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བདེ་སྟོང་དབྱིད་ཀྱི་ཕོ་ཉེ་རྒྱུ་རིང་མོ།

A Long Plaintive Song by the
Spring Messenger of Bliss-Emptiness:
A Spontaneous Vajra Song Supplicating the
Deathless Padmākara

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.

*’chi med pad+ma ka ra la gsol ba ’debs pa rdo rje’i thol glu bde stong dpyid kyi pho nya’i rgyang glu
ring mo*

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Khyentse Vision Project: Translating the Works of
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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INTRODUCTION

Tibetan text titles usually contain at least two elements: a descriptive genre classification and an ornamental title that distinguishes the work from other texts in the same genre.¹ However, *A Long Plaintive Song by the Spring Messenger of Bliss-Emptiness: A Spontaneous Vajra Song Supplicating the Deathless Padmākara* includes no fewer than three genre classifications. First, it is referred to as a “plaintive song,” revealing that it is a song sustains a tone of longing. Next, the subtitle includes “spontaneous vajra song,” indicating that it is a stream-of-consciousness composition revealing aspects of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo’s own profound realization. Finally, the subtitle also marks it as a “supplication,” indicating that blessings are requested from Guru Rinpoche (Padmākara).

In the ornamental part of the title, the “spring messenger” is a metaphor for the cuckoo bird that is employed by many Tibetan authors in the titles of a wide range of texts.² The cuckoo is considered a harbinger of the new season; therefore, the appearance of this metaphor in a text’s title suggests that its contents will usher in a “spring” of spiritual floridity in the form of blessings, insights, and attainments.³

Tibetan texts may also be classified under the general categories of outer, inner, and secret. An outer supplication, for example, would address an enlightened figure in a way that is accessible to almost any reader. It might recount Guru Rinpoche’s great deeds and, based on the feeling of devotion inspired by them, include a request for his blessings. An inner supplication might address Guru Rinpoche in terms of specific teachings he gave and ask for blessings to help the supplicant in their practice and private life. A secret supplication would broach topics that are inaccessible to the uninitiated and call on Guru Rinpoche to grant insight into profoundly esoteric views and meditation techniques. *A Long Plaintive Song by the Spring Messenger of Bliss-Emptiness* belongs to the latter category.

Like many Tibetan works in verse, the song is presented in quatrains, with each quatrain conveying a particular theme or addressing a specific person. It opens dramatically with allusions to advanced yogic practices associated with the channels, winds, and vital drops. For the first third of the song, homage is given to Guru Rinpoche in his ultimate forms as the epitome of enlightened mind and its qualities. Next, Guru Rinpoche's eight manifestations are supplicated individually, each of them being richly associated with a particular doctrinal theme. These verses include profound references to Yogācāra philosophy, essential points of creation and completion stages, the winds and channels associated with Anuyoga, and the view of Atiyoga. Following that, a verse is dedicated to each practice of the seven branches, an essential means for accumulating merit and wisdom. The final third of the song is comprised of verses of general supplication and aspiration, praying for success at every level of the path—from the most fundamental concerns of Mahāyāna ethics to the highest view and the attainment of the three kāyas. The colophon tells us that the song was composed after a *gaṇacakra* offering at the Moon Cave of the Drak Yerpa temple complex near Lhasa.

བདེ་སྣང་དབྱིད་ཀྱི་ཕོ་ཉེ་རྒྱུ་སྤྱོད་རིང་མོ།

A Long Plaintive Song by the Spring Messenger of Bliss-Emptiness

Emaho!

The dynamic energy of primordially pure self-knowing awareness,
The dance of the magical web of unity,⁴
Deathless Padma Tötreng—
In a state of nonduality, I pay homage to you!

Within the city of the vajra aggregates,
Housed within the infinitely pure element of channels,
Among clusters of vital drops is the enlightened body of liberation⁵—
Spontaneously accomplished vidyādhara, to you I bow!

From the dissolution of inhaled and exhaled vital and controlled winds
Within the *avadhūti*⁶
Arises the palpable sonance⁷ of ineffable great bliss—
O vajra of enlightened speech, to you I bow!

All thoughts that are engaged and move on
Are transformed in the expanse of the three liberations,
The inconceivable experiential domain of your enlightened mind—
O spontaneously born one,⁸ to you I bow!

When every form of grasping at appearances and mind
Has been destroyed along with their subtle seeds, [411]

From this arises all that is wished for—
Possessor of infinite enlightened qualities, to you I bow!

Lone binder of all phenomena,⁹
From the play of your many dances
The four enlightened activities are bestowed—
Glorious heruka,¹⁰ to you I bow!

All the victors' compassion is amassed in you,
Sovereign lord, glorious guru,
The face of the sources of refuge gathered together—
O vajra master, to you I bow!

Completely liberated from the compounded aggregates, elements,¹¹ and sense
bases,¹²
With the major and minor marks of union blazing in splendor,
The embodiment of the chosen deities—
O mahāmudrā, to you I bow!¹³

Through the bliss of melting induced by your immaculate and intense flame,
You mesmerized and cavorted
With all the ḍākinīs of the sacred sites and countries¹⁴—
O guide of the assembly of sky dancers, to you I bow!¹⁵

With mind and its objects embraced in the central channel,
Through this intransgressible bond
You harness masses of Dharma protectors and arrogant ones without exception—
O greatest of the great, to you I bow!

Binding in particular the eight consciousnesses¹⁶ and their phenomena of
confusion
Within the net of wisdom,
You are the supreme master whose yogic conduct is accomplished—
To your eightfold display, I bow!

Although you do not waver from the state of primordial purity,
Through spontaneous arrays of clouds of compassion
You appear as the vajra face of the rainbow body of union—
Padmākara, homage to you!

In the fire of discriminating wisdom,
You fully incinerated the two veils, along with their causes, [412]
And took possession of the light of omniscience—

Loden Chogse, homage to you!

Since the life force of accomplishment,¹⁷ unsubiding bliss-emptiness,
Is of one taste in the bindu of your enlightened mind,
You are brimming with victorious activity in every direction—
Nyima Özer, homage to you!

Everything precipitated by the view of the self
Is destroyed through your fierce power of selflessness and compassion
In the vast dharmadhātu, free of elaborations—
Senge Dradrok, homage to you!

The thought swarms of prāṇa mind, along with their causes,
Were sealed in the nonduality of E and VAM¹⁸
By you, the bearer of multifarious mudrās¹⁹—
Padmasambhava, homage to you!

With your supreme, immaculate discipline
Fully manifested like a jewel in a nāga king's hood,²⁰
You vanquished legions of outer and inner mārās.
Śākya Senge, homage to you!

The three elements of motility, darkness, and lightness²¹
Were subjugated by you in the house of the central channel,
Giving you a youthfulness born of the passionate bliss of melting²²—
Pema Gyalpo, homage to you!

The dualistic appearances of the imagined nature,
The obstacle hindering the dependent nature,²³
Were liberated by you under the seal of the thoroughly established nature—
Dorje Drolö, homage to you!

In short, throughout existence and the state of peace,
All things that bring benefit and happiness are fully granted by you,
The Lake-Born Sovereign in whom all sources of refuge are gathered—
I bow to you in the great timelessness beyond the three times!

As soon as the relative samaya being
Is blessed by the ultimate wisdom being,
Unbound by objects and agents of perception [413]
I will pay homage to you!

As soon as all things animate and inanimate
Are purified within the naturally free innate nature,

I will present²⁴ the environment and its living contents as vast cloudbanks of offerings

Within the complete purity of the threefold sphere.

Self-knowing awareness, buddha nature,
Is obscured by the faults of adventitious confusion;
Beyond the limits of meditation and post-meditation,
I confess these within the vastness of twofold purity.

Beholding the truth of dharmatā
And gathering virtues through the two accumulations—
These are the realities of the noble and ordinary ones.²⁵
I rejoice in them with undivided delight!

For the one who mentally relies
On the melodies of the truths of cessation and the path,
Desirelessness and skill in means are conferred.
May you always continually teach them!

If there is no birth in the beginning,
In the end where will cessation occur?
Thereby, I pray that the deathless body of wisdom
Remain present as the vajra of mind!

