bshes's\(^{291}\) of the bKa'-gdams-pa sect engaged in no other Dharma practice but the constant, strenuous application of the Seven Branches of Religious Service.

It was the common, customary practice of all the great bKa'-brgyud-pas, including mNyam-med Dwags-po (sGam-po-pa).

38b. But nowadays it seems to have declined [in popularity], and people of today have no inclination to do what we ought to do—gather the Accumulations to perfection! Even if we do practice [the Seven Branches] to some degree, we have so little faith

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\(^{291}\) *dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen; kalyānāmitra*: in this context, denotes a Lama, usually of the bKa'-gdams or dGe-lugs sect, who has certain extensive scholarly credentials.
and diligence that we never really succeed in gathering the Accumulations.

We let our sacred images, books and stūpas collect dust. Some reckless types even leave these things beneath dirty rags!

[We people of today] place sooty butter-lamps in offering bowls and on altars, while showing undue concern for our own physical appearance.

Never do we offer a single flower to the Precious Ones in a spirit of openness and compassion.

It is said that a person who has never recited the "Seven Branches of Religious Service" has accumulated no merit.

Where does merit come from? It comes only from acquisition of the Accumulations!

If we possess one grain of rice, we eat it if it is edible, and offer it [to the Precious Ones] if it is inedible! Even those of us who have gold, silver, silk, horses, cattle and the like, reluctantly offer small lamps or scraps of food, saying, "We are so poor in merit that we have nothing better to offer!" Thus, we offer lies to the Precious Ones. Do you suppose that all this will lead to [the Accumulation of] merit?? Hence, it is very important to make offerings in accordance with your wealth.

According to all the sūtras and tantras, there is no more profound way to collect the Accumulations than [to offer] the Seven Branches of Religious Service. Furthermore, they say that
each branch of the practice yields more merit than the one preceding it. The merit [accumulated by] making offerings is greater than [that accumulated by] performing prostrations; the merit of confessing is greater than that of making offerings; the merit of delighting in wholesome conduct is greater than that of confessing, and so on.

Whether you choose to recite a long or a short version of [the Seven Branches, the] most important thing is to ponder the significance [of what you are reciting]. Mere recitation is a farce.

**Conclusion**

There is said to be no material offering more meritorious than the Maṇḍala-Offering. It encompasses the practices of the Six Perfections, and yields [the same] beneficial results.

The measureless benefits you will enjoy as a result of offering the maṇḍala are elucidated elsewhere. The Kūṭāgāra-sūtra states that merely building a maṇḍala of the universe gives you dominion over [the actual universe, including] the four continents and the deva-realms. [The sūtra] implies that merely sprinkling scented water on the maṇḍala and offering flowers...

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292 *mchod-pa'i skabs-su lag-nar gyis brkyang-ba'i mchod-pa:* "offering made with hands outstretched."

293 *Khang-bu brtsegs-pa'i mdo.bka'-'gyur, mDo, 998.*
results in rebirth among the four classes of Mahārājakāyika-gods. 294

In short, instruction in the profound Maṇḍala-Offering is included in these instructions in the Foundations because of its great expediency in the rapid perfection of the Accumulations.

39b. However boastful you may be about your generosity, [ordinary offerings are by their nature] numerically limited to a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, and so on. Gifts offered through egotism or desire for acclaim are tainted by these [unwholesome motives]. [Offering ordinary gifts] may make [the donor] feel hopeful or anxious about whether or not they will please the Lama. Recipients [of such gifts are by their nature] numerically limited to a hundred, a thousand and so on.

The Maṇḍala-Offering is the biggest of all because it encompasses all the riches of the entire universe. 295 It is not susceptible to the taints of proud thoughts, since [the donor] thinks, “I am merely offering a product of the mind.” It does not inspire hope or fear about pleasing [or displeasing] the Precious Ones. A person who [offers the maṇḍala], visualizing the excellent recipients of the offerings—the Precious Ones in

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294 rgyal-chen rigs-bshi: highest class of devas in the Kāmadhātu.
295 phyi-snod nang-bcud nam-mkhas gar-khyab kyi dpal-'byor.
the ten directions and four times—the spacious realms, and the rest, cannot help but gather the Accumulations with every thought, word and deed. Thus, strive earnestly to do so.

Build new temples and symbols of Buddha's Body, Speech and Mind. Repair old ones. Serve the Samgha. If you have nothing to offer, sweep the shrine room, perform prostrations and circumambulate it, offering prayers of praise.

To visualize Buddha while joining your palms or tossing a flower into the air [as an offering], is said to yield immeasurable merit. Thus, you who are a recipient of the fortunate and privileged human body—not the inferior body of an animal, who can neither distinguish between wholesome and unwholesome acts, chant a single Mani or fulfill a moral obligation—must practice Dharma without delay! Do not let this human life go to waste! No matter how you do it, it is most important that you establish wholesome tendencies of every kind.

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296 I.e., past, present, future and timelessness. (LPL)
297 Misprint: dge-ba'i bag-chag should be dge-ba'i bag-chags.
CHAPTER VI

FOURTH OF THE FOUR SPECIAL FOUNDATIONS: THE GURU-YOGA

WHICH RAPIDLY CONFFERS BLESSING

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

After having successfully completed the stages of commitment, purification and enrichment (the three previous Foundations) the aspirant is almost ready to begin the Mahāmudrā practices which will transform his ordinary Life into Enlightened existence. He lacks only two final prerequisites:

1. Authorization and ability to do these practices. This can only be conferred by a Lama who has himself received them.

2. Establishment of a close relationship with this Lama and symbolic admission to his lineage.

Receipt of these two comprises the "blessing" promised to one who practices the Guru-Yoga (bla-ma'i rnal-'byor). Hence, this ritual is the final Foundation for Mahāmudrā practice.

Since the ritual involves visualizing your Lama in the form of the Buddha rDo-rje 'Chang, and in that form receiving from him the Four Empowerments (dbang-bzhi), the aspirant should have an unshakeable conviction that his Lama is really the Buddha. The author appreciates the fact that, in most cases, this conviction will have to be gradually
developed, and he provides numerous techniques for doing so.

Practice of the Guru-Yoga involves:

1. Sitting cross-legged and reciting a purifactory mantra (p. 174).

2. Visualizing yourself as rDo-rje Phag-mo (pp. 174-5).

3. Visualizing rDo-rje 'Chang while thinking of him as your root-Lama, seated on the crown of your head, surrounded by the Lamas of the Mahāmudrā lineage and other great Lamas and by the other Sources of Refuge (pp. 176-8).

4. Imagining the merging of the dam-tshig and ye-shes aspects of the Sources of Refuge (p. 178).

5. Praying to Them.

6. Reciting the prayer of the Seven Branches of Religious Service while imagining that you are actually performing them (p. 179).

7. Reciting the long prayer to the Lamas of the Mahāmudrā lineage (pp. 180-91).

8. Reciting the short prayer to the Lamas of the Mahāmudrā lineage (p. 192).

9. Praying to the Lamas for various blessings (pp. 192-3).

10. Reciting the "Ma-nam Four" three times, and the invocation of the Karma-pas several times (p. 194).

11. Reciting the six-line prayer the desired number of times for the session (pp. 194-5).

12. Praying to the Lama for the Four Empowerments; visualizing your receipt of the Empowerments and the results of this (pp. 195-203).
13. Visualizing your Lama dissolving into light and then into yourself (p. 203).

14. Letting your mind rest.

15. Dedicating merit.

To complete the Guru-Yoga, the six-line prayer must have been recited a total of 111,111 times.

TRANSLATION

40a. **Meditation**

3 Meditate that you have been "purified to emptiness" by means of the svabhava-mantra. You now emerge out of emptiness, looking much like rDo-rje Phag-mo, standing on a corpse, red lotus, and sun.

4 As you have not yet purified all your obscurations, meditating that your ordinary self [is performing the Guru-Yoga] would not net you any blessing. But meditating that the yi-dam [is performing the Guru-Yoga] will facilitate your quick and easy receipt of blessing. Thus, [when practicing the Guru-Yoga],

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298 I.e., recite, "Om Sabhawa Shuddha Sarwa Dharma Sabhawa Shuddho Ham," as in Ch. V., and then visualize yourself dissolving into emptiness. (Lama)

299 See illustration on following page.

299 rDo-rje Phag-mo is the chief female yi-dam of the bKa'-brgyud sect.

300 yi-dam du bsgoms-pas byin-rlabs myur-du 'jug-sla-ba'i rten-'brel yin.
Figure 12. rDo-rje Phag-mo (Vajravarāhī)
you should focus your attention on your own yi-dam whoever he may be.

rDo-rje Phag-mo is the mother who begat all the Buddhas. She is essentially Phyag-rgya-chen-mo (Mahāmudrā), appearing in the form of Lhan-cig-skyes-ma (Sahajā). She belongs to a family of yoginis who are especially warm-hearted toward sentient beings. Hence, through her, blessing may be quickly received. It is especially propitious [to visualize yourself as rDo-rje Phag-mo while you practice this meditation], since she was the secret yi-dam of Lords Marpa, Mila and Dwags-po. Do as they did!

[Begin the meditation by reciting the following]:

"On the crown of my head, on a lotus, sun and moon-seat
Sits my own root-Lama as the mighty rDo-rje 'Chang.
Wearing ornaments, holding a vajra and bell in the "crossed hands" mudrā,
He sits in the vajra-posture.
The Lamas of the [Mahāmudrā] lineage,
An ocean of Precious Ones, sit in a column [on the crown of His head],
And also in groups [surrounding Him]."

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301 Synonym for rDo-rje Phag-mo. (LPL)

302 gsang-ba'i yi-dam. According to Kalu Rin-po-che, this means that these three did not reveal to anyone the identity of their yi-dam. Such secrecy will strengthen the blessing received by the meditator.

303 sByi-por padma zla-nyi'i gdan steng-du/
 rTsa-ba'i bla-ma rDo-rje 'Chang dbang-po/
 rGyan-ldan rdor-dril-'dzin-pa'i phyag-rgya-bsnol/
 rDo-rje'i gdan-bzhugs brgyud-pa'i bla-ma dang/
 dKon-mo'hog rgya-mtsho tho-btsegs khrom-du-tshogs."

'Phags-lam, 113/1-2.

The "crossed-hands" mudrā (phyag-rgya-bsnol) is performed by holding the vajra in the right hand and the bell in the left, with the hands crossed in front of the chest.
6 On the crown of your head, or in the sky before you, sits your own root-Lama as he appeared in Taking Refuge. He is the essence of all the Buddhas of the three times. In the form of rDo-rje 'Chang, he sits on a lotus and moon-seat atop a jewelled throne upheld by eight lions and covered with priceless silks.

2 The bKa'-brgyud-pa Lamas are seated (on his head), in a column extending from your root-Lama [as rDo-rje 'Chang] up to rDo-rje 'Chang [Himself]. [This column] is surrounded by Lamas of the 'Bri-khung, 'Brug-pa, Tsha1-pa and sTag-lung [branches of the bKa'-brgyud-pa sect], and by other Lamas of the meditative lineage—a vertable ocean of siddhas! [They are surrounded by Lamas who transmitted] the Great Perfection, the Six Yogas, Path and Result and Zhi-byed gCod-yul, and the Lamas of the lineage

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304 grub-brgyud: tradition which emphasizes meditation. The term is used to characterize the bKa'-brgyud and rNying-ma sects. (LPL)

305 Great Perfection (rDzogs-pa chen-po), Six Yogas (Chos-drug), and Path and Result (Lam-'bras) are key practices identified with the rNying-ma, bKa'-brgyud and Sa-skya sects respectively. Zhi-byed gCod-yul is a particular ritual whose theoretical basis is the prajñaparamitā doctrine. Developed by individual Indian yo-gins, it was introduced into Tibet in the 11th century by Pha-dam-pa. There, it became the central practice of a distinct sect, called the Zhi-byed-pa. Later, when the practice had been adopted by all the major Tibetan sects, the Zhi-byed-pa died out.

Zhi-byed gcod-yul was usually practiced by individuals with prior training in tranquility (gshi-gnas) meditation, who were in a highly-charged emotional state. In terrifying surroundings such as graveyards at night, they would attempt a symbolic severance (good) of the pernicious belief in a 'self.' (LPL)

The ritual, often referred to as "good" (pronounced "chôt"), was also used to cut off emotional obsessions (klesas).

of intellectual discipline, gathered like clouds.

4 Devotedly imagine the merging of the dam-tshig and ye-shes aspect of each of the primordially present yi-dams, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, dākas, dākīnīs and dharma-pālas who surround the Lamas.

5 With deep sincerity and longing, clearly recite:

"Om. You who embody [all the characteristics of Enlightenment], who incorporate the nature of all things, Who, like the sky, have no relation to past, present or future, Who cannot be said to have "gone" or "come," But, like the moon in water, appear wherever You are visualized, Oh glorious Heruka, conqueror of Mara's armies! O Lamas, yi-dams, dākīnīs and attendants, As I have prayed to You today with faith, Exert the force of Your unrestricted compassion, And clearly show Yourselves to me!"

Then recite the prayer of the Seven Branches or Religious Service:

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306 blo-sbyong-brgyud: tradition which emphasizes development of Bodhicitta. Atiśa was its most famous proponent. Mental discipline (blo-sbyong) was especially emphasized by his Tibetan followers, the bKa'-gdam-pas, and their successors, the dGe-lugs-pas.

