

༄༅། །ཟླ་བ་སྒྲ་གཅན་ལ་ཞུགས་པའི་རྟོགས་པ་བརྗོད་པའི་  
རྩོམ་པའི་སྒྲ་གྲུབ་པའི་མ་གྲུབ།

**The Earring of Accomplishment:  
A Spontaneous Vajra Song of Realization  
Describing How the Moon Entered Into  
Rāhu**

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION  
PROJECT

This text includes Vajrayāna content. Please be aware that some Vajrayāna texts may only be fully understood and appreciated through receiving the necessary empowerments, transmissions, or practice instructions from a qualified teacher.

*zla ba sgra gcan la zbugs pa'i rtogs pa brjod pa'i rdo rje'i thol glu grub pa'i rna rgyan*

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**Khyentse Vision Project:** Translating the Works of  
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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# TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Like many of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's poems, *The Earring of Accomplishment* can be categorized in several ways. It is classified as a "spontaneous vajra song," indicating that it is a stream-of-consciousness composition revealing aspects of Khyentse Wangpo's own profound wisdom. Its title also contains the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit term *avadāna*, which means narrative, story, or account. This Tibetan term may be rendered literally as "expressing realization." Accordingly, *The Earring of Accomplishment* describes one of Khyentse Wangpo's experiences of realization—in this case related to the transmutation of energies within his subtle body.

The current text is found not only in Khyentse Wangpo's Kabum (Collected Works) but also in his Kabab Dun (Seven Transmissions), which is organized according to the manner in which Khyentse Wangpo received the various texts. *The Earring of Accomplishment* is contained in the *kama* (or spoken word) section of the Seven Transmissions, indicating that it is not a revealed treasure but associated with teacher-to-student lineages that stretch back to ancient India. It is important to note here that the *kama* section is organized according to the categories of the eight great chariots of the practice lineage,<sup>1</sup> related to the collected meditation instructions of eight different traditions, one of which is the lineage of the *Kālacakra Tantra* and its unique six-yoga meditation system. In his descriptive catalog of the Seven Transmissions,<sup>2</sup> Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche writes that *The Earring of Accomplishment* is representative of the six yogas of Kālacakra.<sup>3</sup> This context explains the poem's use of language associated with the Kālacakra system and the Yogācāra and Zhentong philosophical traditions, from which it borrows various terms.

In addition to its relationship with these tantric and doctrinal sources, the text may be equally appreciated for its literary merits. It is a shining example of Tibetan *nyengak*<sup>4</sup> poetry, an evolution of the rich and flowery style (*kāvya* in Sanskrit) imported to Tibet

in the thirteenth century with the translation of the Indian grammarian Daṇḍin's (seventh–eighth c.) seminal text, *The Mirror of Poetry*.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, in *The Earring of Accomplishment*, the esoteric and literary come together in a dramatic metaphorical narrative where the moon is continually devoured by the fearsome cosmic deity Rāhu, who in classical Indian cosmology is responsible for solar and lunar eclipses. In the Kālacakra system, Rāhu symbolically represents the subtle body's central channel, into which a yogi corrals, purifies, and dissolves the winds circulating in the left, right, and minor channels of the subtle body.<sup>6</sup> In the verses here, the moon is a general metaphor for unenlightened elements—winds, energies, perceptions, and mental processes—that are purified through yogic practices and transformed into wisdom.

The colophon tells us that the poem was composed at Dechen Pema Ö Ling, a retreat center near Shechen Monastery where Khyentse Wangpo is known to have stayed when he was eighteen years old under the tutelage of Shechen Önrul, Gyurme Tutob Namgyal.<sup>7</sup> He signs the poem with the name Jigpa Mepe De, which he used primarily in his early writings.

གྲུབ་པའི་ན་རྒྱན།

## The Earring of Accomplishment

ཨ་ཧོ།

a ho

*Abo!* [358]

མཆོག་དུ་མི་འགྱུར་ནམ་པ་ཀུན་ལྡན་གྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས།།

chok tu mi gyur nampa künden gyi yeshé

Pristine wisdom encompassing all aspects,<sup>8</sup> supreme and unchanging;<sup>9</sup>

ལྷན་གྲུབ་ཟག་བྲལ་ཁ་སྦྱར་མཚན་དཔེ་ཡི་རང་གདངས།།

lhündrub zak dral khajor tsenpé yi rang dang

Untainted spontaneous perfection, the natural glow of the marks and signs of union;

ཅེ་མོ་གཉིས་སུ་མེད་པའི་བདེ་ཆེན་གྱི་ཐེག་ལེ།།

ewam nyi su mepé dechen gyi tiglé

Bindu of great bliss, E and VAM inseparable<sup>10</sup>—

དང་པོའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཉི་ཅུ་ཀ་དཔལ་ལ་འདུད་རྟོ།།

dangpö sangyé heruka pal la dü do

Original buddha,<sup>11</sup> glorious heruka, to you I bow!

