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Three-Part Outline of the Instructions on the Wisdom Kīla of Awareness

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.

rig pa ye shes kyi phur bu'i kbrid la gsum

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

This short, untitled, and undated work by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo outlines the structure and successive stages of meditation in Dzogchen practice in the context of the Pith Instruction Series. In this way, this text functions as a helpful tool for Dzogchen practitioners to support memorization of the successive stages of Dzogchen. This point by point summary provides an easy method of recall when engaging in retreat. It enumerates the three kinds of special preliminaries before moving on to the main practice, which is divided into trekchö and tögal. Both the preliminaries and the main practice are described according to the topics of ground, path, and fruition. The structure of the trekchö outline focuses on view, meditation, and resulting experiences, while that of tögal revolves around its six key points, its four visions, and its four final supportive pith instructions (i.e., the threefold motionlessness, the threefold abidance, the threefold attainment, and the four confidences). This outline is thus an essentialized summary of cycles within the Pith Instruction Series, such as Khyentse Wangpo's own Chetsün Nyingtik.

The association of *kīla* (*purba*) with the practice of Dzogchen has existed since the early diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet. This can be seen in the Dunhuang manuscript Pelliot 44, which, notably, is the earliest extant work that mentions Atiyoga and Dzogchen in the context of the introduction of the *kīla* practice by Padmasambhava in Tibet. This manuscript was stored in the Mogao caves and among a cache of texts that were rediscovered in 1902 by Paul Pelliot (1878–1945).

རིག་པ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་བུའི་ཁྱིད་ལ་གསུམ།

Three-Part Outline of the Instructions on the Wisdom Kīla of Awareness

The instructions have three parts: (1) a general presentation of the structure, (2) a detailed explanation of the pith instructions, and (3) a conclusion about the manner of accomplishing the fruition.

The first¹ part has three sections: (1.1) the path of liberation in this life for superior practitioners, (1.2) the path of liberation at the time of death for those of intermediate capacities, and (1.3) the path of liberation during the bardo for those of inferior capacities.

The first section has two subdivisions: (1.1.1) the special preliminaries and (1.1.2) the main practice.

The first of these has three parts: (1.1.1.1) guidance on the three bodies, based on the yoga of the four elements; (1.1.1.2) guidance on awareness, based on the distinguishing of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; and (1.1.1.3) guidance on mind, based on the training of body, speech, and mind.

The training of speech² has four sections: (1.1.1.3.1) the twofold sealing, (1.1.1.3.2) the twofold dynamic training, (1.1.1.3.3) searching for suppleness,³ and (1.1.1.3.4) entering the path.

The training of the mind has two parts: (1.1.1.3.2.1) the actual training and (1.1.1.3.2.2) settling into naturalness.

The main practice has two parts: (1.1.2.1) trekchö and (1.1.2.2) tögal.

The first has three divisions: (1.1.2.1.1) understanding [the base] through the view, (1.1.2.1.2) practicing [the path] through meditation, and (1.1.2.1.3) directly transcending experiences [through the obtainment of the fruit].

The second, *tögal*, has three parts: (1.1.2.2.1) the base, consisting of contemplating clear light through the six key points; [343] (1.1.2.2.2) the path, consisting of the direct introduction to the four visions; and (1.1.2.2.3) uniting with the fruit through the final supportive pith instructions.

The first has two sections: (1.1.2.2.1.1) the actual practice and (1.1.2.2.1.2) the additional practice consisting of directly engaging in virtue.

The first of these has six parts: (1.1.2.2.1.1.1) the key point of the body, which is the physical postures; (1.1.2.2.1.1.2) the key point of wind, which is the coming and going of the breath; (1.1.2.2.1.1.3) the key point of the object, which is the ground of the arising [of the visions]; (1.1.2.2.1.1.4) the key point of the eyes, which are the gazes; (1.1.2.2.1.1.5) the key point of space, which is the source [of the visions]; and (1.1.2.2.1.1.6) the key point of awareness, consisting of discerning one's essence.⁴

NOTES

1. The text says, “the second” (*gnyis pa*), but it does not provide a detailed explanation of the precepts. Rather, it describes the structure of the path that is the topic of the first subdivision of the text.
2. This training pertains to the guidance on mind itself. The training of the body (in the standing vajra position) is not mentioned in the text, nor are the instructions discussing the yoga of the elements and the outer and inner separations of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
3. Here *gnyen* should be corrected to *mnyen*.
4. The description of the four visions and the attainment of fruition are not discussed.