307 See n. 233, above, for the significance of the merging of these two aspects of Enlightened beings.

308 "Om/ Khyab-bdag dngos-po kun gyi rang-bshin-can/ gNas-med 'gro-'ong-bral-ba nam-mkha' bshin/ gShegs dang 'byin-pa'i mtshan-ma mi-mnga' yang/ Chu-zla bshin-du gar-dmigs der-snang-ba/ bDud-dpung 'joms-mdzad dpal-ldan Heruka/ bLa-ma yi-dam mkha'-'gro 'khor dang boas/ bDag gi dad-pas deng-'dir gsal-'debs-na/ dMigs-med snying-rje'i dbang-gis 'dir-gsal-mdzod."

'Phags-lam, 113/2-4.

The first part of this prayer is addressed to rDo-rje 'Chang.
"To You who have come from the highest Buddha-realm,  
the palace of the Dharmadhātu,  
Who are essentially the Buddhas of  
the three times,  
Who directly demonstrate that Mind is itself the  
Dharmakaya,  

[1] Oh holy Reverend Lamas, I bow down!  
[2] In praise of You, I offer all:  
My body, wealth, and mental creations.  
[3] I confess each harmful deed I have done;  
I will commit no further wrongs.  
[4] I delight in all the wholesome deeds of beings.  
[5] I share [merit], the cause of Supreme Enlightenment.  
[6] I urge [the Buddhas] to remain [in the world] and not enter  
final Nirvāṇa.  
[7] And to teach the unsurpassed, excellent Dharma-paths."

[Now, pray for blessings]:

"[Grant me the blessing of] unbiased benevolence and compassion,  
And the ultimate, co-emergent awareness,  
Like the understanding possessed by Buddha  
and His Sons:  
Grant me the blessing of penetrating understanding.  
Grant me the blessing of direct understanding of  
this illusory body as Nirmāṇakāya.

'Phags-lam, 113/4-7.

This version of the Seven Branches of Religious Service is  
slightly more elaborate than the one used in the Mandala-Offering.  
Branches 5 and 7 are not in their usual order. See Ch. V. pp. 166-9,  
for details on the Seven Branches.
Grant me the blessing of direct understanding of vitality as Saṁbhogakāya.
Grant me the blessing of direct understanding of Mind as Dharmakāya.
Grant me the blessing of direct understanding of the three kāyas, non-separate. 310

5-6 Now recite the long and short prayers to the [Lamas of the] Mahāmudrā lineage. [The long prayer is as follows]:

"To the glorious, all-encompassing rDo-rje 'Chang;
To the Venerable bLo-gros Rin-chen, master of the ten stages;
To Saraha, who appeared in the holy land [of India],
I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 311

310 "Byams dang snying-rje phyogs-med 'byongs-ba dang/
Don-dam lhan-cig skyes-pa'i ye-shes de/
rgyal-ba sras-bcas-mams kyi rtogs-pa ltar/
bdag-gis mgon-sum rtogs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs/
sGyu-lus sprul-skur-rtogs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs/
Srog-gstos longs-skur-rtogs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs/
Rang-sems cho-s-skyor-rtogs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs/
sku-gsum dbyer-med 'chab-bar-byin-gyis-rlobs."
'Phags-lam, 113/7-114-1.
Regarding "co-emergent awareness" (lhan-cig skyes-pa'i ye-shes; sahaja-jñāna), H.V. Guenther says:

" ... one speaks of lhan-cig skyes-pa, sahaja, because two features go together, not that one is in the other. The philosophical implication is that there is no unbridgeable gulf between 'appearance' and 'reality,' because appearance is reality insomuch as it is the appearance of the latter. To make a difference between appearance and reality is the working of our bifurcating mind, but in the immediate awareness that reality is co-present with or emerges together with appearance the seemingly abysmal gulf is bridged." (Nāropa, p. 25, n. 3).

The last four lines of this prayer, a request for the ability to view one's ordinary life as the three modes of authentic existence (sku-gsum; tri-kāya, see n. 138) is again a request for the blessing of co-emergent awareness.

311 See Ch. I, p. 9, on the Mahāmudrā lineage.
Since the long and short prayers share the same function, if one is unable to recite both at each session of Guru-Yoga practice, it is
"To Árya Nāgārjuna, who understood dharmata;
To Shabari, who attained Mahāmudrā;
To Lord Maitrepa, who saw the essential meaning, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 312

To Lho-brag-pa, master of the tantras;
To Lord Mila, chief of siddhas in the Land of Snows;
To the glorious sGam-po-pa, subject of Buddha's prophesy, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 313

permissible to recite the long one only once per day, and substitute the short one at all other times. (Lama)
The long prayer begins:
"'dNgos-kun khyab-bdag dpal-lidan rDo-rje 'Chang/
Sa-bou'i dbang-phyang blo-gros Rin-chen shabs/
'Phags-yul grub-pa'i gtso-bo Saraha/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol.'" 'Phags-lam, 11d/1-2.
bLo-gros Rin-chen (dates?) was an Indian siddha, said to have received inspiration directly from rDo-rje 'Chang. (Lama)
Saraha (ca. 633 AD), one of India's "eighty-four mahāsiddhas," is best known for his dohas or tantric songs. See H.V. Guenther, The Royal Song of Saraha. Seattle: Univ. of Wash. Press, 1969.

312 "Chos-myid-don-grzigs 'Phags-pa kLu-grub dang/
Phyag-rgya-che-brmyes dpal-lidan Shabari/
shlying-po'i don-grzigs Jo-bo Maitrepa/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol.'" 'Phags-lam, 114/2-3/
Árya Nāgārjuna ('Phags-pa kLu-grub or kLu-grub sNying-po, ca. 645 AD ?) was an Indian mahāsiddha often identified, by the Tibetan tradition, with the philosopher Nāgārjuna, who may have been born five hundred years earlier. See Tony Schmidt, The Eighty-Five Siddhas. Stockholm: Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the Northwestern Provinces of China, 1958, Vol. VIII, part 7, pp. 20-7.
Shabari (Shavari, ca. 657) was another Indian mahāsiddha who is said to have originated the cult of rDo-rje rNal-byor-ma, so important to the Karma bKa'-brgyud sect. See Schmidt, Ibid., p. 60 and plate V.
Maitrepa (Maitripa, ca. 1150) was an Indian teacher of both Atiśa and Marpa.

313 "rGyud-sde rgya-mtsho'i mnga'-bdag Lho-brag-pa/
Gangs-og grub-pa'i gtso-bo Mila rJe/
rGyal-bas lung-bstan dpal-lidan sGam-po-pa/
"To Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa, master of Buddha-activity;
To Venerable 'Gro-mgon Ras-chen, the mighty magician;
To sBom-brag-pa, Son of Buddha who completed the [Stages of] Production and Perfection, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 314

To the glorious Karma-pa who suppressed that which is difficult to suppress;
To the mahasiddha 0-rgyan-pa who achieved both types of siddhi;
To Rang-byung [rDo-rje], master of the sastras, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 315

gSol-ba 'debs-so lhon-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 114/3.
Lho-brag-pa, "the man from Lho-brag," is Marpa the Translator (1012-96).
Mila rJe is Milarespa (1052-1135).
See Ch. I., pp. 4-5 on sGam-po-pa (1079-1153).

314 "rGyal-ba'i phrin-las mnga'-bdag Dus-gsum mKhyen/
mThu-stobs dbang-phug 'Gro-mgon Ras-chen shabe/
bskyed-rdzo ge mthar-phyn rgyal-sras sBom-brag-pa/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhon-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 114/3-4.
Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa (1110-93) was the original Karma-pa. See H.E. Richardson, "The Karma-pa Sect," JRAS, 1958, pp. 139-64.
'Gro-mgon Ras-chen [Sangs-rgyas-grags] (ca. 1100) was the first Situ Rin-po-che.

sBom-brag [bSod-nams rDo-rje] (ca. 1100) was another Mahāmudrā master.

315 "gDul-dka' 'dul-mdsad dpal-ladan Karma-pa/
dNgos-grub gnyis-brnyes grub-chen O-rgyan-pa/
'Dzam-gling bstan-pa'i mnga'-bdag Rang-byung-pa/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhon-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 114/4-5.
The Karma-pa mentioned is the second, Karma Pagshi (1204-83), the first Karma-pa to visit China. There, he stunned the Taoist competition with his feats of magic.
O-rgyan-pa (1189-1258), alias rGod-gtsang-pa or mGon-po rDo-rje, was the founder of the sTod branch of the 'Brug-pa bKa-brgyud-pa.

Rang-byung [rDo-rje] (1284-1339) was the third Karma-pa.
"To rGyal-ba gYung-ston-pa, siddha of the Mantrayana;
To Venerable Rol-pa'i rDo-rje, who adorned Jambudvipa;
To mKha'-spyod-dbang-po who realized the true nature of things, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 316

To the great king, Lord of the Dharma, De-bzhin gShegs;
To the learned, Venerable Ratnabhadra;
To mThong-ba Don-ldan, glorious pacifier of [samsāra] existence, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 317

To 'Jam-dpal bZang-po, who is really rDo-rje 'Chang;
To Venerable dPal-'byor Don-grub, personification of Compassion;
To Chos-grags rGya-mtsho, source of blessings,
I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 318

° sNgags-rigs grub-pa'i rgyal-ba gYung-ston-pa/
'Dzam-gling rgyan-gyur Rol-pa'i rDo-rje zhabs/
gNas-lugs-don-rtogs rtogs-ldan mKha'-spyod dbang/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 114/5-7.

gYung-ston [rDo-rje dpal, b. 1283] was a Mahāmudrā teacher.
Rol-pa'i rDo-rje (1340-83) was the fourth Karma-pa, known for his magic powers, and as a teacher of Tsong-kha-pa.
mKha'-spyod dBang-po (1350-1405) was probably the second Zvamdmar Rin-po-che.

317 "Sa-skyong gtsug-rgyan chos-rje De-bzhin gShegs/
mKas-pa'i dbang-po Ratnabhadra'i zhabs/
Srid-shi'i dpal-gyur mThong-ba Don-ldan-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 114/7.

De-bzhin gShegs-pa (1384-1415) was the fifth Karma-pa, famous for his magical feats, which helped dissuade the Yüan Emperor from invading Tibet. See Richardson, op. cit., 1959, pp. 1-6.

Ratnabhadra (ca. 1400) was one of the few Lamas of the Mahāmudrā lineage who was not an important tulku.
mThong-ba Don-ldan (1416-53) was the sixth Karma-pa.

318 "rDo-rje 'Chang dngos 'Jam-dpal bZang-po dang/
Thugs-rje'i bdag-nyid dPal-'byor Don-grub zhabs/
"To the unequalled mahāsiddha, master of the Dharma;
The celebrated bKra-shis dPal-'byor,
And his chosen incarnation, Chos-grags dPal-bzang,
I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 319

To the Wearer of the Red Hat, Lord Amitabha;
To the supreme [eighth] rGyal-ba Karma-pa;
who embodies the Six Families,
And to Venerable dBang-phyug rDo-rje, who embodies
all the yi-dams of the mandala, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 320

Byin-rlabs 'byung-gras Chos-grags rGya-mtsho-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 114/7-8.

'Jam-dpal bZang-po (ca. 1400) was an eminent Karma bKa'-brgyud Lama.

dPal-'byor Don-grub (ca. 1400) was a close disciple of the sixth Karma-pa.
Chos-grags rGya-mtsho (1454-1505) was the seventh Karma-pa.

319 "mTshungs-med bla-ma Grub-chen Chos kyi rje/
bKra-shis dPal-'byor shes-byar rab-grags-pa/
bSam-bzhin sku-sprul Chos-grags dPal-bzang-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 114/8-115/1.

bKra-shis dPal-'byor (ca. 1450) was the fourth Situ, pupil of
the fourth Zva-dmar Rin-po-che.

Chos-grags dPal-bzang was one of a lesser line of Karma bKa'-brgyud-pa tulku.

320 "'Od-dpag-med mgon Zva-dmar cod-pan 'dzin/
Rigs-drug khyab-bdag rGyal-mhog Karma-pa/
dKyi'i-khor kun-bdag dBang-phyug rDo-rje'i zhabs/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 115/1-2.
The Red Hat or Zva-dmar Rin-po-che line, is believed to have
originated from Amitabha. See Ch. I., p. 9.
The Zva-dmar tulku mentioned here is probably dKong-mchog
Yan-lag (1525-83), the fifth.
The eighth Karma-pa was Mi-bskyod rDo-rje (1506-54).
dBang-phyug rDo-rje (1556-1603) was the ninth Karma-pa, and
principal author of 'Phags-lam. This, and subsequent verses in this
prayer to the Lamas of the Mahāmudrā lineage, were added by other
Lamas, after his death.
"To one who bears the marks and blessings of Amitabha:
"E," the lion-throne of Mahāmudrā,
"Vam," the changeless [mahāsukha],
to Chos-dbyings rDo-rje, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 321

To rDo-rje Sems-dpa', [symbol of] integration, constantly unfolding in illusory forms;
The vajra-bearer [Padma]Gar[gi]dBang[-phyug], embodiment of the tantras,
And his supreme Nirmanakāya, Ye-shes sNying-po,
I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 322

321 "'dPag-med-'od-mtshan byin-rlabs-'chang de dang/
E-yig phyag-rgya-chen-po seng-ge'i khrin/
Vam-yig 'gyur-med Chos-dbyings rDo-rje-la/
qSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags- Lam, 115/2.
"One who bears the marks and blessings of Amitabha" indicates a Zva-dmar Rin-po-che, i.e., Chos kyi dBang-phyug (1584-1635), the sixth.
"E" signifies skillful means or compassion, here paired with Mahāmudrā. "Vam" signifies insight, here paired with mahāsukha, the changeless, absolute bliss of ultimate awareness. (LPL)

Thus, the tenth Karma-pa Chos-dbyings rDo-rje (1604-74) is being described as an embodiment of the Vajrayāna goal, the union of skillful means and insight.