འབྲུལ་བཅས་ཀྱན་བརྟགས་སྤང་བ་གཟུགས་ཕུང་གི་ཁྲ་གཞོན།

trül ché küntak nangwa zupung gi da zhön

When the young moon of the form aggregate, the appearance of deluded imputations,<sup>12</sup>

གདོད་ནས་ཡོངས་གྲུབ་གདན་གསུམ་སྒྲ་ཅན་གྱིས་ཐོས་པས།

dö né yongdrub den sum dra chen gyi zöpé

Was swallowed by the Rāhu of the primordially consummate three seats,<sup>13</sup>

མེད་བཞིན་མཚན་མར་འཛིན་པའི་སྤང་ཆ་ཀྱན་དག་ནས།

mé zhin tsenmar dzinpe nang cha kün dak né

All projections fixated on features of what does not even exist were purified—

ཟུང་འཇུག་ལང་ཚོས་སྒྲེག་པའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དུ་ཆས་འགོ།

zungjuk langtsö gegpé kyilkhör du ché dro

Now I'm off to<sup>14</sup> the maṇḍala of the union of alluring youth!<sup>15</sup>

འགོ་འོང་རྟོག་པའི་བཞོན་པ་སྒྲག་རྩེའ་གྱི་ཁྲ་གཞོན།

dro'ong togpé zhönpa sok tsöl gyi da zhön

When the young moon of prāṇāyāma,<sup>16</sup> the mount of the coming and going of conceptual thoughts,

འོད་གསལ་ཨ་ཁ་རྩུ་ཏིའི་སྒྲ་གཅན་གྱིས་ཐོས་པས།

ösal awadhuti drachen gyi zöpé

Was swallowed by the Rāhu of the luminous avadhūti,

སྤྲ་ཚོགས་འབྲུལ་པའི་མཚན་མ་རང་གོལ་དུ་སོང་ནས།

natsok trülpé tsenma rangdröl du song né

The various deluded designations were naturally liberated—

བྲགས་རྟོང་རྟོ་རྟེན་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དུ་ཆས་འགོ།

drak tong dorjé na dé kyilkhör du ché dro

Now I'm off to the maṇḍala of the vajra nāda,<sup>17</sup> sound-emptiness!

ཉོན་མོངས་འཁོར་བར་འཆིང་བྱིད་རྩ་མདུད་ཀྱི་ཁྲ་གཞོན།

nyönmong khorwar ching jé tsadü kyi da zhön

When the young moon of knotted<sup>18</sup> channels—afflictions that bind one to saṃsāra—

ཐུ་བདེ་མས་བརྟན་དགའ་བཞིའི་སྒྲ་གཅན་གྱིས་བློས་པས།

zhu demé ten ga zhi drachen gyi zö pé

Was swallowed by the Rāhu of the four joys, melting and rising bliss,<sup>19</sup>

པན་ཚུན་འཁྲིལ་བའི་འཁྱུད་རྒྱ་ཡ་བྲལ་དུ་སྤང་ནས།

pentsün trilwé khyü gya yadral du song né

The embraces of the tangled snarls came apart—

ས་བཙུ་དབུ་མར་སྒྲིན་པའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དུ་ཆས་འགྲོ།

sachu umar minpé kyilkhör du ché dro

Now I'm off to the maṇḍala of ripening, completing the ten bhūmis within the central channel!<sup>20</sup>

ཐབས་ཤེས་སྒྲུང་ཚུལ་དཀར་དམར་ཐིག་ལེ་ཡི་སྒྲ་གཞོན།

tab shé nangtsül kar mar tiglé yi da zhön

When the young moon of the white and red bindus—how method and wisdom appear—

ཟག་བྲལ་གཙུག་རྟོར་འཁོར་ལོའི་སྒྲ་གཅན་གྱིས་བློས་པས།

zak dral tsugtor khorlō drachen gyi zö pé

Was swallowed by the Rāhu of the untainted crown cakra,<sup>21</sup>

དྲི་བཅས་ཉེན་སྤངས་འཁྱུལ་པའི་སྲིད་ལེན་ཀུན་སྦྱངས་ཏེ།

dri ché nyönmong trülpé sé len kün jang té

Foul afflictive emotions and confused craving and clinging were completely purified<sup>22</sup>—