Whatever boundless virtues,
Beginningless and endless,
Have been produced through such accumulations,²⁶
I dedicate them within a state not stationed in ordinary mind.

Ema! Of all the victorious ones,
You are the sublime natural embodiment of the wisdom aggregate.²⁷
Sole refuge, Lord Mahāguru,
Please think of this child who prays to you with reverence!

Protector, distinctly revealing to me your gladdened face
In person, visions, and dreams, [414]
Please grant me the good fortune
Of the nectar of the enlightened speech that you breathe out.

By thus sanctifying this illusory body fraught with filth
As the great union of appearances and emptiness,
Please bless me to attain the sublime vajra body
That is free from birth and death!²⁸

With every flow of breath out and in
Being sanctified by pure mantras,
Please bless me to attain sublime vajra speech
Free from deliberate inhalation, exhalation, and effortful manipulation!

With all discursive thinking's illusions²⁹
Sanctified by awareness extending through space,
Please bless me to attain sublime vajra mind
Beyond the framework of subjects and objects of perception!

Please grant your blessing here and now
To thoroughly pacify
All the sixteen dreadful armies
Harming me and other beings.

With long life, merit, prosperity, and the ten strengths,³⁰
The trove of effortless qualities
Flourishing in all directions and times,
Please bless me to accomplish the two kinds of benefit!

Inanimate and living things
Are a gathering of prized necessities.
Please bless me to obtain the joy
Of having control over them through my wishes alone!

Wherever baleful battles are waged
By hordes of humans and non-humans,
Please bless me to thoroughly smite them
With the splendor of Vajrarakṣa.

Finally, please bless me to attain the nirmāṇakāya—
Assuming a multiplicity of forms
In accordance with the inclinations and fortunes [415]
Of beings in the ten directions!

Please bless me to attain the saṃbhogakāya—
Pure and ultimate, in the manner of illusion,
Reveling in Akaṣiṣṭha
And imbued with the seven attributes of the union of bliss and emptiness.

Please bless me to attain the dharmakāya—
The space-vajra pervading space,³¹
Having nothing to do with objects,

An endless, sublime spring.³²

One day the appearances of this life will subside.
Before the appearances of the next life dawn,³³
Please bless me to gain instantaneous freedom
In the ineffable luminosity that is the lake-born master!

If my prāṇa and mind succumb
To the influence of contaminations,
Please bless me to attain the level of no-more-learning³⁴
By arising as the vajra body of union.³⁵

If even then I do not attain stability,
Since I have grown familiar with pure appearances,
Please bless me to journey unimpededly
To the land of the Copper-Colored Mountain.

At that time, supreme protector,
Nourishing me with ripening and liberating nectar,
Please bless me to attain supreme accomplishment
On the secret path of the four kinds of awareness-holders.³⁶

Aho! By offering whatever occurred to me as this vajra song
To you, O holder of the wisdom body,
In this and all our future lives
May I and others always remain at your feet.

At Drak Yerpa's Moon Cave, in the supreme siddhi grove blessed by the knower of the three times, the great master of Oḍḍiyāna himself, [416] just after accumulating a hundred feast offerings on the tenth day of Saga Dawa, Dorje Tugchok Tsal, a wandering mendicant with no fixed point of reference, sang of these joyous realizations. I pray for the blessing to attain the state of a tathāgata!

NOTES

1. See Almogi, “Analyzing Tibetan Titles,” and Roesler, “Classifying Literature or Organizing Knowledge,” for studies on Tibetan literary genres and titles.
2. The BDRC database reveals dozens of texts with this term in the title.
3. For example, Jigme Lingpa, following his visions of Longchenpa, composed a song called “The Queen of Spring’s (Cuckoo’s) Plaintive Call” (Goodman, *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*, 144). For a study of the cuckoo metaphor in Tibetan literature, see Virtanen, *Tibetan Written Images*, 98–105. For a discussion of the metaphor of spring in tantric literature, see Schott, *Kṛṣṇacaryāpādasya Dohakoṣaṭīke*, 552.
4. The language of this line evokes the language of the *Māyājāla Tantra* (*sgyu ’phrul drwa ba*), which emphasizes the view in which all dualities are resolved in unity (Van Schaik, “The Early Days of the Great Perfection”; Lama Chönam and Sangye Khandro, *The Guhyagarbha Tantra*, 12–13).
5. Glosses on this term can be found in Arya Maitreya, *Buddha Nature*, 186, 379.
6. On the central channel of the subtle energy body, see Kongtrul, *Jonang*, ch. 9, and the Dharmachakra Translation Committee’s *Emergence from Samputa*. It is left in Sanskrit here because Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo himself chose to use the Sanskrit rather than the equivalent Tibetan term. Note also that he uses the Sanskrit in other texts (cf. *The Four Supreme Skills Using Syllables*, *mchog tu gyur pa yi ge’i sgyu rtsal bzhi*, Collected Works, <https://www.khyentsevision.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/The-Four-Supreme-Skills-Using-Syllables.pdf>).
7. This refers to the source of voiced sounds (see Birch, “Haṭhayoga’s Floruit on the Eve of Colonialism,” 452–53). In other contexts, *nāda* means “sound” itself. Here we have chosen to render *nāda* with the uncommon noun “sonance,” an old-fashioned term simply meaning “sound” that has been adopted by modern music theorists to denote a fundamental sonic field out of which arise both consonance and dissonance (Hinton, “The Emancipation of Dissonance,” 573).
8. Proponents of the belief that one could reach enlightenment suddenly were known as *sahajiyas* (Bagchi, *The History and Culture of the Pālas of Bengal and Bihar*, 101).

9. Here “binder” translates the word for “vow,” “precept,” or “restraint” (*sdom pa*), which is closely related to the term “seal” (*mudrā; phyag rgya*) that appears several times in this prayer. Here we choose to translate it in a slightly anthropomorphized way, since the stanza is supplicating Guru Rinpoche as “heruka,” a general term for a class of wrathful masculine enlightened deity but also used specifically for Cakrasaṃvara (*’khor lo sdom pa*, or “binder of the cakras”). The term *chos kun sdom pa gcig pu* can just as well be rendered as “single confine of all things,” a possible synonym for *dharmadhātu* or *mahāmudrā* or any abstract, ultimate concept that encompasses or subsumes more discrete, relative things. In his *gnas lugs rin po che’i mdzod*, Longchen Rabjam (*mdzod bdun*, vol. 8, 154–55) writes that “all phenomena are bound/subsumed under the point of spontaneous presence (*lhun grub ’gag tu chos kun bsdams pa*) [and] subsumed under the point of non-doing (*byar med*).” Khyentse Wangpo (*sku yi dben gnas bsgrags yang rdzong*, 53) uses nearly the same phrasing in another text that reads, “Within the expanse that is the unitary confine of all things/ a song arises in the dance of multiplicity” (*chos kun sdom pa gcig pu’i dbyings/ du ma’i gar du snang ba’i rol mo ni/*). In other contexts, when there is explicit reference to vows and commitments, the term *sdom pa gcig pu* can be translated as “single precept,” as seen in a supreme view that encompasses all teachings and views below it. See Padmasambhava, *Light of Wisdom*, vol. 4, 103–4: “To never depart from the essential points transcending the borderline between keeping and breaking nor from the pervasiveness freed from the web of perceiver and perceived is the most eminent samaya for arriving in the oneness of the exhaustion of phenomena, as well as being the precept for subsuming all phenomena within the vast sphere of spontaneous presence.” The main point in this passage is that resting in the Dzogchen view has the power to uphold all other vows and commitments, being similar to the famous idiom “knowing one liberates all” (*gcig shes kun ’gro/*).
10. Do Tulku Rinpoche suggests a connection between “heruka” in this line and “binding” (*sdom pa*) in the stanza’s first line, as both terms are commonly applied to the important tantric deity Cakrasaṃvara.
11. For a detailed study of Abhidharma and the *dhātus*, see Goodman, *The Buddhist Psychology of Awakening*.
12. For a comprehensive exposition of this topic, see Goodman, *The Buddhist Psychology of Awakening*.
13. A slightly clearer but more provisional translation of this line could read “To you who achieved mahāmudrā,” which would refer especially to Guru Rinpoche’s manifestation of the vidyādhara level of mahāmudrā at Asura Cave in Pharping, Nepal. While this sense is certainly alluded to, it must be considered that “who achieved” is not represented in the Tibetan. Instead, mahāmudrā and “you” are presented appositionally, suggesting their equivalence. It is not uncommon for mahāmudrā to be a metonym for exalted figures (see Dharmachakra Translation Committee, *Emergence from Samputa*, 1.149; Tsöndru, *theg pa che chung gi grub mtha’*, 143). The link between mahāmudrā and the preceding lines in the stanza is illuminated by a passage in Kongtrul, *Journey and Goal*, 226–28: “One’s own mind is the supreme seal, mahāmudrā, the deity that becomes fully evident through meditation, with major and minor marks of more common and sublime attainment. This is saṃbhogakāya ... endowed with the attributes of an illusory embodiment of timeless awareness, the ordinary elements are freed with the vajra body.” The present translation interprets a slightly unusual enjambment in which *nam grol* and *rab ’bar* are read in their verbal sense of “completely liberated” and “blaze,” since it is commonly understood that the major and minor marks of saṃbhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya buddhas “blaze” (Dudjom, *Nyingma School*, 191; Kongtrul, *Jonang*, §14) as a result of “complete spiritual maturation” (Kongtrul, *Journey and Goal*, 323) transcending compounded aggregates, elements, and so forth.