322 "sGyu-'phrul drwa-ba'i kha-sbyor rDo-rje Sems/
'Bras-rgyud khyab-bdag Gar-dBang rDo-rje 'Chang/
mChog gi sprul-sku Ye-shes sNying-po'i zhabs/
qSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags- Lam, 115/2-3.
"[Symbol of] integration" (kha-sbyor) denotes a Saṃbhogakāya Buddha, such as rDo-rje Sems-dpa'. The "vajra-bearer" Padma Gar gi dBang-phyug (ca. 1600), is here identified as an incarnation of rDo-rje Sems-dpa'. (LPL)

Ye-shes sNying-po (1639-94), the seventh Zva-dmar-pa, is named as Padma Gar gi dBang-phyug's "supreme Nirmanakāya," or incarnation as a Buddha born in the world. For the different types of Nirmanakāya, see Ch. III, n. 138, above.
"To you, the Sahaja-jñana-kāya, bliss and emptiness inseparable;
Whose play is the unceasing vajra-dance,
Ye-shes rDo-rje, essence of all Buddhas, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 323

To Don gnyis Lhun-grub, whose discerning intelligence
Was broad enough to grasp
The "profound" and the "extensive" aspects of
the Dharma, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 324

To the omniscient Lama Byang-chub rDo-rje,
Embodiment of the Ādi-Buddha, who, in the
Dharmadhātu,
Creatively manifests in the dance of the indivisible fourfold vajra, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 325

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323 “bDe-stong dbyer-med lhan-skyes ye-shes-sku/
gZhom-med rdo-rje'i gar-gyis rnam-rol-pa/
rGyal-kun ngo-bo Ye-shes rDo-rje-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."
'Phags-lam, 115/3.
The Sahaja-jñana-kāya (lhan-skyes ye-shes-sku) is the Dharmakāya,
often called the Jnana-Dharmakāya.
Ye-shes rDo-rje (1676-1702) was the eleventh Karma-pa.

324 “Zab dang rgya-che'ichos-tshul ji-snyed-par/
 rNam-dpyod blo-gros rgyas-pa'i nus-stobs-can/
Tshul-bzhin rtogs-pa'i Don-gnyis Lhun-grub-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."
'Phags-lam, 115/3-4.
Don gnyis Lhun-grub may be another name for Ye-shes rDo-rje
(1675-1702), the eleventh Karma-pa, who is not mentioned elsewhere in
this prayer.
"Profound" refers to the prajñāpāramitā doctrine. "Extensive"
refers to doctrine concerned with the other five pāramitās. (LPL)

325 “Khyab-dbag gdod-ma'i mgon-po chos kyi dbyings/
 Mi-phyes rdo-rje-bshi yi gar rol-pa/
 Kun-mkhyen bla-ma Byang-chub rDo-rje-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."
'Phags-lam, 115/4-5.
The Ādi-Buddha is rDo-rje 'Chang. The "fourfold vajra" is His
vajra-Body, Speech, Mind, and Transcending Awareness. (LPL)
Byang-chub rDo-rje (1703-32) was the twelfth Karma-pa.
"To rDo-rje 'Chang, embraced by the beauty
called emptiness,
Committed to the path of unchangeable,
inexhaustible bliss.
The yogin bsTan-pa'i Nyin-byed, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 326

To him who has seen the essential nature
of the indestructible,
And wields the power of changeless, supreme awareness,
The fearless bDud-'dul rDo-rje,
I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 327

To him whose Compassion took the form of teaching
many disciples,
Each according to his temperament, ability
and interest,
The glorious Mi-pham Chos-grub rGya-mtsho,
I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 328

326 "sTong-nyid mdzas-mas mngon-'khyud rDo-rje 'Chang/
'Pho-'gyur bde-ba 'dzaq-med lam boings-pa/
 rNal-'byor bsTan-pa'i Nyin-byed gang de-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhain-skyes ye-shes stool."
'Phags-lam, 115/6.
bsTan-pa'i Nyin-byed (1700-75), also known as Kun-mkhyen Chos
kyi 'byung-gnas, was the eighth Situ Rin-po-che, who founded dPal-
spungs monastery in 1727.
"'Pho-'gyur bde-ba 'dzaq-med" should be understood as "'Pho-
'gyur med-pa bde-ba-chen-po 'dzaq-pa med-pa."
(LPL)

327 "Mi-shigs snying-po'i rang-bshin mngon-gsigs-nas/
 'Gyur-med ye-shes mahog-la dbang-bsgyur-ba/
 'Jigs-med bDud-tshogs 'Dul-ba'i rDo-rje-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhain-skyes ye-shes stool."
'Phags-lam, 115/6-7.
bDud-'dul rDo-rje (1733-97) was the thirteenth Karma-pa.

328 "'gDul-byi'i khams dbang mos-pa du-ma'i ngor/
 De-snayd thugs-rje'i rol-pa cir-yang ston/
dPal-lidan Mi-pham Chos-grub rGya-mtsho-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so lhain-skyes ye-shes stool."
'Phags-lam, 115/7-8.
Mi-pham chos-grub rGya-mtsho (ca. 1750) was an eminent Karma
bKa'-brgyud Lama.
"To him who duly demonstrated the sameness of samsāra and Nirvāṇa, [both pervaded with] bliss, [The sameness of] one's own face and the ultimately real Dharmakāya, Padma Nyin-byed, embodiment of all the families [of Enlightened Ones], I pray. Grant me co-emergent awareness! 329

To him whose spontaneous Buddha Awareness is clear as the sky, Whose manifestations of measureless Compassion embrace all beings, Theg-mchog rDo-rje, who is like the sun for all beings, I pray. Grant me co-emergent awareness! 330

To rDo-rje 'Chang, the teacher who embodies the five Buddhas, Who directly sees the non-separateness of bliss and emptiness, Mahāmudrā itself, The Awakened One, Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, I pray. Grant me co-emergent awareness! 331

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329 "'Khor-'das mnyam-nyid bde-chen 'dus-ma-byas/ Don-dam chos-sku'i rang-zhal legs-ston-pa/ Rigs-kun khyab-bdag Padma Nyin-byed-la/ gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-Lam, 115/8.

Padma Nyin-byed (1774-1853), the ninth Situ Rin-po-che, was the root-Lama of 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul. This verse was added to the prayer by Theg-chog rDo-rje, the fourteenth Karma-pa.

330 "Yongs-grub ye-shes dgongs-pa mkha'-ltar dag/ Tshad-med thugs-rje'i snang-ba kun-la khyab/ 'Gro-ba'i nyi-ma Theg-mchog rDo-rje-la/ gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-Lam, 116/1.

Theg-mchog rDo-rje, the fourteenth Karma-pa, lived from 1797-1845.

331 This and subsequent verses of this prayer have been compiled since Kong-sprul's death, and do not appear in the gDams-ngag-mdzod edition of 'Phags-Lam. We have obtained these verses from a later, unedited text, in which the prayer has been updated by Kalu Rin-po-che and the present Karma-pa, Rang-byung-rig-pa'i rDo-rje.

"Khyab-bdag ston-pa sku-lnga'i rDo-rje 'Chang/ bDe-stong dbyer-med phya-g-rgya-chen-po'i don/
"To the all-encompassing, beginninglessly Enlightened rDo-rje 'Chang,
The Karma-pa with the face and form of Buddhas of the three times,
To mkha'-khyab rDo-rje, whose Compassion is measureless, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 332

To him who manifests the expansive Buddha-Mind of Maitreya, the all pervasive [Dharma-]dhatu,
Regent of Padma [-sambhava], protector of beings, Padma dBang-chog, [whose Awareness] is profound and clear like no other's, I pray.
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 333

To the unequalled 'Jam-mgon mKhyen-brtse 'Od-zer the great,
Protector of the teachings of the meditative lineage; manifestation of Vairocana,
Grant me co-emergent awareness! 334

mNgon-gyur sangs-rgyas Yon-tan rgya-rtsho-la/
   gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."
Yon-tan-rgya-rtsho was the name given to 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul upon his ordination as a Karma bKa'-brgyud monk in 1833. See Colophon, below.

332  "Kun-bdag gdod-ma'i klong-grol rDo-rje 'Chang/
   Dus-gsum rgyal-ba'i sbyi-gzugs karma-kam/
   Thugs-rje tshad-med mkha'-khyab rDo-rje-la/
   gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."
mKha'-khyab rDo-rje (1845-1926) was the fifteenth Karma-pa.

333  "Byams-mgon-thugs klong rol-pa khyab-brdal dbyings/
    Padma rgyal-ba'i rgyal-bstan 'gro-ba'i mgon/
    Zab-geal mtshungs-med Padma dBang-mchog-la/
    gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."
Padma dBang-mchog (b. 1854) was the tenth Situ Rin-po-che.

334  "Rig-stong zag-med chos-dbyings rab-'byams-ngang/
Vairo'i rnam-'phrul sgrub-brgyud bstan-pa'i mgon/
mtShungs-med 'Jam-mgon mKhyen-brtse 'Od-zer mchog/
   gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."
'Jam-mgon mKhyen-brtse 'Od-zer (ca. 1870) was a disciple of 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul. This verse was added by the present Karma-pa, Rang-byung-rig-pa'i rDo-rje.
"To him who penetrated the true nature of the ultimately real Dharmakāya, Whose tainted skandhas dissolved into a living rainbow-body, The master of realization, Norbu Don-kun-grub, I pray. Grant me co-emergent awareness! 335

To the kind one who reveals Mahāmudrā, existentiality of the ground, path and goal, Whose innate character is [Mind-itself], To my root-Lama, unity of all Buddhas, I pray. Grant me co-emergent awareness! 336

To the yi-dams and hosts of deities who bestow the two siddhis, To the dharmapālas, guardians who embody all forms of Buddha-activity, To the ocean-like assembly of holy attendant deities, I pray. Grant me co-emergent awareness! 337

Norbu Don-kun-grub (ca. 1870) was 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul's disciple and Kalu Rin-po-che's root-Lama. He also taught the present Karma-pa. According to Rin-po-che, when Lama Norbu died, his body dissolved into a magnificent rainbow in the sky.

336 "gZhi lam 'bras-bu'i gnas-lugs phyag-rgya-che/ gNyugs-ma'i rang-ngo sprod-mdzad bka'-drin-can/ Sangs-rgyas kun-'dus rtse-ba'i bla-ma-la/ gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes-stsol."

'Phags-lam, 116/1-2. "gNyugs-ma" should be understood as "sems-nyid gnyugs-ma." (LPL)

337 "dNgos-grub gnyis-stsol yi-dam lha-tshogs dang/ Phrin-las kun-bdag chos-skyong srung-ma'i tshogs/ bka'-sdod dam-can rgya-mtsho'i tshogs-bcas-la/ gSol-ba 'debs-so lhan-skyes ye-shes stsol."

'Phags-lam, 116/2-3. This verse was written by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul.
[Then recite]:

"Through the blessing arising from my prayer, 
May ultimate reality, Mahāmudrā as the ground, 
be realized! 
Distinct from samsāra, Nirvāṇa, from anything to be 
removed, instilled, rejected or adopted; 
Distinct from "exists," from "inexists," from all 
opposites: the ground of everything.

May Mahāmudrā as the path become apparent! 
In which no thing to be realized, no realizer, 
no realization is conceived; 
In which no thing obscured, no obscuratation, 
no obsuring function is cast off; 
In which [ideas of] destination, traveller and path 
are utterly transcended.

May Mahāmudrā as the goal become apparent! 
In which no thing to attain, no attainer, 
no attainment is conceived; 
In which renunciation and acquisitio are one; 
the ground and goal inseparable, 
Which is distinct from things; which partakes in 
the nature of all things."338

[Next, recite the short prayer to the Mahāmudrā lineage]:

"De-ltar gsol-ba btab-pa'i byin-rlabs kyis/
 'Khor-'das dngos-kun gsol-bshag spang-blang dang/
 Yod-med-la-soqs kun bral kun gyi gshi/
 gNas-lugs gshi'i phyag-rgya-che rtogs-shog.

rTogs-bya rtogs-byed rtogs-pa ma-dmigs shing/
 bsGrib-bya sgrib-byed sgrib-pa spang-med-par/
 bGrod-bya bgrod-byed lam-las rab-'das-pa'i/
 Lam gyi phyag-rgya-chen-po mngon-gyur-shlog.

Thob-bya thob-byed thob-pa ma-dmigs shing/
 spAng-thob gnyis-med gshi 'bras db yer-med-pa/
 dNgos-bral dngos-po kun gyi rang-bzhin-can/
 'Bras-bu'i phyag-rgya-chen-po mngon-gyur-shog."

'Phags-lam, 116/3-6. 
This concludes the long prayer to the Lamas of the Mahāmudrā 
lineage.
"To the great rDo-rje 'Chang, Tilopa and Nāropa,
To Marpa, Mila and Chos-rje sGam-po-pa,
To Karma-pa Dus-gsum shes-bya Kun-mkhyen-pa,
To the Lamas of the lineage of the "Great Four"
and "Lesser Eight,"
Of the 'Bri-khung, sTag-lung, Tshal-pa, glorious
'Brug-pa and others,
Lamas of the mNyam-med 'Gro-mgon Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa,
Masters of the profound path of Mahāmudrā, I pray.
I have joined the lineage of bKa'-brgyud Lamas.
Grant me the blessing of Liberation!"