བདེ་སྟོང་ནམ་ཀུན་མཆོག་ལྷན་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དུ་ཆས་འགྲོ།

dé tong nam kün chogden kyilkhör du ché dro

Now I'm off to the maṇḍala of bliss-emptiness, replete with all supreme aspects!<sup>23</sup>

གཟུང་དང་འཛིན་པའི་རང་གཤངས་རྟག་ཆད་ཀྱི་སྒྲ་གཞོན།

zung dang dzinpe rang dang tagché kyi da zhön

When the young moon of belief in eternalism or nihilism, the natural glow of subject-object fixation,

མི་ཕྱེད་ཤིན་དུ་སྤྲ་བའི་སྒྲ་ཅན་གྱིས་བློས་པས།

miché shintu trawé dra chen gyi zö pé

Was swallowed by the Rāhu of extremely subtle indivisibility, [359]

ཉོན་ཤེས་སྒོ་བྱར་བསལ་རུང་སྒྲིབ་པ་ཀུན་བྲལ་ནས།

nyön shé lobur sal rung dribpa kün dral né

All afflictive and cognitive obscurations, temporary and ready to be cleared, were fully removed<sup>24</sup> —

རང་གྲོལ་དོན་གྱི་ཡི་ཤེས་ནང་དབྱིངས་སུ་ཆས་འགོ།

rangdröl dön gyi yeshé nang ying su ché dro

Now I'm off to the inner basic space of naturally free, true pristine wisdom!

ཕྱི་ལོ་ཀུར་དབང་པོའི་གཟུགས་བརྟན་གྱི་ཐིག་ལེ།

chiröl karbur wangpö zugnyen gyi tiglé

When the camphor<sup>25</sup> out there, the bindu reflected in the senses,

སྲིད་གསུམ་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་བའི་མགྲིན་པ་རུ་ཆུད་ཆོ།

si sum nampar gyalwé drinpa ru chü tsé

Was caught in the throat of the conqueror of the three levels of existence,<sup>26</sup>

ནང་དུ་རང་སེམས་ཟུང་འཇུག་གཉུག་མ་ཡི་གཤེས་ནས།

nang du rangsem zungjuk nyuk ma yi shi né

From the innate character of unity within my own mind

རྟོགས་པ་བརྗོད་པའི་རྡོ་རྗེའི་ཐོལ་སྒྲུ་རུ་སྤངས་སོ།

togpa jöpe dorjé töl lu ru lang so

Arose this spontaneous vajra song, expressing my realization.

དེ་ཡི་དག་བས་སྲིད་ཞིའི་ཁམས་གྱུར་གྱི་འགོ་ཀུན།

dé yi gewé si zhi kham gyur gyi dro kün

The virtue of that is dedicated as a cause<sup>27</sup> for all to effortlessly achieve realization,

བདེ་ཆེན་འདུས་མ་བྱས་པའི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་རུ་གྲོལ་ནས།

dechen düma jepé chakgya ru dröl né

So that after all beings in the realms of existence and peace

བསམ་བརྗོད་ལས་འདས་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་བཞུགས་ཚུལ།

samjö lé dé chö nam tamché kyi zhuk tsül

Are freed in the mudrā of unconditioned bliss,<sup>28</sup>

འབད་མེད་ཀྱིས་གྲིས་རྟོགས་པའི་ཡན་ལག་ཏུ་བསྡོམ་ཏེ།

bemé kün gyi togpé yenlak tu ngo'o

They may rest in how all things are beyond thought and word!

*The young yogi Jigpa Mepe De here expressed whatever came to mind during the final night session of the fifteenth day of the waxing moon in the eleventh month while in the forest of bodhi trees at Dechen Pema Ö Ling, an ocean of the ripening and liberating of definitive meaning.*