14. On the sacred sites and countries included in the cosmology of tantric Buddhism in the Himalayas, see Huber, “Where exactly are Cārīta, Devikoṭa and Himavat?,” 121–64.
15. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo writes in at least two registers: on one level, he recounts Guru Rinpoche’s outer biographical relationship with ḍākinīs, while on the other he alludes to the inner tantric practices in which concentrated subtle energies in the head are melted with inner heat, causing them to drip, which in turn produces a feeling of bliss. For translations where these practices and their imagery are discussed at length, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee, *Emergence from Samputa*; Dudjom, *Nyingma School*, 18n250; Kongtrul, *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, 28; Kongtrul, *Jonang*; Kvaerne, “The Concept of Sahaja in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature”; Mullin, *The Six Yogas of Naropa*; Tsong Khapa, *Illumination of the Hidden Meaning*.
16. Of relevance to the present text, the transformation of the eight consciousnesses into the five wisdoms is the theme of the treatise *Distinguishing Consciousness from Wisdom by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje*, which is largely based on Maitreya’s *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*; see Brunnhölzl, *Mining for Wisdom Within Delusion*, 68, 111. The confused phenomena that arise in the eight consciousnesses are: (1–5) the experience of seemingly outer objects by means of the five senses and sense consciousnesses; (6) individual experiences of happiness, suffering, etc., that occur in the mental consciousness, as well as the synthetic concepts and generalizations that the mental consciousness develops based on the inputs of the five senses; (7) the deluded experience of “I” and “mine” that occurs to the afflicted mental consciousness; and (8) the all-ground consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), which serves as the basis for the functioning of the other consciousnesses and acts as the repository for the impressions and tendencies they form. See Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, *The Five Buddha Families and the Eight Consciousnesses*, ch. 2.
17. For example, a liturgy in the *Longchen Nyingtik* reads, “within an indestructible bindu in the heart center is the life force present in unsubiding bliss-emptiness—the ḍākinī possessing the most sublime of all qualities” (*snying dbus mi shig thig le cher/ bde stong ’pho med grub pa’i srog/ rnam kun mchog ldan DA kini/*) (Jigme Lingpa, *yum mkha’ ’gro’i tshogs kyi mchod pa*, 585). In another highly poetic passage, Khyentse Wangpo (*sku yi dben gnas bsgrags yang rdzong*, 52) uses the same phrase as a predicate for an enlightened figure: “the life force present in unsubiding bliss-emptiness, who possesses a vajra bearing a mirror of unity” (*bde stong ’pho med grub pa’i srog/ zung ’jug me long ’chang ba’i rdo rje can*).
18. Vesna Wallace (“Medicine and Astrology,” 287) explains that in the tantras, “all the letters of the nāḍi-prāṇas are unified into the single word *evam*. The word *evam* is said not to be a term, or a conceptual sign, because it is the union of wisdom and method. *E* is a syllable *a*, or emptiness, the space-element, in the locative case; and *vaṃ* is gnosis, sublime bliss, which arises from and abides in emptiness, or space. Thus, the multi-syllable text is reduced to a two-syllable text, which is neither a yoga nor yoginī tantra.”

19. Here, Padmasambhāva is described as a “bearer of multifarious *mudrās*”; that is, he either—or both—uses *mudrās* and *is* a *mudrā*. This is in line with the earlier verse in which he is addressed as *mahāmudrā*. On the ambiguity of the Tibetan phrase *gzugs ’chang ba*, see Schopen, *Buddhist Monks*, 19n18. The Tibetan *’chang ba* can have the meaning of the Sanskrit *dhārayati*, which would be translated as “employs the form (*gzugs*),” or “uses something in the form of X.” The phrase can just as well be translated as “assumes the form” in the sense of taking up, bearing, or embodying the form—here the form of a *mudrā*, with its broad range of meanings (seal, consort, symbol, etc.). Each time the term “*mudrā*” appears in this prayer, a rich spectrum of meanings is evoked. In this case, it is qualified by *sna tshogs* (“manifold, diverse, multifarious”), suggesting that it can be interpreted along the same lines as *Mahāmūdra*, the Great Seal that stamps all (manifold) appearances with their coemergent emptiness, or appearances that “symbolize” emptiness. Alex Wayman (“Totemic Beliefs,” 87) identifies *sna tshogs phyag rgya* as a technical term in the tantras: *kun du sna tshogs phyag rgya ni kham gsum gyi sems can thams cad yang dag pa’i ye shes kyis rgyas btab pa’o*, which he translates as “the expression ‘complete universal seal (*mudrā*)’ means that all the sentient beings of the three realms are sealed by right knowledge.” Catherine Dalton (*Enacting Perfection*, 84–85) also supports this reading. A similarly ambiguous usage of the term appears in a tantra of Tsasum Lingpa in the context of exhorting protector deities to carry out their activities: “All beings are escorted onto the liberative path by means of the various *mudrās* (*sna tshogs phyag rgyas ’gro kun thar lam bskyal*)” (Tsasum Lingpa, *gter chos*, vol. 8, 81). In another tantric text, the term *sna tshogs phyag rgya* is glossed as an expression for the manifold appearances of the six consciousnesses being sealed with a realization of emptiness borne from the guru’s instructions (Khyentse Wangpo, *sgrub thabs kun btus*, 63). For further examples of this term used in a psychological way, see Karma Trinle, *do ha skor gsum gyi tshig gsum gyi rnam bshad*, 171; Sonam Gyaltzen, *gsung ’bum*, vol. 21, 60. The term *sna tshogs phyag rgya* also appears in the *Emergence from Samputa* tantra (Dharmachakra Translation Committee, verse 1.3.10), where it describes a quality of a *ḍākinī* as being a “universal consort” (*viśvamudrā*), that is, as one who merges or engages with manifold appearances, sealing them in coemergent emptiness; the corresponding Tibetan lines are *nam mkha’ kun tu spyod ’grub pas/ mkha’ ’gro ma zhes rab tu grags/ kun nas sna tshogs phyag rgya ste/ kun las sna tshogs sdom pa’o*// (Skorupski, *The Samputa-tantra*, 233n13). For examples of this more external, quasi-sexual usage of the term, see Akarasiddhi, *ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa’i rgyud*, 284b; Buddhagyūha, *rgyud kyī don la ’jug pa*, 30b; Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, *grub gnyis ’dod ’jo’i dga’ tshal*, 115; *Sa skya bka’ ’bum*, vol. 6, 29.
20. This refers to a “cobra pearl” or “snake stone” (*nāgamaṇī*), as described in *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, ch. LXIX: “A pearl found in the hood of a cobra is round in shape like the one obtained from the mouth of a fish and emits a dazzling effulgence from its own natural seat” (Dutt, *The Garuḍa Purāṇam*, 187).