"As revulsion [with samsāra] is called the
"feet" of meditation,
Bless this meditator who is free of attachment
to food and wealth,
And has cut off longing for the things of
this life.
Bless me with freedom from desire for
profit and esteem.

As devotion and reverence are called the
'head' of meditation,
Bless this meditator, who continually prays
To his Lama, who opens the gates of the
treasury of instructions.
Bless me with uncontrived devotion and
reverence.

As undistractedness is called the solid
ground of meditation,
Bless this meditator, who remains in that
uncontrived state
In which thoughts are left to arise
naturally, just as they are.
Bless me with meditation distinct from
intellect.

"rDo-rje 'Chang-chen Tilo Nāro dang/
Marpa Mila Chos-rje sGam-po-pa/
Dus-gsum shes-bya Kun-mkhyen Karma-pa/
Che-bzhi chung-brgyad brgyud-pa-'dzin-mams dang/
'Bri-sTag-Tshal-gsum dpal-l丹 'Brug-pa sogs/
Zab-lam phyag-rgya-che-la mnga'-brnyes-pa'i/
mNyam-med 'Gro-mgon Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-la/
gSol-ba 'debs-so bKa'-brgyud bla-ma-mams/
brGyud-pa-'dzin-no rmam-thar byin-gyis-riobs."
"As discursive thought is called the very stuff of Dharmakaya,
Bless this meditator, for whom appearances arise in unimpeded play,
For whom, though they arise, they do not arise as "things."
Bless me with realization of the non-separateness of samsāra and Nirvāṇa."

[Say each of the following prayers every time you practice the meditation]:

6
[First recite] the "Ma-nam Four" [at least three times]:

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340 ci-yang ma-yin cir-yang 'char-ba: "anything which appears is not any thing," i.e., no thing-in-itself, but empty (stong-pa; sunya).
The meditator observes samsāric appearances (snang-ba) but ascribes no ultimate reality to them. (LPL)
This last verse is yet another request for the blessing of co-emergent awareness.

341 "Zhen-log sgom gyi rkang-par gsungs-pa bzhin/
Zas nor kun-la chags-shen med-pa dang/
Tshe-'dir gdos thag-chod-pa'i sgom-chen-la/
Nyed-bkur shen-pa-med-par-byin-gyis-rlob.

Mos-gus sgom gyi ngo-bor gsungs-pa bzhin/
Man-ngag gter-sgo 'byed-pa'i bla-ma-la/
Gyur-du-gsol-ba 'debs-pa'i sgom-chen-la'
Cos-min mos-gus skye-bar-byin-gyis-rlabs.

Yengs-med sgom gyi dngos-gshir gsungs-pa bzhin/
Gang-shar rtogs-pa'i ngo-bo so-ma de/
Ma boos de kar-'jog-pa'i sgom-chen-la/

rNam-rtog ngo-bo chos-skur gsungs-pa bzhin/
Ci-yang ma-yin cir-yang 'char-ba'la/
Ma-'gags rol-par-'char-ba'i sgom-chen-la/
'Khor-das dbyer-med-rtogs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs."

'Phags-lam, 116/8-117/3.
This ends the short prayer to the Mahāmudrā lineage. The first line of each verse states a goal; the second and third lines state the meditator's partial achievement of that goal in his practice; the last line requests the complete fulfilment of the goal.
"All sentient beings, my mothers, numerous as the sky is vast, pray to the Lama, the Precious Buddha. All sentient beings, my mothers, numerous as the sky is vast, pray to the Lama, the all-encompassing Dharmakāya. All sentient beings, my mothers, numerous as the sky is vast, pray to the Lama, the blissful Śāmbhogakāya. All sentient beings, my mothers, numerous as the sky is vast, pray to the Lama the compassionate Nirmāṇakāya."342

Recite the vajra-like invocation of the Great Lord Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa [one hundred times or more]:

"Karma-pa, know me!"343

Recite this six-line prayer repeatedly, without allowing your thoughts to stray:

"I pray to the Precious Lama!
Bless me with the rejection of ego-clinging.
Bless me with indifference [toward objects of desire].
Bless me with the cessation of irreligious

342 This prayer is called the "Ma-nam For" because each of its four lines begin, "Ma-nam . . . ."

"Ma nam-mkha'-dang-mnyam-pa'i sems-can thams-cad bla-ma sangs-rgyas rin-po-che-la gsol-ba 'debs-so/
Ma nam-mkha'-dang-mnyam-pa'i sems-can thams-cad bla-ma kun-khyab chos kyi sku-la gsol-ba 'debs-so/
Ma nam-mkha'-dang-mnyam-pa'i sems-can thams-cad bla-ma bde-chen longs-spyod-rdsogs-pa'i sku-la gsol-ba 'debs-so/
Ma nam-mkha'-dang-mnyam-pa'i sems-can thams-cad bla-ma thugs-rje sprul-pa'i sku-la gsol-ba 'debs-so."

'Phags-lam, 117/6-7.

343 "Karma-pa mkhyen-no" ('Phags-lam, 117/7), i.e., "Karma-pa, see me, see my suffering!"
This should be recited while visualizing or thinking about one or all of the Karma-pas. If you have met him, think of the present Karma-pa. (Lama)
thoughts.
Bless me with understanding of unborn
Mind.
Bless me with the spontaneous subsidence of
bewilderment.
Bless me with the realization of all appearances
and possibilities as Dharmakāya."

6-1 Recite the prayer requesting the Four Empowerments:

[1] "O glorious holy Lamas:
I pray to You for the Four Empowerments
which confer spiritual maturity.
Bless me with the rapid maturation of
the four streams.
Bless me with the siddhi of the four kinds of
Buddha-activity!

[2] As soon as I recite this prayer,
The surrounding deities dissolve into light, which is
absorbed into the Body of the Principal One,
Personification of all the Precious Ones combined.
My Lama's bodily form becomes clear;
White light streams from the place on His
Forehead,
And is absorbed into my forehead, removing physical
obscurations.
I receive the Vase Empowerment, enabling me to
practice Stage of Production meditation.
As a result I become a fortunate perfected one,
a Nirmāṇakāya.

344 This prayer is to be recited 111,111 times in all. After
reciting it the desired number of times for a session, proceed to the next
step, i.e., the Four Empowerments. (Lama)

"bLa-ma rin-po-che-la gsol-ba 'debs.
BDag-'dzin blo-yis-thongs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs/
dGos-med rgyud-la-skye-bar-byin-gyis-rlobs/
Chos-min rnam-tog 'gags-par-byin-gyis-rlobs/
Rang-sems skye-med rtogs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs/
'Khrul-par-rang-sar-zhi-bar-byin-gyis-rlobs/
sNgang-srid chos-skur-rtogs-par-byin-gyis-rlobs."

'Phags-lam, 117/7-8.
The term "bewilderment" ('khrul-pa) implies far more than our
common notion of confusion or mis-perception. It denotes also the deluded
quality of our "normal" perception, as when we imagine anything to be a
solid, real thing-in-itself.
"Red light streams from [my root-Lama's] Throat, And is absorbed into my throat, removing verbal obscurations. I receive the Secret Empowerment, enabling me to practice rTsa-rLung meditation. As a result I become a fortunate perfected one, a Saññbhogakāya.

Blue light streams from [my root-Lama's] Heart, And is absorbed into my heart, removing mental obscurations. I receive the Prajñā Empowerment, enabling me to practice sNyom-'jug meditation. As a result, I become a fortunate perfected one, a Dharmakāya.

White, red and blue light streams from the same three places, [on the Lama's Body], And is absorbed into those three places on my body, removing the impurities of those "three gates." I receive the Fourth Empowerment, enabling me to practice Mahāmudrā meditation. As a result I become a fortunate perfected one, a Svabhāvikakāya.

Then, my Lama dissolves into light and is absorbed into me. My own body, speech and mind and the Lama's Vajra-Body, Speech and Mind are inseparable, and of one flavor. Constantly applying the three [considerations], I am spontaneously Liberated!"

We have also placed the individual verses of this prayer before the relevant sections of commentary.


[2] Zhes-pa'i gsol-ba btab-pa'i mod-nyid-la/ 'Khor-rnams 'od-shu gtsa-bo'i sku-la-thim/ gTso-bo dkon-mchog kun-'dus bdag-nyid-la/ rNam-pa bla-ma dngos-su-gsal-gyur-pa'i/ mDzod-pu'i gnas-nas 'od-zer dkar-po 'phros/"
[Recite]:

[1] "O glorious, holy Lamas: I pray to you for the Four Empowerments which confer spiritual maturity. Bless me with the rapid maturation of the four streams.\textsuperscript{346} Bless me with the \textit{siddhi} of the four types of Buddha-activity.\textsuperscript{347}

Rang gi dpral-bar thim-pas lus-sgrib dag/
Bum-pa'i dbang thob bsKyed-rim-begom-la-dbhang/
'Bras-bu sprul-sku-'grub-pa'i skal-ladan gyur.

[3] mGrin-pa'i gnas-nas 'od-zer dmar-po 'phros/
Rang gi mgrin-par-thim-pas ngag-sgrib dag/
gSang-ba'i dbang thob rTsa-ri-bshang-begom-la dbang/
Longs-spyod-rdzogs-sku-'grub-pa'i skal-lidan gyur.

Rang gi snying-gar thim-pas yid-sgrib dag/
Sher-dbang thob cing sNyom-'jug-begom-la-dbhang/
'Bras-buchos-sku-'grub-pa'i skal-lidan gyur.

[5] gNas-gsum 'od-zer dkar-dmar-mthing-gsum 'phros/
gNas-gsum-la-thim sgo-gsum dri-ma dag/
bZhi-pa'i dbang thob Phyag-chen-begom-la dbang/
Ngo-bo-nyid-sku-'grub-pa'i skal-lidan gyur.

Rang gi lus-ngag-yid-gsum bla-ma yi/
rDo-rje gsum-po db yer-med ro-goig cing/
Khyer-so-gsum-ladan thun-grub rang-grol-lo."

\textit{'Phags-lam, 118/1-7.}

Empowerment (\textit{dbang}) generally refers to a ritual in which a Lama gives an aspirant the authorization and ability to employ specific Vajrayana practices. In this Guru-Yoga practice, the Four Empowerments (\textit{dbang-bzh}i) are received during the individual's private meditation, instead of in a public ritual. No Lama is physically present. But according to Kalu Rin-po-che, before the Four Empowerments can be received in meditation, they must have been received in an external ritual. Virtually any Vajrayana empowerment ritual contains the basic elements of these Four. Thus, the receipt of, for example, the Avalokiteśvara or Tara empowerment enables one to practice the Guru-Yoga.

According to Kalu Rin-po-che, every empowerment has three aspects:
1. the \textit{gzhi} or ground: ritual conferral by a Lama;
2. the \textit{lam} or path: the practice of the ritual in private meditation;
As soon as I recite this prayer, the surrounding deities dissolve into light which is absorbed into the Body of the Principal One, Personification of all the Precious Ones combined. My Lama's bodily form becomes clear.

3. the 'bras-bu or result: ability to practice and achieve the aims of the meditation.

The immediate result of receiving these Four Empowerments is the ability to receive Mahāmudrā instruction, the "pointing-out instructions" in which the Lama directly demonstrates the nature of mind.

The ultimate result is the realization of the nature of mind and achievement of the four Buddha-kayas, as follows:

1. Realizing the empty or open (ston-pa) nature of mind leads to the achievement of the Dharmakāya.
2. Realizing the clear (gsal-ba) nature of mind leads to the achievement of the Sambhogakāya.
3. Realizing the unimpeded (ma-'gags-pa) nature of mind leads to the achievement of the Nirmanakāya.
4. Realizing the three together leads to the achievement of the Svabhāvikakāya.

An aspirant's receipt of any empowerment from a Lama establishes a close connection between himself and the Lama, as well as between himself and the yi-dam or other Enlightened being whose meditation he is being empowered to practice.

I.e., the four Buddha-kayas. See n. 138, above.

phrin-las rnam-bzhi. According to sDe-gzhung Rin-po-che, these are four types of mastery over one's samsāric situation, equivalent to "worldly siddhi" (thun-mong dngos-grub, see n. 136, above. They need not be accompanied by "supreme siddhi" (mchog gi dngos-grub) or spiritual attainment but may appear as by-products of the latter. They include 1. zhi: pacification (zhi-ba) of troublesome circumstances, such as illness, demons or other obstacles; 2. brgyas: expansion (brgyas-pa) of one's wealth, intelligence, store of merit, lifespan and other valuable samsāric commodities; 3. dbang: authority and influence over all types of beings, and 4. krag: forceful (krag-pa) dispersal of disturbances caused by all types of samsāric phenomena.

Yogins of former times developed these to an amazing extent—they could fly through the air, and so on--this is less common today. But these accomplishments are nothing compared to the development of Bodhicitta, the true goal of our practice. (Interview, Feb. 20, 1975).

I.e., your root-Lama as rDo-rje 'Chang.
After you recite [verse 1], the deities surrounding [the Lamas of the lineage] dissolve into light. This light is absorbed into the Lamas of the lineage. The Lamas of the lineage gradually melt into one another, dissolve into light, and then into the form of your root-Lama.

[Now recite]:

"White light streams from the place on his Forehead,\textsuperscript{349} And is absorbed into my forehead, removing physical obscurations. I receive the Vase Empowerment, enabling me to practice Stage of Production meditation. As a result, I become a fortunate one, a Nirmāṇakāya."

Then, from the Forehead of [your root-Lama], who is essentially all the Precious Ones combined, white light radiates. It is absorbed into the place between your eyebrows. It removes your physical obscurations, such as the taking of life or other [physical misdeeds you committed in the past]. You have now received the Vase Empowerment.\textsuperscript{350} You are now able to begin Stage of Production\textsuperscript{351} meditation. As a result, you become a fortunate one, a Nirmāṇakāya.