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GLOSSARY

awareness

རིག་པ། • *rig pa* • vidyā

Knowledge of the natural state.

base

གཞི། • *gzhi*

According to Dzogchen, the original, abiding mode of the natural state (*gnas lugs*).

clear light

འོད་གསལ། • *'od gsal* • prabhāsvara

In Dzogchen, the visionary aspect of awareness (*rig pa*) contemplated during tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

direct introduction

ངོ་སྤྱད། • *ngo sprod*

Pointing-out instructions leading to the recognition of the natural state (*gnas lugs*).

distinguishing of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa

འཁོར་འདས་རྩ་ཤན་དབྱེ་བ། • *'khor 'das ru shan dbye ba*

Special preliminaries (*khyad par gyi sngon 'gro*) of Dzogchen.

entering the path

ལམ་གཞུག། • *lam gzbug*

The fourth training of speech.

essence

ངོ་བོ། • *ngo bo* • svabhāva

In Dzogchen, the empty and primordially pure aspect of the natural state (*gnas lugs*).

final supportive pith instructions

མཐའ་རྟེན་གྱི་མན་ངག། • *mtha' rten gyi man ngag*

Precepts associated with the four visions (*snang ba bzhi*) of tögal (*thod rgal*).

four visions

སྒྲ་བ་བཞི། • *snang ba bzhi*

The four steps of tögal (*thog rgal*) practice.

fruit

འབྲས་བུ། • *'bras bu* • phala

The result of the practice of the path (*lam*).

gazes

ལྟ་སྟངས། • *lta stangs*

In Dzogchen, the special gazes used in tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

guidance on awareness

རིག་པའི་སྒྲ་ཁྲིད་པ། • *rig pa'i sna kbrid pa*

In Dzogchen, the generic name for the separation of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

guidance on mind

སེམས་ཀྱི་སྒྲ་ཁྲིད་པ། • *sems kyi sna kbrid pa*

In Dzogchen, the generic name for the training of the three doors (*sgo gsum*).

guidance on the three bodies

སྐུ་གསུམ་གྱི་སྒྲ་ཁྲིད་པ། • *sku gsum gyi sna kbrid pa*

In Dzogchen, the generic name of the practice of the four elements (*'byung ba bzhi*).

key point of awareness

རིག་པའི་གནད། • *rig pa'i gnad*

One of the six key points (*gnad drug*) of tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

key point of space

དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་གནད། • *dbyings kyi gnad*

One of the six key points (*gnad drug*) of tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

key point of the body

ལུས་ཀྱི་གནད། • *lus kyi gnad*

One of the six key points (*gnad drug*) of tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

key point of the eyes

མིག་གི་གནད། • *mig gi gnad*

One of the six key points (*gnad drug*) of tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

key point of the object

ཡུལ་གྱི་གནད། • *yul gyi gnad*

One of the six key points (*gnad drug*) of tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

key point of wind

རླུང་གི་གནད། • *rlung gi gnad*

One of the six key points (*gnad drug*) of tögal (*thod rgal*) practice.

main practice

དངོས་གཞི། • *dnegos gzhi*

In Dzogchen, the yogas of trekchö (*khregs chod*) and tögal (*thod rgal*).

path

ལམ། • *lam* • *mārga*

In Dzogchen, the various stages of actual practice.

Pith Instruction Series

མན་ངག་སྡེ། • *man ngag sde*

The third and highest class of Dzogchen teachings.

searching for suppleness

མཉེན་བཅོལ། • *mnyen btsal*

In Dzogchen, one of the four trainings of speech.

settling into naturalness

རྒྱལ་དབབ། • *rnal dbab*

The second part of training the mind.

special preliminaries

ཁྱད་པར་གྱི་སྒྲན་འགོ། • *khyad par gyi sngon 'gro*

The three special preliminaries of Dzogchen.

three bodies

སྐླ་གསུམ། • *sku gsum* • *trikāya*

The three aspects, or dimensions, of a buddha's awakening: dharmakāya, saṃbhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya. The dharmakāya is the wisdom mind of enlightenment, which accomplishes one's own benefit and is not perceptible to others. The forms manifested to benefit others are of two types: the saṃbhogakāya, or body of complete enjoyment, perceptible only by highly realized bodhisattvas, and the nirmāṇakāya, or emanation body, visible to ordinary beings.

tögal

ཐོད་རྒྱལ། • *thod rgal*

A Dzogchen practice that involves introduction to the inherently present clear light. It is often taught that where trekchö is the wisdom aspect of the method, tögal is the aspect of skillful means.

training of body, speech, and mind

ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་གསུམ་སྦྱང་བ། • *lus ngag yid gsum sbyang ba*

The training of the three doors (*sgo gsum*).

training of speech

ངག་སྦྱང་། • *ngag sbyong*

The fourfold training of speech.

training of the mind

སེམས་སྦྱང་། • *sems sbyong*

The twofold training of the mind.

trekchö

ཐེག་མཆོད། • *kbregs chod*

A Dzogchen practice that involves cutting through delusion to reveal the purity beyond conceptual elaboration.

twofold dynamic training

རྩལ་སྦྱང་གཉིས། • *rtsal sbyong gnyis*

One of the practices belonging to the training of speech.

twofold sealing

རྒྱལ་གདབ་གཉིས། • *rgyas gdab gnyis*

One of the practices belonging to the training of speech.

view

ལྟ་བ། • *lta ba*

In Dzogchen, the experiential understanding of emptiness and clarity (*stong gsal*).

yoga of the four elements

འབྲུང་བཞིའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར། • *'byung bzhi'i rnal 'byor*

One of the special preliminaries (*khyad par gyi sngon 'gro*) of Dzogchen.