21. Brunnhölzl (*Songs of Innate Freedom*, Appendix 3n2145) comments on these in the Vajrayāna context: “In the Sāṃkhya school, ‘motility,’ ‘darkness,’ and ‘lightness’ ... are said to be the three constituents (Skt. *guṇa*) of the prakṛti, the primal cosmic substance that is said to be infinite, permanent, partless, unconscious, and all-pervading yet imperceptible. It is understood as the primordial undifferentiated equilibrium of those three constituents. In general, rajas (literally, ‘passion’) stands for whatever is active and energetic, tamas for what is coarse and heavy, and sattva for everything that is fine and light. When related to what is experienced by the puruṣa (the “person” or self, which is infinite consciousness), these three correspond to suffering, dullness, and pleasure or to hatred, ignorance, and desire, respectively. In the Buddhist Vajrayāna, the even mix of all three guṇas refers to the unity of body and mind as the inseparable fusion of sattva (bodhicitta; the white bindu), rajas (the red bindu), and tamas (the immovable awakened mind).” See also the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, *The Karmapa’s Middle Way*, 351; Jamgön Kongtrul, *Indo-Tibetan Classical Learning and Buddhist Phenomenology*, 32, 350, 407.
22. The relation between melting bliss and the third (wisdom-knowledge) empowerment is discussed in Tsele Natsok Rangdrol’s *Empowerment*, 42–48. However, the particular imagery of a youthful person is associated with the second (secret) empowerment. Jamgön Kongtrul (*Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, 475) describes it in the following way: “The secret initiation consists in the experience of the pristine awareness of bliss that arises as the vital essence shifts and descends from the forehead to the throat and then to the heart as a result of tasting the bodhicitta from the master and consort in union and seeing the fully blossomed lotus of the consort. The supreme joy (*paramānanda*) experienced is a bliss that lasts longer than that experienced in the vase initiation and is of four kinds, as is the above joy. This bliss is symbolized by a ‘youthful person’ (*lang tsho ’am dar ma*) to indicate that although it is more expanded than the previous, it is still unripened.”
23. Kongtrul (*gsung ’bum rgya chen bka’ mdzod*, 154) adds, “The maṇḍalas of the imaginary and dependent are fastened under the great seal of the thoroughly established” (*kun brtags gzhan dbang ’khor lo ni/ yongs grub phyag rgya chen por bsdoms*). In another prayer, Khyentse Wangpo (*bden tshig gi me tog*, 310) similarly links Guru Rinpoche with the three natures, finally addressing him as “one who partakes in the refreshment of the great seal of the thoroughly established” (*yongs grub phyag rgya chen mo’i ngal ’tsho la rol pa*).
24. The verses above focused on paying homage, which is the first of the Seven Branches. This line relates to the second branch, that is, offering. The remaining branches of confession, rejoicing, requesting, exhorting, and dedicating appear respectively in the next five verses.
25. See Patrul Rinpoche, *Guide to the Stages and Paths of the Bodhisattvas*.
26. This refers to the repetition or accumulation of the Seven Branches.
27. See Jamgön Kongtrul, *Jonang*, ch. 12n2, where a prayer called *kun mkhyen ye shes phung po can* is cited, which Gyurme Dorje translates as: “Omniscient One, endowed with the aggregate of pristine cognition.”
28. In this line and in the same place in the repeated structure of the next stanza, the sentence is read with the instrumental particle *yi*s rather than the genitive *yi* found in the original. Confusion of these is an extremely common orthographical error in Tibetan texts, and this reading makes much more sense.

29. Gyurme Dorje translates the term “discursive thinking” as “false imaginations”; for an extremely detailed discussion of the various types of vikalpas, see Jamgön Kongtrul, *Indo-Tibetan Classical Learning and Buddhist Phenomenology*, 556–69. This is in line with the colloquial use of *rnam par rtog pa* or *rnam rtog as* “superstition” or “irrational belief”; see also Wisdomlib.org, “Vikalpa.”
30. See Dharma Publishing, *The Fortunate Aeon: How the Thousand Buddhas Became Enlightened*, 52–79.
31. An unusual term (*mkha' khyab mkha'i rdo rje*) that Mipham Rinpoche glosses as “the wisdom that is the one taste of the knower and known” (Duckworth, *Mipam on Buddha-Nature*, 107).
32. Here used as a metaphor for the dharmakāya, “spring” (*dpyid*) connects to the song’s title.
33. This refers to the experience in the intermediate bardo states between death and being reborn.
34. For a discussion of this, see Dalai Lama, *A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night*, 10–11.
35. The expression “arise as [or into] the vajra body of union” occurs in the *Five-Nail Foremost Instruction of Nāropa* (*dpal nA ro pa chen po'i gegs sel gzer lnga'i man ngag*): “In that state of luminosity, the consciousness of the bardo of existence will rise into the vajra body of unity” (*'od gsal de'i ngang las/ srid pa bar do'i rnam shes zung 'jug rdo rje'i skur ldang bar 'gyur ro*) (Kongtrul, *gdams ngag mdzod*, 12).
36. See Dharmachakra Translation Committee, *Deity, Mantra and Wisdom*, 56–67, for an outline of how the bodhisattva paths and levels correspond to the vidyādhara levels.

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GLOSSARY

accomplishment

དངོས་གྲུབ། • *dnegos grub* • siddhi

Usually referring to spiritual attainments, of which there are ordinary types, such as clairvoyance, and the supreme type, the highest wisdom.

adventitious confusion

སྒྲོ་བྱར་འབྲུལ་པ། • *glo bur 'khrul pa*

Confusion that is not a deeply rooted condition but only the result of obscurations that are eminently removable. Often likened to clouds in the sky that come and go and have no bearing on the nature of the sky.

aggregates

ཕུང་། • *phung* • skandha

Literally, either a “heap” or “mass.” The Buddha taught five aggregates that comprise the psychophysical makeup of beings: form, sensations (or feelings, received from form), perceptions, mental activity or formations, and consciousness.

appearance of this life

འདི་འི་སྒྲུང་། • *'di'i snang*

Literally, “these appearances.” This is shorthand for the appearances and experiences of one’s current life.

arrogant ones

དྲེགས། • *dregs*

Powerful though unenlightened beings whose alliance is cultivated by practitioners.

aspiration prayer

སྨོན་ལམ། • *smoṇ lam* • praṇidhāna

Literally, “wish-path.” A genre of prayer that focuses on wishes for the future.

avadhūtī

ཨ་བ་དུ་ཏི། • *a ba d+hU tI*

The central channel of the subtle energy body.

awareness

འཇིག་པ། • *rig pa* • *vidyā*

A fundamental term for knowledge, which has the sense of “science” or true, verified knowledge, not mere information. In tantric and Dzogchen contexts, the term connotes knowledge in the sense of direct seeing of the true nature of reality. It can also be translated as a contextually rarefied “vibrant awareness.”

bindu

ཐིག་ལེ། • *thig le*

A word with a great range of meanings related to spherical shapes. In the present text, 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.

bliss of melting

ལྷ་བདེ། • *zhu bde*

A feeling of intense wellbeing or ecstasy in the context of practices related to the winds and channels of the subtle body. In such practices, one uses energy at the base of the central channel to heat up concentrated energies in the crown chakra, which then drip down and set off experiences of bliss.

bliss-emptiness

བདེ་སྟོང་། • *bde stong*

The simultaneity of the experience of bliss with the realization of its empty nature.

body

སྐུ། • *sku* • *kāya*

The honorific term for body. Applied to exalted beings as in the case of the “three bodies of a buddha,” where it can be understood as something like “dimension.”

buddha nature

བདེ་གཤམ་གསལ་སྟོང་པ། • *bde gshegs snying po* • *sugatagarbha*

Literally, “the matrix of those who have gone to bliss.” The innate enlightened essence of all sentient beings. This doctrine is most famously expounded in the *Uttaratantrasāstra* (see Arya Maitreya, *Buddha Nature*).

channel

རྩ། • *rtsa* • *nāḍi*

Part of the architecture of a being’s subtle body. The channels carry energetic winds (*prāṇa*) throughout the body.

chosen deities

ཡི་དམ། • *yi dam*

Included among the Three Roots in Vajrayāna, one's special tutelary deity is usually represented in the singular; in this context, however, the plural is used for deities in union.

clusters of vital drops

ཐིག་ལེ་ཚོམ་བུ། • *thig le tshom bu*

In esoteric discourses, orbs of light (i.e., clusters of vital drops or *bindus*) can be taken as the objects of meditation and become the setting for visions of enlightened forms.

compounded

འདུས་བྱས། • *'dus byas* • *saṃskṛta*

Referring to the impermanent, composite nature of everything in *saṃsāra*.

confess

བཤགས། • *bshags*

Literally, to “put down” or “put aside,” so that the thing can no longer weigh one down.

controlled wind

རྩལ་བའི་རླུང་། • *rtsol ba'i rlung*

Energy that a yogic practitioner forcefully manipulates through breath and visualization, particularly in order to drive the subtle body's energies into the central channel.