\textsuperscript{349} \textit{mdsod-pu'i gnas; ērna}: located half way between the eyebrows. Sometimes referred to as the "third eye" or "eye of prajñā."

\textsuperscript{350} By purifying and refining the individual, the Vase Empowerment enables him to visualize the pure forms of yi-dams, and so on, in Stage of Production meditation.

\textsuperscript{351} \textit{bsKyed-rim}: conceptual (\textit{dmigs-boas}) phase of meditation, which, in the Vajrayāna, is followed by a nonconceptual (\textit{dmigs-med}) phase, the
[Recite]:

[3] "Red light streams from [my root-Lama's] Throat,
And is absorbed into my throat, removing
verbal obscurations.
I receive the Secret Empowerment, enabling me
to practice rTsa-rLung meditation.
As a result, I become a fortunate one,
a Sambhogakāya."

4  In the same way [as before], from the Lama's throat, red
light radiates. It dissolves into your own throat, removing verbal

Stage of Perfection (rdzogs-rim). See Guenther's Nāropa, pp. 138-141.
In the Stage of Production, the meditator visualizes the pure
form of a yi-dam or other symbol of Enlightenment, stage by stage, situated
in the sky, on his own head, in his heart, or elsewhere. After thus
establishing the yi-dam's presence, the meditator visualizes him "in
action," e.g., purifying (like rDo-rje Sems-dpa'), rescuing (like Drol-ma;
Tārā), bestowing compassionate blessings (like sPyan-ras-gzigs;
Avalokiteśvara) and so on. The imagery of rays of light streaming from
the yi-dam to the meditator is extensively employed in this stage. See
In the Stage of Perfection, the practice and, hopefully, the
meditator are "perfected" (rdzogs-pa).
The practice is "perfected" in the sense that the yi-dam which
has been produced is now dissolved "into emptiness," and the practice
has progressed from conceptual to non-conceptual meditation.
The meditator is "perfected" as he lets his mind rest naturally,
in a non-conceptual state, a brief experience of emptiness. If he can
retain this state of mind, his ordinary mental activity actually becomes
Enlightened Awareness, inseparable from emptiness. Even his ordinary
body becomes the radiant Sambhogakāya, and he can be truly helpful, com-
passionate and so on, like the yi-dams. See Beyer, pp. 127-43.
According to Kalu Rin-po-che, in the Stage of Production we es-
ablish wholesome thought-patterns by substituting pure, wholesome
appearances and concepts for random or unwholesome ones. Since we our-
selves have "produced" the visualization, we do not mistake it for
something substantial or ultimately real. [We try to retain this view
during all our encounters with samsāra's appearances]. In the Stage of
Perfection we dissolve this visualization into nothing. This can lead
directly to realization of emptiness and Mahāmudrā. (Public lecture,
obscurations such as lies [you have told in the past]. You have now received the Secret Empowerment. You are now able to practice rTsa-rLung meditation. Thus, you are a fortunate one, a Sambhogakāya.

[4] "Blue light streams from [my root-Lama's] Heart, and is absorbed into my heart, removing mental obscurations. I receive the Prajñā Empowerment, enabling me to practice sNyom-'jug meditation. As a result, I become a fortunate one, a Dharmakāya."

From His Heart, blue light radiates, and is absorbed into your own heart. It removes your mental obscurations, such as perverted views. You have now received the Empowerment of Insight and Transcending Awareness. You are now able to practice sNyom-'jug meditation, by which you become a fortunate one, a Dharmakāya.

352 rTsa-rLung meditation is a yogic practice employing visualization, which aims at mastery of the "pathways" (rtsa; nādi), the structuring of our psycho-organism, and of its "motility" (rlung; vāyu) or capability of motion. See H.V. Guenther, Nāropa, op. cit., p. 46; 158-74; 270-2.

353 shes-rab ye-shes; prajñā-jñāna.

354 Kalu Rin-po-che has explained sNyom-'jug ("blending of equals") meditation as follows:

"To truly receive empowerment to meditate on the blending of equals means that one is authorized and able to completely control the rtsa, rlung and thig-le, and practice yab-yum meditation. The latter may involve meditating on two yi-dams such as 'Khor-lo bDe-mchog (symbolizing skillful means or compassion) and rDo-rje Phag-mo (symbolizing insight or openness) in yab-yum (sexual union). Alternatively, it may involve meditating on a single deity such as 'Khor-lo
[Recite]:

(5) "White, red and blue light streams from the [same] three places [on my Lama's Body],
And is absorbed into those three places on my body, removing the impurities of the "three gates."

I receive the Fourth Empowerment, enabling me to practice Mahāmudrā meditation.
As a result, I become a fortunate one, a Svabhāvikakāya."

6 From the three places [on the Lama's Body], white, red and blue light radiates, and is absorbed into your forehead, throat and heart. Your mental, emotional, and snyom-'jug obscurations which comprise the obscurations of the "three gates," are removed. You have received the Fourth Empowerment. You are able to practice Mahāmudrā, the meditation of the non-separateness.

bDe-mchog. In that case, one would imagine the union of the clear (gsal-ba) aspect of the yi-dam's Mind, representing skillful means, with its open (stong-pa) aspect, representing insight." (Interview, Nov. 4, 1974).

The results of this practice include the experience of the bliss (mahāsukha) of Transcending Awareness (ye-shes), culminating in full Enlightenment, Dharmakāya.

H.V. Guenther, quoting sGam-po-pa and Padma dKar-po, explains sNyom-'jug meditation as that which involves sexual union with a karmamudrā, or actual woman, through which the same results as described above are achieved. See his Nāropa, op. cit., pp. 269-70.

Mental obscurations (shes-grib): various forms of bewilderment. Emotional obscurations (nyon-sgrib): effects of the conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs; kleśa).

"sNyom-'jug" obscurations: effects of clinging to the blissful, tranquil experience of samādhi. They obscure the ultimate goal—the Liberation of all beings—and result in rebirth as a god. Arhats, who perfect samādhi, are considered by Mahāyānists to be especially susceptible to this type of obscuration, which entraps them in the "Hinayāna" attitude.

sgo-gsum: body, speech and mind.

Mahāmudrā (Phyag-rgya-chen-po) is the highest goal and practice of the bKa'-brgyud sect. Philosopically based in the mentalistic Yogācāra.
of awareness and emptiness. This makes you a fortunate one, a Svabhāvikakāya.

[Recite]:

[6] "Then, my Lama dissolves into light, and is absorbed into me. My own body, speech and mind and the Lama's Vajra-Body, Speech and Mind are non-separate, and of one flavor. Constantly applying the three [considerations], I am spontaneously Liberated!"

Once more, delighted by your fervent devotion and reverence, your Lama, smiling cheerfully, dissolves into light. This light enters through the crown of your head, and is absorbed into your heart-region. Think that your Lama's Mind and your own mind have become inseparable, and let your mind rest, unobstructed by conceptualization, just as it is in its natural state, for as long as

system, it originated in India but was most fully developed in Tibet by such masters of theory and practice as sGam-po-pa and the other Lamas in the Mahāmudrā lineage named in the long prayer, above. Mahāmudrā meditation is the topic dealt with in the last ten pages of our text, which have not been translated. The theoretical basis of Mahāmudrā is explained by Guenther in Nāropa, Ibid., pp. 222-35.

358 Misprint: "rigs-stong dbyer-med" should be "rig-stong dbyer-med."

359 "Constantly applying the three [considerations]" (khyer-so gsum-ldan) here means always considering all forms to be that of the Lama as rDo-rje 'Chang, all sounds to be his Speech and all mental activity to be his Enlightened Awareness. At this point, if you have great faith in him, you will visualize your own Lama's form dissolving into light. Otherwise, you will visualize your Lama as rDo-rje 'Chang dissolving into light. (Lama)
you can.

Think: As a result of this practice, all appearances, as soon as they arise, change into the form of the Lama's Body.

All sounds are His Speech, which is empty of any sound-of-its-own. All thoughts which occur, and dart to and fro, are but the spontaneous manifestation of His Vajra-Awareness.

Share the merit [with this prayer]:

"Once I have quickly achieved Mahāmudrā, May every single sentient being Be placed in that same state By virtue of my practice."

How to keep up the practice between meditation sessions

Even between meditation sessions, when you are walking, imagine yourself to be circumambulating the Lama, who is seated on a lotus and moon in the right-hand quarter of the sky.

When you are eating and drinking, imagine yourself to be offering your food and drink—which has melted into amṛta—to the Lama, who sits in a red lotus located at your throat.

Meditate that all your speech is prayer, that all your activities, even walking or sitting, constitute service to the Lama.

Try to fall asleep while meditating that light radiating from [the form of] your Lama, seated--the size of your finger--

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360 sgra-ru grags-tshad gsung grags-stong nādi rang-sgra.
361 rang-rtsal.
362 mtshan-gong-pa: distance between your thumb's knuckle and its tip. (Lama)
at your heart, fills your body and your room with light.

1 When you wake up, imagine that the Lama is seated on the crown of your head, and pray to him with faith and reverence. Do this whenever you are sitting.

2 As soon as you finish building a new house, making new clothes and so on, offer them to the Lama either actually or mentally.

When you are ill, imagine that amrta flows down from the tiny Body of the Lama seated at your heart and clears away the disease. Happily meditate that all methods of curing illness, bad deeds and obscurations have sprung from the Lama's blessing.

Even when a demonic apparition appears, imagine it to be the play of the Lama's Buddha-activity, urging you toward wholesome conduct.

In short, imagine all pleasant experiences to be the Lama's blessing. Meditate that all painful experiences are the Lama's Compassion. It is essential that you make use [of these

363 gdon gi cho-'phrul.

364 It is not possible to entirely avoid experiencing the painful effects of our previous acts. But the Lama can intervene so that we experience them in the present life when, because we are human, and have contact with the Dharma and with the Lama himself, we are far better able to cope with them than we would be if they were allowed to mature slowly and we had to face them as an animal or other lower being. This illustrates the difference between the nature of suffering in the lower and the upper realms. (LPL)
experiences] to enhance your devotion and reverence, and do not look elsewhere for a remedy [for suffering]. 365

Commentary

Importance of receiving the Lama's blessing

Now, understand the following:

In general, in order to pursue the Mantrayāna or Vajrayāna, especially to receive instructions for Stage of Perfection 366 meditation, you must first receive the Lama's blessing. Until you have received it, the true path 367 will not be yours.

On the other hand, it is said that a disciple who is intensely devoted and reverent toward a fully qualified Vajrayāna master 368 with whom he has formed a sacred bond will achieve supreme and worldly siddhi 369 without doing anything more.

But a person who lacks devotion and reverence for the Lama—even if he recites a great many mantras of the yi-dams

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365 I.e., when you are practicing the Guru-Yoga, it is best to focus all your religious practice on the Lama. (LPL)

366 rdzogs-rim. See n. 351, above.

367 lam ge ha-ma: archaic term for lam yang-dag-pa, the true or wholly correct path. (LPL)

368 A Vajrayāna master (rdo-rje slob-dpon) is a Lama who has received empowerment, studied, achieved some realization and is capable of teaching the Vajrayāna.

369 mo hog thun mong gi dngos-grub. See n. 136 and n. 347, above.
of the four tantras, and practices their meditations—will obtain no supreme siddhi whatsoever.

As for worldly siddhi, even though he may strive very hard to achieve long life, wealth, influence and so on, he will not succeed in obtaining any of these. Any [worldly] success he does manage to achieve will have been won through great hardship.

This is the "non-profound path." 371

On the other hand, if he develops true devotion and reverence, any obstacles in the path will be cleared, uprooted and expelled, and he will obtain supreme and worldly siddhi without relying on other [methods]. For this reason we call it the "profound path of the Guru-Yoga."

Positive and negative qualities of a master and disciple

A master or disciple who has such serious defects as lacking compassion, being easily angered, being malicious, spiteful or proud; very attached to his money, property, relatives and so on; undisciplined in words or deeds or full of self-praise, should be rejected.

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370 yi-dam rgyud-sde bshis'i bsnyen-grub tshad-du-'khyol. "bsNyen-grub": recitation of a yi-dam's mantra and practice of the rituals concerned with that yi-dam. The performance of large numbers of bsnyen-grub practices is an achievement highly esteemed in the Tibetan tradition. bsNyen-grub is considered a particularly effective type of wholesome conduct. (Lama)

371 lam mi-zab-pa: opposite of the "profound path of the Guru-Yoga" explained in this chapter, which results in the spontaneous achievement of both kinds of siddhi.
In particular, you should absolutely avoid [a master who commits the following misdeeds], since such a master can only bestow the "blessing" of Māra:

1. Explaining or demonstrating rTsa-rLung or Mahāmudrā meditation, practices which employ mantras or the essentials of the profound Stage of Perfection to a crowd of common folk;
2. Spreading instructions in the profound philosophy and practice of the Mantrayāna in the marketplace;
3. [Boasting that he possesses instructions] not possessed by others;
4. Behaving in an undisciplined manner;
5. Verbalizing the ultimate philosophical perspective;\(^{372}\)
6. Greatly coveting money and property belonging to the Precious Ones;
7. Being highly deceitful and hypocritical;
8. Giving empowerments and instructions [for practices] which have not been transmitted to him personally;
9. Indulging in the pleasures of liquor and sex;
10. Teaching a doctrine which conflicts with Dharma in words of his own invention, because he does not know how to teach the true path.