## NOTES

1. On the eight great chariots of the practice lineage, see Kapstein, “Tibetan Technologies of the Self,” 276–80; Kapstein, “Tibetan Technologies of the Self, Part II,” 110–29; Alak Zenkar, “Brief Biography of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo the Great”; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, 26–31.
2. The Seven Transmissions are enumerated in Doctor, *Tibetan Treasure Literature*, 84–101; Tāranātha, *Tāranātha’s Bka’ Babs Bdun Ldan: The Seven Instruction Lineages*.
3. Dilgo Khyentse Tashi Paljor, *bka’ babs bdun gyi gsang mdzod thun mong gdul bya’i snang ngor ji tsam bzugs pa’i dkar chag ngo mtshar nor bu’i phreng ba*, 115.2.
4. *snyan ngag*.
5. On this history, see Bhum and Gyatso, “Mirror on Fire: Ardent Reception in Tibet and Mongolia.”
6. Jamgön Kongtrul describes the Rāhu metaphor for the central channel in *Jonang: The One Hundred and Eight Teaching Manuals* §60: “you should simply visualize that there arises blue Vajraheruka, with bared fangs and three eyes—the right one like the sun, the left one like the moon, and the central one like Rāhu. With his right leg he oppresses the sun, not permitting the blood (*rakta*) of the right channel to spill; and with his left leg he oppresses the moon, not permitting the generative fluid of the left channel to spill. The transcendent lord is seated in the central channel, which is the pure nature of Rāhu, and in the midst of a blazing fire of pristine cognition...” For more on the symbology of Rāhu as the central channel, see also Lecso, “The *Sekoddesatippanī*: A Brief Commentary on the Summary of the Initiation,” 62; Changkya Rölpa Dorjé, “Brief Presentation of Channels, Winds, and Drops According to Kālacakra Tradition,” 147; Bailey, *The Raven and the Serpent*, 67–69; Henning, *Kālacakra and the Tibetan Calendar*, 95.
7. Jamgön Kongtrul, *The Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, 57.
8. Wisdom is associated with omniscience, or “knowing all aspects” (*sarvākārājñāna*), in particular the five aggregates, in relation to the path (see *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eighteen Thousand Lines*, 2.5, 75.26); it can also mean apprehending all things (*dharmas*). However, the term “all aspects” may be understood phenomenologically as well, highlighting how things appear, including whether they are illusory or real. In this sense, wisdom is framed in terms of awareness of all modes of appearance (cf. *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* 14.46: *rnam pa kun gyi ye shes nyid*). On this latter point, see Griffiths, “Omniscience in the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* and Its Commentaries,” 95–97.

9. Supreme and unchanging are qualities of “great bliss” (see Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *ngo mtshar rang byung gi mchod sdong chen po'i rtogs pa brjod pa'i rdo rje'i thol glu zab gsang rgyud mangs*, 429–30: *rjes chags thig le'i dga' tshal gyi dbus na/ mchog tu mi 'gyur bde chen gyi mchod sdong/ bde stong zung 'jug 'dren byed kyis mjal nas/ rnam kun mchog ldan shul lam du chas 'gro*. See also the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's discussion of supreme, unchanging bliss in the context of Kālacakra in an interview with Alexander Berzin (<http://studybuddhism.com/en/advanced-studies/vajrayana/kalachakra-advanced/question-sessions-with-the-dalai-lama-about-kalachakra/advice-on-keeping-the-kalachakra-vows>).
10. In the tantric context, the Sanskrit term *evam* signifies the union of wisdom (E) and skillful means (VAM), emptiness and bliss, mother and father, and other associated dyads. See Trungpa, *Glimpses of Space*; Harrington, “Like a Buddha Jewel-Casket Thrown Open,” 131–32, 137–40; Henning, *Kālacakra and the Tibetan Calendar*, 159; Wallace, “The Text as a Text and the Text as a Body,” 187. In common contexts, the unrelated term *evam* simply means “thus,” as in the sūtra opening, “Thus have I heard” (*evam mayā śrūtaṃ*). In this stanza, the first line invokes the dharmakāya, the second line the saṃbhogakāya, and the third the nirmāṇakāya aspects of the heruka/guru being supplicated.
11. “Original buddha” is a loose rendering of “first buddha” (*dang po'i sangs rgyas*). The Sanskrit equivalent is *ādibuddha*, a term particularly associated with the Kālacakra system (see Hammar, *Studies in the Kālacakra Tantra*, ch. 4).
12. For the theory of correspondences between aggregates, poisons, wisdoms, and buddha families, see Trungpa, *Journey Without Goal*, ch. 9 and *The Lion's Roar*, ch. 7.
13. The three seats are here qualified as “primordially consummate” (*gdod nas yongs grub*), indicating that they are not ordinary. Being pervaded by wisdom, they are “consummate,” true, or thoroughly established. The terminology of these two lines refers to the three natures (*rang bzhin gsum*) or three categories (*mtshan nyid gsum*) theory most often associated with Yogācāra philosophy but also Zhentong philosophy, which has deep historical roots in the Kālacakra tradition (for an overview of Zhentong, see Hookham, *The Buddha Within*; Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo*; Sheehy and Mathes, *The Other Emptiness*). In this stanza, the moon represents the dependent nature (*gzhan dbang gi mtshan nyid*), which can either be tripped up in the saṃsāric imagined/imputed nature (*kun brtags kyi rang bzhin*) or liberated as the consummate/thoroughly established nature (*yongs grub kyi mtshan nyid*), here represented figuratively by Rāhu. Particularly when qualified with “primordial” (*gdod nas*), this consummate nature is equated with other terms for ultimate truth, such as dharmakāya. In another text, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo glosses the consummate nature as the “innate body” (*gnyug ma'i sku*), another term for ultimate truth (Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, 'od gsal rdo rje snying po'i rig 'dzin brgyud pa'i phiyag mchod byin rlabs bdud rtsi'i char 'bebs, 74). This use of the consummate nature (*yongs grub*) is discussed throughout Stearns, *The Buddha from Dölpo*, esp. 94–96, 99–102; see also Hookham, *The Buddha Within*, 20.
14. There is poetic richness in the verb “to be off to” (*chas 'gro*), which is repeated in the following stanzas. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo uses similar phraseology in another poem in which an unenlightened or impure abstraction transitions into an enlightened or pure form: *phung khams skye mched dus byas kyi grong khyer/ gdan gsum zhi khro'i bro gar du rol pas/ kun brtags snang ba'i bden zhen kun zad nas/ rig 'dzin bzhi yi gsang lam du chas 'gro* (“By enjoying the dance of the peaceful and wrathful deities associated with the three seats/ the city of the aggregates, elements, sense-bases, and conditioned things— / All fixating on the true existence of imagined nature's appearances— / Enters onto the secret path of the four vidyādhara”) (Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *gtad med grub pa'i rdo rje'i thol glu zung 'jug rol gar*, 530–31). Rendering the phrase *chas 'gro* as “I am off to” is very common; see, for example: *da ni kbo bo mi sdod/ rgyal khams yongs la chas 'gro* (“I will stay no more— / I am off to the universal kingdom”) (Drubrik Kyuchok, 'brug pa'i chos mdzod chen mo, 256b).