ḍākinī

མཁའ་འགྲོ། • *mkha' 'gro*

An important tantric term for female energy or a personification of such energy that travels through space and communicates with beings. Ḍākinīs can be mundane and even nefarious, but more often the term refers to female personifications of wisdom in the form of deities or exceptional women.

dance

གར། • *gar* • *nṛtta*

Literal or figurative dance. A common metaphor for the dynamic display of reality, often used in the sense of “display” or “expression.”

deliberate inhalation, exhalation, and effortful manipulation

འདུག་ལྡང་བྱེད་རྩལ། • *'jug ldang byed rtsol*

The three kinds of breath that a practitioner of subtle-body yoga trains in.

dependent nature

གཞན་དབང་། • *gzhan dbang* • *paratantra*

One of the three natures in Yogācāra philosophy. The dependent nature is that part of reality of things simply existing through dependent origination. Things that exist in this way may or may not be layered over with imputed meanings, labels, and so forth.

Dharma protector

ཚོས་སྤྲུང་། • *chos srung* • *dharmapāla*

A class of being pledged to protect and uphold the Buddha's teachings.

dharmadhātu

ཚོས་དབྱིངས། • *chos dbyings*

The ultimate dimension of things (*dharmas*), the emptiness that pervades and encompasses everything.

dharmakāya

ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྐུ། • *chos kyi sku*

Literally, “the truth body.” One of three bodies of the buddhas. The dharmakāya is the aspect of a buddha associated with space and simplicity, comprising the ultimate dimension beyond form.

dharmatā

ཚོས་ཉིད། • *chos nyid*

The most fundamental, irreducible quality of something. When applied to the mind, it implies buddha nature, luminous and empty, which is mind’s essence. Such “thingness” has resonances with the important Latin term *rerum natura* (“the nature of things”). The term can be understood in the sense of microcosmic dharmatā, in that each thing has its own irreducible nature of emptiness, and macrocosmic dharmatā, in that emptiness is universal.

discipline

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས། • *tshul khrims* • śīla

Ethical restraint. One of the six pāramitās.

discriminating wisdom

སོ་སོར་རྟོག་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས། • *so sor rtog pa'i ye shes* • pratyavekṣaṇājñāna

One of the five wisdoms. Discriminating wisdom corresponds to the purification of the sixth consciousness (the mental consciousness). It is an awareness that takes in the specificity and diversity of all dharmas while not losing sight of their empty nature.

discursive thinking

རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ། • *rnam par rtog pa* • vikalpa

An important term for conceptual thought processes that operate on the basis of fixation on various aspects (*rnam pa*) of reality.

dynamic energy

རྩལ། • *rtsal*

In the abstract, this is an important term for the natural expressiveness and liveliness of reality—its inherent “charge.” In more specific contexts, it can mean “skill” or “power.”

E VAM

ཇེ་ཤླ། • *e waM* • evaṃ

In common contexts, the Sanskrit *evaṃ* simply means “thus,” as in the sūtra opening “Thus have I heard” (*evaṃ mayā śrutam*). When found in Tibetan texts, however, it almost always carries profound esoteric meanings where *evaṃ* signifies the union of wisdom (*e*) and skillful means (*vaṃ*), emptiness and bliss, mother and father, and other associated dyads.

eight consciousnesses

ཚོགས་བརྒྱད། • *tshogs brgyad* • aṣṭa vijñānakāyāḥ

The five sense consciousnesses together with (6) the mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*), (7) the defiled mental consciousness (*kliṣṭamanovijñāna*), and (8) the fundamental store-house consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*).

eightfold display

རྣམ་པ་བརྒྱད། • *rnam pa brgyad*

The eight manifestations of Guru Rinpoche. The deeds and characters of the eight manifestations are narrated in the many biographies of Guru Rinpoche and prayers to him.

element

ཁམས། • *kham* • dhātu

In its non-technical sense, it means a fundamental constituent. In its technical sense in the context of Abhidharma, it refers to the eighteen fundamental factors of conscious experience.

embodiment

དངོས། • *ngos*

Being embodied in physical form.

encouraging

དབུགས་དབྱུང་བ། • *dbugs dbyung ba*

A form of the related term *dbugs 'byin pa* (“breath” + “to expel”), which carries the sense of breathing life into someone or reviving them. As a verbal substantive, it can be taken as comfort, relief, or encouragement.

enlightened body of liberation

གྲོལ་བའི་སྐྱ རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ་བའི་སྐྱ • *grol ba'i sku, rnam par grol ba'i sku* • vimuktikāya

The enlightened body of liberation is the result of freeing oneself completely of afflictions (*kleśas*). It is distinguished from the more common word *dharmakāya*, which in certain technical contexts denotes the result of being free of cognitive obscurations. It can also be a synonym for the union of all the enlightened bodies (*svabhāvikakāya*).

enlightened mind

སྤུགས། • *thugs* • citta

The honorific term for mind applied to honored beings implying that their mind is imbued with wisdom.

environment and its living contents

སྣོད་བརྒྱད། • *snod bcud*

A figurative term for the whole universe.

everything precipitated

ཉེར་ལེན་ཀུན། • *nyer len kun* • sarvopādāna

The Sanskrit term *upādāna* is important in Abhidharma discourses, being the eighth of the twelve *nidānas*, or links of dependent origination. It refers to the ego's tendency to

appropriate or seize upon objects, feelings, beliefs, and so forth in order not to lose them, in order to feel secure. The literal meaning is the opposite of giving: “taking up” and clinging in an addicted way. The *nidāna* before it is thirsting (*tṛṣṇā*; *sred pa*), representing the mind’s reaching out in wanting. Instances of wanting form particular patterns that are held together and sustained by *upādāna*, and thus it is sometimes translated as “fuel.” The quality of this fuel or entrenched clinging pattern informs the crystallization of one’s future existence, the *nidāna* of becoming (*bhava*; *srid pa*).

existence and peace

སྤྲོད་དང་ཞི་བ། • *srid dang zhi ba*

A figurative term for all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

face

ཞལ། • *zhal* • mukha

A literal or figurative face, the latter carrying the sense of “true form” or “true appearance.” Sometimes its countenance-related meaning is muted and it simply adds an honorific layer to the being that precedes it.

four enlightened activities

རྣམ་བཞིའི་བློ་ལས། • *rnam bzhi'i phrin las* • caturkarman

The four enlightened activities are: (1) pacifying (*śānticāra*; *zhi ba*); (2) increasing (*pauṣṭika*; *rgyas pa*); (3) magnetizing (*vaśīkaraṇa*; *dbang ba*); and (4) subjugating (*abhicāra*; *drag po*).

four kinds of awareness-holder

རིག་འཛིན་རྣམ་བཞི། • *rig 'dzin rnam bzhi*

The four awareness-holder levels are: (1) the matured vidyādhara; (2) the vidyādhara with power over life; (3) the mahāmudrā vidyādhara; and the (4) spontaneously accomplished vidyādhara.