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\(^{372}\) Since it is not subject to verbalization, doing so only distorts its meaning.
[A master should] avoid forming a close relationship with a disciple who lacks faith, does not keep his sacred commitments, flatters new acquaintances, is very restless, and so on, unless the disciple gradually improves.

The characteristics of a Lama are discussed at length in the āstras and tantras. [But briefly, a Lama] should not have allowed his faith and sacred commitments to deteriorate; should have practiced so much bsnyen-grub\(^{373}\) that he knows the practices well, should care little\(^{374}\) for the eight worldly dharmas,\(^{375}\) and should have personally practiced any teachings he explains to others.

A disciple should have faith, be capable of keeping sacred commitments, and always avoid harmful companions.

The Lama-disciple relationship

Before you have requested Dharma instruction or empowerment from a master, it is permissible for you to scrutinize his qualities. But once you have received [any instruction or empowerment] from him,\(^{376}\) even if he abounds in the four immoral acts,\(^{377}\)

\(^{373}\) See n. 370, above.

\(^{374}\) Misprint: "mi-gshan-pa" should be "mi-gshen-pa."

\(^{375}\) chos-brgyad. See n. 100, above.

\(^{376}\) Misprint: "gang-du-yin" should be "gong-du-yin."

\(^{377}\) pham-pa bzhin: killing, stealing, lying and sexual misconduct.
you may not turn your faith away from him, slander him, scrutinize his qualities, or do anything but treat him as one worthy of devotion and reverence.

It is said:

"Once you have listened to a single brief discourse,  
If you have no respect for the Lama  
You will be reborn as a dog one hundred times,  
And after that, as a butcher!"

Finding a Lama who has rid himself of all defects and perfected the positive qualities is not simply a matter of time. Even if it were possible to come upon such a Lama in every lifetime, without pure vision you might mistake his positive qualities for faults, just as Devadatta saw faults in the Bhagavān.

Since most people of today are "well-endowed" in nothing except bad deeds, we often see positive qualities as faults, and faults as positive qualities! Since we often see a man who has no religious qualities—hidden or overt—as a Worthy One, it is difficult for us to really know a man's qualities by examination!

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378 Devadatta, the Buddha's jealous cousin is the villain in the traditional accounts of Śākyamuni's life. Said to be a leader of a rival religious group, Devadatta did not admit the Buddha's spiritual supremacy. His overt crimes included dividing the Saṅgha and plotting to kill the Buddha.


379 *skyes-bu dam-pa; satpurusa*. According to Edgerton, this denotes "... a kind of lay equivalent of the Bodhisattvas," of which Vimalakirti is an example. *(Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 554).*
Just as the shape of a *tsha-tsha* is determined by the mould from which it was made, a Lama--particularly a Mahāmudrā teacher--who has achieved no realization is incapable of bringing his disciple to the pinnacle of realization. [If your own root-Lama has achieved no realization], after receiving from him the transmission of the lineage of mNyam-med Dphants-bo, Lord Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa, Zhang tshal-pa, rGod-tshang-pa or another [Mahāmudrā master], think of your root-Lama as [the master] in whom you have the greatest faith, and pray to him. If you do this, you will receive the blessing. This has been promised!

Since Buddha prophesied that the great mNyam-med Dphants-bo would spread the Mahāmudrā teachings, it is particularly important for one who is interested in practicing Mahāmudrā to place his faith in rJe-btsun sGam-po-pa. Furthermore, he should meditate on the non-separateness of [sGam-po-pa] and his own root-Lama.

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380 See n. 149, above.

381 *rto gs-pa mthar-thug-pa.* A Lama who has not achieved any realization can help a disciple achieve some degree of realization, but not complete realization.

382 *lung.* Ceremony by means of which a Lama who has himself received it, gives another person authority to read, study and practice the teachings put forth in a particular text. It consists of the Lama reading the text aloud very rapidly while the recipient listens. In most cases the reading is too rapid to be comprehensible. This ceremony may or may not be followed by a verbal explanation of the text's contents. The *lung* ceremony may be a re-creation of the process of oral transmission of Buddha's words, which was the common practice before the Scriptures were written down. (LPL) Seen this way, *lung* is a re-authentication of a particular text as Scripture, the words of Buddha.

383 I.e., think of your root-Lama who has, in fact, received the transmission of the Mahāmudrā lineage as essentially the same as sGam-po-pa or any other Lama of that lineage. (LPL)
If he regards his root-Lama as one who has received the blessing of the lineage as from father to son, he will find it unnecessary to scrutinize his Lama's [qualities].

Such scrutiny is unnecessary even with respect to oral traditions other than [the Mahāmudrā]. Since all those Lamas of the past were Great Ones who received the transmission and passed on their realization—their ultimate Awareness—to one another, they all have the capacity to bless others.

Even if you do not hear the Dharma directly from a Lama who is as famous as those "fathers and sons," if you take as your root-Lama any Lama who has achieved realization, you will receive the blessing.

**Thinking of the Lama as the Buddha**

In actuality, your Lama may be an ordinary being or manifestation of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. But if you can pray to him while meditating that he is the Buddha, all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and yi-dams will enter the Body, Speech and Mind of your Vajrayāna master and work for the benefit of all beings.

According to the Mukhāgama of Mañjuśrī:

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384 I.e., sGam-po-pa.

385 I.e., his root-Lama will have the positive qualities of all the Lamas of the Mahāmudrā lineage, as described in the long prayer above.

386 'Byams-dpal zhal-lung: an Indian text listed in the bsTan-'gyur, rGyud-'grel, 2717, as Zhal gyi lung, by Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes (Buddha-jnānapāda). According to sDe-gzhung Rin-po-che, Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes practiced so much Mañjuśrī meditation that Mañjuśrī appeared to him in a vision and gave him this text.
"Any sentient being who has contempt for a future rDo-rje 'Chang has contempt for me; hence, I abandon him forever."

And further:

"It is I who dwell in [the Lama's] body, I who receive offerings from aspirants. They please me; hence, their karmic obscurations are removed!"387

Thus, when you please your root-Lama, you please all the Buddhas. When you act harmfully toward him, it is just as if you had done so toward all the Buddhas. When you present offerings to him, you acquire the merit of presenting offerings to all the Buddhas, and your obscurations are removed.

In many sūtras and śāstras it is said that our attainment of siddhi is entirely dependent on the Lama, and that immeasurable benefit will result from our devotion, reverence and presentation of offerings to him.

In the tantras it is said:

"A hundred thousand visualizations of a deity's Body, performed a hundred thousand times, Are no match for one unwavering visualization of the Lama's Body. A hundred billion bsnyen-grub practices, performed a hundred thousand times, Are nowhere near as powerful as a prayer to the

387 In both verses, rDo-rje 'Chang is the speaker. "Future rDo-rje 'Chang" refers to the Lama.
Lama, sincerely offered thrice.
One who does a kalpa-worth of Stage of Perfection meditation, and does this twenty thousand times,
Is no match for one within whose mind the Lama but appears."

From the Pradipodyotana: 388

45a.

1 "Oh, Son of good family, the merit acquired by [worshiping] one pore on the master's body is greater than the heap of merit [acquired by worshiping] the Vajra-Body, Speech and Mind of all the Buddha Bhagavāns in the ten directions.

If you ask, 'Why is this so?' Oh Son of good family, the Enlightened Attitude [possessed by the master] is the very core of the Transcending Awareness of [all] Buddhas!"

Generally speaking, there is no difference between [your relationship with] a Lama who has heard the sutras of the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna and one who has received the transmission and practical instructions in the tantras of the Mantrayāna. The only difference is that your relationship with the latter is of greater consequence than your relationship with the former. 389

388 sGron-ma gsal-ba. bsTan-'gyur, rGyud-'grel, 2650. Indian text by Candrakirti, dealing with the Guhya-samajatāntra.

389 yul-gnyan mi-gnyan gyi khyud-par cing-sad. "Yul-gnyan[-po]" commonly denotes a person in a high position who is extremely sensitive and easily insulted, and with whom one must be extremely diplomatic. In this context, it refers to the spiritual V.I.P., the Vajrayāna Lama. Anything one does in one's relationship with him will have great consequences, whether good or bad. One's acts in a relationship with a Hinayāna or Mahāyāna Lama, are not as consequential, hence, he is here called a "yul mi-gnyan." (LPL)
Whether a Lama is said to be the object of your commission of the first transgression or not, and whether the sacred bond between you is said to be broken or not, depends on you. It does not simply depend on whether the Lama is or is not your root-Lama.

As soon as you ask a Lama for Mantrayāna empowerment, a religious connection exists between you. True Lamas are those against whom you must not commit the first transgression. Hence, as soon as you ask a Lama for any Sūtra- or Mantrayāna teaching, your avoidance of bad conduct becomes very important.

390 *rtsa-ltung dang-po.* First of fourteen "basic transgressions" of the Vajrayāna. Commission of any of these results in the destruction of the sacred bond (*dam-tshig*) you have established with your Vajrayāna Lama. Here is the list:

1. slandering or belittling your Lama
2. transgressing the Buddha's precepts
3. getting angry at your co-Vajrayānists
4. abandoning benevolence
5. abandoning the Enlightened Attitude
6. disparaging the tenets of other sects
7. publicizing secret teachings
8. having contempt for your essential [Buddha-nature]
9. slandering emptiness
10. befriending bad people
11. not contemplating emptiness
12. arguing with others
13. neglecting your sacred commitments
14. slandering women, who are the source of insight.

(adapted from Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā*, p. 405.)

Only the first is discussed in our text. There are also eight "gross transgressions." See Beyer, p. 405.

391 Misprint: "bla-ma rtsa-ba'i bla-ma . . ." should be "bla-ma ni rtsa-ba'i bla-ma . . ." (LPL)
Even though the Lamas of the lineage are not your root-Lamas and there is no religious connection between you, they too must never be the objects of a transgression, whether slander or another one.

In general, do not scrutinize the faults of sentient beings. Knowing that they are your mothers, meditate with gratitude, benevolence and compassion.

In particular, do not scrutinize the faults of those who have entered the Dharma's door. Knowing that you are all "in the same boat," concentrate on their positive qualities and cultivate sympathetic joy, devotion and reverence for them.

From the Ārya-Sraddhābalādhanāvātaramūrā-sūtra:

"It is a much worse offence to slander a single Bodhisattva, than to steal all the possessions of all the sentient beings in this trichiliocosm, and destroy all the stupas.

One who belittles and criticizes a Bodhisattva, regardless of the circumstances, will be born in the Howling Hell with a body five hundred yojanas high, with five hundred heads, and five hundred ploughs ploughing into each of his tongues!"

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392 gru cig gi mi dang-'dra-ba. Everyone who has begun to practice Dharma has boarded the "boat" which leads to Enlightenment. A feeling of love and mutual support in the face of all experiences will help ensure a successful voyage. (Lama)

393 Phags-pa dad-pa'i stobs-skyed-pa-la-'jug-pa phyag-rgya'i mdo. bKa'-'gyur, mDo, 867.

394 I.e., a Lama.

395 Ngu-'bod; Raurava: one of the eight hot hells, whose name reflects the cries of pain of its inhabitants.
Thus, in general, it is an incalculably great offence to slander Worthy Ones; in particular, Bodhisattvas; but most of all, very significant persons such as adepts of the Mantrayāna.

Furthermore, we do not know who may be a Worthy One or a religious adept. It is said that only a Perfect Buddha can accurately perceive the spiritual capacities of other individuals. Thus, when you hurl abuse at anybody, your own positive qualities are swept away.

Scrutinizing the faults of others is a contributing factor to your own ruin. Thus, it is crucial that you recognize any fault to be yours alone.

Those who have no faith in the Lama, even in his presence, and who do not regard those who practice religion as pure, will inevitably encounter what they least desire: Others will see them as enemies; they will die in unpleasant circumstances; they will suffer unfavorable death-omens; they will become targets of abuse for everyone.

Those who reverently rely on the Lama and regard all others as pure will effortlessly gain happiness and renown. They will be considered praiseworthy by all. They will die in pleasant circumstances, see and hear auspicious death-omens, and so on.

From the sayings of the Great bKa'-brgyud-pas:

396 gang-zag gi toshad: "measure of the individual."
"If you see your Lama as a Buddha you will receive a Buddha's blessing. If you see him as a Bodhisattva, you will receive a Bodhisattva's blessing. If you see him as a siddha you will receive a siddha's blessing. If you see him as an ordinary person—a good Spiritual Friend—such is the blessing you will receive. If you feel no devotion or reverence for him, you will receive absolutely no blessing."

No one but the root-Lama is as great as the Buddha. He is the unity of all the Precious Ones in the ten directions and three times.

All the limitless positive qualities of the Precious Ones are the creative manifestations of the root-Lama. Furthermore, everyone, everywhere who works for the welfare of sentient beings, as well as the sun, moon, elixirs, medicines, boats and bridges—all these are the Lama's creative manifestations!

Four thoughts to be instilled

1. Think of anyone who has given you empowerments, transmissions, instructions, and even reading skills, as the root-Lama, and simply resolve that he is a Buddha.

2. Think: The Buddhas, yi-dams, and Great bKa'-brgyud-pa Lamas are wonderful indeed. But we have not been taught by them directly; we have not heard them speak. Even those we may have met have done nothing which exceeds the Lama's accomplishments. Countless Buddhas of the past have entered Nirvāṇa; countless Buddhas of the present reside in the ten directions. Innumerable 397 rnam-par rol-pa.
Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Lamas and yi-dams exist. But we have not been fortunate enough to have met a single one of them, even in a dream! But our own root-Lama teaches us the complete, unerring way to achieve Buddhahood in one body, one lifetime! Surely, though we died trying, we could not possibly repay his kindness!