15. The particular imagery of a youthful person is associated with the second (secret) empowerment. Here, “the union of youth” can also be a more general figurative description of tantric accomplishments. In another poem, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo uses the same phrase: *a ti zung ’jug lang tsho chen por brtas pas* (“with the ati[yoga] youthful union growing to be great” (Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *kun mkhyen chen po la bstod dzam+bu’i ’kbri shing*, 192). The phrase is used by other authors as well; see, for example, *dkar dmar dga’ ba bzhi ldan zung ’jug gi lang tsho* (“the youthfulness of the unity of red and white essences brimming with the four joys”) (Amdo Geshe, *gsung ’bum*, 510); *zung ’jug lang tsho brta ba’i bcud chen po* (where “youthful union” is connected with “increasing great quintessence”) (*bka’ brgyud sngags mdzod nag ’gros*, 453).
16. Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye glosses *prāṇāyāma* as follows: “Holding or retaining the life wind (*srog rtsol*, *prāṇāyāma*). In the context of action tantra, the term *pranayama* can be understood from its parts: *prāṇa* (*srog*) refers to the life wind which flows in and out through the sense organs, orifices, pores of the skin, and so forth, and *āyāma* (*rtsol*) means recollection (*dran pa*). The word as a whole, *pranayama* (*srog rtsol*), means to block or hold the life wind (*srog ’gog pa*). When the life wind is retained, one’s mind recalls the focus of meditation without distraction. To retain means to inhale, fill, and push the upper wind down and draw the lower wind up to be held at the region of the navel” (Jamgön Kongtrul, *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, 394n34).
17. “Vajra nāda” refers to the cosmic field of indestructible vibration from which issue the teachings of Dharma and the tantras (see Jamgön Kongtrul, *Buddhism’s Journey to Tibet*, 165; Tulku Urgyen and Adeu Rinpoche, *Skillful Grace*, 31, 37; Birch, “Haṭhayoga’s Floruit on the Eve of Colonialism,” 452–53). In other contexts, *nāda* means “sound” itself.
18. Unlike other, simpler models of the subtle body in which the three main channels run parallel through the torso, in the Kālacakra system the left and right channels intersect with the central channel at the main cakra energy centers. Khedrup Norsang Gyatso notes that these intersections are potential energetic bottlenecks, “where the *dhūti* is constricted by the knots of the right and left channels”; he explains further that these “united winds are then the focus of a single-pointed placement of mind,” so that through yogic practice they may be loosened and “the winds are stopped from flowing in the left and right channels and move constantly within the central channel” (Gyatso, *Ornament of Stainless Light*, 501). When the energies are knotted, or not flowing fluidly in the central channel, the result is saṃsāric perceptions, mental processes, and actions; upon their loosening, wisdom unfolds. On the dislodging of these knotted energies according to the Kālacakra system, see also Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, *A Commentary on the Kālacakra*, 90; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, 317.
19. In tantric yoga, concentrated energies at the top of the central channel are melted by concentrated energies at the bottom of the central channel. As the melting energies suffuse the crown cakra and then drip down to the throat, heart, and navel cakras, four blissful experiences occur. These “four joys” happen again as the melting energies that have descended the central channel then ascend from the navel back up to the heart, throat, and crown cakras. On the process of the four joys, see Thuken Losang Chökyi Nyima, *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems*, 520; Daniel Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra*, 76–77; Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahamudra*, 377; Klaus-Dieter Mathes, “The Four Signs of Mahāmudrā Meditation,” 50–53.