four noble truths

འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་བཞི། • *'phags pa'i bden bzhi*

The truths of suffering, its cause, cessation, and path.

fraught with filth

དྲི་བཅས། • *dri bcas*

Literally, “accompanied by stains” or any number of synonymic combinations.

free of elaborations

སྤྱོད་བྲལ། • *spros bral* • aprapañca

Free from the deluded layers of meanings, associations, interpretations, and projections that the unenlightened mind adds to reality just as it is.

fully established nature

ཡོངས་བྲལ། • *yongs grub* • pariniṣpanna

One of the three natures in Yogācāra philosophy. The fully established nature is the aspect of reality that is arrived at through deep insight or wisdom (*prajñā*). It is the realization that the dependent nature (i.e., dependently arisen things) is naturally empty of the imagined nature. For example, when one realizes that there is no “snake” in a

simple rope, one is aware of that rope. Enlightened beings relate to all appearances in their suchness; that is, they do not impute or add anything to natural, dependently arisen phenomena.

gaṇacakra

ཚོགས། • *tshogs*

A celebratory tantric feast.

great timelessness beyond the three times

དུས་གསུམ་དུས་མེད་ཆེན་པོ། • *dus gsum dus med chen po*

Referring to how the wisdom of enlightened beings does not operate within the framework of past, present, and future.

greatest of the great

ཆེ་བའི་ཆེ་མཚོ། • *che ba'i che mchog* • mahottaraheruka

In addition to meaning the “greatest of the great” (*che ba'i che mchog*), as a proper name it refers to Chemchok Heruka (Mahottaraheruka), one of the most important wrathful deities in the Nyingma tradition. As the central figure in the Teachings of the Eight Maṇḍalas (*bka' brgyad*), he is understood to encompass all other deities.

heruka

ཉེ་རུ་ཀ། • *he ru ka*

A term for male wrathful tantric deities. Often shorthand for the deity Cakrasaṃvara.

house of the central channel

དབུ་མའི་གྲོང་། • *dbu ma'i grong*

A figurative phrase for the central channel's tubular architecture.

imagined nature

ཀུན་བརྟགས། • *kun brtags* • parikalpita

One of the three natures in Yogācāra philosophy. The imagined nature is the aspect of reality that is imputed by name or symbol, implying true existence to that which the name or symbol refers. The classic example of such a thing is the “snake” in a situation where a rope is mistaken for a snake. Upon analysis, things that are imputed in this way are not found to exist; thus, they are “imagined.”

immaculate

རྩལ་བྲལ། • *rdul bral* • viraja

Literally, “free from dust.” Generally a synonym for “pure.”

in person

དངོས། • *dnogs*

Here referring to concrete, waking experience or “in actuality.”

inanimate and living things

བརྟན་གཡོ་བའི་དངོས་པོ། • *brtan g.yo ba'i dnogs po*

A figurative term for the whole universe. The environmental world and the beings contained within it.

inconceivable experiential domain

བསམ་གྱིས་མི་ཁྱབ་སྒྲིད་ཡུལ། • *bsam gyis mi khyab spyod yul*

In this phrase, “experiential domain” refers to the scope of a being’s experience (i.e., what that being has epistemological access to). Here, since it is referring to the experiential domain of an enlightened being, it is qualified as being “inconceivable” by ordinary beings.

innate nature

གཏུག་མ། • *gnyug ma* • *nija*

Referring to the ultimate truth that has always been, that is never produced. The meaning overlaps with terms like “dharmakāya,” “dharmadhātu,” and “buddha nature.”

intransgressible

འད་འདྲཀལ། • *’da’ dka’*

Literally, “hard to go beyond.” This term usually carries the normative significance of “not to be transgressed.”

legions of outer and inner māras

ཕྱི་ནང་བདུད་ཚྭ་གས། • *phyi nang bdud tshogs*

Māras are forces that disrupt one’s spiritual progress. Outer māras are any external being or situation that distracts one from the path; inner māras are thoughts, feelings, and experiences that mire one in saṃsāra.

level of no-more-learning

མི་སྒྲོབ་གོ་འཕང་། • *mi slob go ’phang* • *aśaikṣamarga*

In the Mahāyāna system of the five bodhisattva paths, the fifth is the path of no-more-learning.

life force

སྟོག་ • *srog* • *jīva*, *jīvita*

The vital energy that sustains life.

life force of accomplishment

གུབ་པ་འི་སྟོག་ • *grub pa’i srog*

A poetic expression used with “unsubsiding bliss-emptiness” (*bde stong ’pho med*) as a qualifier for exalted beings.

magical web

སྒྲུ་འཕྲུལ་རྒྱ་བ། • *sgyu ’phrul drwa ba*

A figurative expression, or more specifically one evoking the language of the Māyājāla Tantra (*sgyu ’phrul drwa ba’i rgyud*), which emphasize the view in which all dualities are resolved in unity.

mahāguru

མ་ཁྲ་གུ་རུ། • *ma hA gu ru*

Great teacher.

mahāmudrā

ཕྱག་གྱུ་ཆེན་པོ། • *phyag rgya chen po*

“The Great Seal,” or sometimes “The Great Symbol.” A theoretical and meditational doctrine important to all Tibetan traditions. The general meaning of the term is that all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are sealed or encompassed by emptiness.

māra

བདུད། • *bdud*

Negative influences. Outer māras are any being or situation that leads one further into confusion. Inner māras are one’s own self-delusions.

meditation and post-meditation

མཉམ་རྒྱུ། • *mnyam rjes*

“Equipose” (*mnyam bzhag*) or “meditation” is contrasted with “post-attainment,” or “post-meditation” (*rjes thob*). A meditator’s life consists of these two alternating phases of deep meditation followed by periods in which one is not in such deep meditation but carries with them some of the effects of the previous meditation.

merit

བསོད་ནམས། • *bsod nams* • puṇya

One of two factors to develop in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the other being wisdom (*prajñā* or *jñāna*). Merit can be understood as the “good karma” that beings create, which will have positive results in the future.

mesmerized

བརྒན་པ་འཕྲོགས། • *brtan pa ’phrogs*

Literally, “robbed the stability” or “plundered the constancy.” It covers a wide semantic range related to overwhelming the mind.

mind

སེམས། • *sems* • citta

One of several important terms for mind corresponding to a being’s general subjectivity. It always entails dualism; it is not enlightened mind.

mind

ཡིད། • *yd* • manas

One of several important Tibetan terms for mind. This term emphasizes mind as the faculty that knows mental objects via mental consciousness (one of the six consciousnesses, with the others being the five sense consciousnesses). It also emphasizes the actively mental, deliberating mind in the framework of unenlightened, dualistic thinking.

nāga king’s hood

གཙུག་རྩོར་གདེངས་ཀ། • *gtsug tor gdengs ka*

This refers to a “cobra pearl” or “snake stone” (*nāgamaṇī*).

naturally free

རང་གྲོལ། • *rang grol*

An important doctrinal term related to the true nature of reality. It highlights how the nature of reality need not be actively liberated but is intrinsically untrammelled. The term combines the elements “self” and the intransitive verb “to be free.”

necessities

ཉེར་སྟོན། • *nyer spyod*

Usually referring to the traditional ritual offerings of drinking water, washing water, flowers, incense, lamps, fabrics, food, and music.

nirmāṇakāya

སྤུལ་པའི་སྐུ། • *sprul pa'i sku*

One of the three bodies or dimensions of a buddha. Can be translated as “emanation body” and understood as the tangible presence of the buddha’s wisdom that appears to ordinary beings.

nothing to do with objects

ཆད་པ་བཅས་པའི་ཡུལ་ལས་གྲོལ། • *cha dang bcas pa'i yul las grol*

Literally, “free from objects and all their parts.” Here applied to the dharmakāya, which is not crystallized around any reference points.

ordinary mind

སྟོ། • *blo* • buddhi

One of several important Tibetan terms for mind. It emphasizes the actively ratiocinating aspect of the mind that operates within the framework of subject, object, and action. Thus, it is often translated as “rational mind.” In the context of meditation, “ordinary mind” is a great obstacle, since it stands in the way of nonduality. In some contexts, it can be understood in a poetic (not metaphysical) sense of the English term “soul,” as in the personal mind with its attitudes and feelings.