3. Think: When the Lama takes an interest in us, and gives us religious teachings and gifts, we think about him. When he is far away, we forget about him. When we are subject to illness and unpleasant events, we think about him. We do not think about him when we are happy. This is no way to behave!

While you are moving, walking, sleeping, sitting, whether you are happy or miserable, continuously think about nothing but the Lama.

4. Think: Even if we do think about the Lama once a day while reciting the Vow of Refuge or our morning prayers, [all we are concerned with is] counting how many prayers we have said. This is no way to behave! [Pray] with your hair standing on end, tears of great yearning streaming down your face, and true awareness will soon arise. Ordinary appearances will cease. The force of great yearning can stop random thoughts. When these have been suppressed, you will receive the [Lamas'] blessing.

398 srog rdul-du-brlag-kyang: "even though life is ground to dust."
399 rig-pa.
400 nyams-gtad-med-pa.
Then, you will truly possess devotion and reverence which can bring about sudden realization.

The key to the rapid receipt of blessing is meditation on the Lama as the Buddha. Moreover, if you are practicing Mahāmudrā meditation, think of the Lama as the unadorned Dharmakāya. If you want a long life, think of him as Amitāyus or white Tārā. If you wish to cure a disease, think of him as Bhaiṣajyaguru. [Meditation on the Lama as the Buddha] is the cure for any misfortune!

The Lama is known as the "Lord of the Mandala" because he is regarded as inseparable from the Principal One of the mandalas of all the tantras.  

401 choe-sku rjen-pa. Because it is totally beyond samāsra, the Dharmakāya cannot be characterized in terms drawn from samāsra. Iconographic depictions of the Dharmakāya lack the ornaments, rich clothing, and so on which represent the qualities of the Sambhoga- and Nirmāṇakaya. Thus, the Dharmakāya is "naked" (rjen-pa).


403 sMan-bla: the "Medicine Buddha," evoked in many rituals of healing.

In this section, the author is urging us to see the Lama as the Buddha, and to choose from the many Buddha-symbols the one to which we can best relate. Spiritually advanced persons will be able to think of the Lama as the Dharmakāya; those concerned primarily with achieving long life, and other samārīc goals will think of him as the relevant Buddha-symbol.

404 The Lama is called "Lord of the Mandala: (dkyil-'khor 'khor-lo'i mgon-po) because, 1. the Lama leads his disciple through the mandala (dkyil-'khor) practice (see n. 214, above), enabling the latter to progressively identify with each symbol of Enlightenment of which it is
Conclusion

If you put the foregoing into practice, you will truly be practicing the Guru-Yoga.

Failure to appreciate [the Lama's] kindness reveals lack of esteem for the Dharma. If you lack such esteem, no matter how hard you try, all [your Dharma practice] is futile, and will net you no positive qualities.

If, by reason of this [lack of esteem], you take the high-handed view that it is impossible for the Lama to acquire positive qualities; or the cynical view that it is impossible for others who practice religion to do so, you are meditating with a perverted attitude. Having thus fallen into the first transgression, all the merit you have previously accumulated is swept away!

If you appreciate [the Lama's] kindness, respect for the Lama and the Dharma will arise of their own accord. As a result, all the positive qualities will be yours spontaneously, through no effort on your part.

If true feelings of devotion and reverence do not come easily to you, make offerings to the Precious Ones, serve the Saṅgha, and do all the physical and verbal wholesome deeds you can. It is said that if, after doing this, you meditate as follows, with great composed.

2. the Lama is thought of as non-separate from the "Principal One," the symbol of Enlightenment at the center of the mandala who is the integration of all the symbols which surround him. Each class of tantras has its Principal One. (LPL)
yearning: "May any merit I have gathered inspire strong feelings of devotion and reverence," these feelings will definitely arise.

A person of great devotion and reverence performs great wholesome acts. One of average devotion and reverence performs average wholesome acts. One of minimal devotion and reverence performs minimal wholesome acts.

Nāropa, Maitripa, Mila, Bya-yul-pa\textsuperscript{405} and others obtained \textit{siddhi} solely by undergoing hardships for the sake of their Lamas. We are not capable of doing what they did. Uncontrived devotion and reverence do not come easily, but they may be learned gradually, with the guidance of prayer.

The devotional path

These are the four branches of the devotional path:

1. Do not look at the Lama's faults.

Just as Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes's faithless perception—which made him see Maṅjuśrī as a monk who had married and had children\textsuperscript{406} --obstructed his own achievement of supreme \textit{siddhi}, [your own faithless thoughts] pollute your entire mental attitude.\textsuperscript{407}

48a. 1 How can a Buddha have faults? Whatever He does, let Him do it! Even if you see your Lama having sexual relations, telling

\textsuperscript{405} Bya-yul-pa was an eleventh-century bKa'-gdams-pa teacher. \textit{(LPL)}

\textsuperscript{406} \textit{khyim-btsun}: a married monk, i.e., one who has given up his vows. \textit{(LPL)}

\textsuperscript{407} \textit{rang gi sems-rgyud}.
lies and so on, calmly meditate as follows: "These are my Lama's
unsurpassed skillful methods of training disciples. Since many
sentient beings have surely been Liberated by relying on him, he
is a hundred, a thousand times more wonderful than those who
keep a pure moral code. He never acts out of deception or
hypocrisy, but only according to the highest mode of conduct. 408

In particular, when he scolds you [think]: "He is destroying
my bad deeds!" When he hits you [think]: "He is chasing away
the demons who obstruct [my spiritual progress]!"

Above all, consider the thought that your Lama loves you
like a father loves his son. His friendship is always sincere.
He is very kind.

If he seems to be displeased or indifferent toward you,
think that this is the retribution which will remove your remain-
ing karmic obscurations. Try to please the Lama by rendering

service to his Body, Speech and Mind.

In brief, do not look at the Lama's faults.

2. Appreciate the positive aspects of all his deeds.

From the sayings of the Great bKa'-brgyud-pas:

"Everything this precious, perfect Lama does,
No matter what it is, is good.
All his deeds are excellent.
Even when he does a butcher's harmful
work,

\[\text{dam-pa}'i kun-spyod: conduct of Bodhisattvas.\]
It is good and beneficial,
And surely inspired by Compassion
for sentient beings.

48b.
1
Even when he exhibits sexual misconduct,
His positive qualities are enhanced, and
[new ones] appear--
Signs of his integration of means
and insight.

When he deceives people with lies,
He is using a variety of skillful means
To guide all beings on the path
to Liberation.

When he acts as a thief, the
objects he steals
Are transformed into much-needed
goods,
Which ease the poverty of beings.

Verbal rebukes from a Lama like
this
3
Are actually forceful mantras,
Certain to clear away bad conditions and
obstacles.

His beatings are blessings,
Which yield both kinds of siddhi,
Bringing joy to men of devotion and reverence."

4
As it is said above, appreciate the positive aspects of
all his deeds.

3. The only thing to do is cultivate devotion and reverence,
free of expectation and fear. 409

409 Here, the author is urging us to rid ourselves of the three
kleśas or conflicting emotions: the two extremes of attachment (expectation of reward) and aversion (fear of non-reward or of punishment), and the most basic kleśa, bewilderment (not caring). We are asked to transform bewilderment into devotion and reverence for the Lama not motivated by attachment or aversion.
Meditate on the Lama with devotion and reverence, with no concern for whether your acts will please or displease him. Do not expect to achieve supreme siddhi; do not fear [that you will not achieve it]. Whether you are embraced by his Compassion or not, whether you achieve siddhi or not, the only thing to do is cultivate devotion and reverence, free of expectation and fear.

4. Always think of your Lama with affection.

A layman of the best calibre always does what he can to help his master in private, public and in between. Such a man is a "this-life-person," [one who is concerned only with what may happen in the next] few months or years.

[A religious person's concerns are long-term].

Until, with [the Lama's] help, we reach Enlightenment, everything that happens to us--all our goals and expectations, any degree of happiness and prosperity we find in this life, future lives or in the bar-do--depends solely on the Lama's kindness!

Since your acquisition of religious qualities depends solely on the Lama, think of all your physical, verbal and mental acts as service to the Lama. Since your Lama has spent his life doing many good deeds and praying [for your benefit], always think of him with affection.

If you rely on your Lama with such attitudes as these, you will definitely achieve Liberation.
The practice [of the path of devotion] is totally encompassed in the following two [directives]:

1. Do whatever your Lama tells you to do.

2. Do whatever your Lama wants you to do.  

With your body, do prostrations and circumambulations.

Write, sew, rush around [on errands], fetch water and sweep up.

With your speech, offer prayers in praise of him. Make your Lama's qualities known to others. Ask him what he would like you to do in gentle, polite and straightforward language.

In your mind, cultivate only devotion, reverence and [perceptions of] pure appearance, unpolluted by a single perverted view. If unpleasant thoughts arise due to bad karma and so on, make them cease immediately.

Never display your moods through words or deeds.

If, due to former bad deeds, you act in a manner contrary to his wishes, confess sincerely and offer him your body and your possessions. Recite the hundred-syllable mantra [of rDo-rje Sems-dpa'], propitiatory prayers of confession and other confessional prayers of confession  

410 thugs-dgongs-la gang-yod byed-pa: "Do whatever his Buddha-Mind intends you to do."

411 tshig 'jam shing she-sar-bcas-pas don gab sbas-med-par-bya.


413 bskang-bshags: a type of confessional prayer.
oaths. You must not eat a morsel of food or speak a friendly word with anyone who transgresses the Lama's wishes. It is said that when you befriend a man who has great contempt for your Lama, it is just as [bad as] if you yourself had such contempt, even though, in reality, you do not.

Unless you are poor, you should give your Lama anything you own which is valuable or pleasing to him. But you don't!

If you have valuable goods--fine, expensive things such as young horses, cattle and so on--you keep them for yourself! You offer your useless possessions to the Lama, telling him how wonderful they are! You ask him for any empowerments or teachings at all, no matter how profound they are. If he does not comply, you look at him sadly and say, "But I have been so kind to you!"

Instead of feeling gratitude toward this Lama, who has been able to give you Dharma teaching and instructions, you say, "I have done him a great favor by asking him [for instruction] and listening to him!"

If you are unaware of the fact that it is for your own good that you give offerings and service to the Lama; if you hold up your offerings with pride and self-satisfaction, it would have been better to have made no offerings in the first place!

Signs of successful practice

The authoritative treatises [of this tradition] elucidate the nature of the signs--[encountered] in external phenomena, thoughts and dreams--which indicate that, because you have developed
true devotion and reverence, you have received the blessing. In particular, the eight worldly dharmas no longer seem attractive, and your mind is detached from the concerns of this life.

The best indications are the glimpses of realization experienced after your awareness has been stripped down to unadorned clarity and openness.

Since your ability to practice [Mahāmudrā], the actual ground-meditation, depends on [your receipt of blessing], it is said:

"Do not try to race and leap toward tranquility and insight. First, cultivate within yourself a [fertile] ground for positive qualities."
This was written at the request of rJe-btsun bLa-ma Karma 'Od-gsal 'Gyur-med, who desired an easily read, complete and clear [description of] the visualizations and explanation of the Four Foundations of Mahāmudrā. It is a supplemental text to the ninth Karma-pa's Nges-don rgya-mtsho.

I myself have achieved no realization and make no false claims to originality, but have based [this work] on the sayings of the Great Ones.

--Written by the false renunciate Karma Ngag-dbang Yontan-rgya-mtsho, age thirty-one, at the Kun-bzang bDe-chen retreat centre of dPal-spungs monastery. May it serve to spread the Teachings! May its merit [be shared by all]!

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spong-ba-pa'i zol-can: traditional term of self-denigration.
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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS WITH KALU RIN-PO-CHE AND SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS WITH KALU RIN-PO-CHE AND SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE

Q. Were these Four Special Foundations practiced by sects other than the bKa'-brgyud-pa? If so, how did their ways of practicing it differ?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Yes, the Four Special Foundations were practiced by all Tibetan sects. They were practiced in basically the same way by all the sects, with certain substitutions which reflected the interests of each sect. For example, the lineage of Lamas visualized in the practices would vary from sect to sect.

In Taking Refuge, the Sa-skya-pas, like the bKa'-brgyud-pas, would use rDo-rje 'Chang as the central figure; the rNying-ma-pas would use Guru Rin-po-che and the dGe-lugs-pas would use Buddha Śākyamuni.

Also in Taking Refuge, the yi-dams and dharmapālas would vary from sect to sect. For example, rDo-rje 'jigs-byed would be the chief dGe-lugs-pa dharmapāla, instead of the bKa'-brgyud-pa's Ber-nag-che.

In the meditation on rDo-rje Sems-dpa', some sects would use the yab-yum form of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' instead of the one we use.

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Even some bKa'-brgyud-pas would use this form.

As for the Mandala-Offering, the visualization is the same for all sects, but the liturgy varies somewhat from sect to sect.

The Guru-Yoga practice is virtually the same for all sects, but the liturgies differ slightly.

A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: My own tradition, the Sa-skya-pa, practices the Four Foundations in a manner very similar to that of the bKa'-brgyud-pa. One difference, however, lies in the Vow of Refuge. We use the fourfold Vow instead of the sixfold one used by the bKa'-brgyud-pas, that is, "We Take Refuge in the Lama; We Take Refuge in the Buddha; We Take Refuge in the Dharma; We Take Refuge in the Saṅgha." In addition, we visualize rDo-rje Sems-dpa' in yab-yum. We usually use the mandala of seven features instead of the thirty-seven featured one used by the bKa'-brgyud-pas.