20. As one gains mastery over one's subtle energies by coalescing them in the central channel, in a step-by-step way one can achieve the ten bodhisattva bhūmis or levels. This is explained as the ten bhūmis being completed in the basic space of the central channel (*sa bcu dbu ma'i dbyings su rdzogs*); see Dilgo Khyentse Tashi Paljor, *tshogs glu las smon rten 'brel gyi sbas don rnam par gsal ba rig stong dgongs pa'i snang byed*, 350. On this rather complicated process, see Dhargyey, *A Commentary on the Kālacakra Tantra*, 143–47; Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakra*, 174–75, 186, 207). In tantric literature, the central channel is often described as the source of enlightened qualities; it is even sometimes figuratively called “the spring” (*dpyid*); see Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *A Long Plaintive Song by the Spring Messenger of Bliss-Emptiness* (KVP B1414).
21. This refers to the yogic retention of energies at the crown cakra, called the “cakra of great bliss” (*bde chen 'khor lo*). See Jamgön Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, 314; Sfera, “The Elucidation of True Reality,” 103.
22. This aspect of Kālacakra practice, in which the red and white elements dissolve in the central channel, is described in Henning, “The Six Vajra-Yogas of Kālacakra,” 242, 249–250, 254; Changkya Rölpa Dorje, “Brief Presentation of Channels, Winds, and Drops According to Kālacakra Tradition,” 147, 150. The vocabulary of this line evokes the teaching of the twelve links of dependent origination (*rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i yan lag bcu gnyis*), in which a being is described as constructing their existence in twelve stages. In one of the earlier stages, a being is motivated to act based on afflictions (*kleśa*; *nyon mongs*), which sets the conditions for the later stages of craving (*trṣṇā*; *sred pa*) and its intensification into clinging (*upādāna*; *len pa*) which fuels the wheel of saṃsāra. The twelve links are relevant to the Kālacakra meditation system as well (see Henning, “The Six Vajra-Yogas of Kālacakra,” 248–49, 251; Henning, *Kālacakra and the Tibetan Calendar*, 205; Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakra Tantra*, 99). In short, the system describes a process in which primary misperception, often translated simply as ignorance (*ma rig pa*), precipitates the stirring of karmic winds that move the white and red subtle energies. Their interplay picks up momentum and results in the complex processes that construct the universe, including the twelve links of dependent origination. By practicing the Six Yogas of the Kālacakra, one can harness and purify these subtle energies, thereby reversing the proliferation of saṃsāra.
23. For a rich discussion of the phrase “replete with all supreme aspects” and its meaning in the various systems of Buddhist theory, see Brunnhölzl, *When the Clouds Part*, 953–61. See also Trungpa, *Rain of Wisdom*, 341–42, 368–69. In the present context of the Kālacakra, where the term carries the sense of being the simultaneous embodiment of emptiness and bliss, it signifies buddha bodies. On this specific meaning, see Kongtrul, *Esoteric Instructions*, 303n36.
24. The two obscurations consist of afflictive emotional obscurations (*nyon mongs kyi sgrib pa*) and cognitive obscurations. The former are the five poisons (ignorance, anger, envy, pride, and desire); the latter are defined in Maitreya's *Uttaratantra*: “Conceptions in terms of the three spheres are asserted as the cognitive obscurations” (Brunnhölzl, *When the Clouds Part*, 457). The “three spheres” here stand for experiencing everything in terms of a real subject, object, and the action between them.
25. As a bright white aromatic, camphor was used a synonym for the moon in Sanskrit poetry, and also as a metaphor for the radiant fame of a king. Such a reading is also possible for the Tibetan *dbang po'i gzugs brnyan* in this richly textured line. On the poetic significance of camphor in India, see McHugh, “The Camphor Flame in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” 140.
26. That is, Rāhu.

27. Literally, “branch” (*yan lag*) in Tibetan. Here it is connected to dedication of merit, the last of the “seven branches” (*saptāṅga; yan lag bdun*) practice found in many of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo’s compositions. It does not refer to the six-branch yoga system of the Kalacakra.
28. A passage from Nāropa’s commentary to the *Sekoddeśa*, the extant portion of the root text of the Kālacakra cycle, sheds light on the probable meaning in the line translated here: “This innate bliss is not born from wisdom, from skillful means, or from the [physical] sense organs, but from the Mahāmudrā, devoid of obstacles, similar to the cloudless sky, present in all beings, and is certainly not able to be experienced by the ignorant” (Orofino, “The Mental Afflictions and the Nature of the Supreme Immutable Wisdom,” 42).