palpable

དངོས། • *dnegos*

Usually “tangible” or material. Here it paradoxically qualifies the term *nāda* (“sonance”).

plaintive song

རྒྱུང་གླུ། • *rgyang glu*

A type of song sung in longing to one far away. It is the term used in the genre of prayer “Calling the Lama from Afar.”

praise

བསྟོད་པ། • *bstod pa* • stotra

A eulogistic prayer.

prāṇa and mind

རླུང་སེམས། • *rlung sems*

The mind and the subtle-body energies in holistic interdependence.

primordially pure

གདོད་ནས་དག་པ། • *gdod nas dag pa*

A common predicate of ultimate reality which has never known impurity.

pure appearances

དག་པའི་སྒྲུང་བ། • *dag pa'i snang ba*

Refers to appearances that are not tripped up in saṃsāric clinging. To an enlightened being, appearances are naturally pure. Such a relationship with appearances is cultivated in creation-stage meditation.

purity of the threefold sphere

འཁོར་གསུམ་རྣམ་དག་ • *'khor gsum rnam dag*

Sometimes translated as “threefold purity,” this refers to the point when one has no fixation on the three spheres, or elements, of any action: (1) the doer, (2) the action, or (3) the object of the action. In the Mahāyāna teachings, the six pāramitās are “perfected” when they are performed without fixating on these three reference points.

rainbow body of union

ཟུང་འཇུག་འཇའ་ལུས། • *zung 'jug 'ja' lus*

The union of primordial purity (*ka dag*) and spontaneous presence (*lhun grub*).

realities of the noble and the ordinary

འཕགས་དང་སོ་སྒྱའི་ཡུལ་གྲུ་བ། • *'phags dang so skye'i yul gyur pa*

“The noble and the ordinary” refers to the āryas who have entered the path of seeing, the third of the five bodhisattva paths, and those ordinary people who are on the first two bodhisattva paths of accumulation and joining.

rejoice

རྗེས་ཡི་རང་། • *rjes yi rang*

One of the seven branches. To rejoice in one's own and others' two accumulations.

relative

ཀུན་རྫོབ། • *kun rdzob* • saṃvṛti

One of the two truths which all of reality can be reduced to, the other being ultimate truth. Relative truth is the part of reality that is fictional, that is, everything taken to truly exist, everything filtered through an ordinary mind's emotional and cognitional obscurations.

revelry

རོལ་པ། • *rol pa* • lalita, līla

A term with a wide range of poetic and doctrinal meanings. In poetic registers, it can mean “sporting,” “play,” “cavorting,” “reveling,” and so forth. In more doctrinal contexts, it refers to reality's manifold display.

sacred sites and countries

གནས་དང་ཡུལ། • *gnas dang yul*

Power spots where one's spiritual practice is amplified.

Saga Dawa

ས་ག་ལྷ་བ། • *sa ga zla ba* • Vaiśākha

The fourth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar, considered to be the most important for practice since the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and parinirvāṇa all fall within this period (according to Tibetan tradition). The first fifteen days of the month are held to be particularly important.

samaya being

དམ་ཚིག་སེམས་དང། • *dam tshig sems dpa* • samayasattva

In Mahāyoga practice, especially in the creation stage, the samaya being is the deity imagined by the practitioner in all its symbolic details. The practitioner unites this samaya being with the wisdom being; that is, one imbues the practice with timeless awareness.

sambhogakāya

ལོངས་སྤྱད། • *longs spyod*

Literally, “enjoyment body.” One of the three bodies of the buddhas. The sambhogakāya is associated with enlightened speech and appears to bodhisattvas as bearing the major and minor marks.

sanctified by

བྱིན་བརྒྱབས་པས། • *byin brlabs pas*

Related to the term “blessing,” here it carries the verbal sense of being transformed or consecrated through blessings.

self-knowing awareness

རང་རིག་ • *rang rig* • svasaṃvedana

A term in which “awareness” (*rig pa*) is qualified as “self-knowing.” It highlights that awareness is not limited to ordinary, intentional, dualistic awareness.

sense bases

སྒྱི་མཆེད། • *skye mched* • āyatana

Usually taught as a set of twelve: the six sense objects (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and mental objects) and the six sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind).

seven attributes of the union of bliss and emptiness

བདེ་སྤྱོད་ཁ་སྤྱོད་བདུན། • *bde stong kha sbyor bdun*

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) uninterrupted (*rgyun mi chad pa*); and (7) unceasing (*'gog pa med pa*).

sixteen dreadful armies

བརྒྱད་གཉིས་འཛིགས་པའི་དཔུང་ཚོགས། • *brgyad gnyis 'jigs pa'i dpung tshogs*

Most likely this refers to the “eight great fears” in their outer and inner aspects. The outer aspects are: (1) drowning or water; (2) thieves and assailants; (3) lions; (4) snakes; (5) fire; (6) flesh eating demons or malicious spirits; (7) imprisonment or captivity; (8) elephants.

The inner aspects are: (1) craving or attachment; (2) wrong views; (3) pride; (4) envy; (5) anger; (6) doubt; (7) avarice; and (8) delusion.

sky dancer

མཁའ་འགྲོ། • *mkha' 'gro* • *ḍākinī*

A poetic English rendering of *ḍākinī*.

sonance

ནྟ། • *nA da* • *nāda*

The Sanskrit term *nāda*, which Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo does not translate into Tibetan, means “vibration” or “internal resonance.”

space-vajra pervading space

མཁའ་ཁྱབ་མཁའ་རྫོགས། • *mkha' khyab mkha'i rdo rje*

An unusual term that Mipam Rinpoche glosses as “the wisdom that is the one taste of the knower and known” (Duckworth, *Mipam on Buddha-Nature*, 107).

spontaneous vajra song

རྫོགས་ཐོག་གླུ། • *rdo rje'i thol glu*

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

spontaneously accomplished vidyādhara

ལྷན་གྲུབ་རིག་འཛིན། • *lhun grub rig 'dzin*

The fourth of the four levels of vidyādhara (“awareness holder”).

spontaneously born one

ལྷན་ཅིག་སྐྱེས་པ། • *lhan cig skyes pa* • *sahaja*

One who achieves enlightenment very quickly. During the tantric efflorescence of the Pāla Empire (750–1161), Buddhist and non-Buddhist adepts (*siddhas*) spread the doctrine that enlightenment within a single life was very possible.

spring

དཔྱིད། • *dpyid*

The common term for the season between winter and summer. Figuratively, it often signifies a period of spiritual floridity or something, such as the dharmakāya, that is the source of spiritual qualities.

spring messenger

དཔྱིད་ཀྱི་ཕོ་ཉ། • *dpyid kyi pho nya*

A figurative name for the cuckoo bird who ushers in the spring.

state of nonduality

གཉིས་སུ་མེད་པས། • *gnyis su med pas*

Within an ongoing meditative experience of the coemergence of appearances and emptiness.

state of primordial purity

ཀ་དག་ངང་། • *ka dag ngang*

The ongoing state of pristine awareness that has never known defilement.

succumb

གཞན་གྱི་དབང་དུ་བྱུང་པ། • *gzhan gyi dbang du gyur pa*

Literally, “fall under another’s power.”

supplication

གསོལ་འདེབས། • *gsol ’debs* • *adhyeṣaṇā*

A genre of prayer that highlights the subject’s devoted and solicitous approach to the person or deity they are addressing. They are distinct in character from aspiration prayers (*smon lam*) and praises (*bstod pa*) in that they evoke an immediate yearning for succor and blessings.

ten strengths

སྟོབས་བརྒྱ། • *stobs bcu* • *daśabalāni*

The ten strengths of a buddha whose knowledge has become unobstructed are: knowing (1) what is correct and incorrect; (2) the results of actions; (3) the aspirations of beings; (4) the elements; (5) the different capacities of beings; (6) all paths; (7) the different ways to establish meditative concentration; (8) the previous lives of oneself and others; (9) the knowledge of transference, death, and future births; and (10) knowing that the defilements are exhausted or knowing the path and result.