The dGe-lugs-pas added three "hundred-thousand" practices to the "Five-hundred-thousand" practiced by other sects. Their additions consist of 111,111 tsha-tsha, water and flower offerings. Thus, their practice of the Foundations is called the "Eight-hundred-thousand."

Q. Do these other sects use the Four Special Foundations as a main practice, as does the bKa'-brgyud-pa?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Yes, with minor differences in emphasis between sects.

A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: In the Sa-skya sect, there was generally more leeway allowed as to the amount of emphasis an individual would place on the Four Foundations. In many instances, a person would practice Taking Refuge for three days before practicing a meditation on their
yi-dam, Kye rDo-rje (Hevajra). Sometimes a person would practice the rDo-rje Sem-s-dpa' meditation for three days in preparation for Kye rDo-rje meditation.

It is important to realize, however, that in Tibet comparatively few monks of any sect had either the leisure or the inclination to practice a great deal of meditation of any kind, the Four Foundations included. For example, in Kalu Rin-po-che's monastery of dPal-spungs, of the five or six hundred monks who lived there, only seventy or so may have been practicing the Four Foundations intensively at any one time. The others were preoccupied with their monastic duties, memorization of texts and participation in numerous group empowerment rituals.

Q. In what ways, if any, will the manner of practicing the Four Foundations here in the West differ from those followed in Tibet? Will the Foundations be easier or more difficult for Westerners to practice?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: The way of practicing the Foundations will be basically the same here as it was in Tibet. In Tibet there were people; here there are people. In Tibet they had defilements; here they have defilements. However, Westerners do seem to have the additional problem of doubt, of unwillingness to accept the validity of the teachings. This stems from your superior education in worldly matters. On the positive side, Westerners can learn the Dharma very quickly as compared to the length of time it took Tibetans to learn it.
A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: The Foundations will certainly be practiced in the same way here as they were in Tibet. After all, Tibetans and Westerners can both be Buddhists. Because of the good *karma* Westerners have accumulated, the interest and opportunity to practice the Foundations is much greater here than it was in Tibet. Westerners have the additional advantage of not having broken their sacred commitments (*dam-tshig*), since they thus far have very few commitments to break! This is a factor which will promote the effectiveness of the practice.

Q. Before an individual practices the Four Special Foundations, what should he study and/or practice first?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Before a person begins to practice the Four Foundations, he should formally take the Vow of Refuge from a Lama in addition to taking some other Vajrayana empowerment. The rDo-rje Sems-dpa' empowerment is recommended before practicing that meditation.

Before he can practice the Four Special Foundations, an individual must study the "four thoughts which turn the mind toward religion." He must also learn as much as possible about the meaning of the Foundations, and must be instructed in their practice by a Lama.

A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: Before practicing the Four Special Foundations, a person must apply the "four thoughts which turn the mind toward religion." If he thinks these over carefully and learns to appreciate their meaning, his practice will be very effective and fruitful;
otherwise, it will be sheer gibberish. In short, as the Buddha said: "Abandon all unwholesome action. Perform as much wholesome action as you can. Learn to control your own mind--this is Buddha's teaching." A person who is setting out to discipline and control his mind must first understand the significance of the precious human existence, impermanence, and so on. These will constitute a solid basis for practice.

Q. What type of person should practice the Four Foundations?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: It does not matter if he is a monk, layman, educated, uneducated, male, female, and so on. A person who wishes to practice the Foundations need only possess the following qualities: He should feel disgusted with *samsāra* and be acutely aware of its inherent misery; he should appreciate the qualities of fully Enlightened existence, perfect Buddhahood.

In addition, persons who find it difficult to generate compassion and to understand emptiness should practice the Four Foundations. This is because lack of compassion and difficulty in understanding emptiness reveal the fact that the individual has many obscurations. The best way to remove these is to practice the Four Special Foundations.

A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: The most important prerequisites for practicing the Four Foundations are faith and confidence. As it is said, "All dharmas arise in interdependence." This especially applies to phenomena like faith and conviction. If a person who has no faith tries to practice Dharma, it is as if he were planting a burnt seed. A person who has no faith is unlikely to be interested in practicing
the Foundations in the first place. Even if he does practice them, they will not do him much good.

If a person has faith, all other factors, such as age, sex, monastic or lay status, and so on, become unimportant. But generally speaking, it is best if the Foundations are practiced by an ordained monk or nun, or a layman who has taken the five precepts (and become an upāsaka). But even a householder becomes an upāsaka by receiving any Vajrayāna empowerment.

Q. What role does the Lama play in guiding an individual through practice of the Foundations before, during and after completion of the "Five-hundred-thousand?"

Q. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Before he begins to practice the Foundations, an individual needs a Lama to give him the instructions for practice.

During the course of the practice, if he understands it well, he will not need a Lama's guidance. If he encounters serious obstacles he should rely on the Lama's advice. But if minor obstacles arise he should try to deal with them himself by realizing that they are simply the outcome of his own former actions. If he becomes seriously ill, he should not be discouraged, but should cease practicing and joyfully anticipate his future resumption of the practice.

After he has completed the Four Foundations, an individual must rely on the Lama for further teachings, including instructions in yi-dam meditations, and so on.
A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: Regarding the role of the Lama, it is said: "All the wonderful qualities which arise in a disciple stem from his Spiritual Friend (the Lama)."

Before practicing the Foundations, the individual needs a Lama to instruct him in the practices.

While he is practicing, he should continue to rely on the Lama for further explanation of the meaning and benefits of each practice.

After he completes the Foundations, the individual needs the Lama to instruct him in Mahāmudrā practices for which the Four Foundations have prepared him.

Until you attain Enlightenment, your entire religious career depends on the Lama. The fact that all the great Bodhisattvas have their Lama seated on the crown on their heads—for example, 'Od-dpag-med on Spyan-ras-gzig's head and so on—shows that even Bodhisattvas still rely on their Lamas. Your Lama embodies your sacred commitment to keep Enlightenment foremost in your mind until you actually achieve it.

Q. In what surroundings should the Four Foundations be practiced?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: The ideal environment for practice is one of complete isolation. Lack of external stimuli facilitates practice. If this is not feasible, it is fine to live with others, to engage in other activities, to see friends, and so on. In that case, one should try to practice for at least one to four hours a day, during which time one should not speak to others or interact with them in any way.

A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: In the Buddhist tradition, disengagement from worldly activities during religious practice is very highly regarded.
In solitude, one can devote all one's energies to practice. It is said: "Through disengagement of the body and speech from worldly activities, comes disengagement of the mind." This is the best way to practice—in an isolated retreat. But even practicing in the home, where there may be many distractions, is indeed wonderful.

Q. Must the Four Foundations always be practiced in the same order in which they are presented in the Lamp of Certainty?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: This order is certainly the best, but if circumstances prohibit practice of the Foundations in this order, or if one wishes to combine two of the Foundations to avoid becoming too fatigued from doing so many prostrations at once, or if one works at a very demanding job and cannot do prostrations, he may begin with the meditation of rDo-rje Sems-dpa' and the Maṇḍala-Offering. He may even begin with the Guru-Yoga.

Q. If an individual can only practice one of the Foundations in his lifetime, which one should he practice?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: He should follow his own inclinations.

Q. If an individual loses interest in the practice, should he stop and wait for the inspiration to return, or keep practicing?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: He should definitely keep practicing. If he finds that his thoughts wander a great deal, he should end the session and

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416 This question was asked in order to determine which practice is regarded as the most essential.
simply try to relax and let his mind rest, but he should resume the practice as soon as possible.

Q. What type of practice schedule is best?
A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: This is entirely up to the individual. If he has no other occupation, four sessions a day (each lasting at least an hour) is ideal. If he does have other work to do, he should attempt one session in the morning and one in the evening. But there is no compulsory schedule.

Q. How much time is required to complete the Four Foundations?
A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: This, of course, depends on the individual's schedule. Refuge and prostrations usually take quite a long time to complete, as does the rDo-rje Sems-dpa' meditation. The Maṇḍala-Offering and the Guru-Yoga take less time.

Q. How many times should an individual practice the Four Foundations—once in his life, or more often?
A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: If he can do it once, this is very wonderful. If he then feels very positive about this method of clearing away obscurations and wants to repeat the practices, this is also very wonderful and will have the same effect as his first attempt.
A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: My root-Lama, Ngag-dbang Legs-pa, performed the 111,111 prostrations forty times during his life, and some of the other practices a similar number of times. This was comparatively rare. I have tried to follow his example, and have done each practice
several hundred thousand times. But most people I knew in Tibet merely practiced Taking Refuge, and so on, for three days in preparation for yi-dam meditations.

Q. What are the benefits of practicing the Four Foundations?
A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Generally speaking, the first 444,444 practices (i.e., Refuge and prostrations, rDo-rje Sems-dpa' and the Maṇḍala-Offering) clear away obscurations and gather the Two Accumulations. The Guru-Yoga gives you great faith in your Lama which leads to your receipt of his blessing and attainment of Mahāmudrā.

Practicing the Four Foundations will result in increased faith, devotion, insight and compassion, and will enhance the individual's interest in Dharma practice and weaken his interest in worldly matters.

Q. What are the indications of successful practice?
A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: Increased faith, confidence and trust in your Lama and growing understanding of the workings of actions and results, and so on, are indications that your meditative practice has been effective and that meditation is becoming your way of life.

Q. How does an individual know when his practice of the Four Foundations has been unsuccessful?
A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: The effects of unsuccessful practice will be the opposite of those of successful practice, that is, the obscurations will increase, faith will diminish, and so on.
A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: (Uproarious laughter). Lack of progress

Rin-po-che felt that any practice of the Foundations is, in a sense, successful practice.
in these and other meditative practices manifests itself through the individual's attitudes. If he becomes increasingly concerned with worldly matters; if he develops greater and greater doubts about the qualities of the Three Jewels and denies the validity of the Teachings; if he is less and less concerned about the welfare of others and has less and less confidence in his Lama, this indicates lack of progress in meditation, and receipt of the "blessing of Māra."

Q. What should a person do if he feels that his practice has been unsuccessful?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Failure of the practice is usually due to the person's inability to prevent his thoughts from wandering during practice, and his being burdened with great obscurations. To correct this, he should ponder the "four thoughts" again. If so inclined, he should repeat the Foundation practices, or rely on a yi-dam meditation such as that of sPyan-ras-gzigs, which seems to be very effective in such situations.

A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: An individual who has not made any progress should again practice Taking Refuge and do prostrations, and practice the rDo-rje Sems-dpa' meditation to clear away the obscurations responsible for his lack of progress. He should practice the Guru-Yoga to increase his faith in the Lama.

An individual's lack of progress is often due to the fact that he has not really begun to appreciate the precious human existence, impermanence, and so on. If he appreciates these, true meditation will occur. Lack of this appreciation and lack of faith will obstruct true meditation.
Q. For which further practices does completion of the Foundations prepare one?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Since we are in the Vajrayāna, completion of the Foundations enables us to practice all other Vajrayāna meditations.

A. SDE-GZHUNG RIN-PO-CHE: Completion of the Four Foundations enables an individual to practice all the major yi-dam meditations. In the bKa'-brgyud tradition this would include those of 'Khor-lo bDe-mchog and rDo-rje Phag-mo; in the Sa-skya tradition, Kye rDo-rje and rDo-rje rNal-'byor-ma; in the rNying-ma tradition, the peaceful, wrathful and dākinī aspects of Guru Rin-po-che and numerous other peaceful and wrathful yi-dams; in the dGe-lugs-pa tradition, rDo-rje 'jigs-byed and Guhyasamāja.

Generally speaking, completion of the Foundations enables an individual to practice all meditations involving the Stages of Production and Perfection.

Q. Is it possible to reach full Enlightenment simply by practicing these Four Foundations?

A. KALU RIN-PO-CHE: Yes. In order to become a perfect Buddha, one must develop compassion. In this set of practices, compassion is developed by doing prostrations accompanied by Engenderment of the Enlightened Attitude and the Four Immeasurables.

To become a perfect Buddha one must also understand emptiness. In each practice, the objects of meditation (i.e., the Sources of Refuge and so on) become inseparable from the meditator, and then the
meditator lets his mind rest naturally. These are the profound means for realizing emptiness and Mahāmudrā.

The development of compassion and the realization of emptiness are the two requirements for achieving Enlightenment. During the Four Foundation practices—particularly in Taking Refuge and Engendering the Enlightened Attitude and in the Guru-Yoga—these two are integrated.
APPENDIX B

Text of Phyag-rgya-chen-po lhan-cig skyes-sbyor gyi

khrid kyi spyi-edom rtsa-tshig by Karma-pa IX,

dBang-phyug rDo-rje
APPENDIX C

Text of folios 1-50 of Phyag-chen engon-'gro bshi-sbyor dang dngos-gzhi'i khrid-rim mdor-bsdus nges-don sgron-me by 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul
...
བསྐྱུར་བརྒྱུར་བོད་ཇི་བཞིན་གས་ཤིང་བཞི་ན་སྙིང་ཁྲི་བསྐྱུར་ནས་བཟང་སྤྱོད་ལས་སྤྱད་པའི་བོད་དི་སྤྱད་པའི་བོད་་བཟང་སྤྱོད་བཟང་སྤྱོད་ལས་སྤྱད་པའི་བོད་དི་སྤྱད་པའི་བོད

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APPENDIX D

Text of sGrub-brgyud karma kam-tshang-pa'i phyag-chen

lhan-cig skyes-sbyor gyi sngon-'gro bshi-sbyor

sogs kyi ngag-'don 'phags-lam bgrod-pa'i

shing-rta by Karma-pa IX dBang-phyug

rDo-rje and others . . .