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# GLOSSARY

## afflictions

ཉོན་ཐོང་ས། • *nyon mongs* • kleśa

Ignorance, desire, anger, pride, and envy.

## avadhūti

ཨ་ཕ་རྩ་ཏི། • *a wa d+hUti* • avadhūti

The central channel of the subtle body.

## bindu

ཐིག་ལེ། • *thig le* • bindu

A word with a great range of meanings related to spherical shapes. In the yogic context, it refers to one of the three major elements of a being's subtle body: channels, winds, and vital drops. Vital drops can be understood as concentrations of subtle energy housed in the channels and moved by the winds. It can also have a macrocosmic meaning referring to all of reality as a single sphere.

## camphor

ཀའུ་ར། • *kar+bur* • karpūra

This white substance distilled from the camphor tree is a synonym for the moon (*candra*) in Sanskrit poetry.

## central channel

དབུ་མ། • *dbu ma* • avadhūti

The main energy channel in the subtle body.

## craving and clinging

སྣང་ལེན། • *sred len*

A compound of the important Sanskrit doctrinal terms *trṣṇā* and *upādāna*. In the fundamental teaching of the twelve links of dependent origination, these two terms are presented as consecutive. The former refers to the mind's reaching out in wanting; it is equated with the cause of suffering—the second Noble Truth. Instances of wanting form particular patterns and are held together and sustained by the latter, sometimes translated as

“fuel,” referring to the ego’s tendency to appropriate or seize upon objects, feelings, beliefs, and so forth.

#### **crown cakra**

གཏུག་རྩྭ་ • *gtsug tor* • uṣṇīṣa

One of the subtle body’s main energy centers located at the top of the head.

#### **earring**

རྩ་རྒྱུ། • *rna rgyan*

Literally, “ear ornament.” This expression, common in Tibetan titles, carries the figurative sense of a discourse that is nice to hear.

#### **existence and peace**

སྤྱི་ཞི། • *srid zhi*

A figurative term for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa or every possible realm of existence.

#### **expressing realization**

རྟོགས་བརྗོད། • *rtogs brjod* • avadāna

This term can also simply mean narrative or account, usually in the historical sense.

#### **fixated on features**

མཚན་མར་འཛིན་པ། • *mtshan mar ’dzin pa* • nimittodgraha

Referring to the epistemological process by which existence is ascribed to things based on their names, characteristics, or other details taken to be permanent and truly existing.

#### **four joys**

དགའ་བཞི། • *dga’ bzhi* • caturānanda

Joy (*dga’ ba*), supreme joy (*dga’ mchog*), special joy (*khyad dga’*) or joy free of joy (*dga’ bral*), and coemergent joy (*lhan skyes pa’i dga’ ba*).

#### **heruka**

ཧེ་རུ་ཀ། • *he ru ka* • heruka

A term for male wrathful tantric deities. Often shorthand for the deity Cakrasaṃvara, but also used to refer to one’s own guru.

#### **imputations**

ཀུན་བརྟགས། • *kun brtags* • parikalpita

The projection of existence where there is no such inherent existence. It is associated with one of the “three natures” in Yogācāra philosophy. The imputed or imagined nature is the aspect of reality that is imputed by a name or symbol, ascribing true existence to that which the name or symbol designates. The classic example is mistaking a rope for a snake. Upon analysis, things that are imputed in this way are not found to exist; thus, they are “imagined.”

#### **Jigpa Mepe De**

འཇིགས་པ་མེད་པའི་སྡེ། • *’jigs pa med pa’i sde*

This alludes to the name Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo received from his paternal uncle Mogtön Jigdral Chöying Dorje at the age of eleven at Katok Monastery: Jigme Khyentse

Dögar. Occasionally, Khyentse Wangpo signs his texts with “Abhaya,” the Sanskrit equivalent of Jigme.

### knotted channels

རྩ་མཐུད། • *rtsa mdud*

This refers to congested energies within the channels of the subtle body.

### marks and signs of union

ཁ་སྟོར་མཚན་དཔེ། • *kha sbyor mtshan dpe*

A term associated with the qualities of the saṃbhogakāya. Usually presented as seven attributes of union (*kha sbyor bdun ldan*): (1) complete enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs pa*), (2) union (*kha sbyor*), (3) great bliss (*bde ba chen po*), (4) no self-nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), (5) completely filled with compassion (*snying rjes yongs su gang ba*), (6) being uninterrupted (*rgyun mi chad pa*), and (7) unceasing (*gog pa med pa*).