things

དངོས། • *dnagos*

Tangible, material things.

three elements of motility, darkness, and lightness

རྩལ་མུན་སྤྱིང་སྟོབས་ཁམས་གསུམ་པོ། • *rdul mun snying stobs kham s gsum po* • *tamas, rajas, sattva*

These are three important terms in the Sāṃkhya school of India philosophy.

three liberations

རྣམ་ཐར་གསུམ། • *rnam thar gsum*

Shortened form of the “three gateways” or “three doors” to liberation. These are three different ways one may approach ultimate truth: (1) emptiness (*stong pa nyid*); (2) signlessness (*mtshan nyid med pa*); and (3) wishlessness (*smon pa med pa*).

three natures

མཚན་ཉིད་གསུམ། • *mtshan nyid gsum* • *trisvabhāva*

In the Yogācāra system of philosophy, reality is reduced to three categorical natures or characters: the imagined nature, the dependent nature, and the fully established nature.

threefold sphere

འཁོར་གསུམ། • *'khor gsum* • *trimaṇḍala*

The three elements involved in every action: agent, action, and object of action. When these three reference points are taken to truly exist, this is a framework for saṃsāric

confusion.

transitionless

འཕོ་མེད། • *'pho med*

As in a level of realization that one does not go in and out of, and that has no ups or downs. Here, it is applied to the accomplishment of ongoing bliss-emptiness. There is still the dynamic unfolding of experience, but the accomplishment of unified bliss and emptiness does not subside.

truths of cessation and path

འགོགས་དང་ལམ་གྱི་བདེན་པ། • *'gogs dang lam gyi bden pa*

Referring to the third and fourth of the four noble truths.

two accumulations

ཚོགས་གཉིས། • *tshogs gnyis*

The accumulations of merit and wisdom.

two kinds of benefit

དོན་གཉིས། • *don gnyis*

The achievement of liberation, which benefits oneself, and compassionate and skillful activity, which benefits others.

two veils

སྒྲིབ་གཉིས། • *sgrib gnyis*

The veil of afflictions (*kleśāvaraṇa*; *nyon mongs kyi sgrib*) and the cognitional veil (*jñeyā-āvaraṇa*; *shes bya'i sgrib*).

twofold purity

དག་པ་གཉིས་ལྔ། • *dag pa gnyis ldan*

Literally, “that which is doubly pure” refers to the dharmakāya, which is free from the two obscurations (*sgrib gnyis*): (1) emotions or the obscuration of afflictions (*kleśāvaraṇa*; *nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa*) and (2) cognitional obscurations (*jñeyāvaraṇa*; *shes bya'i sgrib pa*).

ultimate

དོན་དམ། • *don dam* • paramārtha

One of the two truths that all of reality can be reduced to, the other being relative truth. Ultimate truth is reality unobscured by emotional and cognitional veils. It is the “true” reality of all things’ interdependence and the emptiness of inherent existence.

unbound by objects and agents of perception

གཟུང་འཛིན་བྲལ། • *gzung 'dzin bral*

The ordinary mind’s perceptual framework is based on the assumption of outer objects that are grasped and an inner consciousness that does the grasping. This is the root of dualistic thinking that keeps beings mired in saṃsāra.

unity

ཟུང་འདྲུག། • *zung 'jug* • yuganaddha

An important doctrinal term denoting the coming together of two or more distinct things to the point of their indivisibility. It is commonly used when talking about the unity of cataphatic categories like appearances, bliss, and luminosity becoming one with the apophatic category of emptiness. Also used to describe the inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

vajra aggregates

རྫོལ་ཕུང་པོ། • *rdo rje phung po*

The subtle body. When the term “vajra” is added to a common term, it generally means that the latter has been embraced with wisdom and is no longer ordinary. Here, the ordinary aggregates or compounded things that form a being’s body are, in the process of meditative practice, understood as primordially pure, uncompounded, unchanging, and so forth—all qualities of the vajra.

vajra body

རྫོལ་སྐུ། • *rdo rje sku* • vajrakāya

The body united with wisdom so that it is no longer an ordinary body but a body with the qualities of the vajra, like being unchanging, indestructible, and so forth.

vajra master

རྫོལ་སྐྱབ་དཔོན། • *rdo rje slob dpon* • vajrācārya

An expert in Vajrayāna theory and practice, particularly with skill in ritual.

vajra mind

རྫོལ་ཉི་ཐུགས། • *rdo rje'i thugs*

Mind imbued with wisdom.

vajra of enlightened speech

གསུང་གི་རྫོལ། • *gsung gi rdo rje*

The speech faculty imbued with wisdom, or a being who has accomplished united speech and wisdom.

vajra of mind

སེམས་ཀྱི་རྫོལ། • *sems kyi rdo rje*

Mind imbued with wisdom.

vajra song

རྫོལ་ཉི་ཐུ། • *rdo rje'i glu* • vajragīta

A type of song that displays the composer’s meditative realization.

vajra speech

རྫོལ་ཉི་གསུང། • *rdo rje'i gsung*

Speech and wind energies united with wisdom.

Vajrarakṣa

རྫོལ་སྤྲིན་པོ། • *rdo rje srin po* • vajrarakṣa

Vajrarakṣa is listed as a minor attendant deity in the maṇḍala of Amoghasiddhi Buddha and as an epithet of Mañjuśrī in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. Here, Vajrarakṣa is used as a

generic term, similar to heruka, connoting a fierce masculine deity. This usage is found in Vajrakīlaya sādhanas composed by Tertön Sogyal and Khenchen Jigme Puntsok.

victorious activity in every direction

ཕྱགས་ལས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ། • *phyogs las rnam rgyal*

A term broken down literally as “directions” + “activity” + “completely” + “victorious.” It can be used as a phrase or as a proper name or epithet.

victorious one

རྒྱལ་བ། • *rgyal ba* • jina

An enlightened being, particularly a buddha. One who has overcome the afflictive and cognitive obscurations.

view of the self

བདག་ཏུ་བཞུ་བ། • *bdag tu blta ba*

The samsāric metaphysical and epistemological orientation that takes the five aggregates to be a truly existing self.

vital and controlled winds

སློག་དང་རྩྱུ་བའི་རྩུང། • *srog dang rtsol ba'i rlung*

These are kinds of wind that one learns to manipulate in the *tsalung* (channels and winds) system of yoga. The wind of vitality (*srog rlung*) is the life-sustaining energy that pervades the body. Controlled winds or winds of exertion (*rtsol rlung*) refers to winds that are forcefully corralled into the central channel.

vital drops

ཐིག་ལེ། • *thig le* • bindu

A word with a great range of meanings related to spherical shapes. In the present text, 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.

vital wind

སློག་རྩུང། • *srog rlung*

An energy that circulates in the subtle body that sustains one's life force.

wind

རྩུང། • *rlung* • prāṇa

One of the main elements of a being's subtle body. These energetic winds are carried through the body through channels (*nāḍīs*).

wisdom aggregate

ཡེ་ཤེས་ཕུང་པོ། • *ye shes phung po* • jñānaskandha

As all beings consist of aggregates, enlightened beings are also ascribed the aggregate of timeless awareness.

wisdom being

ཡེ་ཤེས་སེམས་པ། • *ye shes sems pa* • jñānasattva

In Mahāyoga practice, especially in the creation stage, the wisdom being is the ultimate form of the deity, which is the practitioner’s own timeless awareness. In successful creation-stage practice, one unites this with the imagined samaya being.

wisdom body

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྐུ • *ye shes sku* • jñānakāya

Very similar in meaning to “wisdom aggregate” in this text. A term for the embodiment of wisdom or pristine awareness.

within the vastness of twofold purity

དག་པ་གཉིས་ལྷན་ཆེན་པོར། • *dag pa gnyis ldan chen por*

Literally, “within the great thing that has double purity” (i.e., pure in terms of the two obscurations or veils).

yogic conduct

བརྟུལ་བྱུགས། • *brtul zhugs* • vrata

Refers to spiritual disciplines and austerities related to Buddhist and non-Buddhist yogic traditions.