### mudrā

ཕྱག་རྒྱ། • *phyag rgya* • *mudrā*

In tantric literature, mudrā (*phyag rgya* or *rgya*) has a rich range of contextual meanings. Most often, mudrā is a “seal” or “gesture,” but it can also mean “consort” or stand figuratively for an energetic force.

### object and subject

གཟུང་དང་འཛིན་པ། • *gzung dang 'dzin pa*

Literally, “the grasped and the grasper,” this refers to the objects and agents of perception.

### prāṇāyāma

སྟོན་ཚུལ། • *srog rtsol* • *prāṇāyāma*

Literally, “life force and exerted [breaths].” Shorthand for the system of yoga practiced to manipulate subtle energies through breath.

### Rāhu

སྟུག་ཅན། • *sgra gcan* • *rāhu*

In Indian cosmology, Rāhu is the demon of eclipses, depicted as a disembodied head that eats the sun and moon. In the astrological tradition of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, Rāhu is a malefic celestial body associated with eclipses and the north node in particular. In Tibet, Rāhu came to be known as Rāhula (*sgra gcan 'dzin*), a cosmic protector of the Dharma.

### replete with all supreme aspects

རྣམ་ཀུན་མཚན་ལྡན། • *rnam kun mchog ldan*

This expression denotes the union of the two truths of appearance and emptiness, variously explained as appearance having emptiness, which is the supreme of all aspects, and emptiness possessing the sublime capacity for manifestation.

### ripening and liberating

སླིན་གྲོ། • *smin grol*

This is an abbreviation of the expression for ripening empowerments and liberating instructions (*smin byed kyi dbang dang grol byed kyi khrid*).

### senses

དབང་པོ། • *dbang po* • indriya

The faculties or organs that are the condition for consciousness of objects.

### spontaneous perfection

ལྷན་སྐྱབ། • *lhun grub* • anābhoga, nirabhoga, sahasasiddha

Being present in a natural and effortless way. This term is also used to describe luminosity.

### spontaneous vajra song

རྫོའི་ཐོལ་གླུ། • *rdo rje'i thol glu*

A type of non-deliberate song that expresses the subject's realization of profound aspects of the Dharma.

### tangled snarls

པན་ཚུན་འཁྲིལ་བ། • *phan tshun 'khril ba*

Literally, “intertwined coils.” This unusual phrase is used poetically by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo to described congested energies in the subtle body.

### temporary

གློ་བུར། • *glo bur* • āgantuka

Referring to something that is not deeply rooted but adventitiously gathered on the basis of conditions. It is often applied to the afflictions, which are like clouds in the sky, not overtaking the sky in any profound way but merely obscuring it superficially.

### ten bhūmis

ས་བརྒྱ། • *sa bcu* • daśabhūmi

The ten stages through which a bodhisattva progresses: (1) Joyous (*pramuditā*), (2) Stainless (*vimalā*), (3) Luminous (*prabhākari*), (4) Radiant (*arciṣmatī*), (5) Hard to Conquer (*sudurjayā*), (6) Clearly Manifest (*abhimukhī*), (7) Far Progressed/Reaching (*dūraṅgamā*), (8) Immovable (*acalā*), (9) Perfect Intellect (*sādhumatī*), and (10) Cloud of Dharma (*dharmameghā*).

### three seats

གདན་གསུམ། • *gdan gsum*

A reference to the awakened nature of the body, senses, and sense objects. There are several ways of enumerating the three seats. They can refer to: (1) the aggregates (*skandha*) and elements (*dhātu*) having the nature of the male and female buddhas; (2) the sense bases (*āyatana*) and their objects having the nature of the male and female bodhisattvas; and (3) the arms and legs having the nature of the male and female wrathful deities. They can also refer to: (1) the five aggregates having the nature of the five buddhas; (2) the five elements of earth, wind, water, fire, and space having the nature of the five female buddhas; and (3) the sense bases having the nature of the male and female bodhisattvas.

### three worlds

སྤྱི་གསུམ། • *srid gsum* • trailokya; tribhava; tribhuvana; tridhātu

The desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm.

**untainted**

ཟག་བྲལ། • *zag bral*

Literally, “free from corruptive flows or sullyng influences.” That is, it is free from what keeps one mired in saṃsāra, especially the five afflictions of ignorance, desire, hostility, envy, and pride.

**vajra nāda**

རྩི་རྒྱ་ར། • *rdo rje nA da* • vajranāda

Indestructible, primordial sound.